

God, Life, and Everything "Year One Done"

Year one is done.

Within just a few hours of writing this, I will be headed up north with an empty car. Hours later, we will be headed south with a car packed to the roof and weighed down with the accumulated dirty laundry, souvenirs, books, and dorm room refrigerator of college student.

A newly minted college Sophomore, thank you very much.

Yes, our son has just completed his first year of college and seems to have survived fairly well. But I don't intend to write about him.

No, this is all about me. Well us - the parents.

You see - and many of you, I'm sure, know this experience all too well - college hits parents especially hard. You see your life flash before your eyes. Your little baby is growing up and has flown the nest.

The bills, however, keep coming home.

Worse yet, all those dreams you had for when the kids left home - they just don't seem realistic at this point. You know those dreams ... drop the kid off at school, pack the house and move to an undisclosed location in the tropics where they'll never find you...

Seriously, while the kids are at school, you still have to keep working, still have to keep the house ready for their inevitable return, still have to be there for them even when they are charting new courses for themselves.

It's an odd new relationship - you watch and support, but they are adults now. You can't tap your watch and say "I want you in by 11:00." You have to trust that whatever good you taught them will sink in, and that they're smart enough to figure out the rest.

[Sometimes I wonder if that's how God feels - having created and given guidance, at some point it's just a matter of sitting back and watching like a nervous parent, ready to support but not jumping in too quickly or at all.]

Of course, it gets weirder, because now that our son is home (by the time you read this), we'll have a whole summer of living under the same roof again. He, who has grown used to working on his own schedule, to going out and coming in as he sees fit, to hanging with his friends at the drop of a hat - he has to deal with us. We, who have grown used to carting around just one teenager will now have to figure out how to get four people to four different places on a daily basis again. We who were growing used to a smaller food budget, now have to start buying in bulk again. Mostly, we were just used to less noise and mess in the house.

I foresee tension.

I also foresee getting used to it eventually - just as he's ready to head back to school.

I'm not complaining, mind you. I absolutely love watching our children grown up. I feel excited and proud. You could not make me trade it for anything.

It's just a little reminder that the things which make life worth living are generally not easy. They're not easy physically - trying to keep up with two teenage sons is back breaking - or emotionally with all the hello's and goodbyes, the constant readjusting to new situations.

But as I say, that's how all wonderful and truly good things are. Hard and joyful.
And way too fast.

Because I can barely believe this first year is done already. He's making plans for next year - and I'm still wondering where the time went.