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## The Quiet God

One of the great things about being a father is that it often gives me glimpses of what God must be like. He is the perfect Father, after all, so on our best dad days, we discover that we are acting like Him, however imperfectly.

Case in point, a recent fishing trip with my six-year-old. Josh defines exuberance. It is pure joy to behold the pure joy he has for life. However, sometimes it can be difficult to keep up with him as he bounces from activity to activity or from topic to topic in conversation.

On this particular day, he was especially excited that he and I were fishing together without his brothers. One-on-one daddy time tends to be a rare commodity in our growing family.

Josh chattered away as we drove to the public pond. Would there be other people there? How many fish would we catch? Would he finally catch a catfish? Did I remember the worms? I could hardly get an answer out before he moved on to his next question. He was too excited to listen to the answers, so I eventually remained quiet.

Once we were there (after a brief side trip to get worms because, no, I hadn't remembered them), he continued the one-sided banter. "It smells like dead fish. Who will catch the biggest? Should I jerk the pole now? What kind of fish is that?" (It was a yellow perch.) He was too excited to remember I had already told him numerous times when to jerk the pole and what kind of fish that was (it was still a yellow perch), so I eventually remained quiet.

Finally, he tired of fishing and asked to go on a hike. The pond is adjacent to some public hunting land, so we took our stroll there. He was fascinated by all the shotgun shells left from years' worth of dove hunts. "Look! Here is a black one! I've never seen a green shotgun shell before! It must be rare! How do you think all these shells got here?" No, green shotgun shells aren't rare. They come in all sorts of colors. Hunters leave them here. But he was too excited to pay attention to the answers, so I eventually remained quiet.

At first, my tendency was to be annoyed with Josh while he chattered away. After all, he wasn't listening to his dad, the self-appointed fount from whom all wisdom flows in my son's young life. Had he just paid attention, he would have had all his questions answered the first time they were asked, he would have learned something, and the day would have gone much more smoothly.

But my annoyance was wrong. He wasn't being disrespectful. He was simply full of the wonder of new experiences and having Daddy all to himself. Who can blame the little guy for not listening?

Once I got my perspective straight, I found that simply remaining quiet and listening to him was the best part of the trip. I was seeing the world through new eyes – eyes that viewed discarded shotgun shells as rare treasures and a tiny yellow perch as a trophy. Best of all, he was excited to be with me. I wonder how many dads out there would give everything they own for such a morning with their sons? Such a morning as I was taking for granted.

There have been many times in my life in which God has been silent. So often, my tendency is to think He is mad at me or punishing me or trying to teach me some great, cosmic lesson. I am

sure there have been times when these were the case. But I wonder how many times He has been quiet simply because He wanted to hear me talk. He wanted to see the world through my eyes and share my excitement.

If I enjoy listening to my child, how much more does He enjoy listening to His? More times than not, I think conveying His truth to us isn't as important to Him as letting us know He is listening and enjoying every minute of it.

He has the rest of eternity to answer our questions and straighten out our misconceptions. He has right now to show us how much He loves us. And sometimes He loves us best by remaining quiet.

*~ Steve Webb*