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MAMA DIES

By Irvin L. Rozier

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Mama Dies

This is story #33 out of 50 from my book, "My Walk With the Lord". This story is dedicated in memory of my mother, Mary Ruth Winn Rozier, October 22, 1929 thru January 7, 2001.

Proverbs 33:31 "Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates."

Mama was tired, her body was frail, and her spirit was broken. She had fought a good fight, but the battle scars were too many. She was 71 years old and weighed 71 pounds. As I briefly touch on some of the events in her life, you will understand her desires to go home to rest.

Mama and her twin sister were born October 22, 1929. Her parents, Archie and Ruth Gill Winn, named them Mary and Mildred. Aunt Mildred was tall and thin, and Mama was shorter and had more meat on her bones. They grew up in South Georgia with six other siblings. Uncle Jasper was killed in World War II so I never knew him. Her two other brothers and three other sisters were all kind and humble people. One thing about Mama's family was the love they had one for the other. Materially they were not rich, but the good Lord had richly blessed them in the things that money can't buy. As I write this, I can remember growing up as a child and later during my adulthood of being around all those aunts, uncles, cousins and of course grandpa and granny. Mama passed on this value of family to me and my four sisters.

Grandpa Winn died on November 17, 1963 just a few days before President Kennedy was killed. Granny died May 20, 1986. One by one their children followed them in death. As I write this today, May 25, 2003, only Mama's twin, Aunt Mildred, and her baby sister, Aunt Ida Mae Walker, are still living.

Mama and Daddy married young. Daddy had served in the Pacific in the later part of World War II and as most young men of those days was happy to get back home and marry his sweetheart. My oldest sister was born in 1948, followed by next sister in 1949, then me in 1952, my next sister in 1953, and then my baby sister in 1956. I believe they wanted a brother for me, but it didn't happen. I wouldn't take

MAMA DIES

all the money in the world for my sisters! They are all smart, wonderful mothers, super good cooks, and very compassionate and loving. Their names (in order are): Shirley, Evelyn, Linda and Joanne. I always remember Daddy saying, "God has surely given me beautiful girls!"

Mama and Daddy struggled financially at first. The small 2 bedroom frame home couldn't hold all of us. This house didn't have an indoor bathroom (we had a chamber pot and an outhouse). I remember Mama heating water on the stove so us children could bathe in a number two washtub (a galvanized tub about three feet diameter). Daddy sold furniture and picked up odd jobs to make ends meet. Then one day something wonderful happened to him. He was born again!

Once a man becomes a new creature in Jesus Christ, he begins to pray for his family. A few years after his salvation, the Lord called Daddy to preach and he was ordained as a minister.

Daddy's prayers for a better paying job were answered and we moved from Patterson to Blackshear. I was seven years old when we moved to a rented house with an indoor bathroom. The girls and Mama were happy!

Well, Daddy continued to pray. He wanted us to have our own place. God answered this prayer and in 1962 we moved to a 15 acre pecan orchard. We had a house, barn, chickens, hogs, cows, ducks and a good garden spot.

Daddy was pleased. He was a pastor of a neighborhood church and continued to sell and deliver furniture.

Mama was 37 when the Lord called Daddy home. There were four of us left at home. For the next ten years, Mama was a single parent. She made many personal sacrifices for us. She also trusted God and He helped her to raise us.

In 1976, she remarried a good man, Euell Deal. He only lived about two and one half years after she remarried. At 49 years of age, Mama had lost two husbands yet by God's grace and comfort, she continued on.

In 1980, she remarried. This time, the man was not so good. At first he was; he went to church, took Mama places, and was pretty good to her. Mama was reasonably happy and content with her life.

Then the false Christian reared his ugly head. First, he started with mental abuse, then physical, and sexual abuse. Over the years, this stress took a toll on Mama. She wouldn't talk much about it, she would say, "You just don't know." You see, she was unequally yoked. Here she was a lamb, and she was plowing with a jackass.

Her health began to deteriorate. One thing right after another. She fell and broke her pelvis in four places. She experienced anxiety attacks. Her nerves were all to pieces.

MAMA DIES

Finally, in 1998, she went to live at Baptist Village, a retirement home in Waycross. Several years earlier, Mama had worked there, and she liked the place. She refused to be divorced from this "man" so she was still married. This move got her away from him. She was improving but other problems popped up and she gradually went down hill.

On January 5, 2001, I received a telephone call from Baptist Village. Mama took a turn for the worse. I went over there and just sat. It was just the two of us. I sure did hate to see her suffer so. Her breathing was labored and as I looked at her, I thought soon her labors will be over.

Around 12:30 PM, the next day, our family began to gather in her room. We would talk to her and smooth her fevered face with a cool rag. One of the staff stated, "She probably won't last two hours." Little did they know about the inner strength my Mama possessed. As her children, grandchildren, sisters, other relatives, and friends would come and have short visits, I knew Mama recognized the voices of the ones she loved. Later that Saturday night, around 11:30 PM, I bent over and whispered in Mama's ear, "Mama, it's all right to go ahead and rest. We will be fine. Tell Daddy I said hello when you get home."

Mama hung on until her granddaughter, Erin, arrived after midnight. Her breathing became more and more labored and her fever rose. About 1:25 AM, I felt the presence of the Holy Ghost as the words of a song came to my mind. The words were: "It hurt us so to see Mama go, to be gone forever more. But before she closed her eyes in death, I heard a knocking on the door. A band of angels just walked in to take her home to glory."

I felt a slight breeze and at 1:32 AM, January 7, 2001, Mama was carried by the angels to her new home. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?

Sunday morning, I went to preach at the nursing home, and that evening we gathered at the funeral home to make arrangements. Several years earlier, Mama had wanted me to go there with her and look at coffins and make some preliminary funeral arrangements. She liked Mitchell Bowen who was part owner of the funeral home. She thought Mitchell would do (later, Mitchell ran for and won the county commissioner race. When he asked me to vote for him, I said, "Mitchell, you got my vote. Mama thought highly of you and that's good enough for me."). Well, I didn't know that the funeral home had changed ownership. Blake Smith had bought it and Mama's was to be his first funeral. Blake is a young man who is ideally suited for this profession. His genuine concern, professionalism, and support are rare in this day and age.

At the funeral wake, over 700 people came by to pay their last respects to my Mama. She had touched many lives with her quiet, humble, gentle ways. She was now reaping what she had sowed over the years.

The chapel was overflowing at Mama's funeral service. The flowers were so bountiful and so beautiful. Mama did love flowers. I had the special honor of speaking a few words during the funeral service. I quoted this scripture: Matthew 25, verses 34–36: "Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye

MAMA DIES

took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me." This scripture described Mama to a tee.

The Lord anointed the two preachers, he anointed the singing, and sent us comfort for our loss. It was a sweet service for a sweet Mama. Thank you Lord that you care for your "Little children".

Mama still lives in our hearts and memories. Most importantly, things were okay between her and her Lord. I'll see her again one day, never to be separated again.

Luke 2.19: "But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart."

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FOOTNOTE; In late November, 2003, I was interviewed by our local paper, THE BLACKSHEAR TIMES, about the publication of my book. Before we started, the reporter, Jason Deal, said, "I want to show you something". He handed me a graduation card my Mama had sent him about ten years earlier. It was Mama's handwriting that said congratulations upon your accomplishment. This had a double meaning to me...showed one of the people my Mama touched and it was like her saying to me, "Congrats on writing and publishing your book."

author, preacher, retired US Army

Leave Mama*s Junk Alone

By Barbara Morris R.Ph.

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by: **Barbara Morris R.Ph.**

A young friend (about age 30) and I (age 75) were talking about all the *junk* we collect over time. The conversation turned to how much *junk* her mother had, and I said I understood because by the time you reach my age, even if you are not a chronic pack rat, *junk* accumulates. My lame excuse for saving things is that I work full time and deciding what to get rid of is not a priority. Another justification is that I grew up during the Great Depression, always wanting *things* of my own — and now I've got them. Get rid of them? You're kidding!

The conversation with my young friend shifted to her brother still living at home. He needed more space in the garage for his car, and Mama*s *junk* was taking up more space than he deemed necessary, so he threw some of it out when Mama was not at home. *She'll never miss it,* he rationalized.

It appears that more than a few adult children feel the same way. On several occasions my Boomer-age daughter, who doesn*t live with or near me, and should not be bothered by my junk, has suggested, *Why don*t you get rid of all this stuff.*

MAMA DIES

What should it matter to adult children, living in their own home with junk of their own, how much stuff you collect? After you are gone, they can back up a garbage truck to the garage, and get rid of it. On the other hand, if they are smart, they will hold on to the treasures, or have a garage sale. Some of the stuff my generation has been saving from *day one* now has antique status and may have value, perhaps not to unappreciative children, but to savvy collectors.

Let me explain something to adult children about old people, i.e., their parents: If retired, there probably are no more long or even short term goals, no more exciting dreams or aspirations -- nothing to strive for. Life is lived as a pastime -- golf, gardening, travel, shopping. *Remember when* is an integral part of a typical retiree*s conversation. And that*s okay.

Those scraps of material Mama has been saving that you think she doesn*t need and won*t miss are tangible evidence of a happy time that can be revisited by touching or seeing those pieces of cloth. It gives her a warm and fuzzy feeling when emotional warmth may be in short supply.

Until there is a good reason to do otherwise, leave Mama alone with all her junk. It*s not yours to dispose of until she dies or asks you to get rid of it. You would not be happy if she came into your home while you were away and threw out what she considered *junk." After all, you are at an age when you*ve already collected a few useless trinkets that have great meaning to you but would be rated *junk* by others.

What goes around comes around. Respect rights of others, especially your parents. Your young children will learn from your good example and if you are lucky, they will not throw out your precious *junk* behind your back when you are old.

Barbara Morris, R.Ph. is a practicing pharmacist and expert on anti-aging strategies. She is the author of Put Old on Hold. Visit her website

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