

## **October 2006—“Naw, I gotta help my Dad”**

Our morning prayer time at the CBM home office was about to begin. We use prayer cards with requests gleaned from prayer letters to pray for all of you missionaries on a rotating basis. The number of “pray-ers” varies, and on this particular day we had a full crowd around the table. The Genungs were visiting, and we always encourage our missionaries to join us. Joshua (11) and Josiah (9) took us up on our offer.

Just as we were getting started, Joshua rushed in, grabbed a prayer card and hurried—not necessarily gracefully—to find a place at the table. Since he was now the center of attention anyway, I nodded toward him and commented to the rest of the team, “I trust you’ve all met our new Vice President.” He looked contemplatively, evidently thinking I was serious, and deprecatingly concluded, “Naw, I gotta help my Dad.” The crew loved it . . . and so did I! Here I am offering the kid an exceptional opportunity for advancement (which is now off the table), and he shot me down, knowing his father has work for him.

Since my office faces the Service Center, I could study Joshua as he “helped his dad.” Throughout the day he made many trips back and forth: to the office, the shop downstairs, or their 5<sup>th</sup> wheel. Sometimes carrying a tool or a message, and occasionally stopping to play—as a kid should. Twice, he came to Linda’s desk for a piece of candy. Once, I tested him: with my arm on his shoulder I said, “Could you give me a hand for a few minutes?” Without awkwardness, he said, “Maybe, let me check with my dad first.” Wow, that’s precious, isn’t it!

And what a great lesson for us! We all have much to accomplish for the Savior: i.e. “working with my Dad.” In addition, we all have many requests and opportunities to do “other stuff.” I’m not talking about sin here folks! Rather, I’m referring to other commendable spiritual pursuits. With all of our diverse obligations, commitments, and opportunities, it can be hard to keep our focus. Let’s take the question of the disciples to heart in our day-by-day ministries: “*Then said they unto him, ‘What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?’*” (John 6.28)

I am confident, that just as clearly as an earthly father gives direction and priorities to his children, our Heavenly Father unmistakably desires to do the same with us. To those other projects, we sometimes need to decline and say, “Naw, I gotta help my Dad.” Yes, even to what may appear to be a great prospect!

A recent scenario once again caused me to re-evaluate and quietly appreciate God’s ongoing tutelage in my life; *as I was writing this*, I received a phone call from a dear friend inviting me on a ministry/fishing trip in the Rockies of the Montana/Canada border. We would go in with a new believer who is an executive with the W.L. Gore Corporation (yep, that’s the Gore-Tex people). He assured me of a fruitful discipleship opportunity. He sweetened the appeal by reminding me of all the free Gore-Tex he receives as a tester, as well as some that I’ve tested and added to my hunting/outdoor footlocker. So I carefully evaluated my schedule and priorities; humm—I have the open dates, the frequent flyer miles, and the desire (the Lord knows I have the desire)! The timing of the invitation (while writing *this* article) caused me to laugh out loud to myself and the Lord; and then turn it down.

I'm blessed and encouraged. You see, there is enough time to accomplish all we need to do for His Glory; time enough for family and work and play and ministry, and yes, even fishing and special ministries in the mountains, but not this time. An essential aspect of prioritizing our activities and passions is to know when to say, "Naw, I gotta help my Dad."

*Bill*