



## Family, Friends, Faith, and Farming: the good "F" words. *by Roddy Dull*

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Again, I think back to my younger days and how most of us at a very young age learned to fend for ourselves a little or maybe even a lot. Not only would we work hard all summer putting up hay at home, we would help the neighbors with their haying, milking, or working in the tobacco field. We did it all so we would have money to buy a class ring or take a young lady to the movies. It was kind of a sink or swim philosophy...yes and no.

If we thought that sink or swim were the only two options, we would learn that we weren't paying attention. This brings me to another good "F" word that I would like to add for this month...Floating. Yes, our parents and grandparents knew very well how to float. Wake up and smell the roses, slow down and catch your breath, get your priorities in order. These are all ways that our peers floated and because they knew how to float, they could swim a lot further when the current got swift than we can today.

I could never figure out why my grandpa, who was probably younger than I am now, would lay down and take a short nap after dinner on a hot summer day during haying. I couldn't figure out why he very seldom put his hat back on and went out to the field after our evening meal. I really couldn't figure out why we wouldn't cut down an acre of tobacco or mow down 10 acres of hay on Sunday after church. Now, I know. He was floating. He and my grandma worked their whole lives loving farming, their family, and each other. Their happiness and their success did not come from continually swimming. It came from the times of just floating.

I have a hard time floating myself. I am always trying to swim ahead of the rest, sometimes never lifting my head out of the water far enough to see if there is even water in front of me. I go home after church, change my clothes and go back to work. When my children were younger, I very seldom missed an event they were in, but often made up the time working until 3 or 4 in the morning. I still struggle with having idle time where I am just not being "productive."

If your head is buried in the water so you can't see what's in front of you, you are missing out on what we have been taught. Life is not a race. If you just keep on swimming full strokes you will never find a finish line. You will never get a trophy. You will someday realize that the water you are wiping out of your eyes is not from swimming, but instead from not taking the time to float.

There is the old saying that those who don't swim, sink. But, every swimmer has the ability to float. So, just take the time to turn over, look up without water in your eyes, and realize that if it's nice enough to be out swimming, then the sun is out and the sky is blue and it will be there every time you decide to float.

In lieu of getting a good tongue lashing at my house I have decided to take swimming lessons from my spouse who is currently teaching me the right way to FLOAT.

*Roddy Dull*