

Have a Good Apple

(By my Mom)

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Back in the 1920's, I grew up a city girl in St. Louis, Missouri, but among my happy childhood memories were the weeks spent near Perryville on a small farm owned by neighbors. Here I had my first close encounter with farm animals. There was the lamb that followed me around the barnyard; an angry sow chased me up a tree away from her piglets; the turkey hissed and ran after me whenever I whistled. I loved my favorite horse, Dolly. I learned to saddle her. Never mind I had never ridden before. I simply climbed on and with a little direction from the owners, and a few initial rounds of the barnyard, before I was turned loose to roam. Dolly was a wise creature. There was a time I tried to urge her down a steep embankment. She refused to go. If I felt a bit uncertain about where I was, the loosening of the reins sent Dolly heading for home.

Along with the fun and wonder of the farm were the chores assigned to each person who sat at table. One duty in particular came my way, no doubt because it was one a child could handle with ease. Now and then, I took a trip down to the cool vegetable storage cellar that was lined with row after row of home-canned jars of fruits and vegetables. Here too were boxes of root crops and baskets of fruit. My job was to carefully check over the supply of apples and return with some.

I would gently lift each apple. If it was sound and firm, it was placed into a “holding” basket to remain in the cellar. Those really bad were discarded, but any that had developed bruises, cuts, or soft or brown spots were placed in a basket to be carried upstairs to the kitchen. These were to be used first, for eating and for cooking – cutting out the bad parts so there would be as little waste as possible. On one apple sorting occasion, a thunderbolt thought struck me:

Nobody ever has a good apple!

That simple thought pervades my general philosophy of life. Seldom on that farm did anyone ever have the pleasure of biting into a sound, firm, crisp, juicy whole apple. Always there were the bad, soft parts standing in the way of the satisfaction of a real taste treat. Though I now understand the frugal, thrifty planning behind the sorting of the apples, it disturbed me as a child.

Living so frugally often sacrifices a joy that is immediately available because of a soft spot in our thinking. So many missed opportunities for pleasure in the moment. At home in chests and closets, we all have items tucked away - the *good china and silverware* and the *good linens* - things that are to be used just for *special*. Do we find special occasions often enough? Or does the good apple stay tucked away 95% of the time. And what about the plans we make for the future. What soft spots stand in our way?

With maturity, the analogy came that God blesses us with an abundance of good apples, but we so often add our own bruises and blemishes. Enjoy all the blessings that could be yours!

**Live life so you and your loved ones frequently
“Have a Good Apple!”**