

Three Wise Words From A Prophetic Granny That Saved My Life

Some say you can smell the spirit of death. I wasn't born again when my great-grandmother was on her death bed—discerning of spirits wasn't in operation—but I somehow still knew it was the last time I would see her.

And she had something important she wanted to tell me.

I want to share those same words with you; words with eternal implications. But I first want you to understand the spirit from which they came.

My great-grandmother was born in the 1800s and lived to be nearly 100 years old. During her lifetime seven states joined the Union. She lived through the women's suffrage and several world-shaking wars. She also lived through the Azusa Street Revival, witnessed the rise of a young Billy Graham and witnessed the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr.

Mama Norris, as she was affectionately known by hundreds, was also a pillar of the church. She helped plant a handful of churches in the small Florida town she called home. (I still have her Bible in my room and relish to read all of the Scriptures that she underlined; Scriptures that touched her heart.)

I said all that to say this: As she lay at the edge of glory, Mama Norris had wisdom equal to and even beyond her 96 years. She had heaven's wisdom in her heart and she wanted to share it with me. Did she know it was a prophetic admonition that would save my life? I am not sure. But I am sure that the Lord put it on her heart to share three simple, yet profound words with me before she came face-to-face with the King.

It was 20 years ago that I stood over her hospital bed knowing she was about to leave this earth. She opened her eyes and saw me standing there. She couldn't speak above a faint whisper, so she motioned for me to come nearer. When I did, she said three words to me that seemed almost like an inconsequential warning at the time. It would take a decade before I started to understand what she really meant, and 20 years altogether before the ultimate revelation graced me.

Here's what she said: "Never hate anyone."

I didn't hate anyone at the time. I couldn't even imagine hating anyone. Not really. Not until my husband abandoned me with a 2-year-old child, exiting the country with piles of my hard-earned money and leaving behind monumental tax issues and credit card bills, along with a wrecked home and a child who screamed every night for a year hoping her missing father might return. He never did. And I hated him. Actually, I hated him with a passion. And I shook my fist at God.

Then I heard those three words Mama told me resonating in my heart: "Never hate anyone."

Those words saved my eternal life. At the time, I came to truly understand that hating and forgiveness cannot flow out of the same heart. And if I didn't forgive my husband God couldn't forgive me. But it wasn't until recently that I got an even greater revelation of Mama's three last words to me.

I was reading 1 John—a book I have read over and over and over again—and I suddenly received a much deeper understanding of the importance of Mama's words in the light of Scripture:

"He who says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness until now. He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him. But he who hates his brother is in darkness and walks in darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes" (1 John 2:9-11).

Mama knew that hate is the ultimate stumbling block. Hate blinds us. Hate was blinding me.

“We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love his brother abides in death. Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him” (1 John 3:14-15).

Hate not only blinds us, hate is a sign of murder in our heart—and a sure sign that eternal life is not dwelling in our spirits. In other words, hatred for mankind cannot live in a heart that belongs to Jesus Christ. Hate had bound me.

“If someone says, ‘I love God,’ and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother also” (1 John 4:20-21).

We are commanded to love. Hatred is a violation of the one new commandment Jesus gave us. If the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost—if it really is—we will draw from His unconditional love to love the unlovely even in the face of their hateful betrayals, vile persecutions and other revolting acts toward us. Hate was killing me.

Love. It’s the bottom line of Christianity. And that was Mama’s last ditch effort at preaching the gospel to her then-lost great-grandchild in three forced words from a dying body. Mama wanted to make sure that I would see her one day again in heaven. And God was faithful to raise up a harvest of the word seeds she planted at a time in my life when hatred was trying to lead me in to the fiery eternity that is hell.

Thanks, Mama. And thank you Jesus.

Maybe you’ve never been abandoned or betrayed or persecuted or used or abused. But I reckon you have seen your fair share of

mistreatment. Some of you have experienced far worse than I ever will. Or maybe this truth sounds too simple to you, as it did to me when I first heard it. But it's profound and you may need it one day like I did. (I hope you don't.)

Either way, whether you are struggling to forgive right now or couldn't imagine ever facing such a struggle, I implore you, just as my great-grandmother implored me: "Never hate anyone."

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