



My Father Rescued Me

By Greg W. Haws

S nuggled in our sleeping bags and lying on a mattress, my brother and I were in the back of our father's pickup truck on an exciting outing with him and two of his friends. The aluminum camper shell of the truck bed did not provide any heat, but it was a covering over us. My brother Ken and I were 10 and 12, and we talked excitedly about our upcoming adventure.

A flaw in the truck's design caused the exhaust pipe to end at the back of the cab instead of extending to the rear of the bed. As we drove in the darkness of the early morning, carbon monoxide filtered up through the bed into our space, filling the air we were breathing. Dad drove the truck higher and higher into the mountains while we became lethargic, then unconscious, and finally breathless.

For some reason, our father pulled over and decided to check on us. When he opened the back of the truck we were unresponsive and not breathing.

He pulled me out first and felt a faint heartbeat. Immediately he performed rescue breathing. The other men did the same for my brother.

I felt like I was in a deep, dark pit that I could not get out of by myself. In fact, I did not want to climb out. It was easier to stay where I was. But my father would not allow it. He revived me and then shifted his attention to Ken. Back and forth he went as we drifted in and out of consciousness. Eventually we were breathing on our own, at least enough to be transported to a hospital, where we received additional treatment.

Many times over the next several years, my father was prompted to "pull over" and check on me. I was never in such physical danger as I was that night in the truck, but several times I faced an emotional or spiritual crisis. My father extended his hand to lift me out of those pits as well. A few times I did not want to climb out because it was easier to stay where I was, but my father would not allow it.

Years later, I stood at his bedside holding his hand as his grip relaxed and life left his body. I thought about the many times he had heard and acted on promptings to check on my brothers and me. I am grateful for his love for us and for his closeness to the Spirit, both of which have blessed our lives immeasurably. ■