

Thinking Aloud . . .

One of the challenges of caring for my Dad during his early dementia was food shopping . . . especially if he was hungry!

The temptation to sample items in the fruit and vegetable section stalked us always. We resisted . . . mostly. Inevitably came the baking aisle and the sweet aroma of butterscotch and chocolate. I remember turning to put a low-fat something into the cart, and caught Dad putting a bag of chocolate chips into the cart! *“Whoa, Dad, put that back!”*

Two aisles later came cookies and crackers. Before I could get us turned around and out of that black hole of empty calories there were boxes of Wheat Thins and Ginger Snaps in the cart. I would give Dad the evil eye and put them decidedly back on the shelf. But it was always a closing cause.

We wrestled over Fritos and Pringles in aisle eight, donuts and Entemann’s in aisle eleven and fresh cupcakes by the bakery. More than once at the checkout I had to extract a fist-full of popcorn from an unpaid-for bag. I kept saying, *“Dad, we are going to dinner, please just wait.”*

Later one afternoon we were sitting at Wendy’s with a ‘biggie’ French fries in front of us. Dad moved close to me, put his hand on my shoulder and with his whimsical smile said, *“I knew you would take good care of me!”*

This is David Thomas thinking aloud that saying “no” in the short term for something better in the long term is kind of what Lent is all about. We did not practice Lent when I was growing up but I have become fonder of the season prior to Easter.

I identify with the impatience of my Dad . . . and the Psalmist: *“How long must your servant wait? When will you answer?”* (119.84). Still, always comes his affirmation in the end *“We will wait for the Lord and keep his way. He will exalt his servant”* (37.7).

I used to have a card beside my computer. On the cover, in beautiful dark blue script was written ***“All Good Things are Worth Waiting For!”***

God is never late. Still, his time is not our time and we often are in a position of waiting.

If we will be patient . . . if we can say “no” to immediate gratification, if we can trust God’s loving intent . . . if we can remain faithful, we have the promise of scripture that he will satisfy our longings and we can say with a grateful smile, *“I knew you would take good care of me!”*