

FAMILY MEMORY MAKING BY BO PROSSER

*As often as you eat and drink this, celebrate your
memories of me! – 1 Corinthians 11: 25*

*I thank my God for every fond memory of you.
– Philippians 1: 3*

Family memories and traditions are some of our most treasured possessions. As you read this, recall some special moments you've shared with parents, family members and special friends. Recall sharing vacations, special meals or maybe just reading bedtime stories or prayers. Some memories are created with very little effort while others take lots of planning and attention to detail. Some memories you would just as soon forget. But all memories are valuable in helping us realize just how special our family times are.

Gail and I have been married almost 30 years, and we have been blessed with a lifetime of memories. Some of our friends through the years have not paid attention to the special times in their lives. They seem to just drift from moment to moment without any memory-making at all. How sad to go through our lives not paying attention to or celebrating together the special moments that make our lives so rich!

Take a minute to reflect...

What is your favorite childhood memory?

When Gail was a teenager, her family went to the beach each summer. Her parents owned their own business, so vacation was a very special occasion because it meant her parents left the family business for an entire week.

To this day, when Gail smells Krispy Kreme donuts, her soul is filled with wonderful memories of her family vacations. Several summers at the beach, her family stayed just down the road from a Krispy Kreme donut

shop and many mornings, her dad would go down early and buy donuts for his kids for breakfast. It was a wonderful and special treat – and a very special memory.

After Gail's dad died, this memory became even more special. Because Gail took the time to share this wonderful experience with me and our daughters now every time we see or smell donuts, we also think of Papa Gene.

What is a favorite holiday memory?

A few Christmases ago we were at my mother's house. All of us, Gail, our two daughters, and me had to share the same bedroom. The girls were sleeping on the floor. We had been asleep a couple of hours when the girls got cold on the floor and woke up. I was evidently SNORING loudly. The girls couldn't go back to sleep and finally said to Gail, "Do something to make him stop!!!" Then they all got tickled and woke me up.

They were cold on the floor so we told them to get up in the bed with us. We laughed and giggled and then we started singing Christmas carols. Soon, we moved on to singing Broadway show tunes! We sang and giggled our way into the dawn of Christmas morning. We have laughed every year since about this "new" tradition.

Taking time to build memories lets us grow closer even in the tense times. Too often we let the stresses divide us. The memories that we hold onto are usually because these memories make the tension positive and bearable. We have to be intentional and pay attention to the encounters we have with life moments to make memories.

For instance, that Christmas night at my mom's was a wonderful serendipity. I could have been angry that the girls woke me up. We could have fussed at them and told them to go to sleep. We could have let them get in the bed with us and then rolled over and gone back to sleep. But, paying attention to the moment, we were intentional about holding on to the meaning of it, and it will be a special moment for us for a lifetime.

Remember to remember

Here are some tips to help you pay attention to life moments and make memories:

- Everything that happens to you has the possibility of becoming a precious memory. Life comes at us in waves. We have the choice of whether we will react positively or negatively. Memories help us diffuse the stresses of life and laugh at ourselves.

- Pay attention. Watch what's happening and notice the serendipitous moments that occur as we go about daily life. Look for the humor, the fun and the bonding moments. Listen to yourself for the happy, sad, mad and scared moments that might turn into some wonderfully happy memories.

- Be intentional about remembering. In our home we make "Alphabet" memories. We remember special times with each letter of the alphabet, for example, What about our last vacation begins with an "A"? No ALARM clock; What about last Christmas begins with a "B"? BUYING a surprise for Mom. And we go through the alphabet for each event we want to remember. It's fun and keeps us remembering.

We also make Top 10 lists around memories. This is always good for a laugh or a tear. A couple of years ago our daughters gave us a Top 10 list of their favorite memories of all time! We laughed, we cried, and we hugged. It doesn't get a lot better than that.

- Keep your pictures or videos handy. When you gather, bring out a bunch of pictures or do a "home movie" night and remember these special times. Our daughters especially like those pictures of their preschool days – and it's guaranteed we will laugh and cry together.

- Thank God for the good times. Remember God's goodness and how God's presence has lifted you through the tense times. Enjoy your family; they will be elsewhere too soon. Hold fast to your mate, to your faith, to your love of each other and to God.

Perhaps the following questions will jump-start your brains and make some memory-making great times for you and your family.

Making Family Memories

Take time to share and discuss the following questions.

- 1) What is your favorite childhood memory?
- 2) What is your favorite memory when you were dating your spouse?
- 3) What is your favorite memory of the first five years of your marriage?
- 4) What is your favorite family holiday memory?
- 5) What is your favorite family memory?
- 6) Other than your wedding, what is your favorite spiritual or church memory as a couple?
- 7) What is your favorite honeymoon memory?
- 8) What is your favorite family vacation memory?
- 9) What food represents a special marriage/family memory?
- 10) What movie represents a special marriage/family memory?
- 11) What performer/concert/theatre event is a special marriage/family memory?
- 12) What family crisis sparked a special marriage/family memory?

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