

## Intensity

"I know why you take so many naps, Grandad." Raymond offered this gem of 5-year-old wisdom as I was swinging gently in my hammock, trying to get in a half-hour of campsite-nap after lunch. I had to bite, "Why do I take naps?" "Because you're so old," came the matter-of-fact reply with the innocent truthfulness of youth.

"I think you're right," I admitted. I've learned to accept the fact that my grandkids and, pretty much everyone under 50 thinks I'm "so old." Last week, my now 7-year-old Killian proclaimed, "Old people always have Cheetos...." Now, I just call them "old person chips" when I offer them to Killian. I get to eat a lot more of them that way.

But I digress.... I decided to milk the old-person idea in Ray's wisdom. "I'll need at least 30 minutes to take a nap. Then we can go swimming." "Ok, Grandad," he seemed happy to have a definite start point to his swim—just 30 minutes away. Unfortunately, I hadn't taken account of Ray's lack of time-telling skill.

I love a hammock view. Tree trunks blending into green masses of needles swaying against the bluest of skies. It's downright relaxing.... "Hey Grandad, has it been 30 minutes?" "Close...it's been two minutes," I noted. "Ok, let me know when it's been 30 minutes and then we'll go swimming," Ray shouted as he continued buzzing around the campsite like a bumble bee on steroids. After a couple more checks to see if a half-hour had elapsed, I gave up on the nap idea, "Let's go swimming!"

Holy Cow! The water at Buck's Lake in September is frigid! It's that kind of water that takes your breath away--and that's only ankle-deep. "I think I'll be more help to you in the kayak," I offered. I could have played the old-man card again, but I'm pretty sure he knew I was wimping out.

With his life preserver Ray had no problem floating and paddling around, and I followed along beside him in the kayak. Before long, his teeth were chattering. "Let's go in and get warm," I offered. But Ray would not have it. Finally, when I noticed a bluish color in his lips, I called an end to swim time.

I used to say that my grandsons, Ray and Killian, bring a certain intensity to everything they do. Now I think that there is a vitality in everything that they experience, and it just can't help but come out in their actions. If something doesn't have the immediate potential for excitement, then it is labeled "boring." Sometimes I think I want that same potency in my experiences also, but I'm not sure what I'd do with it. Maybe I'm just used to the sameness of life; maybe I've come to appreciate the boring things in life; maybe, heaven forbid, I'm just old....

Martha spotted us coming in, "Get dried off, and I'll make some cocoa!" Sitting in a lawn chair in the autumn afternoon sun, wrapped up in a big warm towel with a cup of hot cocoa, I experienced the intensity of the moment in an unexpected way—something of the soul. Ray was sitting next to me, "Thanks for taking me swimming, Grandad," he got out through his still chattering teeth. Thanks indeed.... I was glad I hadn't taken that nap, although now the hammock was looking pretty good....

*"I came that they may have life and have it abundantly." --Jesus (John 10:10)*

Be the church, --pastor tony