

A Dear John letter worth sharing

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Is there any son or daughter in this world who is not thrilled by the declaration of "I'm proud of you" from a parent?" I know how it was for me. Few things in my life have ever touched me as much as the words my dad shared with me in the first letter I ever received from him. In many ways, it helped bring the "Prodigal" back home. It's a 21 year old "Dear John" letter worth sharing.

Dear John: Your mother and I have been asked by Mike Oliver to write you a letter in support of your planned "Walk to Emmaus" in January. It is supposed to be an opportunity for us to express our appreciation of you and what our relationship means and has meant over the years.

When you were little, I had the same close relationship with you that I had with the other boys, and I realize now that when you were in Jr. High, I let you down by not being as involved with you in your activities as I was with the other boys. I also did not understand your sensitivity to other people at that time, and when you came home with a peace symbol, I never gave you an opportunity to state a position. I had my mind made up, and did not care to be confused by the facts. I was critical of your friends, and thus alienated you and never really re-established a close bond with you. I regret that now, and if I had the opportunity to re-run that part of the race, I would move up to scouts when you did, to try to gain back the son that I had "lost" with a few hasty words.

You are in the correct field. From the time you were in Sr. High, I began to see the potential, and it really came out while you were in college. I felt that ministry was where you belonged, but I was not the one to whom you came for advice in those days. I will admit that I was quite pleased when you finally made the decision to enter the ministry, and I am very proud of you and your accomplishment in dedicating yourself to a life of service to others. You will never know the sense of pride we felt at your ordination. Your mother stood and walked alone for the first time after the accident, and held her head high the whole way down the isle. That event inspired her to do what very few believed could be done.

Your accomplishments in school, in scouts, and now as a person have been sources of pride to us which you will recognize when you have children of your own. The greatest gift any parent can receive is to have a child do well, and the highest feelings of ecstasy are realized in the accomplishments of your off-spring. When you do well, we glory.

Keep up your good works, son, and hold the hand of Him whom you have vowed to follow. Your earthly parents love you very much, and are very proud of you. Your Heavenly Father must be even more so. Love, Dad.

I hope each of you parents is smart enough to tell your children how proud you are of them. But not just parents - grandparents, aunts and uncles, teachers, Sunday School teachers, and everyone else! Just as God said to Jesus, "You are my beloved son. With you I am well pleased," so do we need to let those young ones who are entrusted to our care know that we are pleased with them -- pleased for the kind of young men and young women they are becoming, and pleased that God has brought them our way.

Why not write a "Dear John" letter today and let them know? (or a Dear Bobby or a Dear Darla, etc.!) It can change a life. It did mine.