

## RULES TO LIVE BY

Growing up I had no rules other than those in school. At home bedlam ruled. I skipped school for the first time in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. I felt it was too cold to go out for recess and so myself and a friend left at recess. We went to my home expecting to find our mothers since they were always together. They weren't there so we continued to her home which was about a mile further and across John R. They were not there either, but it was warm, and we had paper dolls, so we stayed there. Our parents found us about 6PM, we had left school about 10 A.M. Our parents had ended up calling the teacher when we hadn't come home to my house. We weren't in any trouble, but my mother did say she wished I would not cross John R without someone older. I could see the wisdom in this, so I agreed. If my children had done this, I would have been extremely upset. Nothing was said to us at school, nor was it ever mentioned again at home. When I smoked my first cigarette at 9 years of age, my mother found out and only said she thought I should wait until I was older. I said okay and did not tell her that I hated the taste and had no plans to try that again.

Wolves had more rules than I did. I made my own rules and used them to make myself safe. One of the rules I had was that I could not date until I was 15. When I was 12 or 13 a young boy asked me to go to the movies with him. I told him about this rule. My Mother and his mother had set this up. When my mother heard that I could not date until I was 15, she was furious and was waiting at the corner when I came home from school. She stood there screaming at me that I was a liar, that there was no such rule. Now I had invoked this rule because I really did not want to go to the movies with Johnny. Why I came up with 15 I don't know but I probably read it in a book. When my mother finished her screaming, I very calmly said, "I think it's a good rule and I'm going to keep it." She turned around and walked home. I had found my power.

When I went into Nurses Training there were rules that were plentiful. We had to be in our rooms studying from 7 to 9 PM during the week. Weekends we could sign out and go home (and only home) or we could have one 12:30 and one 2 a.m. For someone who had had no rules this was hard for me to adjust to but I knew rules like not going out alone but in pairs or more, being in by 9 PM unless we were signed out were designed to keep us safe I just wasn't used to people telling me what I could and could not do. But I adjusted and always felt safe.

God gave us rules to live by called the 10 Commandments. These are big rules meant to help us live together. In Deuteronomy 5 they are listed by Moses. 1. You shall have no other Gods before me. 2. You shall not make idols. 3. You shall not take the Lord's name in vain, 4. Remember the Sabbath and keep it holy. 5. Honor your Father and Mother. 6. Do not murder. 7. Do not commit adultery. 8. Do not steal 9. Do not lie 10. Do not covet your neighbors' possessions.

Lord, we thank you for this day. Be with us in all we do and may we remember your rules for our lives. Be with our Staff and Leaders, bless their mission and their work. Be with Pastor Don, bless his ministry and be with him and his family. Be with our church may we remember that it is your church, and we are your workers. Be with our Country may we find peace and love for each other in our hearts as your children. May we remember not just who we are but whose we are. In Jesus name we pray. Amen

Grace Epperson

