

NOT TIPPING THE SCALES

-- Irma B. Williams

Mother and Dad bought the Country Store that faced the busy 441 Highway the summer I turned 10 years old, in 1945. What an eventful summer we three children, Richard, Delores, and I enjoyed.

Dad had moved our family from Howey-in-the-Hills to the community of Zellwood, Florida. We lived in the house that was conveniently connected to the store by a wide hallway with a polished hardwood flooring. This gave Mother easy access from the store to the house without going outside. Inside the store was a long L-shaped counter and at the far end, to our delight, gleamed one of those old fashion, large, oblong-curved glass candy cases. It was filled with such sweets as lollipops, bubble gum, tootsie rolls, lemon drops, all day-suckers, coconut bonbons, chocolates, and my favorite, peanut butter kits in little yellow wrappers.

Across the room diagonally, at the other end of the counter, the cooler kept the dairy and meat products fresh. Nearby, sat the white porcelain and metal scales. These stately scales were important to customer and to proprietor since both could see the number to which the arrow on the scales pointed, the exact amount of meat being weighted from the other side.

One day as I happened to be standing by Dad, to get my attention, he "tipped the scales" by putting his thumb on the back of the scales gently pressing down. I watched the arrow of the scales move. Then Dad said, "Irma, I know of a man who would put his thumb on the back of the scales when he was weighing the customer's order." Oh, I could tell by Dad's expression that he was not happy in knowing that man had cheated his customers. Clearly, Dad let me know that our family had no such practice, and that we gave an honest weight in our business, and sometimes more.

Often around our table after prayer, while eating supper together, Mother and Dad would share interesting stories with a moral; some were funny, and they laughed with us. Some stories were serious. Forming Christian values in our heart as children, shaped our character.

I regret I did not think to thank Mother and Dad, before they went to be with the Lord, for training us to obey them, to tell the truth, to respect others, to pray our prayers, and to revere God. Mother's motto: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

"All things whatsoever you would that men should do to you, do you even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets," (Matthew 7:12).