

Fresh Start

By Jerry Bader

Why Am I Here?

August 19, 2018

“Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding.” Proverbs 3:5

My wife and I make it a point to try to visit my 91-year-old mother every other weekend. Mom suffers from dementia and each visit tends to include the same set of questions, repeated anywhere from 10-12 times each:

1. Where am I?
2. Why am I here?
3. How long have I been here?
4. Where are your children?
5. How old am I?

She is usually incredulous when we answer the age question. And sometimes she wonders aloud why she is still alive. More than once I have answered that question by saying: “You’re still here because it is in God’s plan for you to be here.” She usually laughs at that response. She can’t imagine how she could possibly serve God anymore. Perhaps you cannot imagine how God might use you either.

She sits in her room in a nursing home all day long; leaving only to eat in the cafeteria. She remembers very little new information and seems to be forgetting more and more long-held memories every day. Walking is difficult for her and she is often sleeping when we arrive. Bringing eight children into this world – that was part of God’s plan. Miraculously surviving carbon monoxide poisoning as a child so she could grow up to have those children – that was part of God’s plan. Spending 59 years with Dad – that was part of God’s plan. But surely not now. What can she or any other resident of a nursing home in a condition like hers do to fulfill God’s plan? Plenty.

Mom still has her sense of humor. It’s obvious that the staff tease her about “how much she loves” getting her medication just to elicit a smart-aleck response. And Mom seldom disappoints. It’s impossible for us to know how much Mom blesses people with those quips, but God knows.

We visit Mom out of love, not duty. We are blessed to be able to share some of our time with her. And seeing how excited Mom is to see us truly blesses us indeed.

As I said, Mom retains very little new information these days. A couple of months ago I told her I was called to the ministry. Most times we visit, I ask her if she remembers anything new about me. Most times she remembers hearing about my calling. She couldn’t be more proud or excited about my calling. It is a gift from God each time she can answer that question and to see her excitement in answering it.

If you have someone in your life like Mom, how much do you bless them and are you blessed by visiting them? If you don’t have someone like Mom in your life, how can you bless someone else and be blessed yourself by volunteering to visit a nursing home? Perhaps you will consider asking God these questions today. Ask, listen and then say yes.

“The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’” Matthew 25:40