



## The Story Of My Life

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You know how we lived among you. You remember how you set yourselves to copy us, and through us, Christ himself. You remember how, although accepting the message meant bitter persecution, yet you experienced the joy of the Holy Spirit. **You thus became examples to all who believe in Macedonia and Achaia.** You have become a sort of sounding-board from which the Word of the Lord has rung out, not only in Macedonia and Achaia but everywhere where the story of your faith in God has become known. We find we don't have to tell people about it. They tell us the story of our coming to you: how you turned from idols to serve the true living God, and how your whole lives now look forward to the coming of his Son from heaven—the Son Jesus, whom God raised from the dead, and who personally delivered us from the judgment which hung over our heads. (1Th 1:6-10 PHILLIPS)

I heard my mother tell the same story for the thousandth time and dismissed it as yet another retelling. Truth is, I've heard her tell many stories

many times. They are like old hat to me now, so much I can recite them.

For 17+ years I have edited her sermons for resale. You'd think hearing her speak would get old, especially since I know all the stories, but instead, it's become my most enjoyable part of the week. I have my own office. I am, for most points, my own boss. If I need to know something, I walk out and just talk to Mom.

We have lunch together twice a week. We don't talk about anything important, necessarily, but, looking back, it's the togetherness that matters. It's the fact I've spent so much time with her and Dad that I have all these memories, this comfortable "Thanksgiving" feeling that causes people to travel hundreds of miles, or perhaps only ten, to sit around a table each year.

I know her well now, and I imagine, she knows

## Raising Godly Children

BECKY COMBEE

There isn't a higher compliment than a child crediting his parents for their influence in his right decisions and successes. When faithful, godly parents raise their children in the church, training them in the ways of God, and the child matures to live for God, all is well. Yes, it is more than well. In the words of the Scripture, it is "exceeding abundantly above" all we could ask or think.<sup>1</sup>

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*(Continued from "The Story Of My Life)*

me. Our two days together matters to me significantly, and the stories – the stories. It didn't seem important to hear how some woman I've never met tolerated a situation and overcame it until it applied to me. I saw myself walking in her shoes in part, and I said, "I can do this. I can overcome." I would have never known that without hearing that story.

Or another tale she routinely tells that also, one day, there I was and realized, "Hey, that's me." Those people, who lived their lives as best God gave them to live it, will never know that some girl from Auburndale who writes books found inspiration from their walk with Christ. And I may not realize how the example I strive to set influences others who see me.

Join in imitating me, brothers and sisters, and pay careful attention to those who live according to the **example** you have in us. (Php 3:17 CSB)

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*(Continued from "Raising Godly Children")*

The command of God's Word to parents is to raise their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.<sup>2</sup> This means we will teach them God's Word and, while they are young, insist on godly behavior. It also means, we will be an example before them.

Years ago, I was praying with several ladies while their children were playing in the yard. I heard the front door open and then a small voice said, "Ah, they are still praying." They closed the door and went back outside. They recognized the sacredness of prayer, and obviously, that was not the first time they had seen Mom pray. What a great example these ladies were to their kids.

The Scripture says, "Train up a child in the way he should go."<sup>3</sup> When I asked the Lord what this meant, I had a series of thoughts that challenged my thinking. The first was, "I will do it for you." This reminds us that parents orchestrate the success of their infant child by doing everything for them. Secondly, "I will do it with you." We taught our

Someone, somewhere on this earth might change their behavior because of what I've overcome. That is a sobering thought that stands with me often and guides my reactions. After all, if I found comfort in an unknown woman's example, then it stands to reason others could find comfort in mine. Or worse, I could lead them astray. I don't want to be responsible for leading anyone away from the cross and the grace God has extended to all men.

This changes my behavior. Many times, I have an opinion. But what if my bad temper, my snappy response turns someone off to the gospel? Or what if, like those stories, a woman I've never met hears a story about me and says, "I can handle this. God and I, together, will overcome this situation in my life?" That fruit, years after it is sown, will abound to my account. (Php 4:17)

So, as I gather this holiday amongst the family that God has given me, I'll be grateful for many things, greatest of all for surviving this tough year, but also for other people's walk of faith whose stories, whose victories have changed mine.

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children to make their beds this way. For years, I made the bed. Then as they grew older, we worked together. I made half, and they made half. If we had a successful week, I always made the bed on Saturday. However, the day came when they made the bed themselves. That's our final step – "You can do it by yourself." I remember the first time we got to step three and a little head came around the corner to see if I was coming to help, but I was not.

We teach our children many things, but **the greatest training we can give them is personal Bible reading and prayer.** They should see us reading, and we should read with them. They should also see us praying, and we should have a time of prayer with them. The greatest moment of our lives will be when we pass their room and hear their voices calling out to God. There is no greater reward!

Children are our heritage, a blessing of the Lord, and it is our responsibility to give them the tools of success.<sup>4</sup> Success always begins and ends in God. Let's equip them to live for Him and enjoy His blessing.

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<sup>1</sup>Eph 3:20 <sup>2</sup>Eph 6:4 <sup>3</sup>Pr 22:6 <sup>4</sup>Ps 127:3