Kids and Permanent Markers

How have we hidden them? On top of the refrigerator, hidden in the top drawer of a dresser, or guarded by Navy Seals in an iron safe and monitored by infrared security alarms. *Somehow* my kids found a way to get them and use them.

We moved into our dream home a few years back. We were all so delighted with all the extra space. It was really the first home Darlene had been able to plan everything from the paint to the carpet to the kitchen island. She was in heaven. We watched expectantly as the last brick was in place and the last roll of carpet had been installed.

As we joyously walked into the home that first morning, I said to my youngest son who had just turned three, “This house is so big you might not be able to find your room!” I should have been more discerning as I looked at his worried little face as he pursed his little lips together and furrowed his brow at that one comment.

I knew something was wrong when I awoke the next morning to the sound of my wife’s plaintive wail. I rushed out of the bedroom and immediately understood her sorrow. Our youngest had taken a magic marker and drawn a line from the front door down the foyer, up the stairs, into his room, ending the line with the point of an arrow fixed in place at the foot of his bed. He explained, as best he could, that he didn’t want to forget where his room was.

A thick red felt tip pen on eggshell carpet does not help the resale value but it does remind us to pray for our children.

We’ve had a number of similar incidents. Since we wouldn’t let our kids do the temporary tattoos from the cereal boxes—(An attempt to teach Levitical law to them. See: Lev. 19:23-28)—they took turns creating eagles or some other type of winged creatures on each other’s bellies. Suffice it to say

they found a work-around. At least it wasn't on their foreheads.

They found many other applications and surfaces for permanent markers:

- On the couch to reserve a permanent seat
- On the wall to record important milestones
- On the cat paws (Why? Why Not?)
- On rags (hurriedly cleaning up the marker stains before they got busted)
- On the pages of by Thompson's Chain Reference Bible (One son thought the black and white outlined maps were coloring pages. I actually saw this happen to my Study Bible while I was preaching with my large print Bible. What a helpless feeling. It's impossible to interject "Jacob, stop that," in the middle of a message about the eternity of our souls.

My greatest prayer these days is that when they are old, God will make a much more permanent mark on their souls. Every stroke of parenting, every opportunity to bless and discipline leaves a spiritual and emotional mark. Daily, I'm reminded of the things we did and the things that we didn't do to aid them on their journey. We made our mark, but if I had it to do all over again I'd make more of them.

One thing is for certain I'm an expert on permanent marker removal and if you need help, hunt me down on Facebook. I'll walk you through it.