

Daddy-daughter days

Sure, there were small disagreements. Sure, Mother Nature foiled our plan to bring home dinner, and we arrived back home with a coating of coastal grime that would take generous scrubbing to remove later that evening. But looking back, it's difficult to consider it anything other than what it surely was — a perfect day.

As we've all no doubt noticed by now, locales near Cottage Grove of-

fer a lifetime of adventures that can be accessed with a quick car ride, and the summer's bounty draws to a glorious peak this time of year. But with an unbelievably packed summer schedule thus far, it's been difficult for my family to set forth and enjoy it all. That is, until last week, when our new favorite traveling companion joined me for a world-class adventure by the ocean.

This summer marks four years since

my wife and I welcomed the newest, most dynamic and engaging member of our little family, and evidence of our life's many transformations since abounds.

Early on, two separate work schedules offered Heather and me ample time on our own with a very needy newborn; this period was quite difficult for my wife, and I recall the times she took a much-needed break while I counted the hours until she returned.

Soon, though, I realized that watching the clock was a poor substitute for true togetherness for Annabelle and myself, and so on the days we now enjoy together, I do my best to spring out of bed and propel us toward something amazing — whether it's a full day's journey, a special picnic or just an enlightening conversation.

And there's so much to talk about. On our way to the Coast last week, we talked about the Umpqua River and how the fish there would love a little more cool water. We talked about the special dinner we planned to make for Mommy. We talked of nothing much

and laughed endlessly at the sound of our own voices — perhaps the greatest gift a four-year old can give her father is the inclination, nay, the requirement to be completely goofy much of the time.

There is so much learning, so much science at the beach, and we wondered why we caught only large female Dungeness crabs but no males. We ate fish and chips at a floating restaurant and wondered what the ducks in the bay were saying to each other. We ran aimlessly but ferociously over the wet sand, me knowing that my days of easily winning footraces are undoubtedly numbered (she keeps reminding me as much.) Later, my plan to tire her out so I could fish a little came to fruition, though the fish themselves did not.

Somewhere along the line, we've watched as our lives and our priorities have changed. Days that once offered madcap excitement and impossible thrills now hold something so much nicer, so much sweeter in store. And I wouldn't have it any other way.



Great weather and great company make for an amazing day at the Oregon Coast, as the author learned again on a recent trip with his four-year old daughter.

JOYCE

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an outer life. Your inner life is your soul life, which includes your mind, will and emotions. Your outer life is your physical life. And while God cares about every detail of your life, He is more concerned with your inner life than your outer life.

I have found that it's possible to give your body rest but not your soul. For example, have you ever had trouble going to sleep because you were worrying about a problem and couldn't stop thinking about it? This kind of activity just wears us out inwardly. We can also wear our souls out with too many thoughts running on, too many decisions to make, too

much talking, and too much multitasking. Worry, fear, excessive concern about what other people think and insecurity are also common reasons people are worn-out and don't have any peace.

I remember when I used to be jealous of Dave and the peace he had. I was worn-out most of the time, worrying about problems, but he wasn't. Now, we had the same problems, but while they wore me out, Dave was still peaceful and happy because he would cast his cares on God. One of his favorite scriptures is 1 Peter 5:7, which says, "Cast all your anxiety on [God] because he cares for you" (NIV). And even now, anytime someone goes to Dave with a prob-

lem, he'll encourage them to "cast your care" and give them that scripture.

It used to make me so mad when he wouldn't get upset when I was upset, but eventually, I got to the place where I was desperate to have what he had. So I prayed and told God I would do whatever I had to do to be peaceful, and He taught me how to change my approach to life.

The revelation that changed my life

I came to realize that the world is not going to change, the devil is not going to change, and all of the people who bother me probably aren't going to change, so I

have to decide to change.

In John 14:27 (AMP), Jesus said, "Peace I leave with you; My [own] peace I now give...to you. ...Do not let your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid. [Stop allowing yourselves to be agitated and disturbed; and do not permit yourselves to be fearful and intimidated and cowardly and unsettled.]" So we can be peaceful and make the decision not to be troubled, afraid, agitated and disturbed, but it won't just happen automatically.

The truth is, we won't have peace if we don't pursue it on purpose, because there will always be opportunities to get upset or offended about something. For example, you lose

your car keys when you're running late, or you get caught in a traffic jam, or someone at work gets the promotion you wanted, or the electric bill is higher than you expected it to be...and on and on. There can be an endless cycle of stuff that happens that we can get upset about.

We also have to remember that we have an enemy who wants to keep us worn-out. The devil is a peace stealer and he works hard to set us up to get upset. But we can learn how to change our approach so we don't live upset all of the time. And Jesus gives us the best example to follow.

The key to living in peace

Jesus didn't conform to the

world—He walked in the Spirit. When He felt tired and pressured from the crowds who wanted Him to help them, He took time to walk away and get rest. He spent time in prayer, alone with the Father, because He knew He wouldn't be any good to anybody if He didn't get refreshed.

It's so easy to let other people's needs and emergencies control and manipulate us. And when we let others run our lives, we can get to the point that we're falling apart! It's not wrong to want to help or please people, but we need to take care of ourselves, calm down and stop getting upset about things that usually don't really matter anyway.

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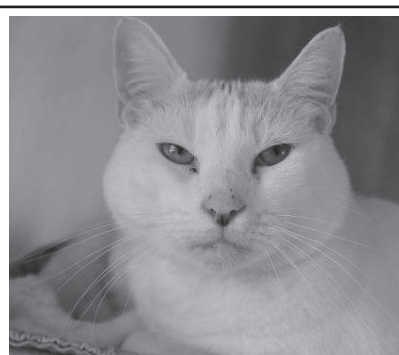
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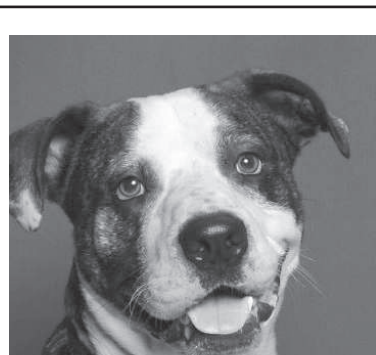
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