

Granddaddy

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Many times when people write about their memories of someone it is after that person has passed away. While I am thankful for the opportunity to recall the past, I do hope to make many more memories with Granddaddy. H.E. Phillips has eleven grandchildren and, at this writing, ten great grandchildren. The grandchildren range in age from thirty-three to four years old and I am the second oldest grandchild.

I would have to say my most favorite times were when my sisters and I spent the weekend with Granddaddy and Grandmother. It was the same routine on those Saturday nights. Granddaddy always made the popcorn and we stood on chairs all around him anxiously waiting for the first kernels to pop. After our popcorn and coke it was time to get Granddaddy "fixed up" for church the next morning. With him stretched out in his recliner with his pajamas on, we would go to work. We soaked and massaged his feet, trimmed his fingernails, and combed his hair. Back and forth we would go to the medicine cabinet for lotions, powders, aftershave, and creams. It happened every time; Granddaddy would fall asleep and as is the case with most small children, we would sometimes get carried away. I will never forget the time he woke up and leaped from his chair, his face burning, only to realize my youngest sister had rubbed athlete's foot powder all over his face. Still, he continued to let us fix him up, although he did take away our electric razor privileges for awhile (but that was only after I had shaved off one sideburn and half of an eyebrow). He has had Vaseline in his hair and Mentholatum all over his feet. Never once through all the little accidents did he become angry with us, but he did fight falling asleep for fear of what would happen to him next.

I could hardly wait to be old enough to help with the paper, Searching the Scriptures. The first job was to take lunch and sometimes supper back to Granddaddy's office and run small errands around the house. Then when I was old enough to read, I could help count, stack or sort. The house was always busy with people and papers were everywhere, and sometimes as late as one or two o'clock in the morning the paper would be finished, bagged and ready to go to the post office. Patiently Granddaddy would answer all my questions on the way to the post office. Why did he write a paper? Why was his picture on the front? Where did he get the name, Searching the Scriptures? Wouldn't it be easier if he just bought a paper from the store?

Granddaddy's office was like a sacred place to us. We were never allowed to play in there. In fact, we didn't even go in there unless Granddaddy was in there. It was where you went for help in answering a Bible question or for encouragement when the boy you liked asked your sister out instead. It was also where you went when you were in trouble and often I sat there across the desk from Granddaddy while he talked to me about my behavior. It has always been very easy to talk to Granddaddy. In every discussion, whether it be right at the start or, perhaps, when your talk was finished, he always said, "I love you" and told us how much we meant to him.

Summer vacations usually found us heading to Kentucky to see our great-grandmother. On our drive up, Granddaddy would tell us stories about her and the good Christian influence she had been on his life. They would sit for hours on the porch swing. After dinner we would gather in the living room

where Granddaddy would talk of his childhood. On occasion, Grandma Phillips, as we called her, would slip in a story or two of some of granddaddy's mischievous times as a boy. Since her death, he has talked often from the pulpit about how much she encouraged him to be a gospel preacher.

I guess my biggest disappointment is that my husband and our children do not live as close to Granddaddy as I did growing up. We only get to be together about two or three times a year, so my children sit and listen to me tell stories of my times with Granddaddy.

As I prepared for this article, and my sisters and I talked about our different memories, one thing that kept coming up was that Granddaddy has always been the same. What I mean is that he was not a Sunday gospel preacher and then a different person at home during the week. Whatever the people from church saw and heard from Granddaddy was what we saw and heard during the week. As the years pass, I realize that the day will come when Granddaddy will die, but as long as I remember the lessons he has taught me and that I now teach to my children, he will really be with us for a long time. For all the kind words and fond remembrances, I know the greatest I can do is to live a faithful Christian life and to be the example for others that Granddaddy has been for me.

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