

“Values Almost Forgotten...”

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High School First Place



On December 7, of the year 1946, a jewel was born into a world much ‘different’ from the world we know today. Yes, the world lacked the technology and comforts many of us deem as common daily utensils, but that is not what I mean when I say ‘different’. I say ‘different’ in regards to the morals and values upheld by the family and the individual. That jewel was named Rachel Anderson. She grew up in a home of old fashioned values. She grew up to be a mother far into her golden years; when her grandchild, a two pound baby girl, came into the world and had

nowhere else to go. I was that two pound girl, and when I reached four pounds, I went home with my grandparents. Rachel Anderson (officially Rachel Tarkington since 1962), raised me on the values that she thrived on, and I grew to depend on them like any baby depends on its parent’s love. Through my Gram, my grandmother, I have learned three values that will forever be the backbone of my life: In this world, the order of importance will always be God, family, and self. Relationships have a right and a wrong; and kindness will always be required.

If you take a look around you today, more than likely most of the people you see, upon close interrogation, will reveal that they either don’t believe in God, could care less about their family, or that they think of themselves as the number one priority. I hate to admit that more than a few of my own friends fall into that category. Of course, that is their choice. Living in America, every individual is perfectly capable of making their own choices pertaining to their desires and priorities. However, whenever I am told, “Get your priorities straight...” the outline my Gram taught me: God, family, self, is the first thing that pops into my head. To some it may sound like I’m bordering the idiotic when I say that things become a whole lot clearer when using this format. But, I say it with the utmost truthfulness. You don’t have to be a saint to make the outline work. For heaven’s sake I don’t think I’d even come close to being perfect. Yet, when I break down my choices into that neat little priority line, my life becomes very appealing to me as an individual. My Gram taught me that whenever things seem like they’re crashing down, all you have to do is have a little faith, take to your knees, call in your family support, and examine yourself. You can laugh, but I’m not trying to make a joke. My Gram is quite accurate in most of her ideas. Her words are so well proven to me, that whenever I make a life changing decision, I still get that little outline in my head. If it doesn’t fit into my Christian morals, or if effects my family and me in a negative manner, I turn away from the situation and back track to safer ground; just like my Gram taught me.

As to the relationships between people of present day, there are so many alterations from the traditional take back in my Gram’s day, that it makes her head spin whenever she contemplates it. At

age sixteen, my Gram was happily married to an (and I am not joking when I say this) amazing good looking guy that was the champion track star of the school, and had a sweet and sensitive personality unheard of in present day. Now, I may not be able to fathom getting married at sixteen, but I greatly admire the fact that even being married at age sixteen, my Gram still completed high school. It wasn't until after she had graduated that my grandfather and she decided to begin their family. That scenario seems very far from all the talk flying around lately, of teen pregnancies and people living together before marriage. Once again, America is a free country where the individual can decide on what they want in their daily lives for themselves. It just saddens Gram and I to think that values have changed so drastically.

The most important thing, of the many things my Gram has imparted to me, remains to be elaborated on. It is one of the the many old fashioned values that get shoved to the side in present day turmoil. It is the one thing that is almost never considered in the heat of the daily schedule. It is simply put as, "Kindness." Many have often heard, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." In my life I have been laughed at just as much as I have been laughed with. I had a bully in middle school that sent me home with a new bruise every day. My Gram went through the same trials and she related to me how she dealt with each and every situation. She sat down beside me and told me, "Honey, I'll give some advice: words cut deep, but don't let them see your pain. Bruises heal, do don't let them see you wince. Keep your head high and never resort to their level...." Then she'd get a fierce and protective tone and say "....remember, just say the word and I'll go down to that school right now and...."

It is because I know what it felt like to be bullied that I am always ready to defend the underdog. Just like my Gram was ready to leap to my defense, so too will I do the same when I see an unjust situation. Sometimes, all a person ever really needs is a kind word. There is no need to make someone hurt. My Gram has proven to me very effectively that it is far easier to pull someone down than to build them up. In other words, being mean takes no effort at all; it is being kind that is a challenge. My Gram taught me to always go for the challenge.

In the end, the values that were upheld by most in my Gram's day get shoved to the back seat by most in present day. The contrast between the two times makes it seem like you are comparing two different dimensions. Who knows, it might just be that it is two different dimensions; two different dimensions with a very thin line between them...that got blurred by the passage of time. All I know is, courtesy of my jewel of a Gram, my head is staying firmly planted in that old fashioned dimension looked down on by so many. As long as I live, as long as I hear my Gram's gently nagging voice in my head, her words will be the backbone of my life, and the old fashioned values will never be considered worse than, "....almost forgotten".