

My Father's Day Tribute

by Deborah A. Biddle

The lyrics to one of my favorite songs begin by asking, "How can I say thanks for all the things you have done for me? Things so undeserved, yet, you gave to prove your love for me. The voices of a million angels cannot express my gratitude. All that I am and ever hope to be, I owe it all to thee." The songwriter was referring to God when writing the lyrics. However, recently I have thought about the lyrics in relation to my father, Harvey R. Vaughn, who recently passed away.

He was a remarkable man. He had his faults and shortcomings, as most of us do. However, most of the practical things in life that I learned, I learned from him. My earliest memories of him are how he took care of my sister and me. Both my parents worked full-time jobs. So, they shared household responsibilities, including cooking, combing our hair, getting us ready for school, and helping us with homework.

If it was Daddy's turn to get us ready for school, he made sure we were dressed well and that our hair was combed. When he did our hair, our braids weren't as perfect as mama's. But, he could braid neatly and coordinate our hair accessories with our outfits for the day. He still managed to send us out clean and cute!

Daddy was always teaching me how to do something, even when I didn't want to learn. It was he who taught me how to write my name. I remember how he took the time to make sure I knew exactly which hand to use and how to spell my first and last name.

He taught me how to tie a tie, change a tire, and use a wrench, hammer, screwdriver and drill. He gave me my first toolbox, which I still use to this day. From him, I learned how to paint a house, drywall, use a level, plant a garden, and the importance of working hard. Without even knowing it, I also learned what to look for in a husband.

Because he was the ultimate provider, making sure we never went without anything we needed and ensuring that we had most of what we wanted, even if it meant he had to work two jobs, I prayed for a husband who was a hard-worker and good provider. I witnessed my father's love, faithfulness and dedication to my mother first, then to my sister and me, so I prayed for a husband who would sacrificially love me and love our children. By virtue of the chastisement he gave us from toddler to adulthood, I prayed for a husband who knew that love is not just being nice, it also means making the sometimes-difficult decisions to discipline.

While I was a college student, my pastor used to say that a girl learns the first things about how she should be treated by her husband from the way her father treats her and her mother. I am grateful to have had a good example of what it means to be a husband in my father. Daddy loved my mother, lived with her for life, and was faithful and satisfied with my mother. He honored her, made decisions with her, provided for her and ruled his household well. In my earthly father, God gave me the standard for choosing my own husband. In Himself, God gave me the perfect example and He let me know that a husband worth having is a husband worth preparing for and waiting for.

Today, I am happy to say that my prayers, preparation and waiting were answered in the person of Lloyd L. Biddle. Proverbs 18:22-23 states, "He who finds a wife finds a good thing and obtains favor from the Lord." I like to believe that "She who is found by a husband is found by a good thing and also obtains favor from the Lord." Lloyd is truly my "good thing", my treasure. He is who God knew I would need and the man I will always love.

I have been blessed with three wonderful fathers and a fabulous husband: God, Daddy and Lloyd. So, How can I say thanks to them? What is the appropriate response? I will live a godly life in response to the love each one has faithfully given to me.