

LETTERS FROM GRANDPA
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Dearest grandchild,

Today's letter will deal with the subject of maturity. Paul wrote: **“When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me” (1 Cor. 13:11)**. Normally, we grow out of childishness with age, but not always. There was a joke that made the rounds many years ago about the couple who went to a marriage counselor. The husband complained that his wife was immature and had never grown up. When asked for an example he said: “Just last night I was taking a bath and she burst in without knocking and began sinking all my battle ships”.

Sometimes circumstances cause us to mature spiritually beyond our physical years. Doug Still, for example, was a young man in the Fairview Church when Granny and I were ministering there. He died of cancer at the age of 14. He knew he was dying and because he was mature beyond his years he spent the last days of his life giving comfort and encouragement to his parents, family, and friends. He urged them not to worry because he had given his life to Jesus Christ and was going soon to his heavenly reward. He died with his eyes open and his father gave me the honor of closing them before the funeral home came to take away his body.

A similar story with a different ending involves Randy Carlson who has been a long time friend of our family. On two separate occasions Randy gave me as a reference while seeking employment. In both instances I stated that Randy was mature beyond his years. This maturity came when as a teenager he was diagnosed with cancer, and after surgery, chemo, and radiation was given only two months to live. Randy was skin and bones and urinating blood. The doctors informed him that they were going to go up through his urethra and place a radium implant in his bladder. At this point Randy said “no”. Most 19 year olds don't have to grapple with such decisions. Randy, however, determined to go home and die if this was God's will for his life. On the advice of a friend he began an unconventional treatment. He was on a strict diet, ate herbs, and drank two quarts of carrot juice every day. Miraculously, his health gradually improved. During his recovery he became the Youth Minister of our church and even lived with us for a while. By the grace of God he is still alive and serving the Lord. Naturally, he gives God the credit for his healing.

Another good friend Randy Cordell, was diagnosed with an aggressive and deadly cancer during Super Bowl Season. He died a few weeks later and explained to everyone that the Super Bowl was no longer a priority in his life. He told me of a man in his hospital ward who inherited \$25,000 during the last few days of his life. The fact that he died happy because of this money involves a disconnect with reality.

Granny and I certainly want you to enjoy your childhood. We get a great joy watching you mature. When you were babies merely sitting up or standing were special achievements. Later you could walk, run, and compete in athletic contests. Playing games can help you develop both mind and body. Games and fun, however, should never cause you to lose sight of the priority of a right relationship with God. I have heard that Neil Armstrong dreamed at the age of 5 to be the first man

to walk on the moon. This ambitious goal did not keep him from having fun, but it did provide a template to focus his mental and physical energies. For example, what he believed about walking on the moon, made him study harder, eat healthier, and exercise more than others who did not share his faith.

Many years ago I did a venture in faith on video with the late David Sanders. David determined at the age of 8 to be a missionary to Brazil. His formative years were also shaped by this worthy goal. He married a woman who shared his missionary dreams. They felt called by God to the city of Brasilia before it even came to be. Perhaps you remember that the leaders of Brazil made the bold determination to move their capital from the coast to the interior of their vast country. An appropriate area of barren land was selected, and plans were drawn up to make Brasilia a modern city of which every citizen could be proud. David, and his wife Ruth, moved to Brazil two years before Brasilia became a reality. They were first in line when properties were designated for church buildings. The number on the title deed to their church property was 001. While David has passed on after more than 50 years on the mission field, it was my privilege to spend some time with him while visiting Brazil many years ago. (FYI - a story about and answers to prayer are included in the book "Beyond the Veil").

But this is a letter to you! While I pray that God will protect you from harm and give you a long and fruitful life, the reality is that caskets come in all sizes for a reason. Childish people live in a world of make believe and depend on others to make important decisions for them. No one but you, however, can make the most important decision of all. Only you can decide to receive Jesus Christ into your heart and make Him the Lord of your life. It takes real maturity to make this decision. Some are mature enough to make this decision at the age of 5, some at age 50, and some not at all.

I am praying that in the midst of your formative years, you will find the time to put away childish things and be mature enough to prepare for eternity.

I love you,

Grandpa Boyce