

Excerpts From
FATHER'S DAY

Jason S. Glenn
Ronald L. Glenn

Sigfam Media Group, LLC

P.O. Box 27
Wilberforce, Ohio 45384
<http://www.sigfam.com>

Copyright ©
2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009
Jason S. Glenn and Ronald L. Glenn
All rights reserved.
ISBN 0-9767146-4-7
Printed in the United States of America

Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture quotations in this publication are taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version NIV Copyright 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan Publishing House. All rights reserved.

2. A Funny Thing Happened While I Was Washing My Car

I got up early one Saturday morning and decided to go wash my car. The day at that point was nothing out of the ordinary, just a regular Saturday. The sun was shining. The birds were chirping. Everything was as good as it could be for a guy in my situation.

I had just finished scrubbing my tires, when I noticed this church group walking through my apartment complex. They were all dressed in matching T-shirts and holding those little cans with the slits in the top that people usually carry when they are going around asking for money. It turns out that they were collecting donations for the youth group at their church. One of the ladies in the group, who looked about my age, maybe a few years older, walked up to me and asked for a donation. I didn't have much cash on me, but I had just finished cleaning out the interior of my car. I had some spare change in my pocket that I had found underneath one of my seats. I plopped a couple of quarters down in her can and went back to washing my car.

However, the lady said that the purpose of the group's excursion was not only to collect donations, but to testify and spread the Word. Therefore, she began to talk to me about Jesus and his love. At some point she asked me if I knew Jesus. I exclaimed that my father is a preacher and has been all of my life, so Jesus and I have met--even though I don't keep in touch with him as often as I should. She apparently saw this as her opportunity to help me get back in touch with Jesus, and invited me to her church on Sunday. It seemed like a reasonable proposition at the time, so I told her I would think about it. She then became thrilled at the idea that she had possibly just saved another heathen, and continued the

conversation with much zeal. She told me a little bit about herself. She was recently divorced, she had two kids, and she just started a new job that she was really excited about. Then she began to ask about me. I told her that I was in school and that I have a baby daughter.

"A baby girl?" she exclaimed. "How precious! Do you have any pictures?"

Although I did have a picture of her in my wallet, I lied and said no. I'm not sure why, but I just didn't feel comfortable showing my daughter's picture to a complete stranger. There probably was no harm in doing so, but I decided to play it safe.

"What's her name?" she asked.

"Dallas," I replied.

Then a funny thing happened. At the mere mention of my daughter's name, the lady immediately cocked her head back and frowned up her face as if someone had just forced her to suck on a peeled lemon.

"Why you name that baby a man's name?" she spewed. I have to admit, the question caught me off guard. Granted, Dallas Glenn, my daughter's namesake, was a man. He was my great-grandfather. That is one of the main reasons why the name Dallas has meaning for me. Naming my daughter Dallas gives her a link to her history. Every time someone calls her name, they are invoking the spirit of one of her paternal ancestors. I hope that it will, in turn, act as a reminder that she will always be blanketed with the love and protection of not only her father, but also her grandfather and her great-grandfather and her great-great-grandfather, and the list goes on. One of the things that I also liked about my daughter's name is that it is versatile--gender neutral. I have, contrary to popular belief, actually come across several women named Dallas. It's a name that can be masculine when referring to a male, and feminine when referring to a female.

Nevertheless, I feel like in either case, it has strength and character, and I like that.

I didn't really feel the need to defend my decision to name my daughter Dallas, especially to some stranger, but I thought I could possibly enlighten the lady. Consequently, I took the time to explain the meaning behind my daughter's name. In spite of the fact that I didn't owe her any explanation in the first place, the lady was obviously not satisfied with the one I gave. She told me that her pastor had just preached a sermon on this topic. She began to quote some obscure scripture passage--something that included the phrase, "...and the children shall be named...", or something like that. Then she said, "You have to take something like naming a child seriously. You don't know. Naming that child a man's name might make her grow up to be a lesbian or something."

In a surprisingly calm tone, I explained my theory that lesbianism had less to do with one's name, and more to do with one's desire to sleep with women. Unfortunately, my hypothesis fell on deaf ears. I then became really annoyed, to say the least.

Now, normally, if I find myself in a situation where I think someone is talking complete nonsense, then I will just walk away. I don't normally lash out at the offender or engage in confrontation, but in this case I was at my house, minding my own business and this lady came and forced her unsolicited, unwanted opinion on me. Therefore, I didn't think I should be the one to leave. Plus, I hadn't yet rinsed my car. I felt backed into a corner, and if I followed my normal *modus operandi*, it would mean interrupting what I was doing. In addition, I think fathers, especially fathers of little girls, have an inherent instinct to want to protect their children from would-be threats, even if the threat happens to be the benign, nonsensical, ramblings of a stranger. I would like to tell you that I summoned the infinite wisdom passed down to me from

my father and his father and his father before him. I would like to say that I then used that wisdom to say something profound, poignant, and meaningful; but, alas, I was left to my own devices. I turned to the lady, and interjected in the middle of her Jesus tirade, something that I have to admit could be viewed as a bit mean-spirited. I said, "You know, Roushedra, you may have a point. Maybe I should be concerned about the affect that my daughter's name will have on her in the future because it's obvious that your name must be what turned you ugly."

For some reason, she didn't seem at all pleased with the fact that I had taken her words of wisdom into account. In fact, she promptly popped open her can, gave me my quarters back, quoted some more Bible verses, told me I needed Jesus, and stormed off. Initially, I found it ironic that the conflict between this lady and me started because she insulted me; yet, in the end, she decided that I was the one who needed Jesus. Now that I think about it, maybe she was right. I think that God has a sense of humor. So maybe, in His own comical way, God was trying to show me that I do need Jesus.

Once again, I have to admit that Jesus and I don't always talk as much as maybe we should. I, like so many others, am wrestling with questions of faith, and I'm far from the end of my spiritual journey. However, I do believe in the lessons that Jesus taught--the universal lessons of love and respect and caring for others--the lessons that I learned from my father that were passed down from his father, and his father before him, and so on.

I'm sure that there probably was a better way to respond to the lady's comments that morning. I still have many lessons to learn, lessons that I may one day be able to give to my daughter from my own bank of fatherly wisdom. I'm sure that there will once again come a time when I will feel the need to spring to my daughter's defense; and just maybe, Jesus willing,

with the help of my paternal ancestors, when that time comes, I'll be able to say something profound, poignant and meaningful.

jsg

Epilogue

My wife and I have two sons. The younger is twenty-nine years old. The older is thirty-one, the co-author of this book, and the father of our precious granddaughter. Many years ago on Father's Day, I wrote a poem that expressed the panoply of feelings that I felt as I considered my state in life. My boss at work could not disguise his irritation at my way of handling issues in the workplace. My friends sometimes seemed to be more distant and less friendly. The one source of unmitigated support was these two boys who clearly weren't old enough to know better. It is this poem that I first published in *STILL LIFE* that closes this meandering collection of reflections.

Who Are These Boys?

who are these boys?
these sons of mine
they trouble me
with their toys
that multiply and invade my space
the teddy bear and blocks
cars and trains
that find their way to my bed
to stiffen and lump up my mattress
and pillow
who are these boys? these sons of mine
they bother me so at night
with their questions
who, daddy, who?
what, daddy, what?
why, daddy, why?

and they want to hear stories
about goblins, fairies, bears
and such
they listen in wonder and
amazement about things that
never were
and never will be
who are these boys? these sons of mine
they shadow me
everywhere I go
I sneak away to the den
just for a moment of quietness
peaceful reflection, you understand
a moment just to
think, meditate
or read the funny pages
and then I hear them breathing down my neck
nipping at my heels again
who are these boys? these sons of mine
they amaze me so
that they can look at me
with all these moles on my face
and tires around my waist
and extra chins and such
all these flaws that any idiot can see
yet all they see
these sons of mine
as they throw
their grubby little arms around my neck
and squeeze and hug and hold me close
all they see
these sons of mine
is daddy rlg

Your sons will take the place of your fathers; you will make them princes throughout the land. I will perpetuate your memory through all generations; therefore the nations will praise you for ever and ever. (Psalm 45:16-17).