

Wayne's World

I've Been Thinking About "Control" Galatians 5:22,23 the Spirit produces ... self-control

Surely the one thing we treasure about the Harvest Thanksgiving that was celebrated in October is the fact that it is for many families a time when we gather together for "the meal" and get caught up on what is going on in one another's life without relying on social media to do this for us.

Our family fit into the Thanksgiving celebration as described above as we, too, gathered together for "the meal" and the getting caught up with one another – person to person! One part of the family came from the Niagara region, and the other part of the family came from out of province, namely British Columbia, with a near three-year-old Molly as part of the B.C. contingent. As one would well expect, that because of the distance, the B.C. family stayed for a week before returning.

Well, once the Thanksgiving festivities were over and our B.C. family settled in with Grandpa and Grandma, this is when I got to thinking about "control". Grandma mentioned that in our house (somewhat smaller than the B.C. abode), we do not run, and with that pronouncement, I heard a snicker come from our son. With that, my mind shifted to the fact that we were dealing with a three-year-old here, which led me to think of the word "control" (or lack thereof)!

It is amazing how a three-year-old can change the interior landscape of a bungalow. Anything that was considered absolutely untouchable or out of bounds (can a three-year-old grasp that concept?) was either confined to the one room with the door shut or elevated to a higher shelf to visibly indicate its sacredness. While Molly did indeed do some running, swinging using the window pane and couch to anchor (Grandma did not like this one), stomping, jumping and somersaulting, all in all (except for finding some knick knacks – and still looking for others – with new resting places) things worked out fairly well. Glad to report that the big things like keys, cell phones, wallets, glasses, etc., did not go missing, except when they were misplaced by the adults. The large basket containing a variety of teddy bears and Disney characters all in a very definite order were victims of a Molly investigation and were resettled in the basket upside down in a general hodge podge; it was Grandpa who definitely did not like this one! Grandpa forgot to place the basket in a sacred zone and missed fifteen minutes of a football game getting his friends back in order.

Perhaps now you realize why I was thinking about "control", how control can be lost and how we seek to regain it.

We all deal with control issues. Some are beyond us: friends move, our bodies age, the weather (how many churches have prayed that it not rain for the picnic?), our favourite team goes down to defeat, a fender bender. Others are within our reach: what we choose to eat and how much exercise we get, how we spend our leisure time, who we spend time with – the list goes on.

In the month of November, we remember how some nations have attempted to control other nations and the price that so many of our veterans paid so that we can live in a country "glorious and free".

The writer to the church in Galatia tells them and us that one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is the gift of self-control whether externally; we are, or are not, in control. Self-control is not only a gift, but the Spirit is continually activating that control within us. Not us! But the Spirit! Deep within us.

Hymn writer James K. Manley penned these words – "Spirit, Spirit of gentleness, blow through the wilderness calling and free" – the freedom of self-control.

