A Tribute to Helen Davidson

May 1, 2013

Helen Davidson was a wife, mother to four children, grandmother to dozens, including the author of this tribute, sister to several, and an honored friend to all. She passed away in February 2003 at the age of 85 and left behind a saddened set of family and friends who were all blessed to have known her and carry memories of her 10 years later.

Grandma lived a very hard working life with the challenges of running a farm in the rural Midwest into her 70’s. She did this without all the amenities that most people today would consider an entitlement in our current culture – running water, indoor plumbing, etc. A typical day in her life was typical of any person on a farm, rising early to feed numerous animals, tend an expansive garden, collect water for the day, other household chores that involved lots of stooping over, picking things up, heaving things long distances, cooking for family, canning vegetables, etc. (and this is several decades after raising four kids). As a respite, she enjoyed her weekly outing to church for a social that usually involved coffee and homemade baked pies!

Yet the prevailing thought that I have, and that most people have when they think of her, is her irrepressible cheerfulness and joy. My grandmother was an extrovert. She enjoyed visiting with people, chatting, baking and cooking for others, and just trying to make her circle of influence better. I’m quite sure she didn’t think in those terms, but she lived it!
The last several years of her life she did enjoy a season living “in town” in an apartment after her husband and my grandfather passed away. I think this season only intensified her social calendar. As a boy, I had the chance to visit with her frequently, oftentimes weekly. By the time she moved to town, I was a young adult, and I lived about three hours away. I wanted to be a good grandson, reverent to his beloved grandmother. So I called her frequently to say hi and to check in. After I got married, I wanted to visit her for a day with my wife. I called her a few days in advance to let her know we would be coming to visit. When I told her I was hoping to visit, there was a silence on the phone, and then my grandmother told me she had her weekly church group coming up and she had pies to bake and some other chores to do. My nearly 80 year old beloved grandmother was too busy to see me! I said, “Ok, Grandma, good for you! Have fun!”

And that’s what she did…

By the time she was in her 80’s a life of hard physical labor was taking its toll on her body. My grandmother chose to ignore certain circumstances and challenges and to live a cheerful life. She was a great example to me and I am quite sure to all the people that had a chance to know her. We love the memories and good example you gave us and we will always love you!