

LETTERS FROM GRANDPA
(Special Mother's Day Letter)

Dearest grandchild,

Since tomorrow is Mother's Day today's letter will be a tribute to mothers. In addition to my own mother, my thoughts on Mother's Day invariably revert back to the booklet *Meditations For Mother* by Michael Craig Pratt. Mike was a student at the Ozark Bible College and worked as a youth minister at our church. On July 23, 1966 his mother, Leona Pratt, was in a plane crash that killed her husband Harold, and her daughter Marilee. Leona suffered 52 fractures but miraculously survived. During her six months in the hospital Mike wrote her many letters of encouragement. His letter of Nov. 28, 1966 expressed optimism that she might "possibly be HOME for Christmas". She was! Throughout the remainder of his life Mike devoted himself to cheering up his mother. Some of these many messages are contained in his booklet. Mike also died in a plane crash on Dec. 24, 1974. He was only 26 years old. It was my privilege to collect some of these meditations and put them in print.

The Dedication Page of the booklet features this beautiful tribute by an unknown author: *"My mother – She carried me under her heart; Loved me before I was born; Took God's hand in hers and waded through the Valley of Shadows that I might live; Bathed me when I was helpless; Clothed me when I was naked; Fed me when I was hungry; Rocked me to sleep when I was weary, and sang to me with the voice of an angel; Held my hand when I learned to walk; Suffered with my sorrow; Laughed with my joy; Glowed with my triumph, and while I knelt by her side, she taught my lips to pray. Through all the days of my youth she gave strength for my weakness, courage for my despair and hope to fill my hopeless heart; Was loyal when other failed; Was true when tried by fire; Was my friend when my other friends were gone; Prayed for me through all the days, when flooded with sunshine or saddened by shadows; Though we lay down our lives for her we can never pay the debt we own to a mother."*

On the second anniversary of the plane crash his mother was continuing to improve. Mike was on a mission trip and wrote to her from Africa: *"Two years ago today was July 23, 1966. These past two years have been a time of testing and challenge for us, but I also feel they have been a time of great growth in the Lord . . . Thank you, Mom, for being an example of faith and courage to me, and a source of love and strength. You have come a long, long way these past 2 years, and let us serve Jesus together to the end, and give Him our all, ever as He has given us His all! May God watch over you, and direct you, as you live for Him!"*

On April 7, 1969 he wrote: *"Dearest Mom, I wish to thank you for being a really wonderful mother to me. I have learned some important lessons from you, and I hope they will stick. Thank you especially for your unselfish attitude which you have always shown forth to me . . ."*

On Mother's Day 1969 he sent this article entitled "I AM TIED DOWN" *"I am tied down by clothes lines on which I hang small blue and yellow rompers, by strings and common place thread with which I sew on buttons, mend wee pockets, patch faded, thread bare little suits. I am also tied down by red jumping ropes and also by ropes that pull small wooden animals about. I am also tied down by clean white gauze with which I kiss and bind the wounds of my children. Most of all I am tied down by baby arms around my neck. Yes! Thank God I am tied down!"*

On April 28, 1970 he reminded her that *"Worry is a thin stream of fear trickling through the mind. If encouraged, it cuts a channel into which all other thoughts are drained"*.

On May 8, 1972 he wrote: *“Perhaps Today! Perhaps this very day Jesus Christ will come back to earth and say ‘Gentlemen, it’s closing time!’ And all the hellish schemes of men will come to one catastrophic conclusion, and all the machinery of earth will come to a grinding halt! The fact is that Jesus Christ is coming back again!”*

To a group of graduates Mike gave this timely advice: *“Be selective in what you think and do! Our many experiences are as strokes of the artist’s brush, shaping and tinting each of our characters in sometimes very subtle ways . . . Always remember that Jesus Christ, our Lord, Master, Savior, teaches us the true beauty of unselfish giving. Let us strive to pattern our lives after the One who has opened the door to life, and life more abundant. Jesus Christ – The Way of Fulfillment!”*

Mike said many times that *“We cannot afford to get our roots so deeply in the things of this world that we would not be ready to leave it in a moment’s notice.”* That moment came for Mike December 24, 1974. He was on his way home for Christmas flying a small private plane. He encountered severe icing north of Ft. Leonard Wood, Mo. which resulted in structural failure. The wing of his plane came off in flight and was found a quarter mile from the crash site. These words are on his tomb stone - **“For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain” (Phil. 1:21).**

Mike loved and encouraged his mother while he had the chance. We should do the same.

I love you,

Grandpa Boyce

The link to *Meditations for Mother* is:

https://boycemouton.com/downloads/Meditations_For_Mother.pdf