

# Have I Told You Lately That I Love You?

by **Linda Kipley**



Sorting through boxes in my storage room is never on the top of my “Things to Do” list. Maybe that is why it took me thirteen years to find my surprise, or perhaps it was a divine appointment that in an instant brought the God of the universe into a small room where His presence was tangible enough to be felt.

My dad had died from a sudden heart attack thirteen years ago. I was devastated by his death. Being a “Daddy’s girl” for forty-four years had not been nearly long enough. At that time Dad and I were in the midst of coping with Mom’s death just five years earlier. We were heartbroken that she was gone before we could say goodbye. Our farewell words of endearment fell unanswered onto her lifeless body. Not being able to say goodbye to my dad obviously crushed me. There was so much I wanted to ask him.

Living over a thousand miles apart made it difficult to keep in touch. Dad had phoned me a few months prior to his death, totally excited over an encounter he’d had with God. He said it had changed his life. Wow! That was an amazing answer to prayer. Dad had been wrestling with God for years and especially since Mom’s death. He struggled with wanting to be with her in heaven, yet unable to settle deep issues that could only happen between him and God.

“Dad, can you tell me about your conversation with God?” I asked, hoping he would describe the details of that awesome event.

Dad promised to come for a visit as soon as possible and face-to-face tell me all about his conversion. Unfortunately, that visit never came to pass. Even though I was consoled that he was in heaven with Mom, I felt robbed of our conversation. Hadn’t mother’s death taught me that life was short and not to wait? I was heartbroken that my opportunity was gone.

Now, thirteen years later, on Father’s Day, all this surfaced once again as I rummaged through boxes from Dad’s house. These boxes had arrived with water damage and were sitting in storage, awaiting my assessment of what could be salvaged. One of the boxes held assorted memorabilia including musty albums full of pictures of relatives and friends, most of whom I did not recognize. I read

mildew-stained letters saved from my college days and sorted through birthday cards yellowed from age.

On the bottom of this box I discovered old cassette tapes Dad saved of favorite songs he recorded from the radio. Most of the cassettes were moldy and brittle. Many were not even playable. After going through a dozen or more of the tapes, and mostly hearing old country western songs like “Have I Told You Lately That I Love You?” on the ones that did play, I was about to throw the remainder of the cassette tapes out when I decided to listen to one more tape.

Suddenly I heard Dad’s voice! It felt as if Dad was sitting across from me in that storage room. My heart skipped a beat as he began to speak. It was a recording of his testimony spoken the day of his baptism. His words flooded my heart, fulfilling my desire for that one last conversation with Dad. He was answering all my questions as if he had already known what they were. He spoke of his renewed heart so beautifully and I felt his love, all the while sensing the pleasure of my heavenly Father.

So humbled by this timeless experience, I sat in the now silent room and thanked my heavenly Father over and over for this priceless treasure waiting for me to discover. Finally I was able to say goodbye to my dad knowing where I will find him one day. My once orphaned heart no longer feels the pain of a loss, just loneliness from being separated for a brief time here on earth. My message from Dad is forever tucked away in a safe place.

“Happy Father’s Day, Dad. Have I told you lately that I love you?”