

Treasure Every Moment With Your Earthly Father

Over thirty-three years ago, my paternal grandfather passed away. We called him Paw Paw and my dad loved him very much.

Paw Paw loved to listen to his “45” of Tennessee Ernie Ford on his console record player and walked through the house singing at the top of his lungs. He had a lava lamp on top of the TV and an old fashioned cuckoo clock on the wall. Even with thick coke-bottle glasses he still had to use a magnifying glass to read his Bible, which he did the first thing every morning and the last thing every night. He loved Jesus with all of his heart. In church he would “amen” after almost every sentence.

Paw Paw died suddenly from a massive heart attack while at work. He was 80 years old. I remember my dad hugging me and saying, “I hope I can make it without him. I talked to him so often. I already miss him ...”

My grandmother, Dad’s mom, was 10 years younger than my grandfather and we called her Gran Gran. They got married when she was 16 and were married for 54 years. Gran Gran was so special. She was a hairdresser (we called them “beauticians” back then), and always smelled like the solution she used when she gave permanents. Every night she would rub lotion on her hands, and it was a treat for each grandchild to sit next to her and let her rub the extra (by design I think) on our hands. We argued to see who would sit next to her at church, because she always held the hand of the child sitting next to her.

One time, when I was very young, I got in trouble while my family was visiting her home. I ran into the kitchen where she was cooking, and hid behind her skirt. She turned and looked

at my dad and said firmly, "Ramon Eldon, you are not going to spank this boy in my house!" Right then I thought that it might be a very good thing if we moved in with her *permanently*.

Although he traveled all over the world, Dad never missed a day calling her, and when she died at 96 my dad was holding her soft sweet hand. For many weeks after she went to heaven, Dad caught himself picking up the phone to call her. He loved her deeply.

May of 2010, shortly before Father's Day, Dad stepped onto the shores of heaven. Many sermons have been preached, and many songs sung about a saint who has gone home wanting to see *Jesus* first. You know, I believe our Savior is so gracious that He looked at my dad and said, "Go hug your mom and dad. Visit with them. Catch up. You and I have eternity together." And Dad would do just that. He would hug the two people he had loved more than words could say.

While he was here I talked to him every day. In the last four years of his life he spent many days sitting on his recliner praying for me. Every time I talked to him he finished our conversation by saying, "I love you Leonard ... with all of my heart!"

Someone said that my dad lost his battle with cancer, but Dad lost no battle. My dad loved Jesus deeply. Fervently. Passionately.

Paul declares in 1 Corinthians 15:54 that "when this mortal is clothed with immortality ... *death has been swallowed up in victory*" (HCSB, emphasis added). Jesus said in John 11:25-26 that He is the resurrection and the life. If we believe in Him we will *never die*. Today, Dad would declare that, "*to be alive was Christ ... but to die is so much better.*"

A man who is one of my dearest friends and mentors has expressed often that we should give honor to whom honor is due. So, *please understand* when I would say, *“Dad, this devotion was written to honor you. Well done, brave Warrior. You finished strong. You were my best friend. I miss you more than words could express. You finished well. I love you ... with all of my heart!”*

This Father's Day, treasure the time you have with your earthly father. Embrace the wonderful memories and discard any negative ones and the emotions attached to them. Let the God of all comfort remind you of His great love and if your father is now in His presence, know that you will be reunited and spend eternity enjoying both.

Prayer Power for the Week of 6/9/2014

As we approach Father's Day this week, take time to thank God that He is eternally our Heavenly Father and will never leave or forsake us. Thank Him that He's promised to be a father to the fatherless, and the One who takes us in even if our natural fathers and mothers forsake us. Pray for those who have lost their dads through death, divorce or abandonment, and take time to honor yours if he is still available, and his memory, if he's not. Pray for our military and their families, especially those dads currently away from home. Continue to pray that believers would work and pray together for revival in our nation and the expanding of God's kingdom. Remember Israel and pray that our leaders would have wisdom in dealing with the issues affecting the nation and the world. Psalm 27:10; Psalm 68:5; Heb 13:5b; John 11:25