

## THE LETTER FROM FRANKIE

The week had been really heavy, and that a continuance from the previous few. The day itself had been overwhelming, and I just wasn't sure how much more I could carry, or how I could even handle all that felt placed in my lap. So like any good soldier, I went to hide in my room. Just for a few minutes, though, because I have little ones. And they can't be left for very long at a time.

I sat on the floor by my bed and faced the bookshelf, scanning the titles on my "one day I'll read that" shelf, looking for some sort of new inspiration where I might find encouragement. I pulled out a devotional by Amy Carmichael, reasoning that she had been through extremely difficult times herself, and would thus have written from a depth and point of strength that could relate to the overwhelming place that I found myself in. And I was right. The words under the date of that day were exactly appropriate for what my weary soul needed in that moment. But then I found something more.

Tucked between the back pages of the used book I found several sheets of notebook paper, a tad colored with age. On the outside of the top sheet were the words, "To Daddy." I toyed with the thought that I shouldn't read the letter since it was a personal one not addressed to me. But the inscription in the front of the book notes it was a gift in 1980, and the givers were Frankie and Keith. The handwriting was the same in the letter, and I was curious to discover the heart behind the gift of this book — from Frankie to her father.

The letter started out, "My dearest Daddy, As I lay awake Wednesday night...some things occurred to me about your relationship to God. Because I love you so much, I am going to write very bluntly." The letter goes on to remind this father how he is so concerned with one of his other daughter's actions and reactions. And turns that into the same response that God has for this man. The same desire for rightness that this father has for his daughter is the same desire that God our father has for him. And all of us.

There followed five handwritten pages of verses that Frankie had taken from the Bible to encourage and challenge her dad. She was brave to write that letter. She knew that what she lovingly had to say to him about the truth of who God is and what He desires for and from us was worth whatever reaction she might get. In her own words, she knew it was "better to be truthful at the expense of angering or alienating, than to avoid making waves at the expense of losing [her dad] in a much more crucial way."

While Frankie will likely never know how far her words have reached, or how they grounded and encouraged me that day, I am again persuaded that words are powerful. And the things we say and leave behind can be far-reaching and impactful. What are you choosing to communicate? Be encouraged to say what needs to be said — especially about God's truth.





## THE BEST PART OF TEP

When I think about the knitting circles, and working/visiting with those who create and donate beautiful warm things, and of the fun books that are shared for kids, I think, “this is the best part of what I get to do!” And when I sort and count and pack all the things generously given, I think, “this is such a great part!” And when I work on editing a text to help a missionary with a project, I think, “this is the best part!” And when I deliver hats and scarves for kids in need, books to organizations handing them out, blankets to the elderly in homes or hospice, and baby items to foster care and pregnancy centers, I think, “this is the best part!”

It is such a blessing to be doing “the best part” all throughout the different stages of the process to help and encourage people.

We would love to have you join us in any part of this ministry, and welcome thoughts and questions you may have along the way!

## BLESSED CHRISTMAS TO YOU

I have heard several people say recently that Christmas time is their least favorite time of the year. This is mainly due to the stress it brings and the business it has become for so many. But we take a different view that makes for a calm, peaceful season. We just celebrate Jesus. Gifts are minimal, the schedule runs not much different than other months, and we enjoy time with the people we happen or plan to see each day.

However you celebrate (or avoid), we wish



you a very blessed, thoughtful Christmas season, and hearts that turn to the Lord Jesus even more in the New Year!

May God bless you as you seek Him.



*(for the law made nothing perfect); but on the other hand, a better hope is introduced, through which we draw near to God.*

*Hebrews 7:19*

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www.theencouragementproject.org  
678 360~1592

stephanie@theencouragementproject.org  
PO Box 452 ~ Alpharetta, GA ~ 30009