

My Father's Daughter

by Kelly J. Brown, July 8, 2004

This little article is dedicated to my father, who wasn't going to be content with just *reading* the scriptures; but in living them out every day — No matter the cost. He has inspired me to live the Holy way, and not what might seem to be the easy way.

~I love you~

“My son, keep your father's command, and do not forsake the law of your mother. Bind them continually upon your heart; tie them around your neck. When you roam, they will lead you; when you sleep, they will keep you; and when you awake, they will speak with you. For the commandment is a lamp, and the law a light.” (Proverbs 6:20~23)

Every time I read the above verse, I am made to stand in awe at the power of God's word. The trueness of the scriptures is so comforting, and the seriousness of the Lords commands to us, so humbling. I have experienced this verse, and continue to experience it daily.

Through no strength of my own, God has given me a heart for the commands of my father, and the law of my mother. And I have found that as I have striven to please my earthly father, as well as my heavenly Father, by obeying this verse, that not only have I obtained a heart for honoring my parents, but I have also come to make those commands and laws my own. This, my friends, is a testimony of God's goodness.

As I observe the convictions and the passions for the things of God in my earthly father, I begin to make myself available more, in helping him. Walking beside him in his ministry; asking for ways I can help him, and pray for him. I want to know more about what he believes. I want to know why he believes, the things he does. As I come to understand more and more each day the kind of “unit” that a family is to function in, I find myself wanting to be involved more. The beautiful thing is, that as I begin supporting my father in his God given ministry, I find that his convictions, are becoming my convictions, his passions, my passions. I daily have to bind them on my heart, and tie them around my neck. (i.e. I saw how important the scriptures were to my father, and so I began studying them more, myself. I could see how seriously he took the restoration of the family in America, and so I began to read about it, talk to him about it, pray about it; and now I long for restoration too! I knew the convictions he held regarding leaving a God honoring legacy to the next generation, and so I found myself striving after that in my own life as well. I began thinking multi-generationally.

After ending a conversation, people began telling me how much they heard my father in me. “I can hear your Dad talking when I listen to you, Kelly!” They laugh, and inside, I feel ten inches taller. I want to sound like him. I want to be like him. The reason for this? I believe it is because I take seriously that verse. I know that God has given me my father for the very specific reason of guiding me through my early years of life, helping me to see clearly the very narrow road before me, and offering me a light, that will help to guide. It is the same light he uses as he walks that road; and so we walk together.

“Character cannot be developed in ease and quiet. Only through experience of trial and suffering can the soul be strengthened, vision cleared, ambition inspired, and success achieved.” — (Helen Keller's Journal)

There have been times when I haven't understood the commands of my father, they haven't made sense to me, nor have they seemed necessary.

I can remember times when a certain issue would come up in our family that my father had strong convictions about. He would sit us down, talk it through with us, ask our opinions, pray with us, etc; and often times, they were things that made me squirm! They made me uncomfortable, because I knew that if I responded in the right way, it would require change in my life; I would have to go out of my comfort zone, and die to myself! (Who wants to do that?)

For example: One struggle I had a particularly hard time with the issue of girls clothing. My father began to feel more and more uncomfortable with allowing us to dress by the worlds standards. Not to say that our clothing was immodest, but that it didn't portray my fathers understanding of the beauty and purity of godly femininity. Also, he believed girls should dress distinctively different than boys. I always thought that I understood the saying: "The way you dress will tell people about your world view," until this issue came up. This issue made me think very, very hard about that saying; and compelled me to ask the question: "Do my clothes make me look set apart? (Which is what I've been called to do, be "set apart".) Do they paint a picture of what I believe?" Unfortunately the answer for me, was no, they didn't. Now, this was a question that came after time. When my father first asked my sisters and I if we would please start wearing more feminine clothing, I think I burst into tears. "The way I dress isn't that big of a deal, as long as it's modest!" I thought. This is only one example out of the few our family has dealt with.

Out of all the members in my family, I am probably the most opinionated and strong willed. My mother and siblings have never had quite as hard a time with these issues, as myself. Although they don't always understand, they're more willing to accept the direction of my father without complaint. I, on the other hand have a tendency towards questioning what he says. "Why?" I want to know. "Why is what you say right? What if I don't hold the same conviction you hold in this area? Why do you have to make choices that will make our family so different from everybody else? Why?" (Sound familiar?)

There are many, many things I appreciate and admire in my father, but one of the things that has meant the very most to me, is the way he responds to my selfish questions. "I know this doesn't make any sense to you." He would often say. "But because I feel so strongly in this area, so convicted by the Lord, I'm asking you to trust me. I know it won't be easy, but I need the support of my family in this. I'm sorry it's painful, but I love you."

You would think that after hearing this response to my complaint, I would be stuffing my mouth with humble pie — but only partly. I would obey, but not for the best of reasons. I wasn't sure of very many things, but this I knew: If I claimed to be a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, then I had no choice but to obey the commands of my father; and so I would find myself saying: "Lord, I don't understand this at all! My flesh is not willing, and so I need your help. Give me a heart that trusts in you *even* when I don't understand."

From there, would begin the long process of slowly handing everything over to the Lord. Spending much, much time in prayer, trying with everything in me to surrender what I wanted for my life, knowing that I was being selfish.

I don't want to be afraid of handing my life over to God. I know people who are miserable, because they live their lives in fear of what might happen if they *do* give everything to God. "He might make me do things I don't want to do!" Some will say. When I hear things like this, my heart cries out to them, and I think to myself: "Oh God, give me a desire to be taken anywhere, a desire to do anything that you would ask of me. I want to be able to look at the future and smile, knowing that it will bring all kinds of surprises from you. I want to look forward to the ways you will stretch me, the ways you will change me, and the ways you will sanctify my soul, so that I might be more like your Son; and right now, help me to be content in knowing that You are revealing things to my father, for our good."

After having thoughts like this going through my mind, during these times, I wish I could tell you that there was an immediate change. I wish I could tell you that I never complained again; that I trusted without question, and lived happily ever after. But the truth is that these things had to be worked on by the Lord in my heart over a period of time. It was a matter of dying to myself every time the issue came up. It was a time of soaking myself in the word of God, seeking wisdom, direction, and guidance.

As I look back now, on all those issues that made me squirm, a smile comes over my face, because now they fill me with gratefulness to the God of the universe. I'm so thankful that He would chose to enlighten my eyes to the truth of God's word, a truth that so many people don't know! I even have a whole soap box on dressing feminine, now. It's a strong conviction I hold. You see, because I was faithful in obeying, even when I didn't understand, God blessed me, with a change of heart. Not only do I obey and honor the commands of my father and mother, the convictions they hold are convictions I hold now! My heart was melted, and God convicted me in those same areas my father had conviction in. I can hardly believe myself, (knowing where I came from) when I hear myself telling my mother: "Mama, even if you and Papa took back all of those convictions you hold, and said that we could make our own choices about those things, I wouldn't change! I would go right on doing those things, you requested of us, because I believe so strongly in them now." Only by the grace of God can I say that today, and by the grace of God that verse holds true in my life. The commands of my father and the laws of my mother are in my mind and in my heart all the time. When I sleep, they comfort me, and when I'm awake, they speak with me. They do so because God promised they would — if I would trust in them.

Post Script:

I understand that some of you may be asking *this* question after reading my testimony. "What if I don't have a father that is involved? What if my father isn't guiding me in that way? How can I be shaped and challenged?"

I can say this: If this is the case in your life, I would encourage you to find a godly man that knows God's word, and loves God's word. A man you can trust. Maybe it's an Uncle, a Grandfather, or a pastor. Ask him to shepherd you. Maybe it's your mother.

A man once asked his father why he loved the scriptures so much. How come he knew so much about what the Bible said; and his father answered this way: "When I was a young boy, my father died, and the only other father I had, was my heavenly one. I wanted to spend as much time with him as I could, and get to know him. I read, and read, and read God's word."

Oh, ladies, if nothing else, do this. Immerse yourself in it. Soak yourself in it. Develop a taste for the word of God by reading it continually. The Lord will bless your obedience. He will convict your hearts, and challenge your thinking. He will cause you to grow — if you trust what He says.