

DEAR READER,

2-21-19

HEY! I HOPE EVERYTHING IS GOING WELL WITH YOU. I WAS TELLING YOU STORIES FROM MY CHILDHOOD. BUT AFTER I'VE TOLD YOU WHAT THERE IS TO TELL ON MY LIFE I'LL GET INTO OTHER MATTERS....

WHEN I WAS AROUND 7 OR 8 YEARS OLD, THIS SWEET LADY NAME HAZEL (MAY SHE REST IN PEACE) WOULD COME BY MY FAMILIES APARTMENT & GIVE MY BROTHERS, SISTER & I A BAG OF CANDY AND INVITE US TO CHURCH. I WENT. FROM THEN ON I CAN'T REMEMBER A WEEKEND SHE DIDN'T BRING ME A BAG OF CANDY (BUBBLE GUM, NOW PLACES, LOLLY POPS... GOOD STUFF! 😊) AND HER CHURCH BUS PICK ME UP SUNDAY MORNING. THAT'S WHEN I STARTED GOING TO CHURCH. BUT SOON AFTER I GOT INTO IT REAL DEEP, I STARTED GETTING GROUNDED FROM GOING. I EVENTUALLY FOUND MYSELF AT A PENTECOSTAL CHURCH. IT WAS LOVE! EVERYBODY ON THEIR FEET, CLAPPING AND DANCING. NOW... WHEN I SAY DANCING, I REALLY MEAN GETTING DOWN! I MEAN IT WAS LIKE THE HOLY GHOST CAME TO SOUL TRAIN. IF YOU DIDN'T BELIEVE IN SPIRIT POSSESSION WHEN YOU WALKED INTO THAT CHURCH, YOU DIED WHEN YOU WALKED OUT! AND I HAD FUN! I LOVED GOING TO THAT CHURCH SO MUCH I WENT SUNDAY MORNINGS AND EVENINGS, WEDNESDAY NIGHTS, SATURDAY NIGHT

PRAYER SERVICE AND WHEN I WAS OLD ENOUGH TO JOIN THE YOUTH GROUP, I DID AND FRIDAY EVENINGS WERE WITH THEM - MY OLDEST, YOUNGER BROTHER AND MY SISTER WENT TOO. BUT NOT TO ALL OF THEM LIKE I WAS. I STARTED HAVING FUN WITH MY LIFE. IT STARTED TO HAVE MEANING....

WHEN I WAS ABOVE 11 OR 12... MAYBE 10, MY MOM WOULD PUT ME ON PUNISHMENT THAT CONSISTED OF 1 CONSEQUENCE ONLY - NO RIDE TO CHURCH. I COULD GO OUTSIDE & PLAY WITH ANYONE I WANTED, WATCH T.V. ETC... BUT WHEN I'D ARGUE WITH MY SISTER OR BROTHER OR NOT WASH THE Dishes RIGHT OR CLEAN THE BATHROOM RIGHT - NO RIDE TO CHURCH. UNLESS, OF COURSE, I COULD FIND ONE FROM SOMEONE ELSE...

YOU SEE, IT WASN'T ABOUT PUNISHING ME, IT WAS ABOUT MY MOM NOT WANTING TO DRIVE ME TO CHURCH. SHE WENT TO WORK AND WHEN SHE CAME HOME IT WAS HER AND DANIELLE STEELE. OR DEAN MOON. THOSE ARE HER FAVORITE 2 AUTHORS.

I WOULD SAY IT WAS JUST THAT SHE WAS TIRED & WANTED TO REST. BUT AS YOU'LL READ, YOU'LL LEARN IT HAD TO DO WITH MORE OF ME AND WHO MY FATHER WAS.

I NEVER MET HIM. OR RATHER, MY MOTHER LEFT HIM BEFORE I WAS OLD ENOUGH

TO DEVELOPE ANY MEMORIES OF HER. SO WHEN SHE SAID THINGS TO ME LIKE, "YOU'R A PEECE OF SH-T, YOU KNOW THAT? SUSS LIKE YOUR FATHER." I DEVELOPED AN OPENSON OF HER THAT HE WAS A DAD GUY. BUT THAT'S ANOTHER STORY I'LL TELL YOU IN THE FUTURE.

AFTER I'D BEEN GROUNDED FROM CHURCH SO MANY TIMES I DRIFTED AWAY FROM SO. FROM THEN ON I TURNED TO FIGURING THINGS OUT ON MY OWN. WHICH DON'T TURN OUT SO WELL... OBVIOUSLY. BUT I HAD ONE HELL OF A RIDE.

I WAS A CHILD... THE THINGS THAT WOULD SHAPE ME INTO THE MAN I WOULD ONE DAY BECOME WERE THE THINGS, EVENTS, THAT TOOK PLACE IN MY LIFE IN THOSE YEARS. THERE IS "NO" GREATER ACCOMPLISHMENT FOR A PARENT THAN TO HAVE THEIR CHILD GROW INTO AN ADULT WITH A STRONG AND CORRECT MORAL COMPASS... FAITH DOES THAT. NO MATTER WHAT THE RELIGION IS, AS LONG AS IT TEACHES LOVE & PEACE & COMPASSION... WHY STOP THAT FROM SHAPING THE HEART & SOUL OF A CHILD? THERE IS NO GOOD REASON WHY. EVEN IF IT'S NOT RELIGION, BUT ANY PRACTICE THAT TEACHES A CHILD TO LOVE

OTHERS & TO BE KIND AND TO TREAT OTHERS
THE WAY THAT YOU WANT TO BE TREATED (THE
GOLDEN RULE!) AND TO BE RESPONSIBLE... IT'S
GOOD FOR THE CHILD.

THE MORE GOOD THAT IS IN A CHILD'S
LIFE, THE LESS TIME THE BAD WILL HAVE
TO WIGGLE IT'S WAY IN.

I AM NOT THE FUTURE, MY CHILD IS.
TEACHING OUR CHILDREN TO BE GOOD & TO DO
WHAT'S RIGHT IS LIFE'S GREATEST DUTY!

UNTILL NEXT TIME.

Yours Truly,
Doug