

REGRETS, ANYONE?

2016

I'm in my 'golden years', or so I read the other day as I was checking the meaning of the term. Apparently it's the time of life after sixty-five or at retirement. I turned seventy-one last December, so I definitely fit in the first category. My husband and I still own our company, but I don't invest as many hours into it as I used to, so that puts me in the semi-retirement bracket. I must say it's a great season in my life. I have more free time to do whatever suits my fancy! With this freedom, however, comes the aspiration to use it wisely and productively, not only for personal gains but for the benefits of others as well. I realize that with age I have to accept my limitations, but as the Word of God says, "We will still bear fruit in old age. We will stay fresh and green." (Psalms 92:14) So, I cling to that promise, and trust Him to lead me one step at a time in that direction.

Lately, however, I've been giving some thoughts about my life thus far, and I was asking myself if I had any regrets at all. The choices I made and the priorities I set forth, the words I said or shouldn't have said, the things I've done or shouldn't have done. I realize it's not a simple question and there's probably no simple answer either, but I think it's well worth investing some time on the subject.

The past is gone. I know. So, why go through all this introspection? Well, because I may learn a thing or two from it and, if need be, do differently or better when I still can. I thought of Granny, this little old lady with a southern flair, who at some point in her life may have asked herself the same question. And if she did, could she give me her two cents worth on the matter?

So, it's with this thought in mind that I headed out the door for my daily walk, and ended up at the assisted living facility where she resides. I made my way to the reception desk and asked for Granny.

"Which one?" a lady asked me with a smile. "Most of our elderly female patients here like to be called this way! Do you know her name?"

"Oh, I'm sorry... I don't."

"Well, she said, at this time of the day, you could start by looking in the dining area. If you can't find her there, you may look on the porch. Our patients usually like to gather there after lunch."

I thanked her and headed out in that direction. The room was nearly empty when I came in, and I spotted her right away. She was sitting in her motorized wheelchair at a table by a window overlooking the lake. She was looking out the window and holding a cup in her shaky hands when I made my way to her table. As she slowly put the cup back on its saucer, she noticed me and gave me an inquisitive look. I immediately greeted her with a smile.

"Hi Granny! I don't know if you recognize me, but the other day the Preacher, you and I met in the shuffleboard area where we had a real good conversation together. We even ended our visit with a little 'shindig'! Do you remember?"

"Oh! Are ye sure it was me, honey? 'Cause I cain't carry a tune in a bucket! But I cain tap my feet... Yes sirree!" she exclaimed, laughing. "Now, come closer, honey, so I cain grab a good look at ya," she added, straightening her glasses on her nose. "My eyes ain't as good as they used to, ye know."

I got closer, and with her eyes squinting and her mouth slightly ajar, she looked at me for a few seconds. I was hoping she would recognize me, but her face went blank.

"Well, I cain't remember that day...or ya, honey... But ye come and sit down! I ain't got no visitors in a coon's age, I reckon! But again, cain be 'cause I'm losin' my bearings and I cain't remember no more! Ye

know Al Zheimer? Well, he's been runnin' after my tail for a while now, and I'm afraid he's catchin' up with me! I'm tellin' ya, growin' old is not for wimps! But enough talkin' about me. How have ye been doin' yerself?"

"I'm doing very well, Granny. I can't complain... Even if I do, no one listens anyway!" I said smiling.

"Ain't that right, honey! And when ye're livin' in an old folks' home, I cain tell ya that *nobody* listen' no more 'cause we're all hard of hearin'!" she said laughing, and stumping her feet on the footrest of her wheelchair. I couldn't help but laugh too!

As we finally settled down, I asked, "Granny, you'll probably be taking a nap soon, but do you have time to visit a little longer?"

"Time? Ye're askin' if I got time? That's all I've got me, honey! That nap cain wait, I reckon. So, come on, I'll drive my 'Cadillac' on the porch, and ye cain take one of them rockin' chairs out back. There ain't nothin' like sittin' on a porch and talkin' with folks. Yes sirree! I still remember them Sundays after church when me, Maw and Paw used to sittin' on our porch. We were talkin' and singin' our hearts out...and our dawg Trigger was howlin' like there was no tomorrow! I'm tellin' ya, I was happier than a tornado in a trailer park!" she commented, laughing.

"These were good times, weren't they, Granny?"

"I reckon they were, honey... Ye know, I come and sit on that porch ever' day the good Lord brings. It reminds me of the good old days..."

"Listen Granny..., I came to see how you were doing, but I also had something else in mind... Can I ask you a personal question?"

"What kinda question, honey?" she asked with an inquisitive look.

"It's a question I've been asking myself lately... Looking at your life so far and what you know now, would you have changed anything? Do you have any regrets at all?"

"Well...I cain tell ya that much, honey, there ain't no point in beatin' a dead horse. Past is past..." she answered with a hint of sadness in her voice. "There ain't no goin' back ye know, and there ain't nothin' ye cain do about it..." she said as she slumped against the cushion of her chair.

Oh...I may have hit a sensitive nerve here! I thought, so I promptly asked if she would prefer not to talk about it.

She shrugged. "Nah... That's fine, honey... If ye're askin', I reckon it's important to ya... I always say that if everythang's comin' our way in life, must be 'cause we're in the wrong lane... I'll tell ya what, I musta been in that lane more often than not, 'cause I got myself in trouble plenty of times! I reckon t'was my fault or maybe not... I'm makin' no excuses, but ye never know for sure all the time... Excuses are like backsides, anyway. Everybody's got one and they all stink! But the good Lord sure taught me some good lessons... And I know t'was all done in love, and for my own good. I reckon He forgot about my past, and I'm fine with that... That's what the good Lord does to ya when ye're one of His! And that's why I take a likin' in tappin' my feet! Yes sirree!"

Not wanting to spoil her joyful moment, I hesitantly asked, "Granny, have you ever been married?"

She immediately stopped tapping her feet, took a breather for a few seconds, and then answered, "Nah! I was too pig headed for that! I'll tell you what, though. There was a couple of handsome boys I was

interested in, but I always backed off when it gotten too serious... Ye see, I was used to makin' my own decisions, and wantin' nobody puttin' their nose in my business, and decide what I ought to do or not. But it backfired on me... It got me all alone, I reckon...with no husband and no young'ns... But I'll tell ya what, I *love* them kids! That's my biggest regret, I reckon... I woulda like' watchin' my own little 'critters' runnin' around my house! But t'was my choice...and when I gotta realize that, t'was too late to start a family. So, I started carin' for other Maws' and Paws' young'ns at church and around my neighborhood. It turned out I was bein' a Granny for them too. Let me tell ya, honey, God cain turn our regrets into joys some way or another when ye trust Him with all yer heart... But what about ya, honey? I cain ask ya that same question. Any regrets on yer part?"

"Well... I was making an inventory of my life recently, and I can honestly say that I was a pretty good kid growing up, and even through adolescence and early adulthood. Then I got married, had kids and that changed a little..." I replied with a sad smile.

"While raising my family with the responsibilities and all, I must admit I lost my temper more often than I should have. I also realize that I probably missed many opportunities to say an 'I love you', a 'thank you' or a 'job well done' to my kids while they were growing up... I could have prayed more often with them, and tell them that God loves them very much, and that He always will, no matter what... That He'll always listen to their prayers and somehow answers them so they'll have hope while facing life's problems and its challenges. I could have encouraged them more to put Got first in their lives, and honor Him in everything they do. I could also have been bolder in voicing my opinion on important issues even if the other person disagrees with me... Wanting to avoid conflicts for fear of being rejected, hurting people's feelings or offending them should not have stopped me... However, I must say that my biggest regret is in the way I treated my husband before we got married..."

At these last words, I could tell I had her undivided attention just by the way she straightened herself up and leaned toward me. I'm sure she didn't want to miss a word of what I was about to say!

She finally asked in a high pitch voice: "What in the world did ye do to that poor man, honey?"

"Well...at the time, we both worked together for the same company and in the same office. We got to know each other pretty well and became good friends... Some mornings on his way to the office, he would pick me up with his car... We would chat about anything and everything the entire trip... I must say that we got along pretty well... But one day, a strange thing happened that totally changed our friendship..."

"He was waiting in his car one morning in front of my apartment building when he saw me coming out... He told me much later that as I was walking up to his car, he kind of heard an inner voice saying, "*She would make you a good wife!*" To say he was surprised is an understatement... So from that moment on, I felt his friendship had somewhat changed, and I was afraid to know why... But one day he finally confessed that he had fallen in love with me... Unfortunately, I didn't feel the same way about him... This turn of events really complicated things."

"Oh! I cain only imagine, honey..."

"Well, to make a long story short, he tried very hard to win me over, up to a point that I got really frustrated with him... I said words to him that I shouldn't have said, and I'm sure I hurt his feelings many times over... up until the day he finally decided to stop pursuing me... A good friend of mine told me that he was devastated... To say that I was feeling sorry for my behavior is an understatement. I was haunted by guilt and remorse when one day I finally turned to God, and asked Him to show me His will as far as this relationship was concerned... Well, strangely, a short time after this prayer I realized that I was slowly but surely falling in love with the man I had been pushing away for so long... I couldn't believe it! And what an amazing feeling that was! So, as you can imagine, I immediately told him about my change of

heart... Our relationship blossomed very quickly from thereon, and we got married about a year later. Isn't this something?"

"Ain't that a beautiful story? Yes sirree! God sure cain turn our world upside down, but it's always in a good way, ain't that right! Tell me... yer husband's still around, ain't he?"

"He sure is!"

"Then, tell him to get his butt over here next time ye come visit! I'd like to meet this husband of yers!" she exclaimed with her squeaky laugh.

"I will, Granny." I replied, laughing.

I knew it was now time for me to leave. I gave her a big hug and left her on the porch promising to come back soon.

On my way home, I was praising God for His amazing love, mercy and compassion. In sharing with Granny, I realized that my past doesn't have to dictate my future. I may have regrets, but I don't have to hang on to them. I am a firm believer that everything happens for a reason in life, and God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love Him. He's in the business of mending hearts, and if I put my total trust in Him, follow His guidance and let Him change me into the person He wants me to be, a bright tomorrow is ahead of me...on this side of heaven, and beyond.

<https://MyWalksWithGod.com>