



There is no doubt the freedoms I enjoyed as a child are no longer around. If a parent let their child do today what I could do back then, he or she would be brought before Social Services. It was not just my parents, but every parent in my neighborhood was the same way.

For instance, I can remember getting to ride my bike to school every day when I got into the sixth grade. That's unheard of today. The trip was approximately a three-mile ride that led beside the foundry, by the old ice plant, and across the railroad tracks at the train station.

I can still remember how cool the early morning air felt on my skin, on that first day. I think that was the only day in my life I actually looked forward to going to school. In those days no

one thought about someone kidnapping a child. Nobody I knew even locked the door to their home! But that bicycle was my transportation to the world. I rode it to school, baseball practice, the swimming pool, the roller rink, the movies, friend's houses, and to the best fishing holes all over my little city. I've carried bats and gloves, fishing poles, and even stringers of carp while maneuvering my way in and out of every shortcut.

In my day it was banana seats, sissy bars, and one gear. And the handlebars were so long and tall, a friend could always come along. Sometimes that bike took me to places I had never been, but it always brought me back home.

Every kid in that day was an expert bicycle mechanic and custom rod builder. We

had to be if we were going to be able to travel. And boy did we travel. Today is so different. Better in many aspects and worse in some.

Today, we have better education, better technology, and more skills. And these are why I will never long for the "good ole days." What is worse is mankind. Not individually, but collectively. The sheer number of people added to our propensity to sin, equals more sin in the world and thus a more sinful world.

For follower of Jesus, we can either bemoan the new sinful days and complain about this new Godless world, or we can realize the opportunities to share the good news of the gospel has never been better.

Don't think a more sinful world hurts your purpose. It actually makes it easier to find those who need a message of God's grace.

Are you obsessed over something? Has something gained your attention in such a way that you have made some drastic changes in order to accommodate that matter? Deer hunters do this all the time. I was just reliving the past season with a friend. He was telling me about a place where he hunted that was

for bow hunters only. One evening, just before dark, he saw what he called the buck of a lifetime, and it was only 60 yards from his stand. And even though he could not get a shot at it, it caused him to almost ignore all the other bucks that came his way; and there were plenty.

By the time his few days of hunting were over, he had passed up some really big bucks because none of them were the one he had seen just a few days earlier. In the end, the cost was coming home empty-handed, all because he had become obsessed with one prize so valuable that every other prize paled in comparison. He is not alone in this obsession.

I know of other hunters who have marked one particular buck as their goal and have waited for two or three years in order to get it. And I know of some who waited just as long only to find out their prize was now their neighbor's trophy. Some may not understand this obsession. Some do. Everyone ought to.

In recalling these stories, I am reminded of the Biblical story of the man who found a valuable pearl. The author says when he discovered it, he sold everything he owned

and bought it. No diversification. No hedging his investment. No waiting until more favorable times. But selling it all – pushing it all in for this one pearl of great price. What was the Lord comparing this most valuable pearl to? The kingdom of heaven. What is the kingdom of heaven? Let's just say it is the totality of God in our lives now and the greatness of heaven in the future. What the Lord desires is this; that there would come a time in our lives when we finally understand the most valuable thing in our life is simply him. And in fully understanding this, we would willingly, gladly, and excitingly be willing to give it all up in order to experience, without distraction, the worth and surpassing greatness of that relationship.

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July 16 - Terry and Renee Wynne
July 18 - Justin and Sasha Harrell, Joe and Lucy Burrell
July 19 - Dr. and Mrs. Eddie J. Carthan, Jeffie and Beth Alford, Michael and Merideth Fancher, Arthur and Sue Ables
July 20 - Marvin and Diane O'Reilly, Donald and Judy Broyles
July 21 - Larry and Pat Bonds, Robert and Kasey Hutton
July 22 - Paul and Betsy Padgett, Bill and Beverly Putnam

No Tight Places, Please

I have already said in this column that I am very claustrophobic. When I have to ride an elevator, I cringe as the door closes and the box starts to rise, believing that it just might not open again.

I remember once my husband and I were in Jackson at my doctor's office on the twelfth floor and a few minutes before we



Peggy's Take

were finished with my examination, the lights flickered, and it went completely dark in the room. The hospital had a backup generator to provide power to the lights and to the elevators. They told us we could wait a few minutes until the generators kicked in or we could walk down the twelve flights of stairs. Well, the lights were off, and the generator was the only source of power. What if it started halfway down and the power went off again? Then we would be stuck until the power was back on or I had climbed out the top hole in the little box. I decided that we would walk down the stairs in spite of my husband's unhappiness and irritation.

I tell you all of this to tell you that perhaps my phobia might have gotten better. We are having an outside elevator installed in Gulfport on our beach house that is fourteen feet, twenty-three steps, off the ground. After climbing those stairs, especially in 100* weather, something had to be done. My husband asked me if I thought I would be able to get into the pulley contraption without freaking out and after climbing those

stairs several times, carrying groceries, suitcases, and our dog, I immediately decided YES!

Of course, to make this all feasible, the box of the elevator is not solidly enclosed but has slats every six inches, and it is only about four feet high, and IT HAS NO TOP! I am not fastened up inside a box so I believe I can manage this. If not, don't you think I could jump out as it will only go to fourteen feet?

This is the season for my favorite vegetable/fruit – fresh vine ripened tomatoes. This is one of my favorites to make this time of year.

TOMATO PIE
4 fresh tomatoes peeled and sliced,
½ cup of fresh basil, chopped
½ cup chopped green onion
1 cup of grated mozzarella cheese
1 cup grated cheddar cheese
1 cup of mayo,
one nine-inch prebaked deep-dish pie shell
salt and pepper to taste
Preheat oven to 350*.

Place the tomatoes in a colander and sprinkle with salt and let drain for about 10 minutes. Layer the tomato slices, basil and onion in an unbaked pie shell. Season with salt and pepper. Combine grated cheeses and mayonnaise together and spread over the top of tomatoes and bake for 30-40 minutes.

* Peggy Sims is a life-long resident of Attala County and columnist.

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