

Hug tight and buckle up



JEANABABCOCK

Jeana@BabcockAutoCare.com

If you've read some of my past articles about my dad, you know that he suffered from Parkinson's Disease and Lewy Body dementia. You may also remember the journey of healing and forgiveness in my family's relationship with him a year and a half ago. At this moment, I am most grateful in how the Lord orchestrated the time we had with him and his wife not only for reconciliation but so that I could also know if my dad knew Jesus. In a precious conversation he and I had during that visit, I learned that he did.

I've thought of that conversation a lot and even more so since May when my dad went on hospice care. Everyone said Dad would likely pass within days. At the time, he was not eating or drinking very much; he was sleeping a lot and weighed only 99 pounds. But leave it to my feisty, strong-willed dad to defy what should have been. A few days after hospice came, he began eating again and chatting with the nurses. This continued for several weeks. But in the second week of June, we were informed that he suffered pain from bedsores and he was sleeping most of the time without consuming many foods or fluids again. The suffering my dad has endured has been tremendous. This is why I began to fervently pray that the Lord would take him home soon. It appeared that would happen ... but then, on Father's Day, my dad awoke and ate breakfast and lunch! I giggled when I received the news – my dad loves food—leave it to him to enjoy it on that special day!

Sadly, they were his last two meals ... the day after Father's Day, my Father in Heaven took my father on earth, Ronald



James Stanley, home. It was an answer to prayer and an end to his suffering—but somehow, I was unprepared. My dad is gone. How can this be? Even as I write with tears dripping off my face, it does not seem real.

A dear friend of mine, Patti, a woman of great character, faith, and love, who has brought amazing comfort in such a time as this, texted me: "Grief has a sneaky way of catching you unaware with unexpected memories in many small things". How right she is. Have you lost a loved one? If so, you know this all too well. You'll be getting through your day – then boom, out of nowhere, a memory will flash, you will dwell in it and you will start to sob uncontrollably for what is lost.

Have you ever endured this devastation? How did you get through it? I know only one way—through the

strength of Jesus and from the comfort in knowing Dad is now with Him—free from his pain and suffering and enjoying all of the things he loved best.

Perhaps my way is not yours. Perhaps you do not know or believe in Jesus. Perhaps you have not known the freedom and joy of knowing Him. Perhaps you don't want to. Or perhaps you've never been given the opportunity to. Stick with me to the end for some good news.

For now, will you join me, as I tap into some memories to honor my dad and maybe teach us a little something from his life?

HUG TIGHT AND BUCKLE UP

My dad gave tight hugs—the kind that made you know how much he missed you and how much he loved you. He was

also a safety fanatic in the car—seatbelt for everyone every single time. Be like my dad—hug tight and buckle up, no matter how far you are traveling.

LOOK GOOD AND CLEAN UP

My dad always looked his best so that he could give his best to others. His tidiness extended to his car—which was immaculate. My dad always cleaned his car on a regular basis, and cleaned it out at all his destinations—work, home, gas station, vacation destination, etc. Having a clean car not only feels good to the owner every time he/she enters but it feels good to the traveler's lucky enough to share your ride. Be like my dad—always look your best and keep your car clean.

EXERCISE AND STAY HEALTHY

My dad was a marathon runner, biker,

hiker and exercise enthusiast. He loved feeling his best with a healthy body. Likewise, he loved having a healthy vehicle. He had it serviced on time, every time and he took extra precautions when going on trips—never taking chances in something going wrong. Be like my dad—keep your body and vehicle healthy.

FUEL YOUR BODY AND CAR

My dad was mostly a healthy eater (pies were his weakness)—and he loved fresh fruits and veggies. As a kid, I would slice green peppers for him as a snack when he got home from work. He ate them as others would eat French fries! My dad fueled his body well and he fueled his vehicle often. Dad rarely got below a quarter tank of gas—whether he was simply cautious to never run out of gas or he knew it was better for his fuel tank and system, I have no idea. But he was better for it. Be like my dad—fuel your body and car well.

It's clear that my dad's role in his healthy habits didn't extend his life as he hoped due to the diagnosis of Parkinson's disease. But being healthy and cautious did allow him to live a healthier life and to be at his best to serve others.

Back to the good news: Last month, I shared with you the news of Eagle Brook Church (EBC) coming to Rochester that was revealed in a sermon on my birthday. In the next few months, EBC will be ramping up to open the campus here. Guess when the opening day is? You'll never guess—it is October 27, which would have been my dad's 66th birthday. I will never forget God's goodness in this. God is good all the time. All the time, He is good.

Be like my dad—serve others by signing up to be a part of helping to open the EBC campus: EagleBrookChurch.com/Rochester. Or be like my dad—meet Jesus at EBC in Rochester on my dad's 66th Birthday.