

Positively Speaking

By Mark Wilson

What I Learned from Dad

When I was 16, my dad didn't know very much. He was old fashioned and too strict. He always wanted to know where I was going and what I planned to do.

Dad simply didn't understand. He made me work when I wanted to be lazy. He forced me to clean up my messes. Sometimes, he would even put me on restriction.

"Unfair!" I would protest, but my cries would fall on deaf ears.

Since Dad was a preacher I had to go to church every Sunday, even if I stayed up late on Saturday night. Not only did I hear sermons on Sunday morning, I would also hear them throughout the week:

"Be kind to people-- especially the grouchy ones. There's a reason they are acting that way."

"Work hard son. You'll never get the job done by quitting when you feel like it."

"I trust you to do the right thing."

"Don't be silly."

"Do you love God, son? Do you really love Him with all your heart? That's the only way to live, you know!"

I shrugged my shoulders and wished Dad didn't preach so much.

In the following years, I graduated from high school, went off to college, got married, had kids, attended seminary, and became a pastor myself.

During those years, Dad must have learned a lot, because within a decade, he became the wisest person I ever knew. I was amazed at how his intelligence increased so rapidly.

I discovered that I could call him with almost any problem, and he would have a good way of figuring things out. Dad became my hero.

Even today, nearly two decades after his death, I still pause when facing a difficult decision, and ask, "What would Dad say?"

Now that's pretty amazing, considering he didn't know much when I was 16 -- or did he?