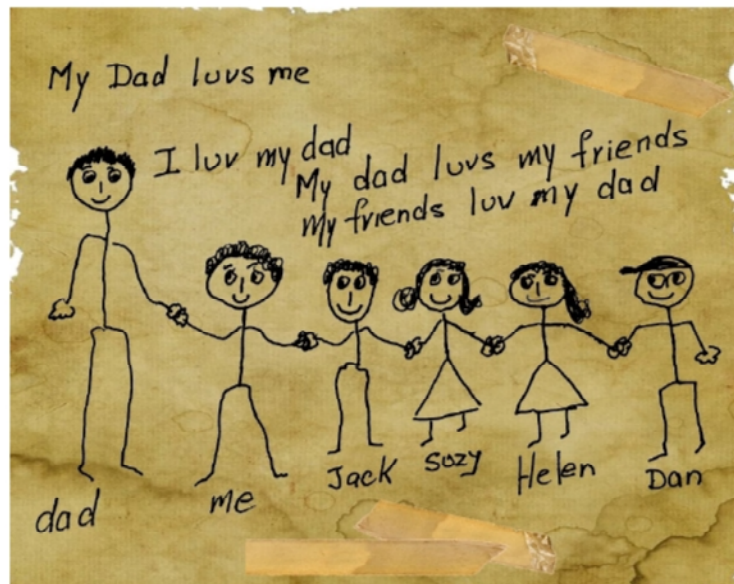


"LIFE THROUGH THE LENS"



MY DAD LUVS ME

Sitting at the kitchen table, the old man's veined, sun spotted and scared hands slowly and carefully, once again with love, smoothed out the sheet of paper. Held together with now browning strips of sellotape where once creases from years of folding and unfolding had taken their toll and had given up and become weakened tears. A crooked finger slowly traced the words which had held pride of place on the fridge door for many years, held in place by a magnet with the face of a smiling kindergarten-aged son. His rheumy eyes and love-filled heart traced each figure, paused on each word. "My dad luv me. I luv my dad. My dad luv my friends. My friends luv my dad", paused on each word, and a slow smile transformed and lit up the old, creased face. Then a little sadness crept into his thought as he remembered some of the kids who would not accept his son's friendship or his. They stayed away even though he and his son wanted to involve them as friends. With a deep sigh, he refolded the paper, faded and with age lines. He sighed deeply and refolded the piece of paper with the precious drawings.

The drawing shows the father, son, and friends holding hands together as expressions of caring and love. God of the Bible is a lot like that, only more so. He expresses his relationship of love with his son Jesus in words, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased *and* delighted!" (**Matthew 3:17**) This same father tells us, "Jesus loves us, just as God the Father loved him; in this truth, we can rest secure and at peace." (**John 15:9**) It is like God says, "Any friend of my son is also like a son to me. My son is loved and special. You are loved and special. I hold my hand out to you, take it, accept that I also love and care about you and your life".

Just as any father who truly loves their children and wants them to talk about problems and hurts, God says to all who are willing to trust him, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest." (**Matthew 11:28**) True friends trust each other, talk to each other, help, and stand up for each other no matter what.

Could you draw a picture with the words "My heavenly dad loves me, and I love my heavenly dad; My heavenly dad loves his son Jesus; we are friends, and I am happy this is true!"? If you can't, in your mind, hold out your hands to Jesus and tell him you want to be one of his father's loved children.

God bless,
Kevin.