

Living Well in the Shadow of Life

Our favorite vacation memory...

One of my favorite vacation memories was when my three kids were 11, 12, and 14. My mother was visiting my sister who lived in Southern California. I was expected to join them and spend our summer vacation there with her. I began to add up the costs and even though I was staying with her, it was going to be expensive with flights, car rental, etc. There was also another problem...

I'm not a Southern California person. I realized I was going to spend more money than I had to visit a place I didn't want to visit and do things I didn't want to do. I made the decision we were not going there for vacation. I told my mother and she was fine. The next day when she realized my decision, she called back and wondered if my wife and I were having marital problems. We weren't. We wanted to have our vacation doing what we wanted where we wanted and with whom we wanted. I reminded my mother that for the prior nineteen years of my marriage, my family had managed to "squeeze" their way and invite themselves onto "my" family vaca-

tions. If they were to join us again, it would be by invitation. We (the five of us) were going to Florida.

The woman at AAA was incredible making all our arrangements. We stayed on the Disney grounds. When we arrived at Disney World, I was greeted by a woman wearing a HUGE Mickey Mouse hand. I knew we were going to have fun.

It was just the five of us. It wasn't so much what we did; it was that we were doing things together as a family. When we were on the Tower of Terror, I was holding onto my oldest and youngest as they feared they would get thrown out of an open window which was thirteen stories in the air. Every time the window opened, they screamed with fear. After that, we climbed onto the Rock and Roll roller coaster which looked more like a 1964 Cadillac than a thrill ride. There was no uphill to climb. We were accelerated from 0 to 60 mph in seconds as we screamed for our lives.

My other favorite vacation memory was when we bought a \$150 pool for our backyard. It was 3-foot-high and 12 feet wide. Suddenly everyone at church was our new best friend. Everyone was

over at our house. Ours was the "cool" backyard to come over and play in.

It didn't matter whether we traveled nine hours to Orlando or nine seconds out the back door and jumped into our three-foot K-Mart pool, we were together. We were having fun as a family. We were making memories that money can't buy.

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As you plan out your summer plans, whether you leave your driveway or not, it's not about where you go; it's about who you go with. Have a GREAT summer with the people you love.

Rev. Tony Marciano is the Executive Director of the Charlotte Rescue Mission. The Charlotte Rescue Mission provides a free long term Christian recovery program for men and women who are addicted to drugs and alcohol. For more information, visit our website at www.charlotterescuemission.org.

