



REFLECTIONS

March 14, 2010

**If one falls down, his friend can help him up.
But pity the man who falls and has no one to
help him up!**

Ecclesiastes 4:10

Old Friends

My wandering mind often takes me back to the place where I grew up—a sandy little town where water is scarce, trees are sparse, and the wind is frequent. But it is not those things that are memorable to me. It is the people I knew there. Today I remember some former classmates who shared my path if only for a brief time.

The first is the friend that moved to town, became my daily companion, then moved away again. I remember flying kites with him in the cotton field not far from my house, and we dug an underground hideout in the vacant lot across the street. And after he moved away I wrote him a letter. I can still feel my disappointment when it was returned, “Addressee Unknown.” Today I remember the fun we had together and the disappointment I felt when he moved away, yet I can’t remember his name.

In the eighth grade another kid moved to town. He had a formal sounding name that he didn’t like, so we gave him one that he did. He had come from Arkansas, so for the rest of his life everyone knew him only as Arky.

Arky was a kid who enjoyed the spotlight and he found it with mischievous behavior. His antics frequently disrupted the classroom, but the wry grin that came over his face made it hard for the teachers to really become angry with him. I think it was that grin that made him so likeable, although I was never very close with him. His antics made me a little afraid. But he was a close enough friend for me to visit in the hospital when he was involved in an accident.

The same year Arky moved to town, James moved away. He had been my closest friend in younger years. When he moved, I felt that a little part of me moved with him. Recently I tracked James down on the internet and we have renewed our friendship. We have shared memories and old snapshots that have refreshed the joy of the good-ole days.

As memories of these old friends bounce through my mind, my fondness for them has surfaced again. The time I had with them was brief, but even if I can’t remember one’s name and wasn’t close with another, I can see how they blessed my life.

I can only pray that I might have also been a blessing to theirs.

“You are the light of the world.”

Richard +

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