**THE WISDOM OF WINNIE THE POOH**

I’m sitting here today reflecting on the famous quote from Moses about when, and what, to teach our children. It’s found in Deuteronomy 6:4-9 and reads,

4 “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one! 5 You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. 6 “And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. 7 You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. 8 You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. 9 You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

Dad. Mom. Grandpa. Grandma. When, and what, are you teaching your little ones? We certainly need to be finding opportunity to daily insert a Biblical story into their young lives. In my childhood I cannot actually remember learning the books of the Bible, or learning to sing *Jesus Loves Me*, for it was embedded into my mind at such an early age. Likewise, I never remember getting to know Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, Jonah, Jesus, Peter, Paul and Mary. Those stories were learned before I ever could read my ABC’s or write my name. That’s as it should be. The Catholic Church used to say, “Give me a child to the age of six and they will be a Catholic for life.” There’s some logical truth to that. We must teach our children in their formative years.

With that said I would like to venture into something I recently did while visiting my grandkids. My five-year old grandson Walker loved me to read him books before going to bed. I cherished those moments with him. He would pick out a book (ok, usually 3 or 4 … or 5, taking advantage of Papa’s indulgence to procrastinate “lights out”), and we would read. Even after reading he would ask me for an “imagination story.” These were stories I told my sons when they were his age. Several nights I launched into my remembrance of Winnie the Pooh’s adventures in the Hundred Acre Wood with Piglet, Rabbit, Owl, Eeyore, Christopher Robin, and of course Tigger.

Ah, that lovable old bear Winnie the Pooh. I remember so many of those stories. I read A. A. Milne’s books to my kids as they were growing up. We often watched the PBS animated show *The Adventures of Winnie The Pooh*, right after *Mr. Roger’s Neighborhood*. When my daughter was a toddler we decorated her room with Beatrix Potter’s *Adventures of Peter Rabbit* and A. A. Milne’s *Winnie the Pooh*. We read her books of these wonderful adventures of a curious bunny and a funny bear. With so many books, television shows, and movies clamoring for our kids attention, most with no redeeming value, I want to encourage you to consider literature with godly values.

Pooh was known for his simple mind and simple sayings, often sitting with legs sprawled out while thumping his head with his paw and saying, “think, think, think.” But Mr. Milne, a British author who wrote the book in 1926, often made Pooh into a philosopher with his child-like sayings. Whether reading the series of books, or watching the animated cartoons, I learned some valuable Biblical principles worthy of passing on to our children (or grandchildren). Let me give you a few of my favorite Poohisms:

“If you live to be a hundred, I hope I live to be a hundred minus one day, so that I never have to live a day without you.”

“A day without a friend is like a pot without a single drop of honey left inside.”

“It is more fun to talk with someone who doesn’t use long, difficult words, but rather short, easy words like, ‘What about lunch?’” (I love that one, still use it – rl)

“Some people care too much. I think it’s called love.”

“I think we dream so we don’t have to be apart for so long. If we’re in each other’s dreams, we can be together all the time.”

“Any day spent with you is my favorite day. So today is my new favorite day.”

“Before beginning a Hunt, it is wise to ask someone what you are looking for before you begin looking for it.”

“I’m not lost for I know where I am. But however, where I am may be lost.”

“When you see someone putting on his Big Boots, you can be pretty sure that an Adventure is going to happen.”

“How lucky am I to have something that makes saying goodbye so hard.”

“Love is taking a few steps backward maybe even more to give way to the happiness of the person you love.”

“It isn’t much good having anything exciting, if you can’t share it with somebody.”

Bottom of Form

“If people are upset because you’ve forgotten something, console them by letting them know you didn’t forget—you just weren’t remembering.” (my personal favorite – rl)

“I’m never afraid with you.”

“I always get to where I’m going by walking away from where I have been.”

“Oh, bother.” (Pooh’s most famous saying, for, like me, he was often confused).

I’ll stop there. I just wanted to whet your appetite for some good, wholesome, ideas as to what to do with your kids. We have so many precious little ones here at Northwest. I love each and every one of them. I want you to know that I think of them often and pray for them always. Soon, way too soon, they will be grown and gone. So cherish your fleeting moments with them as you “*sit in your house, walk by the way, lie down, and rise up*.”

God bless you parents – and grandparents – who are now training up your child in the way he / she should go (Eph. 6:4). May the good Lord increase your tribe (literally).

I love you Claire, Walker, Corinne, Cora and Medeleine. – Papa