

I think it was Abraham Lincoln who said: All I am, or ever hope to be, I owe to my angel Mother.
That is how I feel about my own Mother.

Our mothers teach by example and by precept. I have many memories of things my Mother taught me, but I keep coming back to one example when my mother taught me something I never forgot. I was born and raised in Ogden, Utah. We lived on the west side of Orchard Avenue, half way between 32nd street and 33rd street, at the base of a steep hill. On winter days, the road up the hill on 32nd street was customarily blocked off so the nearby children could sleigh ride down the hill.

At the top of the hill lived a family by the name of Belnap. They had a son who was in my school class. He had broken his leg. In those days a broken leg kept a child home much longer than it does today. Our school teacher encouraged those living close to the Belnaps to visit as often as we could. On this particular day I was on my way home after visiting him. It was a beautiful Autumn day and I decided to cut through the Orchard behind the Belnap home.

As I walked along, all around me the trees were heavy with their load of lovely ripe red apples. Without thinking, I helped myself to one, and went along home. When I got home I was still eating that delicious apple and my Mother noticed and said: "Ida-Rose, where did you get the apple?"

I said: From Mrs. Belnap's orchard."

Mother said: "Did Mrs. Belnap give you permission to pick the apple?"

I stopped chewing! "No," I said, "But she had lots and lots of apples. I am sure she would never miss one apple!"

"That is not for you to decide," said my Mother, "You should never help yourself to something that belongs to someone else. Now get yourself back up to Mrs. Belnap's house, and tell her what you have done!"

No amount of coaxing helped my case, so I started back up the hill to Mrs. Belnap's house. That hill was never so long nor so steep as it was that day. All the way I kept wondering. "Would she call the police? Would I have to go to jail? Or even worse--what would Mrs. Belnap think of me?"

It was a heavy little arm that I lifted to knock at that door. When she came to the door I stammered out my sin. She was an understanding woman and realized that my Mother was taking advantage of a teaching moment to teach me Honesty.

"It's all right," she said, "Any time you want an apple, just knock on my door and you can have one." I was very grateful to her for her kindness and generosity, but the important thing was that that day I learned an important lesson on "mine and thine."

It is my prayer, that Mothers everywhere recognize their teaching moments. I say this in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.