

“I’m Not a Baby, Grandpa”

By Michael R. Morris

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My granddaughter Lily just turned four, but I still call her by her toddler nickname: “Baby Lils.” When I do, she reminds me, “I’m not a baby, Grandpa.”

She may be right, but I hope not. I’ve decided that if I keep calling her Baby Lils, maybe she won’t grow up so fast. So I will keep calling her Baby Lils, at least until she reaches the age to start driving.

Of course, I know I can’t hold back the rush of days, months, and years. I tried that with my own children . . . and failed. “Our lives [pass] away,” as Jacob says, “like as it were unto us a dream” (Jacob 7:26). Before I know it, our youngest son will become a missionary, leaving my wife and me with a house full of empty bedrooms and echoes of childhood.

I recently heard a character in a movie say, “Age deepens all feelings.” I believe that is true. By the time you live half a century or more, you’ve experienced many of life’s joys and sorrows. Love grows with loss, and you know that happily ever after comes in the next life, not in this one.

As I look into Lily’s face, I wonder what deserts she will cross, what burdens she will bear, and what thorns in the flesh she will suffer (see 2 Corinthians 12:7). I pray that the Lord will protect her, for a few years at least, from those mortal lessons that are vital to our spiritual and emotional growth. I pray that He will strengthen her when those trials come, as they come to us all.

For this moment, however, I dismiss such thoughts. I try not to think too much about the future. I don’t want to miss the beauty of the present.

“Come get me, Grandpa,” Lily says as she runs away.

I chase her from one room into the next. Her sweet laughter is music,

Spending time with my little granddaughter highlights the beauty of the present and evokes echoes of the past.



and her bright face is sunshine. For a moment, 25 years disappear. I am now in the past, with Lily's mother, my daughter. She is four again. And like Lily, she giggles as I chase her through the house.

Then another memory comes. It's 1974, and my brothers and I are visiting with our great-grandfather Curtis Ellsworth. It is the last time I will see him in this life. He will die a short time later, at age 90, while I serve a mission in Guatemala.

In this moment from the past, I wonder: "What is Grandpa Ellsworth thinking as he looks upon us, his posterity? Does he remember when his own children were small? Does he worry about our future? Do we remind him that life passes swiftly?"

As we said goodbye in that long-ago moment, I remember that Grandpa Ellsworth wept. For decades I wondered why. Now I think I know. ■

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We'd love to hear from you!

