

Why You Should Forgive Your Dad This Father's Day

An invisible force pushed me to my knees and an audible voice spoke, "Forgive your father." I had walked into my dorm room after being at a campus ministry meeting where I declared my faith in Jesus. I had not talked to my biological father in several years.

"I forgive my dad," I whispered while bowing to my knees unable to get up because of a force that held me down. Suddenly, a wall that I didn't know was erected around my heart like a fortress shattered with those words. Tears that I had not cried in years rolled down my face. My friends called me 'stone-faced' because of my reputation for not showing any emotions.

I sobbed uncontrollably as memories of my handsome father leaving my family flooded my mind. I felt the terror again when mom and dad pulled me back and forth while hurling obscenities at each other. Pain that I locked away now shuddered through my shaking body. Then a cloud of peace settled into the room as my lifelong tormentor was gone. The realization that God was on the scene in every painful episode brought me peace. God had not abandoned me or left me alone although my biological father had.

My father, Leonardo Corpus, was born in the Philippines and grew up in Hawaii. He married my mom, Aloha, when she was 19-years-old. Although he already had a wife and two kids in the Philippines, he pursued my mom when she was 15 years old. My parents divorced when I was 6 years old.

My father dropped in and out of my life bearing gifts such as a shiny pair of yellow go-go boots that I desperately wanted when I was 8 years old. He had studied accounting but had a

hard time finding a decent paying job because of widespread prejudice against Filipinos in California during the 1960s and 1970s that literally sentenced thousands to a life of hard farm labor. He was funny, charming, handsome and a gifted musician. I believe that he was frustrated with the inability to provide for his family and lack of job opportunities.

He unknowingly launched my career in writing when I stayed with him a few weeks every summer in my early teens. He had a typewriter that I wrote stories on. During the day I worked in my stepmother's garden by his side, weeding and watering neatly landscaped rows of tomatoes, cucumbers, okra and lettuce. At night I typed stories and listened to big band music on the radio while he watched wrestling matches on TV. One of those stories got published in a children's magazine.

Weeding, watering and picking fresh vegetables by his side was one of the happiest moments with him. He seemed content and at peace. After my stepmother, Connie, died, he lost his way and disappeared from my life. He re-married several times after that but I never saw him happy again like he was with Connie.

I didn't realize the shackles of bitterness and hurt I had around my heart towards my father. That moment of forgiving him set the course for my walk with God. God was with me when I worked in the garden with my dad. God was with me when I was being pulled apart by furious parents. God was with me when my dad left.

I found a father in God who will never fail me or let me down. This father will never abandon or reject me. God's love is never ending and He is a faithful provider.

I've heard a lot of teaching and read books about being a godly father. At times I've felt like damaged goods because I didn't have a father that did everything experts say a good father should do. I've also had a craving in my soul for attention from a man. That craving leads many young girls into

bad relationships. I'm glad that God stepped in to satisfy that craving when I was a young woman and prevented me from satiating that longing in a relationship.

God removed the scars and shame of being fatherless when he stepped into my life that night and adopted me as His own. God filled the longing for a father and He sent godly men who were my pastors, brothers in the Lord that set a great examples of godly men. Those men helped form my standards for what I wanted in a future husband.

I believe we need God involved in our families to be functional. I envy my friends who had great dads. But I'm thankful that I have a father who will never leave me or forsake me. When your biological dad fails you, remember God's heart for you:

" Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, to be holy and blameless before Him in love; He predestined us to adoption as sons to Himself through Jesus Christ according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace which He graciously bestowed on us in the Beloved" (Eph. 1:3-6 MEV).

You're not an orphan and you're not alone. He has called you His own. He will never fail you. {eoa}

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