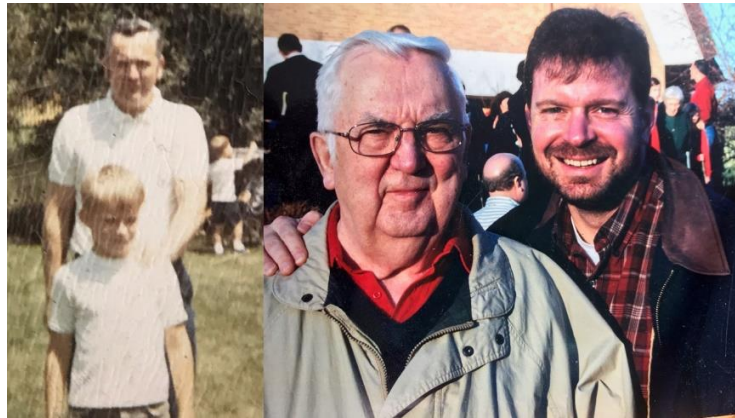


# FaithBIT



## Wisdom from My Dad

Reflection by Paul Nelson

What important lessons and skills did your dad teach you? I think of my dad as the anniversary of his death draws near, and I am grateful for what he taught me. He taught me to use tools, to measure twice and cut once. He taught me how to hang, mud, and sand sheet rock, and then sand it some more. He taught me how to cut-in a straight line when painting, how to sweat copper pipes, replace a window and re-glaze the glass, change oil, change a tire, properly jump a dead car battery, and so many more good, helpful skills.

Of all the things my dad taught me, one of the best lessons was about faithful generosity. Not that this was an easy lesson to learn. "We can't afford that!" was a phrase often heard around our house. We were not lacking for any necessity, but luxuries were not indulged in because, as we were told many times, we didn't have money to spend on unnecessary items. If you have shoes on your feet, you don't need expensive Adidas. Why pay for Levi's jeans when Sears Toughskins are half the price and last twice as long? I was in high school before we had a color TV, air-conditioning, or a second car. As kids, we often complained about this frugality, but even if we didn't have everything we wanted, we had what we needed, and we were loved.



**"...giving, not getting  
took priority in our  
house."**

**- Paul Nelson**

It's not that my parents couldn't have bought some of these things, it's that they chose not to. When my dad would explain to me why we weren't going to buy something I wanted and thought I needed, he would say more than, "we can't afford that." He would explain that the reason we couldn't afford some of those things is because giving, not getting took priority in our house.

For my dad and mom, giving to God was foundational in their lives. They gave as a way of thanking God for daily gifts. They gave as a way of supporting the ministry of God's church. They gave to bless and change lives. And they gave because they wanted their lives, and the lives of their children to be inspired by giving, not getting. So, they said "No" to a lot of things so they could say "Yes" to faithful generosity. I saw first-hand how their giving filled their lives with joy, and contentment, and their generous hearts inspire me. They didn't look to the things of this world for meaning or fleeting happiness or give in to the temptation of always wanting more.

This is one of the most important lessons my dad taught me. Perhaps because he knew I was so good at wanting things. I needed encouragement to resist wasting my life pursuing the things of this world, always wanting more. Don't we all? Dad taught me to find joy and contentment in faithful generosity, and I appreciate this lesson more and more as each year passes. May we all keep learning to say "no" to things we don't really need, and "yes" to God and giving. That's where the real joy is!