



# Grandparents Day & Wal-Mart

Steve and I recently attended our granddaughter’s Grandparents Day program at Pillow Academy. She had asked us several times if we were coming. We assured her we would both be there – little does she know, but nothing could keep us away. The auditorium was full of smiling, proud, and happy grandparents. All of us were waiting for the moment our little ones would be on stage to perform their songs. After the program, we all headed to their classrooms to see where they work and study,

as well as some of their papers and artwork on display. Leila Rose had made us bookmarks, magnets, and written us a letter about how much we mean to her. Steve had to get back to school, but Leila and I had a couple of hours before I took her to her Mom’s work. When asked what she wanted to do, her reply was “Shop”! A girl after my own heart. We went several places and our last stop was Wal-Mart. I was amused at all the grandparents who had also been suckered in to going



## Read Your Life Backward

*God is working in you to help you want to do and be able to do what pleases him.*  
Philippians 2:13 NCV  
*What God said about Jeremiah, he said about you: ‘Before I made you in your mother’s womb, I chose you. Before you were born, I set you apart for a special work’ (Jer. 1:5 NCV).*  
Set apart for a special work.

God shaped you according to yours. How else can you explain yourself? Your ability to diagnose an engine problem by the noise it makes, to bake a cake without a recipe. You knew the Civil War better than your American history teacher. You know the name of every child in the orphanage. How do you explain such quirks of skill?

God. He knew young Israel would need a code, so he gave Moses a love for the law. He knew the doctrine of grace would need a fiery advocate, so he set Paul ablaze. And in your case, he knew what your generation would need and gave it. He designed you. And his design defines your destiny. Remember Peter’s admonition? “If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies” (1 Pet. 4:11).

I encountered walking proof of this truth on a trip to Central America. Dave, a fellow American, was celebrating his sixty-first birthday with friends at the language school where my daughter was studying Spanish. My question—“What brings you here?”—opened a biographical floodgate. Drugs,

sex, divorce, jail—Dave’s first four decades read like a gangster’s diary. But then God called him. Just as God called Moses, Paul, and millions, God called Dave. His explanation went something like this. “I’ve always been able to fix things. All my life when stuff broke, people called me. A friend told me about poor children in Central America, so I came up with an idea. I find homes with no fathers and no plumbing. I install sinks and toilets and love kids. That’s what I do. That’s what I was made to do.”

Sounds like Dave has found the cure for the com-

mon life. He’s living in his sweet spot. What about you? What have you always done well? And what have you always loved to do?

That last question trips up a lot of well-meaning folks. God wouldn’t let me do what I like to do—would he? According to Paul, he would. “God is working in you to help you want to do and be able to do what pleases him” (Phil. 2:13 NCV). Your Designer couples the “want to” with the “be able to.” Desire shares the driver’s seat with ability. “Delight yourself in the LORD and he will give you the desires of your heart” (Ps. 37:4 NIV). Your Father is too gracious to assign you to a life of misery. As Thomas Aquinas wrote, “Human life would seem to consist in that in which each man most delights, that for which he especially strives,

perfect gift for the upcoming holidays. I want to share some of my favorites.

\*If you ever get caught sleeping at work, just slowly raise your head and say, “In Jesus’s name I pray.”

\*God gave us mouths that close and ears that don’t... that should tell us something.

\*My ability to remember song lyrics from the 80’s far exceeds my ability to remember why I walked into the kitchen.

\*Before you speak, let your words pass through three gates: At your first gate, ask yourself, “Is it true?” At the second gate, ask “Is it necessary?” At the third gate ask “Is it kind?”

\*There are two kinds of people in the world: givers and takers. The takers may eat better, but the givers sleep better.

\*I don’t mind getting wrinkles if they are from laughing and sunshine.

\*After all the eating I’ve done during the winter, I am happy to report that my flip-

and that which he particularly wishes to share with his friends.”

So go ahead; reflect on your life. What have you always done well and loved to do?

Some find such a question too simple. Don’t we need to measure something? Aptitude or temperament? We consult teachers and tea leaves, read manuals and horoscopes. We inventory spiritual gifts and ancestors. While some of these strategies might aid us, a simpler answer lies before us. Or, better stated, lies within us.

The oak indwells the acorn. Read your life backward and check your supplies. Rerelish your moments of success and satisfaction. For in the merger of the two, you find your uniqueness.

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flops fit just fine.

\*When you look at a field of dandelions, you can either see 100 weeds or 100 wishes.

\*On particularly rough days when I’m sure I can’t possibly endure, I like to remind myself that my track record for getting through the bad days so far is 100%. And that’s pretty good.

\*Sometimes I impress myself with the smart stuff I say and do. Then, there are times when I try to get out of the car with my seatbelt on.

Today I have some side dishes. I hope you will give today’s recipes a try. Thanks for reading.

### GARLIC PARMESAN ROASTED POTATOES

- 14 small red potatoes
- 2 Tbsp. olive oil
- 1 tsp. garlic powder
- ½ tsp. onion powder
- ½ tsp. paprika
- ½ tsp. salt
- ½ tsp. pepper
- 1 tsp. Italian seasoning
- ¼ cup grated Parmesan cheese

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. In a large bowl, toss potatoes with olive oil, seasonings, and cheese. Toss until evenly coated. Spread potatoes in a single layer on a foil lined rimmed cookie sheet. Bake, uncovered, for 45 -50 minutes.

### SPINACH & ARTICHOKE RICE CASSEROLE

- 4 cups cooked rice
- 1 (10 oz.) pkg. frozen copped spinach, thawed and squeezed dry
- 1 (14 oz.) can artichoke hearts, drained and finely chopped
- 1 ½ cups shredded Parmesan cheese
- 1 (8 oz.) cream cheese, softened
- 1 (15 oz.) container ricotta cheese
- 3 cups shredded Mozzarella cheese
- ¾ cup milk
- ½ tsp. garlic powder
- ¼ tsp. onion powder

Preheat oven to 325 degrees and lightly spray a 9 x 13 inch baking dish with nonstick spray. In a large bowl, beat together cream cheese, ricotta, milk, garlic powder and onion powder.

Add cooked rice, spinach, artichoke hearts, ½ cups Mozzarella cheese, and 1 cup shredded Parmesan cheese. Spoon mixture into prepared dish and top with remaining cheese. Bake, uncovered, for 40-45 minutes.

### ROTEL CHEESE GRITS

- 4 cups chicken broth
- ¼ tsp. salt
- 1 cup quick cooking grits, not instant
- 1 cup shredded sharp cheddar cheese
- 4 oz. Velveeta, cut into cubes
- 2 Tbsp. butter
- ½ tsp. garlic powder
- 1 (10 oz.) can Rotel tomatoes, diced
- 2 eggs

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Bring chicken broth and salt to a boil in a medium saucepan. Add grits; stirring constantly until blended and cook on Low for 5 minutes. Remove from heat and stir in ½ cup cheese, Velveeta, butter, garlic powder, and tomatoes. Stir until cheese are melted; set aside. Beat eggs in a small bowl and add a small amount of the grits to the mixture; mix well. Gradually add the egg mixture back into the grits; mix well. Pour into a greased square baking dish; bake for 30 minutes and sprinkle with remaining cheddar cheese. Bake an additional 10 minutes and let stand for 10 minutes before serving.

*\*Lee Ann Fleming is a Holmes County native, food columnist and has garnered fame for her recipes featured in the film, **The Help**. Fleming can be reached at [lafkitchen@hughes.net](mailto:lafkitchen@hughes.net).*

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