

# Roots in Ripon

Roots in Ripon

*Chuck Roots*

18 September 2017

[www.chuckroots.com](http://www.chuckroots.com)

## The Value of Seniors

Senior citizens, those with many miles on their frames, are meant to be a blessing to any culture and society. That's a theme that is evident throughout the Bible. Both my wife, Isaura, and I can vouch for the truth of this role of the aged ones.

Isaura grew up on the Island of San Miguel, the Azores, Portugal. The village where she was born and raised, Arrifes, was also where most of her family still resided, even though some had made the long journey to North America. At age thirteen, and the oldest of her five siblings, her family also moved to America, settling in the Central Valley of California.

But during those formative years on San Miguel, she spent countless hours and days with her many aunts, uncles, cousins and grandparents. Especially her grandparents.

On Sundays after church, Isaura would help her grandmother take food baskets to families in their community. This was food prepared by her grandmother. One of their shared loves was working in the garden, tending to the various flowers and plants. Both grandparents were strong Christians, exemplifying their faith by their actions each and every day. She has often mentioned seeing her grandfather through the door to his room which would be slightly ajar. There he would be with his Bible, on his knees, in prayer. She would quietly listen as he prayed out loud. As a farmer, he knew well the importance of the proper weather conditions, especially rain. He would implore the Lord for the crops to grow so he could pay his employees who had families to feed. They would often feed the poor children by bringing them into their home for a meal.

I am forever grateful to her grandparents, because their example made a deep and lasting impression on my wife, who, not surprisingly, is a woman of prayer; she's generous to a fault; and loves to work in her garden. When I step across into Glory, I'm going to search out her grandparents and thank them for helping shape my wife's godly character.

On the other hand, I was born in Connecticut, right on the Long Island Sound. My parents were born and raised in Texas, but moved to New York in 1934 where my father was able to find a good job during the Great Depression. So, my brother, sister and I were all born in Connecticut. My parents divorced when I was five. My mother remarried shortly before I turned seven. My grandparents all lived

# *Roots in Ripon*

in Texas. Traveling there in the late '40s and '50s was a major evolution, and costly. My new step grandmother who hailed from Concord, Massachusetts, won me over quickly with her homemade strawberry shortcake with real whipped cream! I can still taste it. She only cooked from scratch! She moved in with us when I was ten, having been widowed seven years earlier. She would make pancakes for me which I loved. They were the ugliest things you've ever seen, all misshapen and lopsided. But my taste buds and saliva glands could not have cared less.

All the grandkids called her Bambi. I don't know why other than the older grandkids started calling her that long before I came along, even though her name was Ethel. I would open the bedroom window for her at night, and close it in the morning before heading for school. I also enjoyed brewing her a cup of tea in the morning. I learned a lot about cooking, especially baking, by watching her in the kitchen. She loved reading books of all kinds, along with working cross-word puzzles. But what I loved and appreciated most about her is the time she would take to listen to me talk about whatever was on my mind. She was so patient, listening to my childlike thoughts, but never making light of what I said. I always felt like I could bring up any subject with her, and she would listen intently. She was a gift to me. And guess what? I love to bake and putter around in the kitchen. I love to read all sorts of books. And I must have learned to listen because I spent a lot of time counseling as a pastor, and as a Navy chaplain.

When I was on active duty in the Navy, our girls were quite young. So, at each duty station we would look to "adopt" an older couple who would be surrogate grandparents for our girls. We were blessed with many people over the years who were willing to give of their time and energy with our girls.

Isaura and I have been retired over three years and are enjoying spending lots of time with our grandkids. They can be seen helping Meema (Isaura) in her garden, or baking goodies with me in the kitchen. I especially enjoy those moments when they have questions or simply want to talk.

Are you a senior citizen? Do you have grandkids or great-grandkids you can invest your time and energy into? Perhaps they live too far away for that. Then let me suggest that you look for children in your local neighborhood, church, or school who could definitely benefit from your life and experiences.

You may be retired and feel you are no longer of much use or value to society. But you would be wrong about that! There are children who desperately need you to give them your time.

It was meant for you to live this long so you could be a blessing. In being a blessing, you will also be blessed, many times over.

What are you waiting for!