

## Flashpoint

Why is it so very difficult to remember?

My short-term memory works best by repetition. If you are in my life you will stay in my mind. But if you are not part of my day, you then become part of my long-term memory. To occupy that place means I barely remember you.

Some people would look at this as a blessing. The older we get the more we forget the bad and only remember the good. However it is both the bad and good experiences in life that have made us who we are today.

My first 38 years of life were spent perfecting my sins. I have buried those memories deep within me where they live in the shadows of my heart and mind. But those memories were not meant to be forgotten. I became a believer in Jesus at age 38, but I still carry the good, the bad and the ugly within me at the age of 62.

God in HIS Grace to me rarely brings them to my mind. But, He does so occasionally because there are life lessons in each circumstance of my sins. These lessons add clarity to my faith and energize my continued upward climb in maturity as a believer to be more like HIM.

Not to long ago I was having lunch with my friend Dan. I meet Dan many years ago. I am about 20 years older than Dan. When I was cutting my baby teeth on Scripture and drinking milk Dan was eating meat and lived an outward life of service and obedience to the Lord that all could see.

Dan was mature in his faith already and I looked up to him as a mentor both in his life walk before Christ and the thoughtful words that always came out of him.

Dan was giving me a praise report about his daughter. We all pray for our kids that they would place their faith in Jesus for their salvation. Many of them say they have, but you know as well as I that we cannot see into their heart. So we look for the fruit of good works in their lives that reassure us they truly do love the Lord who waits patiently for them.

Dan loves Christian music as do I. Dan and his wife are part of their church's music team. Dan came across a song that touched his heart so much that he gave it too his daughter. Interesting that someone would give a song as a gift. Yet a song can touch the soul where words alone cannot.

She loved the song not just for the melody but also especially for the lyrics. They continued to fill her mind day and night. She played it over and over. She told Dan how this song touched her heart so much that she was practicing it so she could stand before her Lord in church and sing it as a solo to the congregation.

How awesome it is for a believing parent to hear their child sing before the Lord. It is like proclaiming our faith in baptism. We stand on the stage before the congregation but really we stand alone before the King of Kings and sing to Him alone. When we worship among the many at church and we sing, we too stand alone before the King of Kings and sing to Him alone.

I am sure that Dan looked at His daughter and thought how awesome a proof of her repentant heart it is, for her to be able to sing from her heart to the Lord before witnesses.

Dan is truly blessed to both see and be part of the growth in spiritual maturity of his child. Dan then spoke about what a blessing children are and that he was praying for his older son's confirmation of salvation. That when his son was born and brought home from the hospital he went into the crib late at night and then tenderly lifted his newborn son up high before the Lord in the darkness of the room.

There in the darkness Dan gave back his son to the Lord of light and asked that God would be his true father and that the Lord would guide Dan as his earthly father in the joy of teaching his son about Jesus and Scripture. That Dan would be able to bathe his son in the light of Gods Word through all the years of influence Dan would have; so that his son would grow up to be a man of God.

Hearing that and the emotion that came forth out of Dan humbled me. It showed me two things. First that Dan walks with His Lord and second that Dan truly loves his children. This is the way a believing father in Christ should act on behalf of his child. Dan's sharing sparked a memory from my past about my first-born son that I had buried deep within me because I never wanted to experience its pain again.

Jesus taught people by using contrast and comparison and so in an instant I was back in my child's bedroom in the dark. I too held an infant child up in the air. I was 21 years old at the time.

A year before I was in college, I had wonderful plans for the future. Then I met a girl and together we made a baby. Then we got married. I quit school, and abandoned all my plans for the future.

I became a husband, a provider, and a father all at the same time. Abortion was not an option, doing what was right was everything. And so the disappointments that were Legion inside of me were hid in the recesses of my heart and mind. Legion grew and grew and festered until I found myself filled with rage standing alone in the dark of my tiny 5-month-old sons room.

Like Dan I took my son up in my hands and held him high before me into the air. So sweet, so soft, so precious this small life that had been given to me to care for by a God I did not know.

My hands wanted to squeeze him, my arms wanted to shake him like a rag doll, it was no longer my son and I but God and I locked in a battle. My rage pitted against Gods love both for my child and me.

My little one began to cry; he could feel my rage. The screams inside my head never came out of me, but the tears flooded my vision as I found my self-throwing him onto the bed. In that instant I realized that all the rage I had focused on him should have been focused at me. I was to blame not him.

I gently picked him up into my arms to calm him down for now he was screaming. I fell to my knees quietly sobbing and rocking the both of us. Then the God I did not know calmed both him and I down together as we gently fell asleep in each other's arms.

Two fathers, Dan and I both lifting up the blessing of life given to each of us by God. The one parent knowing God and the responsibility he has before God to raise up a child that knows God.

The other parent a non-believer, lifting up his child in rage because his birth messed up his life. That moment in time happened 40 years ago. Yet, the rage and the pain and the Love for my little one came alive to me again at the moment that Dan brought back this flashpoint of memory to me.

Back then I never would have thought to lift up my firstborn and dedicate his life to serving the Living God. As a non-believer I did not know any better, for my entire life and existence was about me alone. But in 1985 when I became a believer and my first-born was 16 I began lifting him up in prayer before the King of Kings so that someday while we both live I would have the honor of baptizing him in the Name of Jesus and then the joy to do the same for my Grandchildren.

It has been 24 years and that day has not come yet for either him or his brother and my grandchildren. But I live each day in hope, always with a seed in my hand to plant when the opportunities come.

Another person comes to mind that also lifted up a child in prayer to the Living God. This man was very old, his name was Simeon, and his story is in Luke 2, 25-35:

“ Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Christ.

Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying: "Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you now dismiss your servant in peace.

For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all people, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel."

The child's father and mother marveled at what was said about him. Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother: "This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too."

Simeon held the Lord of the Universe in His arms. He could now rest in peace because it would be the Lord who would now hold Simeon in the palm of His Mighty Hands.

God had fulfilled the Messianic promise of the ages to His children that the Messiah of Israel, the Christ of His Church, the SON of GOD would come to earth in human form, to walk among them...and He did.

The word Abba is a beautiful Hebrew word. It is the word we know as Daddy. This is the word God has chosen for describing Himself personally to you and I in HIS Scriptures.

WE are His children and He is our Daddy...if you but know HIM as LORD.

We walk through this life holding onto our Daddy's hand. Then when He takes us through the front door into His house, our house; He will lift us up into His arms and give us a personal tour of the very room He has taken our entire lives to prepare for us to live in.

**You men with children** who are reading this need to know your children are a blessing from the Lord. It is your responsibility to raise up your children to know their Creator and to know the Scriptures that tell the story about the Son of God.

Like John the Baptist, who came to prepare the way for the Lord. You also have been given the honor and the responsibility to prepare the way to your child's heart so they will be able to accept Jesus as their Lord and Savior.

**God calls you** to begin praying for their Salvation from the moment they have life in the womb. Then in LOVE, live your life before them and your wife and your God so there is no question in their minds about whom you belong to and whom you have chosen to serve.

Then maybe God in HIS Mercy to you will bless you by giving you the desire of your heart, the desire of my heart... that each one of our children will become a Child of the KING.