



ABBA, FATHER, DADDY

For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, “Abba! Father!”

—Romans 8:15 (NASB)

I’ve talked about my complicated relationship with my father. My father died this past month, and I’m almost ashamed to say that I don’t feel any different. It’s complicated. Even today when my friends talk about the reverence and respect they feel for their dads, I wish I could join in the conversation. I’ve always seemed to have had an empty hole there. So many times as both a child and as an adult, I’ve wanted to just be able to put my head on his shoulder and say, “Oh, Daddy, let me tell you about . . .” when I fell and scraped my knee, when I suffered the changes of adolescence alone, when I had the normal disappointments and disasters. When I learned I had cancer, I wanted Daddy. At times of fear and times of rejoicing, I wanted a “daddy” there. I felt different and deprived because I missed those things. That’s one of the reasons—besides the fact that I love them more deeply than I

could have imagined—that I desire that loving relationship with my own children and grandchildren.

But then I found something else.

Abba is a Syriac or Chaldee word that is used several times in the New Testament. It is an intimate term for God as father. As intimate as “daddy.” Now I know that I can begin my times with Him, addressing Him in this intimate way. When I’m in His presence, I’m a child wanting the love and protection of his daddy—and that’s important because I never had that love and protection. So that’s how I start my times with Him, sharing my fears and worries, highs and lows, and my deepest feelings with Abba.

Can you imagine that we have an invitation into His room, that we can address the Creator of the universe, the Creator of life as “daddy”? Yes. And sometimes we just need a daddy, don’t we?

April 2013



Dear Mom,

I came to see you last week, but you didn't know me. You are in that final progression of dementia that has taken you away from us. But I cling to the memories of you. And every once in a while, a small window opens that reveals your personality just as it always was. A few weeks ago, I sat holding your hand while you colored in a coloring book. After a few minutes, you looked at me and said, "I know you. And I love you." No more beautiful words have I ever heard. But then you handed me a crayon, and I started coloring on the page with you. You looked at me with that old exasperated look and said, "You never could stay inside the lines."

And I couldn't! And that was the real you shining through the darkness of this evil disease for a flickering moment. How I will always treasure that small moment.

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