***Losing Them Before They’re Gone***

**(Post is 542 words)**

My mother was witty, fun, and smart. She danced in the kitchen, talked her way out of every traffic ticket, and ran her own business. She read constantly, created intricate cross-stitched pieces, and could quote baseball statistics like a pro. She loved Jesus and adored my dad.

Mom may still be living, but years ago, dementia took the person she was. The disease slowly changed her personality and tore down her ability to effectively relate to other people. Although it happened over time, the reality hit me one day. “Mom” was gone; just a shadow remained. And I’ve been feeling the loss ever since.

My mother and I were always close. Even after I married and we moved hundreds of miles away, Mom and I stayed connected with regular, long phone calls. I went to her with parenting questions and friendship issues. She always cared, always listened, and always had some words of wisdom.

I never realized how much I had depended on Mom until I couldn’t. But then I discovered that in some ways, our relationship had hindered my dependence on God. When something happened, instead of turning to Him, I called Mom. When she lost the ability to listen and understand, I began to learn how to take those things to the One who would always listen. Always understand.

The psalmist David knew about personal loss and painful relationships. Yet David learned to cultivate a deep, satisfying relationship with God that brought him comfort in the midst of grief, security in tumultuous circumstances, and joy that surpassed any loss.

In the sixty-third psalm, David emphasized God’s presence with His people. Whether through death, betrayal, or simply change, human relationships will always fail us. But God will never fail us. Our earthly relationships can never meet all our needs, but God can meet every need. He can quench our thirst and satisfy our hunger. His love is better than life itself. (See Psalm 63:1-8.)

When you feel alone, when a sense of loss overwhelms you, turn to the Truth. You are not alone. God is with you. Remember the times He has made His presence known to you in the past. Reflect on those moments you’ve experienced His loving care. Whisper His name and turn to Him. Depend on His strength and sustenance.

Yes, our relationship with our parents is different than it once was. Now they depend on us. Now they need our help. Our guidance. In many ways, we are the parent and they are the child. We grieve the people they were and the relationship we had with them. But, in our grief, let’s not miss what we still have. Who they are now.

Today, my relationship with my mother is drastically different than it was. Yet I’m seeking new ways to find joy in the relationship we do have and to help her enjoy the life she still has. Mom can no longer read, stitch, or dance. But she does like watching planes take off and land. So recently, we drove out and parked next to the airport. And we sat and together we watched the planes.

*How has the relationship with your parents changed in recent years? What are some practical ways you can enjoy the relationship you have with them now.*

*Kathy Howard calls herself a “confused southerner.” Raised in Louisiana, she moved with her engineer husband around the U.S. and Canada. She says “pop” instead of “Coke” and “you guys” as often as “y’all.” But she’s still a southern girl at heart! Kathy encourages women to live an unshakeable faith by standing firm on our rock-solid God no matter life’s circumstances. Kathy, the author of eight books, including the new daily devotional* [*“30 Days of Hope When Caring for Aging Parents,*](http://www.kathyhoward.org/books/30-days-of-hope-when-caring-for-aging-parents/)*” has a Master’s in Christian Education. She is passionate about Bible study and discipleship and loves sharing at women’s events and retreats. Kathy is also a regular contributor to Crosswalk.com, Hello Mornings, Arise Daily, and more. Kathy and her “mostly retired” husband live in the Dallas/Ft Worth area near family. They have three married children, four grandsons, and three dogs – one of them on purpose. She provides free discipleship resources and blogs regularly at* [*www.KathyHoward.org*](http://www.KathyHoward.org)*. Kathy also connects with women at* [*Facebook*](https://www.facebook.com/KathyHowardUnshakeableFaith/)*,* [*Pinterest*](https://www.pinterest.com/kathyhhoward/)*, and* [*Instagram*](https://www.instagram.com/mkathoward/)*.*

***30 Days of Hope When Caring for Aging Parents***

Struggling to navigate the parent/child role reversal? Kathy Howard’s new book, *30 Days of Hope When Caring for Aging Parents*,explores God’s Word to find hope and encouragement for the wide range of physical, emotional, relational, and spiritual challenges the adult child caregiver may experience. Each of the 30 devotions – which can also serve as a guide for a daily quiet time – includes a Scripture passage, a real-life illustration, biblical commentary/application, and questions for reflection.

**(Alternate bio)**

*A former “cultural Christian,” Bible teacher Kathy Howard now lives an unshakeable faith for life and encourages other women to embrace real, authentic faith. Kathy is the author of 8 books, including* [*“30 Days of Hope When Caring for Aging Parents”*](http://www.kathyhoward.org/books/30-days-of-hope-when-caring-for-aging-parents/)*. Find spiritual encouragement and free discipleship helps on* [*her website*](http://www.kathyhoward.org/)*.*