

A FAR GREATER GIFT

By Chris Deaver

Brother Reynolds didn't just teach us—he loved us.

During my last year in Primary we got a new teacher: Brother Reynolds. He had gray hair and wrinkles, and he shared stories about the Depression and his service in the U.S. military during World War II. At first I didn't relate to his stories—they were boring and happened so long ago.

One time my friends and I were misbehaving in class. Brother Reynolds took me aside and spoke directly to me. He simply asked me to do better and told me he wanted the best for me. Before then, my friends and I hadn't been paying much attention. But we soon learned something special about Brother Reynolds—he cared deeply about us, and his only agenda was to love us.

Brother Reynolds constantly shared his testimony of the Savior Jesus Christ. He had a light in his eyes as he taught us about the power of living a Christ-centered life. His stories became real adventures that sparked our imaginations and made us want to serve the Lord.

I still remember a lesson he taught about the Prophet Joseph Smith and how he testified that Joseph was once a young boy like us. With tears in his eyes, he told us that the Lord had high

expectations for us, just as He had had for Joseph. Brother Reynolds said we would each do great things in our lives, even change the world, if we would be like Joseph and stay close to the Savior.

A few years later when my friends and I were in high school, we learned that Brother Reynolds needed his apricot trees trimmed. We gladly trimmed the trees, which took several hours of climbing on ladders and cutting away. It was hard work, but we knew it would matter to Brother Reynolds.

That year we also learned that Brother Reynolds needed a new

set of scriptures. His were old, dog-eared, and tearing at the seams. We pooled our money and bought him a beautiful leather quad with his name engraved on it. We gave it to him at our ward Christmas party. I'll never forget the way his face glowed and his eyes twinkled with tears and excitement from seeing us boys do something that meant so much to him.

After I went to college some years later, I found out that Brother Reynolds had passed away. I went to visit his wife and family to share my deep respect and appreciation for him. When I saw all his happy children and grandchildren, I realized how blessed I had been to know this great man.

"He loved you boys," Sister Reynolds said through tears and with a smile. "He *really* loved you."

In a world where it's difficult to focus on the right things, Brother Reynolds showed us that our relationship with Heavenly Father and His Son matters most. We may have trimmed Brother Reynolds's trees and given him a new set of scriptures, but he gave us a far greater gift: an abiding love for the Savior, Jesus Christ. ■

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