



# *REFLECTIONS*

October 29, 2023

**"Only be careful, and watch yourselves closely so that you do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them slip from your heart as long as you live. Teach them to your children and to their children after them."**

*Deuteronomy 4:9*

## **A Gift That Keeps on Giving**

A recent reading carried me back in time, my own time. The reading told of a letter the author wrote to his grandson for his birthday. But it was more than a letter from a grandfather. It was a gift, when opened again and again in later years, that would help Benjamin know things about himself and the world that he otherwise may not have bothered to wonder. Those things mostly involved family values, legacies received, and distinguishing characteristics passed along through the generations.

The letter spoke of realities of the times of its writing bundled with glimpses into Benjamin's deeper roots that helped explain some of the mysteries of the times of its reading while also offering peeks into the days and years still to come. The grandfather revealed the truth through stories about ancestors, the good and the bad in them, that suggest if not explain, reasons for traditions, personality traits and points of view passed through the generations.

At some point in life most of us express an interest in who we are and in those people whose lives trace through our veins. And maybe Moses wasn't talking only about God's commands and the Israelites' escape from slavery when He wrote: *"Teach them to your children and to their children after them."*

Personally, I think we should all write such a letter to explain that we love because we were loved, or go in search of love because we weren't, and to reveal derogatory views held toward other races, religious beliefs, or cultures because someone of influence had derogatory views of them. Or how the choice of vocation was made because "that's what Daddy wanted." Or muster the courage and grace to face a challenging time because that's what you saw your grandmother do.

Certainly, without the context of how our family histories shaped our lives, our enigmatic wisdom will be falteringly incomplete. But when they are passed to us, and we pass them on to others—well—

they will be a gift that keeps on giving.

*"You are the light of the world."*

*Richard* +

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