

“What God Expects”

Deuteronomy 4:9

James 1:19-20

Mark 7:21

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By Rebecca Enney

It is Saturday morning and Elizabeth is sitting at the breakfast table while her mother, Mrs. Mawakasunga, is cooking at the stove. It is nice to have things back to normal again. Her mom and dad are back home from Tanzania and Aunt Gertrude has gone back home. School started last week and, while summer had been great, it was sort of nice to have the regular routine again.

“What did you like most about Tanzania this time Mommy?” asked Elizabeth as she poured the milk on her cereal.



Mrs. Mawakasunga got a far away look in her eyes and she seemed to go someplace else in her imagination. “I think I loved seeing my family there, and eating the foods I grew up with and having a simpler life style.” Then Mrs. Mawakasunga opened her eyes and added “But I missed you Elizabeth! Tell me about your summer.”

“Oh yes!” said Elizabeth. “You know, Aunt Gertrude and I had a great time making the garden out back. Barabas helped us move the big rocks and one time he chased Aunt Gertrude to get that big spider off her shoulder, and we all laughed. And Aunt Gertrude told me about when you were little girls in Tanzania. And

she told me about sweetbreads and other stuff that you ate there. And we went to church every Sunday. And Aunt Gertrude read me a story every night. I tried to tell her that I can just read the book myself, but she wanted to read it to me. She is kind of strict, but I think I really like her.” And then Elizabeth looked at her mother and added “But I really missed you Mommy!” And they hugged.

Isn't that nice? It would be great if that was the morning went. But what if the morning went more like this: It is Saturday morning about noon and Elizabeth finally turned off the cartoons on the TV and got some cereal. Her mother was busy in the kitchen cooking all sorts of weird food from Tanzania and it didn't smell so good.



Elizabeth was kind of bummed out. School started and she and Running Chairs are not in the same room. And she actually has **HOMEWORK** to do over the Labor Day weekend. That stinks. And it is kind of hard to get used to mommy and daddy being here again.

“So how was your trip?” Elizabeth asked sarcastically, remembering how angry she was that she had to stay home with mean old Aunt Gertrude. Her mother got a far away look in her eyes and said “It brought back a lot of memories from my childhood. Elizabeth, could you please stop smacking your lips when you eat your

cereal! And when you are finished there, I need you to unload the dishwasher! Hurry now, you've wasted most of the morning in front of the TV."

"Right." said Elizabeth under her breath. "Welcome home." Isn't that an unhappy story? I really hope it did NOT go like that.

You know, so often it seems like the difference between a NICE story and an UNHAPPY story is about how we behave. In the first story, Elizabeth and her mother behaved with love towards each other. In the second story, they had rude behavior and showed no kindness. They did not particularly listen to each other.

"Be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger," it says in the Bible lessons for today. "Anger does not show God's love." "Teach the ways of the Lord to your children, and your children's children."

I think that God has placed within each of us the capacity to show love and kindness to our families and friends. He has filled our hearts with His Love. So why do we behave so poorly sometimes? I guess it might be because we let anger and rudeness push into our heart. Sometimes it seems that bad things don't only come from outside us, they actually come from inside us! We need to be strong in the face of anger and rude behavior, whether it comes from others or from ourselves. That is a hard job. But it is what God expects.

God expects us to show love, even when it is hard to do, because that is when it is needed the most. Even at home.