

A Father's Joy
Joseph Herrin (07/06/98)

Tonight my heart is full. It is odd how a full heart has such a connection to one's eyes. They won't quit filling up with tears. I must have wiped the moisture away from them a dozen times already. I know it is joy, deep joy, that courses through my soul tonight. God is massaging my heart with the hands of a little girl.

I remember thinking about being a father while yet a youth. It has long been something that appealed to me. I dreamed of having a large family one day, like the Walton's. I knew early that children are God's blessing, and I desired to be blessed.

God has given me a bride who shares my love of children and acknowledges the blessing of them. We anxiously awaited the birth of our firstborn. God blessed us with a son, Joshua Caleb, but while still in the womb he went to be with our Lord and Savior. "The firstborn male who opens the womb is holy unto God." I never doubted that God is a God of love, but my heart ached greatly.

In my sorrow God spoke to me. "I am going to give you a little girl and her name will be Kristin Noel." I had never considered naming a girl this name. I told my wife what God had spoken and we agreed that it sounded like a Christmas name. Three weeks later, Tony knew she was pregnant and that her due date would be around Christmas. Kristin Noel arrived into our hearts and lives on December 29th, 1987. My heart has been singing ever since.

Two years later God repeated the blessing and brought us a son to hold and cherish. Josiah Thomas knows how to elicit the fervent love of his parents. He doesn't do anything special to bring this passion forth from us, he simply is who he is. His mother and I can't help loving him (we wouldn't want to stop if we could).

It is a daughter, however, that has brought tears to her father's eyes today. I can't help it. My heart is moved. After church a change of plans is mentioned. Kristin, now 10 years old, has announced that we have been invited to a day at the lake with friends. Rides on a pontoon boat add to the attraction of this offer. My little girl's eyes are excited.

I tell her that I don't know if I can do this today. My uncle Dan, who is visiting from 3,000 miles away, is with us today and I had hoped that our family would spend some time with him. I see disappointment in my child's eyes, but she hasn't given up all hope. Mommy has yet to speak.

I speak with my wife and she also would like to go to the lake, as would my son. I tell them that I had hoped they would visit with my uncle, who is one of my favorites. They are not easily persuaded. They show concern for my desires, but the allure of the lake is too strong. I relent and tell them it will be alright if they go. I will spend some time alone with my uncle. They seem happy and all is settled.

I go to the car and my uncle settles in beside me in the front passenger seat. I feel that this turn of events is probably from the Lord and will allow me to have a good serious time of discussion with my uncle. Suddenly, the rear car door opens and a young lady who I know very well climbs in and buckles up. It is Kristin. I ask her, "Have you decided to go with us?"

I look at her as she answers, "Yes."

Something about her demeanor captures my attention. I see a serious resolve in her eyes to be with her Daddy, but I know that she has made a hard decision in turning down a day at the lake. Kristin has shown tremendous sensitivity recently to the feelings of others, and there is no one she is more sensitive to than her Daddy.

I tell her, "Kristin, it really is alright if you want to go to the lake. If you would like to do so, I will come by later and spend time with you this evening."

She sees that I am really okay with this and that my feelings are not hurt by her decision to go. Slowly she exits the car and I tell her I love her and will see her later.

But, there is no hope for my heart. It is overwhelmed for the day. I have seen a child's compassion for her father and I am ruined. What concern is this in a tender heart that will give up a day at the lake to bring solace to a father's heart. This is selfless love. She has put pleasing her father above her own desires. I am undone.

Heavenly Father, you said you would turn the hearts of the fathers to the

children and the hearts of the children to the fathers. I have experienced this today and my heart is moved within me. When will these eyes stop watering?

It was such a simple act. She esteemed me above herself. It is such an unusual act in a selfish world. I am touched by the profoundness of it. A little child has overcome the world. She has turned her back on selfish impulse and has made a conscious choice to honor her father. She has exercised command over the flesh, for me.

Keep your fancy cars and luxurious homes. Don't even try to tempt me with titles or position. I have been touched by the heart of my child this day and I am full to bursting. Just look at these eyes, they cannot hold back the floods of joy. It is well with my soul.

I have no want. I am the richest man in the world today. "The glory of the fathers is their children." My head is wreathed in glory today. Thank you Lord for a compassionate daughter.

Father, is your heart so easily moved, also?