

“It is the Lord Christ You Are Serving”

Upon first learning of the topic for this year’s essay contest, I was stumped. How could I choose just *one* of the positive things I have learned from watching my parents during my fifteen years of life? From matters of faith, to the importance of service, to their example of a strong marriage and consistent parenting, it seemed that the possibilities were endless. Eventually, I determined that one very positive (and also unusual) thing I have learned from watching my mother is the Latin language.

I can clearly remember that first day in fourth grade when Mom pulled out the lift-the-flap folder she had made for me and I learned every Latin student’s first lesson: amo, amas, amat, amamus, amatis, amant. Translation: I love, you love, he/she/it loves, we love, “ya’ll” love, they love. I was intrigued by my first foreign language lesson ever. I didn’t want to stop. After the first five verbs we learned some nouns. Many of the first nouns were easy. Roma – Rome, Italia – Italy, memoria – memory. Soon after that first memorable day, I could write simple subject-verb sentences such as: Regina ambulat, the queen walks.

As more time passed, I was introduced to the future and imperfect tenses, nouns of other declensions and verbs of other conjugations. Because the differences between these can be quite subtle, I often had my hands full trying to remember it all. Despite the fact that she was learning along with me, Mom was an admirable Latin teacher, making charts, writing funny jingles, and always staying a few steps ahead of me. She has always been a very hard (and pretty much tireless) worker at everything she does and Latin was no exception. Repeating chants, writing forms, and drawing a plethora of

illustrative pictures and posters, Mom not only taught herself but helped me immensely as well.

Now I have finished my first year of high school, with Mom having seen me through six years of Latin and dreadful-sounding constructions such as Passive Periphrastics, Gerundives of Obligation, and Ablative Absolutes. She now teaches Latin at the homeschool study center I attend and always encourages students with her well-known phrase, "Latin's not so tough!" Certainly, I believe her other students have excelled at the "not so tough" language because of her diligence and attention. In addition, the main reason I have done so well in Latin is because I watched my mom and emulated her wonderful example as she too worked at learning the language. This I will continue to do as I head off into my first year of Spanish in the fall.

One of my mom's favorite Scripture passages that has served as a motto for her life and study of Latin is Colossians 3:23-24. "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving." Or, in Latin, "Quodcumque facitis, ex animo operamini sicut Domino et non hominibus, scientes quod a Domino accipietis retributionem hereditatis. Domino Christo servite."