

DEVOTION

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Never Eat Slimy Watermelon

read

Proverbs 7:1-3

“My son, keep my words and store up my commands within you. Keep my commands and you will live; guard my teachings as the apple of your eye. Bind them on your fingers; write them on the tablet of your heart.”

reflect

I was driving my daughter Novella to school the other morning, and she asked me if we were going north.

Truthfully, I had no idea what direction we were going, which is the case 98 percent of the time I’m driving, but I thought it was a curious question for a kindergartener, so I asked her, “How do you know what north is?”

“Never Eat Slimy Watermelon,” she replied.

Her teacher had taught her a mnemonic device to remember north, east, south and west.

We spent the rest of the ride coming up with other ways to remember those four letters. Our favorite was, “Nice Elephants Sip Water.”

I began thinking about other mnemonics I’ve learned over the years to remember things.

There’s Every Good Boy Does Fine (or Deserves Fudge) for the notes on a musical scale. ROY G. BIV for the colors of the rainbow—though Novella just seems to know that, as evidenced by the countless rainbow draw-

ings hanging up around our house.

I learned Please Excuse My Dear Aunt Sally in math class for the order of operations: parentheses, exponents, multiplication, division, addition, subtraction.

And then there is FUAMWISL.

Never heard of it?

It’s a mnemonic I created in high school to memorize a list of eight vocabulary words. The words have long since escaped my mind—though I suspect one might be “loquacious.” Useless as it is, FUAMWISL has been lodged in my brain for 25 years.

I’m sure 25 years from now, Novella will remember “Nice Elephants Sip Water” whenever she has to discern east from west.

What we learn when we are young, even though we might not fully understand it, has tremendous staying power.

I learned John 3:16 as a child: “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (KJV).

It took me years to understand those

words, and God’s great love for this world still astonishes me.

Probably the first verse I learned was Psalm 23:1: “The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want” (KJV). But it was just a story about sheep and a shepherd until I truly experienced God’s hand directing my life, protecting me and providing for me in times of need.

If you have children in your life, teach them early about the things of God. Read the Bible to them, pray with them and help them memorize some verses.

But beyond that, lead a Godly example in your actions and words. I have always liked the quote: “Preach the Gospel at all times. Use words if necessary.”

Kids always are watching and learning.

Psalm 119:11 says, “I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.”

Help children inscribe God’s Word on the tablet of their hearts. They might not fully understand at the time, but it will stick with them like ROY G. BIV.

react

- ▶ Is there something you learned as a child that always has stuck with you?
- ▶ What are some intentional ways you can help a child learn about God?

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