

Keepsakes

Parents, hang on to your children's keepsakes. I'm talking about those trinkets and treasures your children kept right on up to their senior year in high school. They'll remember those; and they will remember even more keenly the Bible verses you taught them.

After high school, most kids do one of three things: go on to college, join some branch of the armed services, or get a job. Their choice usually depends on focused interest, parental encouragement, or career orientation. But often, for the teen striking out and leaving home, the keepsakes of their youth are left behind, tucked away in a box, closet or dresser drawer.

When I was a boy, I had lots of keepsakes. There was my Boy Scout pocketknife, pieces of art or woodwork, my cap pistol, and baseball glove. Then there were two special keepsakes: my World War II Japanese flag and a baseball signed by my favorite big league team, the New York Yankees. What keepsakes or souvenirs do you remember? What keepsakes did your children leave at home when they embarked on adulthood?

There were several young men in our neighborhood who went off to fight the Axis powers in WW II. Down on Nevin Avenue, about a block from our house on 19th Street, a young man came home from service in the Pacific with the United States Navy. I don't remember his name, but I remember his kindness and the smile on his face when I questioned him about America's defeat of the Japanese Imperial Navy. My interest must have pleased him, for he gave me two treasures. One was a white navy cap, with the edges turned down on four sides; the other was a silk "Jap" flag depicting the rising sun. These were special keepsakes I said I would keep forever.

When I returned home after college, I looked for my keepsakes. I'm not sure what ever happened to my autographed hardball. One of my nephews probably found it and put it to good use. I still have the red silk "Rising Sun" flag. Missing one of its golden tassels, I still get a lump in my throat, when I see that imperial flag waving in some film on the History Channel, or when I hold it up. What a treasure of victory! I remember Pearl Harbor!

The Psalmist said, "As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourishes. For the wind passes over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more...We spend our years as a tale that is told" (Psalm 103:15, 90:9). Our lives fly by quickly; but I think it's good to cherish those tangible treasures that charmed our youth and bring back memories of family, baseball, and friends who lived down the street.

So parents, hold onto your children's trinkets and treasures. Some day they will come back looking for them, looking for the keepsakes of their youth. They will be grateful for your treasuring them the way they did. And their hearts will be warmed, remembering the love and happiness you gave them in their childhood. But most of all, they will remember your love and caring to teach them God's Word, which is of so much more value than the trinkets of youth.