

REFLECTIONS

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**Train up a child in the way he should go,
And when he is old he will not depart
from it.**

Proverbs 22:6NKJV

My Mentor

What a joy it is to watch my sons being fathers. They are so good at it—dedicated and loving in the manner they teach, guide, and direct their children in preparation for life. They take such care to shape the way each of my grandchildren should uniquely go. It's just the way my dad did for my brother and me.

My dad was my mentor. From the lessons he learned from his own walk down life's pathway, he blazed a trail for me to follow. It was blazed with his words of wisdom; and it was blazed by sharing the successes he enjoyed and the disappointments he suffered. But I think I learned the most from simply watching him live.

Whether in running his business, serving his church, or being with friends, Daddy was a very caring man. I might describe him as an encourager. He once encouraged a security guard to submit his poetry for publication. And with the gift of a set of oils, he encouraged a once fledgling artist to pursue a career that eventually led to world renown.

Daddy was himself gifted with an artist's brush, and he had a beautiful singing voice. God blessed him with these gifts and he shared them willingly with others. In the ways he used his giftedness, he encouraged me to use my gifts too.

But maybe I learned most from Daddy from the love he lived—for his parents, for my mom, for my brother and me, for his friends, and for our Lord. He was so considerate, so caring, and so very committed to all of us. It is the quality I cherish most and the one I seek most to pass along.

Daddy was my mentor. He gave me life and then shaped the way I have lived it by the way he lived his. It's what God calls fathers to do. It is what our heavenly Father does for us. God gives us life then He shapes it to be just the way He planned. He plans our life experiences to mold us into who we are, to develop the talents we have, and to prepare us for the opportunities to use them.

In the latter years of my dad's life, I often told him that I loved him. But I'm not so sure that I ever thanked him for his guidance. So, I thank him now. I thank him for the life he gave me and for shaping the way I have lived it with the way he lived his. That's what mentors do.

And that's why it brings such joy to watch my sons be mentors too.

"You are the light of the world,"

Richard +

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