



# REFLECTIONS

January 27, 2013—Refreshed from June 25, 2006

**Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.**

*1 Thessalonians 5:16-18*

## Renewals

That day the cemetery was as hot and dusty as I expected it to be, but I wanted to visit Millie's grave. She had been an important person in my life and I had not attended the service to honor her life. While we were there we also located Mike's resting place. Mike had been a close friend whose life was suddenly taken only a few short weeks after our high school graduation and his gravesite restored some painful memories. I recalled the shock we were in, the fragility of life that stunned our minds, and the harsh realities we experienced as we lowered his casket into his grave. Gratefully though time has been kind. It has graciously dimmed the memories, and softened the pain.

But that year I did not go to my hometown in dusty northwest Texas to visit the cemetery and relive old pains. The occasion was the all-school reunion and the renewal with high school classmates and other friends from my roots. Our class members have remained close, so every reunion begins as if we had seen each other only yesterday. Renewals offer time for us to catch up on what has happened since we last met and to relive the fun, the mischief, the pretty girls from other towns, and the jokes we played on our teachers (who really weren't as old then as we thought they were.) The time together was uplifting and as we parted, our relationships were revitalized and our bonds strengthened.

As I reflected on those days with my friends, I also remembered and relived other important times in my life. One of those was church camp. I remembered my first year at camp and how close I felt to God and how inspiring it was as I joined many other campers in accepting Jesus Christ as my Savior. I never wanted to lose the closeness to God I felt that night. But time has dimmed that memory too, and diminished the effect those days had on my life.

I'm grateful that God allows time to dim memories and diminish pain as a way to heal brokenness. But time dims and softens good memories too. That is why renewals are so important. Renewals rekindle memories and revitalize feelings.

Prayer is a renewal with God. Prayer is uplifting and through prayer relationship with him is revitalized and the bond strengthened. When we pray continually, we discover that God is always there.

And in his presence there is joy and peace no matter the circumstances.

*You are the light of the world,*

*Richard +*

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