The Letter by Holly Crain

When I first walked into a Life Bible Study I wasn't looking for Steve (my now husband) and he wasn't looking for me. I came to know him from a distance over about three years in the biblical community called Life Bible Study here at our church. I saw that people admired him, respected him, went to him for advice, trusted him, and that he was a man of honor. Little did he know that one day he would be my husband and a stepfather to my children… neither of which was an easy task for a man to take on. But that was what God eventually asked him to do. He spent several decades committing to raising two step-children. It was a thankless and behind the scenes job but one that he embraced and was very much present in each season.  
  
This past week, our oldest daughter (his step-daughter) wrote him a letter. Even though it has been a sweet relationship it was not without struggles. I'm thankful for a man that will work through struggles and handle conflict and tensions with grace to demonstrate the love of God (an agape love which means "selfless, sacrificial, unconditional love" like the love of God).  I asked permission to publish her letter here and she gave full permission.  
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"*Poppy, I just wanted to send a letter to give you some encouragement and tell you what you have meant to me. First of all I am so thankful to have had you as a part of my life. I knew and still know that I can come to you and receive such godly, honest, and encouraging guidance. I can always trust what you tell me. I always enjoyed our conversations on the way to church on Wednesday nights and enjoy anytime I get to talk to you.*  
  
*I don't remember the first time we met (but I don't remember a lot of things! Haha!) but I remember how you made me feel. I inherently knew that I could trust you. I knew that you were safe. I knew that you would be a good Dad, and I knew that you would love my mom and always keep us protected. I remember playing hide and go seek with you in the Katy house and laughing a lot! I had a lot of anxiety when Mom was single, especially at night and when you and mom got married I had such peace knowing that you were there.*  
  
*I have a lot of memories of things that I did towards you that I would change too. I hope you know that I see clearly now what you did for us. I hope you know that I am so appreciative of you stepping up and taking Evan and I in as your own. I hope you know that I appreciate you taking an interest in me, believing in me, and loving me for who I am. I hope you know that I am so sorry for putting you second when you were the one doing the whole job of Dad in my life.*  
  
*Having (our 7 year old foster son) in my life makes me see all this more clearly. I am thankful that I am able to feel that to know how you must have felt. Parenting is the hardest job in the world and just know that I only have good memories of growing up with you.*  
  
*I hope this weekend you are able to see how important you are to so many people. You are always wise, and always truth telling. I am just thankful that you are able to be such a big part of my life. I'm so thankful for the qualities of loyalness and steadfastness that you possess that have impacted our family greatly. Also, for your sense of humor, and your laugh! I always loved when America's Funniest Home Videos would come on, because then we could hear your big laugh!*  
  
*Please know that I treasure having you in my life and in my kid's lives. I am so thankful that the Lord put us together.*  
  
*Your daughter, Emily*"  
  
She's 28 now and God is the center of her life and that is enough. Oh and she is also a very beautiful, caring, loving, a wife and a mother to two foster children that will hopefully be adopted soon.  
  
Our children don't always thank us during these years of raising them. But I want to encourage with Galatians 6:9 and pray that you will truly receive the Word which says, "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up" and 2 Peter 1:5-7, "For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love."  
  
*If we have not met, I want you to know that my name is Holly and I walked into this church 22 years ago with a 5 year old daughter and a 2 month old son in tow. This church embraced me but bigger than that the gospel and what God did in my life changed this common girl forever! And I know He will do the same for you! He will! Enjoy the SPF ministry and the newsletter and get excited about what God has in store for you and your children!*

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