

LETTERS FROM GRANDPA
#296

Dearest grandchild,

Today's letter will be about a high school boy who would not let the doctor amputate his leg. As we tell his story, see how long it takes you to identify who he is. He was born Oct. 14, 1890 in Dennison, Tx. He was the 3rd of 7 boys born in the family. In 1892 the family moved to Abilene, Kansas. It was a religious family with special times set aside to read the Bible. Parental discipline was rigorous and misbehavior was not tolerated.

In his freshman year at Abilene High School he suffered a severe injury to his knee. The injury became seriously infected. The angry infection went all the way up to his groin. The doctor determined that the infection was life threatening and recommended that to save his life the leg be amputated. This teen age boy faced a dilemma that required maturity beyond his years. Should he place his trust in medical science and lose his leg, or should he place his trust in God and risk losing his life? On that occasion he dared to put his faith in God rather than his doctor. The wound eventually healed, but it took so long that the boy had to repeat his freshman year in high school. This, however, was a water shed experience that forged within him a life long trust in God. As we will also see, that courageous decision was key to his future.

He finally graduated from High School in 1909 but the family was too poor to send him to college. Consequently, he and his brother made a pact that they would take turns going to college. While one brother went to college the other would work to pay the bills. While working at a creamery a friend suggested to this boy that he apply for entrance to the Naval Academy as no tuition was required. While he was one of the winners of the entrance exam competition he was too old to be admitted. He didn't give up his dream of going to college, however, and applied for admittance to West Point. He was accepted at West Point in 1911. His devout mother was deeply saddened that he entered the military. He graduated from West Point in 1915.

- He married in 1916 but lost his first son to scarlet fever in 1921. By now he had risen to the rank of major. His second son was born in 1922.
- In 1927 he began a two year tour at the War Department under Gen. John Pershing.
- In 1929 he became the chief military aide to Gen. Douglas MacArthur.
- In 1935 he became MacArthur's assistant military advisor in the Philippines.
- In 1942 he became a major general and two months later became commander in chief of our allied forces in W.W. II.
- He led "Operation Torch" (the invasion of N. Africa) and then went on to command the D Day invasion of Normandy on June 6, 1944.
- In 1948 he became the President of Columbia University but left that position in 1950 to become the Supreme Allied Commander of NATO.
- He retired from active duty in 1952 and on Nov. 4, 1952 was elected President of the United States. On Nov. 6, 1955 he was elected for his second term with one of the largest vote totals in history.
- During his two terms as president he established the U.S. Information Agency, the Interstate Highway System, the Civil Rights Commission, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration and welcomed Alaska and Hawaii into the union as states.

- As you have undoubtedly guessed, the boy who would not let them amputate his leg was none other than Dwight David Eisenhower. He passed away from a chronic heart problem Mar. 28, 1969.

President Eisenhower's remarkable career rests like an inverted pyramid on his admission to and graduation from West Point. Had he played it safe as a teenager and allowed the doctor to amputate his leg, he would not have been accepted at West Point and his amazing career would not have been possible.

In 1940 church membership was in the U.S. was only 49% but rose to 69% by 1960. President Eisenhower and Billy Graham played key roles in promoting religious faith in America. On Feb. 1, 1953, just ten days after his inauguration, Eisenhower was baptized. He is the only U.S. president to be baptized while in office. He began his inaugural address with a personal prayer that he had written. His cabinet meetings began with a time of silent prayer. He also initiated the National Prayer Breakfast. Billy Graham was welcomed into the White House as a spiritual advisor. During his presidency the words "under God" were added to the Pledge of Allegiance, and "In God We Trust" became our national motto and is now printed on our national currency. Eisenhower felt that religious faith was the single most important distinction between American freedom and Communist oppression. The tyrannical Soviet Bloc was atheistic but our Declaration of Independence states: *"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."*

On Feb. 7, 1954 Eisenhower gave a radio address emphasizing the role of religion in American history. He said: *"Out of faith in God, and through faith in themselves as His children, our forefathers designed and built the Republic . . . by the millions, we speak prayers, we sing hymns, and no matter what their words may be, their spirit is the same: In God is our Trust."*

Reflecting on Eisenhower's amazing life reminds us that decisions made in high school can shape our destiny. I pray for every one of you by name every day. Please seek the help of God in making your decisions! Decisions made today will shape your destiny tomorrow! **"Trust in the Lord will all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all you ways acknowledge him. And he will direct your paths" (Prov. 3:5,6).**

I love you,

Grandpa Boyce