

AN OLD LESSON FOR A NEW YEAR

Using the lens of today (as supplied in a letter from my son) to sift through the fragments of a bygone era in our lives, I offer a simple observation for the New Year now upon us.

New Year's Day (from my journal 15 years ago). It's hard to believe another year has gone! But it has. In looking back, it seems to have been the hardest year we have ever had. Difficulties abounded: a move to another church, unstable job situation, decision about whether to change jobs or accept a lower position, the house on the market for six months without selling.

But there were blessings, too. We started a special family activity every night where we all go to see Jenny at the Conway Human Development Center, and Mary reads as I exercise Jenny. We have been reading books by George MacDonald, and I look forward to that time. Since we are all together, it has not been a burden, but a pleasure. Jenny enjoys it, too, and has really responded well.

Barrett is doing well in school and can read almost anything he desires. He never watches television, but prefers to build with blocks, read or pursue some other creative endeavor. Last year he began both soccer and baseball and went swimming almost every day during the season.

We had a special Christmas. One evening the Chathams and Bakers came over, and we had Jenny here. There was violin playing, singing and Barrett's performance. Jenny loved it all, and it was a time of real remembrance.

We only took brief excursions for vacations this year: Silver Dollar City (it rained), the zoo, MacArthur Park and Mid-America Museum. It's hard for us to leave Jenny alone now. She has doubled her weight (now at 60 pounds) since last year and really needs to be taken out of her wheelchair to cool off.

Next year holds much promise.

Christmas Day (from a letter written by Barrett to us this year). I was going through the bookstore not too long ago and saw something that brought back a lot of memories. I was suddenly transported back almost 20 years, and Mom is reading to me in the red rocker. Then I am in bed, with Dad reading to me out of the Picture Bible and Biblical Archaeological Review.

After Dad and I read, we race to see who can flip off the light switch at the head of the bed. I use my feet, and Dad almost always lets me win.

I remember all of those wonderful times that we spent together reading, and I want you to know that I treasure those memories. They make me much of who I am today.

"Thus one by one the moments make the shape and course young lives will take--in our few days with our children." To spend our moments wisely is the best investment we can make.