

Title: Conversations

Subtitle: "Wooden Bowl"

Second Subtitle: "Wooden Bowl"

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A frail old man went to live with his son, daughter-in-law, and a four-year-old. The old man's hands trembled, his eyesight was blurred, and his step faltered. They sat at the dinner table. But the elderly grandfather's shaky hands and failing eyesight made eating difficult. Peas rolled off his spoon onto the floor. When he grasped the glass, milk spilled onto the tablecloth. The son and daughter-in-law became irritated with the mess. "Enough about grandfather," said the son. "I've had enough of his spilled milk, noisy hands, and tablecloth. So the husband and wife set a small table in the corner. There, grandfather and the rest of the family enjoyed dinner at the dinner table. Since grandfather had no table, his food was served in a wooden bowl. Sometimes when the family glanced in grandfather's direction, he had a tear in his eye as he ate alone. Still, the only words the couple heard from grandfather were admonitions when he dropped a fork or spilled food. The four-year-old was

One evening before supper, the father noticed his son playing with wood shavings. He asked the child sweetly, "What are you making?" Just as sweetly, the boy replied, "I'm making a little bowl for you and mama to eat your food from when I grow up." The father smiled and went back to work. The words so struck the parents that they had tears started to stream down their cheeks. Though no word was spoken, the decision was done. That evening the husband took grandfather's hand and gently led him to the corner table.

For the remainder of his days he ate every meal with the family. And for the rest of his life, the husband nor wife seemed to care any longer when a fork was dropped, milk spilled, or the table soiled. Children are remarkably perceptive. Their eyes ever observe, their ears ever listen, and their minds ever process the messages they absorb. If they see us patiently providing a loving atmosphere for family members, they will imitate that attitude for the rest of their lives. A parent realizes that every day that building blocks are being laid for the future.

Let us all be wise builders and role models. Take care of yourself, ... and every day!