

REFLECTIONS OF FATHER

By Keith

It is not easy to put into writing the thoughts and feelings that I have for my father, James Alvin Criddle. I have not always been one to let my feelings and emotions be known and have always tried to approach things from an objective rather than a subjective view point.

The impressions that I have had of my father have changed and fluctuated during various stages of my life. I will attempt to put down my feelings for him as I have now, which were influenced by my feelings that I held for him in the time frame of which I am talking.

I have not always understood my father and I feel that he didn't always understand me, but one thing that I have always known is that he loved me and would stand behind and support me in whatever I chose to do. My greatest understanding of my father has come since my return from my mission in 1965 when with the separation of distance and the maturity of years, I was able to look back and appreciate all that my father has and continues to do for me. To quote a familiar joke, "It is amazing how much my father has learned in the passed few years."

The feelings that I have for my father are expressed by the words love and appreciation, but the word that I would choose to describe my fondest feeling would be respect. Respect for the man, respect for his morals and ideals, and respect for what he has done for me. This respect may be evident by the nouns with which I refer to my father. In discussing him with other people he is either referred in a formal way as my father, or he is referred to as daddy, which is very personal and affectionate. I have had some friends comment that as an adult I still refer to my father as Daddy, much as a small

child would.

I don't have any first remembrances of Daddy. It seemed that he has always been there and I still have the feeling that he always will be there whenever I need him. My remembrances are much different than the remembrances that I have heard from my older brothers and sisters. I remember Dad more as a middle age to older man. There are always comments made of his curly red hair, but I only remember his hair at the most of being curly reddish gray and have a stronger remembrance of it being gray-white with waves as it is combed back over his head.

Father was always a strong person. He was able to discipline with voice and with his presence rather than with physical discipline. He instilled in me a desire to do the correct thing. At first not to do the correct thing for itself, but because I was trying to please my father and make him proud of me and the things that I was doing. There were only three times that I can remember my father using physical discipline on me. All three times I deserved it, but I didn't like it anyway. I remember the humiliation when he got his wide belt and spanked me. He told me it was going to hurt him more than it was me, but my bottom was the one that got sore. I don't have to worry much about that anymore, because I now have his wide belt.

Dad always had names of affection that he called his children: Sweetheart, Sunshine, and Tulip. I was known affectionately as "DaleMelvinMaxConnieCarolJeanClyde KEITH!" I think that this must be hereditary though, because I now have two children. One is KurtisBrian, and the other is BrianKurtis.

Being the seventh in a family of eight, I was able to get away with a lot of things that my older brothers and sisters weren't able to get away with. I did not have the requirements of farm chores and working on the farm as those that had come before me. This may have been because by then farm work and making a living had become easier, or because it was so hard to get me to go to work, that it wasn't worth it to try to get me to go to work and was easier for Dad to do it himself. When I was very young, Dad still had a cow that he milked every night and morning. Even though I may have been old enough to learn how to milk the cow, I never had to. I can still remember as a very young boy watching Dad milk the cow in the shed; the way he would hobble the cow and tie the tail down so that it wouldn't flip him while he was milking, the old hat that he wore as he leaned his head against the cow's side, and the expertise with which he used to fill the milk bucket as he milked it by hand. I can also remember having milk squirted in my face and mouth, and at the cat as he milked the cow. About the only chores that I had to do was gather the eggs, a job that I hated tremendously and was greatly relieved when the chickens were finally all killed off. It wasn't until my middle to late teenage years that I was required to go out to the farm and do any farm work other than picking rye.

One incident that comes to mind reminds me of the patience that my father had with me. Right after learning to drive, and getting my drivers license, I thought the greatest thing in the world was to be able to drive a car. I was supposed to relieve Dad on the tractor on the home place one morning and afternoon. As I left I wanted to take the car up, and Mother told me that I had to take the truck, so I was very upset that I had to drive up the International truck.

When I got there I parked the truck in the gateway and walked over to relieve Dad on the tractor. He told me that he wanted me to bring the "car" over so he could lay in the shade while I continued with the plowing. Misunderstanding the word car and being upset that I had brought the International when Dad wanted the car in the first place, I went over and got the truck, backed it out of the gate-way catching and bending the front bumper on the gate, and drove back down to home to get the car. When I got home, Mother informed me Dad wanted the truck and that he commonly refers to the truck as the car. By this time I was very frightened, having (1) been late getting up there to relieve him to begin with, (2) bending the bumper on the truck, (3) driving off and leaving him after he told me to bring the truck over to him. I think it would be fair to say that I was scared! I remember asking mom if I couldn't just stay home! She told me to go back and take the truck out as he said; so in tears, I drove back to the east side, drove out on the field and waited for Dad to complete the circuit to come to the truck. When Dad stopped by the truck, he didn't say a thing about me being late, or having driven off and left him. He just told me to get on the tractor and plow. I remember looking back and watching him as he walked around the truck and looked at the bumper that I had bent. He never said a thing about my being late, bending the truck bumper, or going off and leaving him. I don't even know if he remembers this incident, but it has made an impression on me of the importance of having patience with somebody who may not have an understanding of what you want.

Dad always taught me how to work rather than told me what to do to work. Even though I didn't have to do as much as my brothers

and sisters before me, I still remember walking through the fields with Dad, Carol, and Jean (and later Clyde), pulling rye. As I look back I can still remember the beauty of the grain fields with the waves of grain moving with the wind. In my mind's eye, I can still see the little heads of rye sticking up. In reading Dad's history I think we can blame the rye on the first crops that were planted in the valley by his father. As I read through the history I saw where they harvested more rye than they did wheat the first year.

I can remember my father becoming angry only once. Even when he was disciplining me I do not feel that he was angry. The one time he became angry was when Clyde and I were playing blind man's bluff in the living room and I was the one who was blind folded. I just happened to be able to see out of the bottom of the blind fold well enough to see where Clyde was going and as he tried to get passed me, I was able to move in on him much quicker than expected. Clyde put his head through the large picture window in the living room. Fortunately, just the window was shattered and nothing happened to Clyde's rock hard head. Clyde and I were, needless to say, frightened at the aspect of Dad coming home, but I remember being shocked when Mother made Clyde and I tell him, and his comment was, "What in the 'sam hell'". I don't believe I ever heard my father use any stronger language before or since.

I always knew that Dad was a very spiritual person with a great love of the Gospel. (He gave the world's longest prayers before eating - especially his Christmas morning prayer). Through my formative years, he was involved in a position of great responsibility in the Church, being Stake President of the Portneuf Stake for 20

years. Holding this position and hearing my friends, friend's families, and associates always refer to my father as "Stake President", always kept me in a little awe of my father and his position. It was difficult trying to live up to the image of the "Stake President's son", and at times, I had a tendency to kick against the pricks. My father and my family, including me, received many benefits through his calling in the Church. Many of which I am now coming to appreciate. I have sometimes felt that my father's Church calling kept he and I from becoming as close as I would have liked. Being gone from home with his Stake President calling, a lot of my early childhood rearing was left to my mother, and I didn't have an opportunity to become as close to my father until after Mother expired in 1962. Dad was very lonely after Mother expired and I think this gave us an opportunity to become closer than we had been previously. I was glad to see my father marry Alda as a helpmate.

I remember the ambiguous feelings I had in high school when I was wrestling. I wanted to do very well and impress my father, but I also was afraid that I may not do well and embarrass him. Before every wrestling match, I hoped he wouldn't come, but after every wrestling match, I wished that he had come and watched me. I can still remember the two wrestling matches that he did make and how glad I was to have my father there. As a side light; The first one he came to, I won. (He almost missed it because I won in the first round.) The second one he came to, I lost in a decision. Even though I had lost, I was glad Father could see my participation in sports. I asked Dad when I became older why he never came to

watch me wrestle and he told me he didn't come because he was so involved in my activity and wanting me to do well that it was very hard on him to watch me participate in sports. I encouraged him to watch and participate when Clyde was involved in sports, and must say he did seem to become more involved in watching Clyde.

Education was one aspect that my father supported me in very strongly. Despite having an eighth grade education himself, he encouraged me, as well as all his other children, to obtain as much education as possible. Not only did he encourage them to obtain an education, but was willing to subsidize their education and their financial support while they were going through school. I am deeply indebted to my father for this and have tried to express my appreciation, but I feel I never will be able to repay what he has sacrificed for me.

As I look back, Father must have had his patience tried many times with my rebellious spirit. At times, I may have been rebelling against the image of being the "Stake President's son", and wanting to feel just like an ordinary kid. Despite my shortcomings and transgressions, many of which are humorous as I look back on them now, Dad never lost his patience with me and continued to support me, I feel because of his love for me. It seemed at times that my father was larger than real life; being a spiritual giant, perfect husband and father, and financial genius, (many of which are true). I have come to appreciate my father much more recently when I realize what a realistic human and natural individual he is. Knowing that he loved fast good looking horses as I love fast good looking cars, that he enjoys dressing up and being in the company of beautiful

women, (ie. his wives), knowing that he had many of the fears and frustrations of growing up and a dislike for chores required of him as I had, his experimentation of smoking his cigar on his horse, and visiting the brewery in St. Louis, make my father seem much more human and reachable to me.

As I've reflected upon my father, I see an example that I would be proud to emulate. He has demonstrated growth through diligence, self-education, hard work, and obedience to the Gospel. He is a human being whose growth has been sure and steady and who was "not born perfect". If I can but follow in his footsteps I have a plan of life already layed out for me.

Dad, as I close I would like to say how proud I am that you are my father. That I hope all my actions can continue to make you proud of me, and I want you to know that I love, appreciate, and respect you.

Love,

Keith