



June 1, 2026

A FATHERS' DAY LETTER

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“Train children in the right way, and when old they will not stray.”

Proverbs 22:6

When my grandmother died back in 2003 at the ripe old age of 100, one of the items that was passed down the family tree to me was my father's Purple Heart from WW II. As you probably know, it's a medal awarded to soldiers wounded in combat. I am certain many of you also count one of these among your family heirlooms- displayed in a shadow box or secured in the top dresser drawer next to your church socks and passport.

When I finally got around to examining it closely, I found inside the case an old letter, wrinkled and yellow, written for Fathers' Day 1945 by my father to his grandfather, the man who raised him. Sadly, my grandparents divorced when my father was a boy and his “real” father took no further interest in his upbringing.

Given Memorial Day has just passed, Fathers' Day is later this month and our nation is again at war (at least as of this writing) I thought it might be fitting to share this 80-year old letter.

It reads as follows:

*“For Fathers Day: Dear Pal,
I guess this is a rather unusual remembrance [a Purple Heart]
but I felt sure you'd understand it's significance to me and so
realize it as a tribute to your efforts on my behalf.*

It represents to me far more than my sweat and blood since these things are incidental to my efforts to lead my men in combat as faithfully and well as you've stuck by me. They gave to me so much more than was necessary when the risk involved the ultimate sacrifice that I cannot but feel that I was in some small way successful. And I hope you've the same feeling towards me because then I'll feel as if I've repaid you in the only way I know you want to be repaid. No one could ask for or desire a finer father than yourself.”

It's obvious my father thought his grandfather had filled in admirably as a father-figure. I never did meet him as he died shortly after this letter was written. Time can polish one's reputation, but by all accounts my great-grandfather was of first-rate character; a freight agent for the railroad who first visited Beulah in 1908. According to the family stories he enjoyed Crystal Lake, golf and poker.

Scripture places great importance on the care and nurturing of the family, both immediate and extended. Verses range from the stern admonition to deadbeat dads in I Timothy 5:8 and the fatherly coaching of Ephesians 6:4, to the exulted definition of “pure religion” as the caring for orphans and widows per James 1:27.

While the intact nuclear family may be considered the ideal arrangement, it is not the reality for many. Most divorced men are dedicated and loving fathers despite difficult

circumstances. Family life and fatherhood even under the best of circumstances comes with many trials.

Thus, in keeping with the positive spirit of the letter above and in recognition of Fathers' Day in its broadest context, I would like to thank all the fathers, grandfathers, step-fathers, big brothers, uncles, and others who provide paternal love and guidance in all its various forms, when and where it's needed.

“With upright heart he tended them, and guided them with skillful hand.” Psalm 78:72

~Written by Jim Trent

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