

Daddy

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I am grateful that I have been given the opportunity to write about H.E. Phillips, who is my Daddy. I wish to express my appreciation to brother Mike Willis for this issue of Guardian of Truth which is devoted to pay tribute to H.E. Phillips. I did not inherit any of Daddy's ability to write but I will try to express my heart in this article and hopefully those who read it will see H.E. Phillips through the eyes of a daughter.

I want to say from the beginning that my two sisters, Carolyn King of Shelbyville, Tennessee, and Juanita Dennis, of Tampa, Florida share the same love and respect for Daddy as I do, so I write this tribute on their behalf.

How does one start to talk about another who has had so much influence on her life? The first thoughts of Daddy that come to my mind was when I was about five years old. Daddy always had his office in our house and he spent most of his time in his office studying and writing. At that age I knew that Daddy's office was important because his books were special to him and that is where he would go every morning all dressed up in his shirt and tie (which he still does to this day). He would let me play around him and pull up a chair to sit by him at his desk. I would watch him open his mail or read a book and I would pretend to be his helper. I felt important to him and this started a relationship with a Father who still shows love and care.

Growing up in our home was quite different from most. Our house has been described as Grand Central Station by some. Over the years we have had a lot of people in our home and even some who lived with us for awhile. As I think back, I believe the reason we always had so many in our home is the simple fact that Daddy and Mother love people. Other than just having company over, we usually had the preacher in our home when there was a gospel meeting at the congregation and that was fun to me, even if I had to give up my bedroom for a week. I was fortunate to grow up in a preacher's home because I was exposed to many good people. Around our dinner table many funny stories were exchanged and important Bible matters discussed with family and friends.

When I was about nine years old, Daddy took me to a couple of meetings in the Alabama and Tennessee area. It was when the institutional issues were beginning to divide some churches and Daddy was asked to preach on these subjects. I can remember feeling special to be taking my Mother's place and taking care of "the preacher." By the time that I got back home I had heard so much about widows and orphan homes, church supported schools, etc., that I probably could have preached two or three good sermons on the institutional issues. These are just a few of the things I remember about Daddy when I was young.

When I started dating, Daddy had some rules that seemed to be rather strict such as: he had to know who you were going with, where you were going, and when you were to be home. The curfew was usually 11:00 p.m. and you dare not be a minute late because, if you were, he would be waiting for you and your date. I can remember my oldest brother-in-law Hugh say that, when he married my sister Carolyn, they were going to stay out all night long but I don't think they ever did. As I look

back now, I am glad that Daddy did have rules for us in dating. Those rules don't seem so rigid now that I have a teenage son and two little girls who will be dating before I know it.

Along with the happy times, there have been some sad times related to Daddy's work as a preacher. We have watched him agonize over those who left the Lord or those whom he could not convert. Anyone that knows Daddy knows that he is not afraid or ashamed to stand up for what he believes the Bible teaches, no matter who opposes him and he has been persecuted many times for taking a stand on a certain issue. During the past few years he has written on topics such as the eldership, divorce and remarriage, fellowship and grace, social gospel and even institutional questions that have developed in the church, and he has lost friends in the process. He felt that teaching God's word on these subjects was more important than friendships. The Word of God was read and studied in our home and we were taught the importance of God in the everyday decisions that we made. We did not grow up with any material wealth; in fact, Mother and Daddy had some hard times financially that I was not even aware of until I was grown, but we were happy and always had enough to supply our needs. Being the child of a preacher is not always easy because most of what you do is examined by others. I was made aware of my influence on others and the necessity of having and maintaining a good reputation.

There are some characteristics about Daddy that stand out in my mind. He is a strong believer in parents using discipline in bringing up their children. He has always said that teaching a child to be obedient is the most important thing you can teach them. And I am one of three daughters who can testify that he practiced what he preached on the matter of discipline. I always knew that I was in trouble when those black eyes focused on me and I was called to go with him to his office, which was usually the place that he talked to us. I would get a lump in my throat as I walked behind him just wondering if this would be the time he would spank me or strongly rebuke me. Of course, I always wished for the latter. But even though we received our share of spankings from Mother and Daddy, we knew the punishment was deserved and would be just. It was not done out of anger but out of a desire to make us what we should be.

My pride was shattered at the age of sixteen when I received a spanking from Daddy because I did not obey a note that he had left for me at home. I wasn't trying to be rebellious but I failed to take his note too seriously. Believe me, when you are sixteen years old, you feel that you are too old to get such punishment but that incident vividly brought to mind the importance of obeying Daddy. I remember it to this day and tell the story to my children. The same attitude toward obedience was stressed in our relationship to God.

Another strong characteristic that belongs to Daddy is his faith in God and his love for the souls of men. He has never hidden his desire to go to Heaven and has so stated publicly and privately on many occasions. He has given much time and attention to others in talking to them about private matters. There have been endless hours spent over the years in helping couples with marriage problems or parents who were having problems with their children or maybe just taking the time to encourage someone who was troubled. I have never heard Daddy complain about helping anyone along this line. I have to say that he did not neglect his own family because of spending time with others and I am thankful to him for that. He has touched many lives and it is no wonder that he is loved and respected by so many. He has been a Father to many and his sons-in-law will say that he

is their Daddy as well as ours for they love him dearly. He has had and continues to have such an influence on young men who desire to become preachers. This love that Daddy has starts at home with his wife, children and grandchildren; we all have been blessed to have him as an example. Children owe so much to their parents who have taught them the Word of God and set the proper example before them. Being a mother myself, I realize more than ever the importance of a good example.

It would be impossible for me to write anything about Daddy without saying something about Mother. They have been one flesh for 54 years and Daddy would be the first to tell you that, whatever success he has had in preaching the gospel or being a husband and father, was because of the love and support of his wife Polly. He has always displayed a love for her the way the Bible teaches. Mother has been so giving of herself to Daddy and his work. She has undertaken the role of being a preacher's wife with much love and hard work and many have been the recipient of her kindness and hospitality. Carolyn, Juanita and I have always felt so thankful to have a Mother who took the time to teach us about life and about being a good wife and mother. She has also showered our children with the same love and words of wisdom that she gave to us. The words "Bo Bo" and "Grandmother" are sweet sounds to her ears. "Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her."

Daddy has lived beyond the three score and ten years in this life and the signs of age have shown in his health. Sometimes, because of his health, he worries that he can not do what he once did and he feels that maybe he is not useful anymore. I am thankful for younger men, who are gospel preachers, that realize the importance and need for an old soldier - one who has fought the battles and is there to give encouragement and strength to those who need it. My Daddy is such a soldier, and those across the country who call upon his knowledge of the Bible and seek his wisdom in dealing with problems make him know that he is useful and needed. We realize the void in our lives and in the church when men such as this depart this life.

Daddy, in closing this tribute to you, I would like to say on behalf of Carolyn, Juanita and myself, that we thank you for your faith, your life, your prayers in our behalf and your constant love for us. Maybe the best tribute that we could give you is to live righteously and godly in this present world so Heaven would be ours in the world to come. I pray, if the good Lord wills, that you may live and continue to do good for us and others in the years ahead. We love you.

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