

## **"Grandma, I Want To Go To Camp!"**

“Grandma Elise, I want to go to that camp with you!” I was surprised and thrilled to hear his announcement. I had told my grandson, Jake, about Grand Camp when I was in Omaha in March for his birthday. Grand Camp had sounded so great and I had only hoped against hope of ever going. There were so many obstacles. It was now May and there may not be any openings. Jake’s mom and step-dad had to agree to let him come out to Colorado. Then there was the logistics of how to get him back and forth. The money had to be rounded up so we could go. This had to be a God-thing! I prayed and committed it all to His will and abundant provision. One by one, the Lord addressed each issue and it all fell into place. We were going to Grand Camp!

I never dreamed that his parents would let him come so far and for so long. Though Jake is nine, we have only spent short and sporadic time together. His mom remarried but lets me see him whenever I get back to Omaha, but I have never been able to have him stay with us in Colorado. Having him for over a week was a big responsibility and caused concerns, but it was worth the try because I wanted the opportunity to expose him to spiritual things and other Christians.

While in the car, we were able to talk a lot. Jake was very sad and very down on himself. He was moving and this would put him in a different school. He was sad to lose his friends. He said it was hard for him to make friends and to keep friends. He called himself a screw up and said he always messed things up. This broke my heart. I had such high hopes that this Grand Camp would be fun for him and would be a positive experience for both of us.

Upon arriving, Jake was shy, uncooperative and refused to join in on the activities. My heart sank. By Tuesday I was so frustrated with his attitude that I grabbed two grandmas and asked them to pray for us. They hugged me and we huddled together and they prayed for us on the spot.

Jake had looked forward to the white water rafting activity until he read and signed the release form which listed all the possible risks. He announced, “I am not going.” On Monday and Tuesday I tried everything to get him to change his mind. I tried to reason with him. I asked him to trust me, but to no avail. On Wed. morning, when we were to leave for rafting, Jake was still determined he was not going. I grabbed Cavin, the camp director, and asked him for help. Cavin said the same things I had said and asked Jake to trust him. After Cavin finished and walked away, Jake looked at me and said, “I don’t care what he says, I am not going!” Ugh!

It wasn’t until after we arrived and tried to change his mind unsuccessfully that I finally told him it was okay. We would not go. Then he changed his mind! He agreed to look at the raft and talk to our guide. They put him in the front. He had a ball! Everyone who had prayed for Jake was rejoicing at what the Lord had done. Everyone was congratulating Jake on his courage and bravery. There is such power in praise and affirmation. That day was a turning point for Jake.

Jake loved all the fun activities after that. He found and solved clues, played games, swam in the pool for hours, made new friends, memorized scripture, made crafts and a family crest. Jake was exposed to many loving and caring people. He began to respond and change before our very eyes.

Jake is not a Christian nor does he come from a Christian home. His other grandma has taken him to church and I found out that he knew quite a bit about some Bible stories and about Jesus dying on the cross. I had a lot of talks with him at night about the Lord. Several times I gave him an opportunity to invite Christ into his heart. He said he wanted to but that it was a big decision and he was not ready. On one occasion I read a verse that talked about opening wide the door of your heart and welcoming Christ into your heart. He said he wasn’t ready to open his heart and welcome Christ in, but he did have a crack open. I praise the Lord for the crack and that he is open to talking about the Lord. Jake is

afraid but can't put his finger on what exactly he is afraid of. He'd like to trust Christ, but just isn't ready. Pray for Jake!

I was to write and say a blessing to Jake. I had never done one. I struggled and spent much time in prayer and thought. It was to be a time of recognition of his attributes, talents and interests. I was to affirm his value and my love for him and to encourage him in the Lord. All I could see was his fear and negative attitude and I hadn't spent that much time with him to know his talents, except I knew he was very intelligent. Well, after Wednesday and the rafting, the Lord led me by faith to focus on his courage. He gave me Joshua 1:9 as an anchor verse for him. The Lord gave me a beautiful blessing to speak to Jake. I don't believe either one of us will ever forget that moment!

Friday morning came. It was awards time and then we were to say our goodbyes. Guess what award was given to Jake? He received the bravery award! I marvel at how the Lord orchestrates things!! He never ceases to amaze me. Early in the week I was ready to leave Grand Camp. I wrestled with the Lord and He reminded me that He had brought me there. So by faith, I told Him I would trust Him to be at work whether I ever saw the results or not. The Lord is so good! I saw Him do some amazing things. His powerful love was expressed through all the caring grandparents, grandkids and staff. That love changed Jake.

We were one of the last ones to leave Grand Camp. Jake wanted to make sure he said goodbye to all his new friends. "Grandma Elise, I don't care how long the trip is; I want to come back to Grand Camp next year!" Just maybe, Jake will open wide his heart to Jesus then. Thank you Lord and thank you Grand Camp for the incredible gift you gave us! Grand Camp—what possibilities, what an adventure, what a ministry!!!