

Holding It All Together

by Amy McCollom



An Old Relic

I went to a doctor appointment recently, and the nurse taking my vitals was amazed at something. She grasped my arm to get a pulse, and said, "Wow! I haven't seen one of those in years! It's amazing that you still have one of those! My grandpa used to have one of those that had one of those things on the side that he had to turn every night before bed. I remember as a kid watching him do that and thought it was so magical, all those gears inside."

I told her I have worn a watch since I was 12 years old, and this one was solar-powered and didn't need winding, which amazed her even more. As much as it amazed this young lady to see me wearing a watch, I remember a time when most people wore watches. A nice, dependable timepiece was as essential as today's cellular phone. Time was important because it was not always yours to do with what you wanted.

There was a time for this and a time for that, and you had to know the difference. There was work time and play time, lunch time and dinner time, and time to be in bed. Even the television stations followed a time system and went off the air

at a scheduled time when it was time to be asleep. Time schedules, I believe, helped keep the world in order, and running as it should. Even the Bible says, "where there is no plan, the people perish." Schedules are a good thing. As much as I like my free time, if all time was free time, nothing would get done and calamity would ensue.

Time, schedules, order, the ticking of the clock keep things running the way they should. Knowing the time is always a good thing. I, for one, am terrible at sensing time passing. That is why I need to see a clock to remind me of how much time has passed. I also get distracted easily by shiny things (there is probably a raccoon in my family tree), and I have been known to meander through a craft store for over 2 hours while thinking it was 20 minutes. So there's that. I would be lost without a watch. Watches don't lie, unless you are in the Bermuda Triangle. But we won't go there, ever.

So look around you. If you see a person with something strapped to their wrist, chances are it's a Fit Bit or Health Tracker or some kind of Phone/Watch/TV/Entertainment device. It will probably have a black face to save battery power. It will require

a push of a button to operate. And it won't tick.

As progressive and modern as things become, there is still that quiet comfort I have in knowing that all I have to do is look down at my wrist and instantly see the time. No buttons to push, no wi-fi needed, no menu to flip through. Instantly I'm grounded and that feeling will never go out of style. Whether I'm the relic or my watch, doesn't matter. Relics are worth holding onto because they have value. If only people would look away from their phones long enough to realize this.

As I look around my house, I see other old relics that would probably surprise a younger person today. My iron skillet is still in use, mountain dulcimers hanging on the wall, the front of a desk drawer from a once prominent hotel in Urbana now repurposed as a shelf on the wall. My bookcases are full of books, some classics but some new, a library that tells of all our interests from puppies to politics, cats to christianity. I still own a magazine rack and get periodicals, and sometimes make a purchase NOT online. I have boxes of real photographs, not just digital blurs on a device or a cloud. Pictures I can pick up and pass to my husband, sort and pile, and put back in their box after I have had a good laugh and a good look at them.

I have a real tea kettle and I make my own tea latte every morning. I have been to a Starbucks once in my life and was shell-shocked by the prices so much I will probably never go back. I can make my own Starbucks drinks at home. Besides,

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Hook, Line and Sinker

With Tony Hooker

Alpha Male

The alpha male is the boss. He eats first, has his pick of mates, and leads the pack during hunts and when dealing with threats to survival. When challenged for top position by a young pretender, the alpha male either will concede immediately or fight to retain his position, depending on his age and health.—Animals.mom.com

We're talking about wolves, right? Or are we?

On Memorial Day, Mrs. HLS and I were invited to the oldest male offspring's abode for a cookout. For the very first time, I wasn't the lord of the grill as the boy assumed control of the coals. He did a great job. The ribs and corn on the cob were cooked to perfection. Everything was as it should be. The conversation was lively, the laughs were genuine, and that's when it hit me. My spot at the head of the cooking fires, earned through decades of Kingsford, propane tanks and, lately, wood pellets, was no longer 100% mine. The crown prince had carved out a section of the

kingdom for himself, and I wasn't too sure how to respond. On the one hand, I have to admit that it was pretty great watching someone else fritter about, constantly checking and re-checking the coals, meat temps and such, for a change. He did things his own way, and it took all my self-restraint not to offer him pointers that are based on my decades of experience, and that I was sure he was just dying to hear. (queue derisive laughter from Mrs. HLS!) On the other hand, if I'm no longer needed to be the grill master, what good am I? The Mrs. Has always been the bond that holds the family together. She's like Gorilla Glue on steroids when it comes to that, while I'm more like the paste we used to eat in kindergarten, the kind that barely kept the construction paper turkey together long enough to give to our mom at Thanksgiving. The youngest has already taken over my "drive mom when the weather's bad" duty, so for a minute there I felt like all of the things that make me use-

ful around the house had been taken over by my younger, smarter, much better-looking offspring. And then I remembered my superpowers. I am still the undefeated world champion at bug/spider/wasp squishing, and as far as I can tell, no one from the royal family is trying to usurp that crown. I can still load a dishwasher to its limits, and yes, I can fit in "one more glass or plate," always. I am not too sure that the offspring were even aware of the fact that we had a dishwasher back in the day, given the way they so studiously avoided opening it.

So, I guess I'll get used to the idea of not being the host site and alpha male for all family gatherings, moving forward. The truth is that both of my sons far surpassed my culinary skills a long time ago, and I'm ok with that, I guess. Now, about that dishwasher. Did you know that I have the perfect system for loading? It's a skill that's taken me decades to perfect, and I'm just DYING to tell you ALL about it.

Pastor Stahl's Weekly Message of Faith

Hello, Everyone!

We are finally in the month of June, when the days get really long and the nights are very short. We continue to ask a Blessing on our farmers and the fields that they have planted. May their harvest this Fall be abundant!

We can pray in our churches for a harvest of souls for the Kingdom of God. We pray that the Holy Spirit will add daily to the number of people meeting Jesus and having their hearts warmed by the Holy Spirit.

A minister was giving a tour of his new church to a

visitor. He was showing off, very proud of the expensive and brand new pews, the expensive and brand new stained glass windows, the expensive pulpit and altar, and outside, a big shiny Cross on the steeple. The minister asked his visitor, "What do you think of all our new and expensive things? The visitor replied, "Wow, you got gipped. Time was, they gave a cross for free, to hang you on." The minister had his priorities out of whack. We should always look to the Cross, not as a shiny new ornament, but the place on where the King of Kings and Lord of Lords Gave Himself up for us. We should always cling to the Old Rugged Cross; we should always remember to Whom we belong.

This past Sunday we celebrated Pentecost, the Birthday of the Church with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the Upper Room. This occurred 50 days after Jesus' Resurrection. Jews from all over the world were gathered in Jerusalem for the harvest celebration of Pentecost, when they would bring a bundle of grain and offer it

in the Temple as an offering to the Lord. God Chose this Day to Pour out His Holy Spirit on the band of believers gathered together. The Spirit would give them Power from God to go out and preach the Gospel. On this day, each person heard the Gospel declared in their own language. Peter spoke in his own language, probably Aramaic, but each person gathered for Peter's sermon heard his words in their own language. The reason was that each person could take the Gospel message back to their own towns and share it in their native language. It was the Tower of Babel in reverse. Luke writes in Acts that over 3,000 people gave their hearts to Jesus after Peter's sermon. (Acts 2:41)

God Can Speak to us today in His Power and Glory; we can hear the Gospel of Jesus as it warms our heart, and we can experience the Peace that passes all understanding.

Stand back and behold the Salvation of the Lord!

Thanks Be to God!
Blessings to all of you!

Pastor Jeff Stahl
Countryside and Ogden United Methodist Churches

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With Jim Balmer

Mark 6:53-56

New International Version
53 When they had crossed over, they landed at Genesaret and anchored there. 54 As soon as they got out of the boat, people recognized Jesus. 55 They ran throughout that whole region and carried the

sick on mats to wherever they heard he was. 56 And wherever he went—into villages, towns or countryside—they placed the sick in the market-places. They begged him to let them touch even the edge of his cloak, and all who touched it were healed.

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