

"Just Like Grandma Used to Say"

A Modern Day Parable inspired by Matthew 18:15-20



Esther is an experienced mother having raised 8 boys. She learned how to parent from her own mother, Julia, who raised 7 sons and 2 daughters. Julia always had a way of keeping things peaceful, even in such a busy household. She had many great sayings and "tricks of the trade" if you will. Esther's boys quickly learned that a trip to Grandma Julia's house always came with life lessons and pineapple upside down cake. Both were quite a treat. Her life lessons were always disguised as funny family stories full of adventure.

Julia lived a rich life of 85 years, not by society's standards, but by her standards of family love. She passed away peacefully, surrounded by her big, beautiful, loving family. Now Esther is the Grandma serving up sweets and stories to her grands. Her home is usually filled to the brim on weekends and holidays. This Labor Day is quite different due to the pandemic. Only the locals gathered at Esther's since travel is still restricted. Her youngest boy, Bobby, lives just down the road, and his family including five boys stays close by. They check on Esther, do her shopping and errands, and tend to her yard.

Just after lunch, Esther was in the kitchen humming her favorite hymn and putting the finishing touches on her famous coconut creme pie when the back screen door flew open and a wailing, red-headed, 5-year-old boy burst into the room. "Nana!" he cried. "My brothers are being mean to me again. They won't let me play. They say I'm too little. But, I'm not! I'm big enough." Tears and dirt streamed down his freckled face. He ran to her, threw his arms around her legs, and smudged his grit and sadness into her faded pink apron.

Esther smiled and patted his sweaty head. "My poor baby. It's tough being the youngest, isn't it?" She gave Nate a tight squeeze, then instructed him to take a seat at the kitchen table. "I know what you need," she said. "A big piece of Nana's pie!" That did the trick! Nate wiped his face, washed his hands, and happily took a seat. Her coconut creme pie was his all-time favorite! Nana served up a piece of pie piled high with cream that was bigger than the boy. As she handed him a fork, she asked, "Did I ever tell you the story of your daddy and the football follies?"

Nate could only shake his head "No" because his mouth was already full of pie! "Well, let me tell you," Nana continued. "Your daddy had it hard like you. It's not easy being the youngest of 8 brothers. Every Sunday after dinner, the boys would all go out back to play touch football while I cleaned the kitchen and got dessert ready. You know," she paused the story, "coconut creme pie is your daddy's favorite, too... just like you!"

"Anyway," Nana resumed the story. "Your daddy's oldest brother, Uncle Silas, never wanted Bobby on his team because he was so much smaller than the rest of them. Your daddy would come running through that same door just like you did, crying, saying Silas was being mean." One day Grandma Julia was here when that very thing happened. She said to your daddy, 'If your brother is mean to you, go and have a talk with him. Go when it is just you and him alone, and tell Silas how it makes you feel when he doesn't include you on his team. If he listens to you, you have won over your brother. If he doesn't listen, take one or two other brothers along with you. They can be witnesses to the facts you present to Silas. If he refuses to listen to them, then you come tell your Mama.'"

"Now, I'm saying this to you, my little nugget." said Esther. "And remember to pray before you talk to your brother. If the two of you can agree, then the Lord will take care of the rest. When two or more of your brothers gather together in His name, the Lord will be with you. Can you feel it? Seems almost like Grandma Julia is here in our midst, too!"