

# A Post About Nothing

This post is about nothing because I should be in bed. I'm writing as a way to vent because I can't sleep. We've let our daughter have sleepovers pretty much constantly for the past 2 weeks. We've run into some of her friends and figured what a better way to end summer in a fun way than with some sleepovers, especially with these friends we don't see often.

Problem is, all these girls seem to lose track of the rest of the world when they're together. They run up and down the stairs like a herd of elephants (I am SO not going to mention this out loud – what could scar a sensitive pre-teen girl more than comparisons to the largest land mammal??), they giggle incessantly, and they BURST into our bedroom at midnight complaining of a scary noise. And that's what led me here. Having a group of kids burst into my room as I'm trying to relax with some quiet reading time at midnight apparently set off my adrenal glands – big time. It's now almost 1 am, and I can't even think of laying down again for fear of my quiet bubble being burst yet again. My adrenaline is pumping so hard; I feel like I've just ridden a roller coaster or like I'm about to deliver a speech. The kicker is, with little or no sleep, how I am going to be able to supervise 6 kids tomorrow – with one of them being a VERY exploratory 10-month-old?? I don't know how it's going to work. All because of a scary noise. Well, unfortunately for this group of self-absorbed 'tweens, they're about to find out that a long day with a very tired and grumpy Mom is *infinitely* more scary than any kind of noise or bump in the night.

Good luck, girls.

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# Harvey, You Were Awesome

I was thinking that I should get in one more blog post before the New Year. I was going to write a general update about my beautiful family, but before I got to writing it, I found myself thinking of Harvey.

Let's begin at December 26, 2011. My husband and the kids surprised me with a wonderful Christmas gift: they had **all** saved and planned for months to buy us a zoo membership. Our family loves zoos and has had a membership to the local zoo (whichever zoo happened to be local at the time) for as long as Hubby and I have been married. I remember that our most recent zoo membership expired on April 1st of last year – I remember this because I made sure to visit on April 1st for what would be our last visit to the zoo for many months. For budget reasons, it didn't make a lot of sense for us to renew the membership because I was expecting our 5th child in October – what pregnant lady wants to take her 4 kids to the zoo in the summer? Not this one. So we let the membership lapse. I missed our visits to the zoo, but at the same time, plagued by pregnancy related nausea and fatigue, followed by post-cesarean surgery recovery and the joys (and trials) of caring for a new baby brother to 4 other kids, I didn't *really* miss our visits to the zoo...

But then my family surprised me with that membership. Now that I'm healed from the surgery. Now that the baby has stayed with the babysitter a few times and actually liked it. Now that I can take my home-schooled kids to the zoo any time I feel like taking a field trip!

This past week was a great one! Hubby was able to flex his work schedule to spend a lot of time with the family, and we all enjoyed the break, which included visiting the Toledo Zoo. In our travels to zoos over the years, we saw many amazing things and learned many amazing things. Among them:

zoos are GREAT to visit in the winter! Many animals are so much more active in the cold weather, and there are many less people, allowing visiting families opportunities not normally offered (Example: my kids made bird feeders as a craft at the zoo and *loved* it!!).

Being winter, some of the exhibits were closed. Other animal environments were rearranged from the last time we had been there, so we couldn't quite keep tabs on our familiar favorites. We did notice that the Great Apes area was rearranged. There was a sign saying that the Great Apes area was going to be closed for the Lights Before Christmas event, but we saw the gorillas and orangutans, so we didn't think much of it. Until we didn't see Harvey the Chimp. When I got home, I looked in the Toledo Zoo's newsroom online and saw that Harvey had passed away in August. It was sad for me; Harvey's exhibit was one of my favorite stops at the zoo. He was an elderly chimp who loved little kids, and here is a video I have of him playing with my kids. I can't be too sad though; Harvey died in his sleep, at the healthy chimp age of 52 – DOUBLE the average life expectancy of a chimp in captivity.

My other favorite exhibit at the zoo, the orangutan family, was also rearranged – during our visit we saw only the mom and daughter – what happened to Boomer (my favorite zoo animal until Harvey stole the title), the patriarch of the oranges? Such things are commonplace in zoos, and I'm thankful that I once again have a membership that gives me insight to studying the wonderful creatures inhabiting the zoo. As much as I mourn my old favorites, I will be looking forward to watching the new additions as well: baby Lucas the elephant, the new baby tigers soon to be exhibited, and the new addition soon to be announced to the public due any day! Yes, I have inside info! One thing I love doing while visiting the zoo is talking to the volunteers, and one was beside herself with the awesome news of an impending birth! So much so that she

couldn't keep it to herself, even if she was supposed to!  
Would I do the same if I was a zoo volunteer? Dunno... but in  
the meantime, a HUGE THANK YOU GOES OUT TO HUBBY AND THE  
KIDS!!! I've already enjoyed my zoo membership more than you  
would have ever hoped for when you planned and saved!! LOVE  
YOU GUYS!!!

I wish everyone reading this a very happy and safe New Year!

Here are tribute videos to Harvey the chimp – watch how he  
played with my kids! We will miss him!



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# Little Luke Likes Lights

Thought I would post a quick little update about our youngest child who is growing so quickly that I don't know if we can call him our "new addition" any longer! Luke James is almost 2 months old, and among his likes are being held, listening to music, and looking at lights. He's been especially impressed by the colorful lights on the Christmas tree. These things are common favorites among many almost-2-month-olds, but Luke is a very special baby – he has been able to hold his head up for a few weeks and is extremely alert for a baby his age. His VERY FAVORITE thing to do in the whole world is to be held like this while his little hands open and close and his eyes bulge as he takes in the world around him:



Luke doesn't sleep well at night, but we aren't really surprised because none of our 5 kids were very good sleepers as babies. But Luke doesn't sleep much during the day, either – he takes about one good nap per day about 3-4 days per week. And by "good nap" I mean him sleeping for over an hour without waking up. Actually, I thought of the perfect way to describe Luke the other day: he is an *intense* baby. He wants **what** he wants **when** he wants it, and he's not shy about asking. Don't get me wrong; it's not that he is a disagreeable baby, and he is very

smiley. He's just very demanding, and since he is always awake... well, you can understand why my free time is down to almost none and the blog posts from me remain infrequent. Especially because he demands to have 100% of the available attention, whether it's eye contact while playing with him or using both hands to feed him – he is not a fan of a multi-tasking parent.

He's already able to play – he loves looking into the eyes of people who play with him, and he especially likes to exchange baby talk with “goo” being his favorite word. He loves when his sisters and brother play with him, but it's hard to tell if he has a favorite yet. Christopher is 3 and Luke's only brother, but he doesn't play with him often – it seems like Christopher is afraid of hurting Luke, and he also seems shy about talking to him or playing with him. Disney likes to hold Luke (she's 5), but she loses interest in a matter of minutes. Taylor is almost 12, and she enjoys Luke's cuteness, but she is too busy with a life of her own to spend a lot of time with her baby brother. Sammie stands out as the remarkable sibling. 7-year-old Sammie just adores her baby brother; she's always asking to hold him, and she doesn't soon grow tired of it. She plays with Luke, asks how he's doing, expresses interest in his activities, misses him when she's gone, and loves seeing cute pictures of him. I'm looking forward to watching their special bond strengthen even further as they grow up together. His brother and sisters love their baby brother in their own ways, and any time Luke does something new, he is crowded by an admiring entourage that can rival that of most celebrities.



Luke also really likes baths. He smiles like crazy the whole time he's in the bath; he'll even throw out a couple of "goo"s and "gaa"s and doesn't seem to notice that he sounds different when his ears are under water.

Luke is also the tie-breaker in our family – we have 3 brown-eyed people and 3 blue-eyed people. Two months old is too early to tell what color a baby's eyes will be, so right now we don't know which "side" will win. It's interesting also that our 2 blue-eyed kids are left-handed while our 2 brown-eyed kids are right-handed. Will Luke be a tie-breaker in only the eye color category or will he break the mold and be a blue-eyed righty or a brown-eyed lefty?

Even with his intensity, Luke is a wonderful baby and it's been nothing but a pleasure so far to get to know him as his personality develops – I wouldn't change any part of him or anything about him, no matter how far behind on stay-at-home-mommy-work I am! Here he is wearing the adorable camouflage hoodie someone got him – it's so cute! And here's an interesting bit of culture clash for you – where I grew up in the suburbs of Chicago, Luke would wear this and we'd be trendy. Here in the woods of rural Northwest Ohio, I put the camo hoodie on Luke, and we heard no fewer than FIVE comments about hunting and him being a little woodsman ☐





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## Luke James

Our 5th bundle of joy arrived on October 7, 2011. His name is Luke James, and he was born at exactly 8 am, weighed 7 lbs 11 oz and was 19.5 inches long. He is healthy and a very happy easy-going baby. He seems to have his days and nights mixed up though, which I suspected based on his movements when he was still in the womb. We are enjoying him immensely, and so are his 3 sisters and his brother. I am recovering from the c-section pretty well, and I will write more about Luke's first days at home when it doesn't hurt to sit in a chair for longer than 10 minutes. I would love to put up a hundred pictures of gorgeous little Luke, but my bunny chewed my camera cord, and I can't get any pictures off my camera. I hope to have this situation remedied soon, but I depend on Hubby for all my tech-related needs, and Hubby is exhausted staying up with the baby at night, taking care of me and the kids during the day while also keeping up with his responsibilities at both of his jobs. It just seems mean and commanding of me to place more demands on him now, so I will have to somehow be patient about the picture taking and sharing. I wonder how long I can last; Luke is one of the cutest babies I've ever seen!!!

**\*\*UPDATE\*\***

Hubby devised a way to transfer my pictures using my ebook reader – genius! So anyway, here is a picture of swaddled Luke at 1 day old:



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## Highlights From A Beth Moore Bible Study

One of the activities that's been keeping me so busy lately is the Beth Moore Bible study I'm attending on Mondays, called Jesus The One and Only. It's great; I'm learning a lot, getting to know other women from my church, and it gets me and the kids out of the house for a few hours every Monday morning. The kids can blow off some steam while I go through the workbook with my small group and watch the dvd. A fun class, but there is a side effect of all the learning: homework. Our workbook is divided into weekly sessions, and there are 5 days of homework for every week's lesson. Each day has about 4-5 pages of homework that involves creative thinking and looking up passages in the Bible, contemplating them, comparing them, and answering thought-provoking questions. Time-wise, it's intense, especially for this

pregnant mother of 4. This is the 3rd week of class, and so far I've been able to get all my homework finished on time and am really enjoying it. I struggled a bit at first with the stress of trying to find those extra hour 5 days a week that I was sure I didn't have, but I'm managing and reaping the rewards. Before I begin today's homework, I thought I'd share some things that I've highlighted in my workbook.

Before I do that, however, I will recap in a nutshell what the study itself is all about: Jesus. We began our discussions talking about Mary, and Beth Moore is really great at delving more deeply into things and encouraging the student to give more thought. We talked about what Mary might have been like as a young Jewish woman (Mary was probably around 13 or 14 when she was told she was about to carry the Lord's child – did you know she was that young? I didn't!), and we talked about her pregnancy (of particular interest to me right now), her thoughts and feelings, her journey to see her cousin Elizabeth, and then we moved on to talking about Jesus himself. We talked about him as a baby, a child, and about how he was led into the desert, all while relating it to our own lives. Some of Beth Moore's statements that stuck out to me in the workbook are:

*God seems to love little more than stunning the humble with His awesome intervention.*

*Seasons of intense temptation are not indications of God's displeasure.*

*God emphasized that the road to redemption would be costly and confrontational.*

*Luke was the only Gentile God inspired to write a Gospel.*

*God allows circumstances to exist in our lives that drive us to dependency on Him.*

*God is far too faithful to let anyone make it through life*

*without confronting seasons of utter helplessness.*

*The good news Christ may want to preach to you today is that you don't have to subsist. You were meant to thrive.*

*I'm quite sure if my healing process had been painless, I would have relapsed.*

*Many people sincerely love God, but I don't think anyone stands to appreciate the unfailing love of God like the believer finally set free from failure.*

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## **Easter 2011**

Easter is definitely a favorite holiday of mine. Can't be THE favorite because nothing beats Christmas, but it's proven to be even better than Halloween these days. No matter how you celebrate Easter, there is always lots to do this time of year, and I think our family found the perfect balance between celebrating the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ and the traditional kids' stuff like Easter eggs and bunnies.

Every year, our community has an Easter egg hunt, and my kids always love it. My oldest is now too old to participate, but I was proud that she chose to come along with us and that she was a HUGE help with the little ones. Our community's Easter egg hunt is more of a candy scramble now. They used to have it in the park, and the volunteer teens from the high school would hide the candy all around the park, but they got tired of having to move the event indoors at the last minute because of inclement weather. With Easter being in April, you just can't guarantee a sunny, dry, Saturday morning without muddy ground in which to hide the Easter surprises. So now they have it in the middle school gym, and while they can't exactly

hide the candy, the kids seem to love it all the same. If the kids find a piece of candy with a colored dot on it, then they win an extra prize, and 2 of my 3 kids did just that – those of you who know our family can guess who was the one with the (as always) bad luck – poor kid.

At church the following day, we had two special guests join us – one friend who doesn't go to church but began to come after falling on hard times in his life, and a new friend who is also going through tough times and looking to switch churches. I'm so happy to report that New Friend now calls our church her church home – she and her kids really like it! Also, Friend #1 has been coming to church every week since! God is amazing!

Monday, we were invited by some friends to attend "The Living Last Supper", a show near Fort Wayne Indiana staged solely for God's glory – to depict the last days and the death and Resurrection of Jesus. It was an **awesome, powerful** show; one I **strongly recommend**. This will be an annual tradition for our family for sure! Especially since all 4 of our children were moved by the performance, and we didn't even need to use the child care!

Friday saw the annual kid-friendly tradition of egg coloring, and I think this was really the first year we've done egg coloring with a little BOY in the house. Our son is 2, and what a difference there was between his rowdy excited way of dropping the eggs into the colors versus his sisters' delicate quest for prettiness in their egg designs. Our son barreled through his allotment of eggs so quickly that his sisters were still working on theirs when he was done, and this is what happened:



After dinner, our family sat down in a circle to do another one of our favorite Easter traditions: [Resurrection Eggs](#). It's a set that was given to us by my sister last year, and I have to remember to tell her how much we enjoy doing this every year. We even lent our set to some friends this year for them to enjoy! It comes with a booklet, and we take turns reading the little paragraphs that tell the story of Jesus' death. The booklet asks questions and gives you places to pause, and you open each of the 12 eggs when prompted. Each of the different colored eggs contains a little something that represents the part of the story that was just read, and we have kids take turns opening eggs. It's a wonderful way to combine the eggs aspect and the spiritual meaning of Easter into a fun-filled educational family activity, and we love it!

Saturday morning the kids got a nice surprise – the Easter Bunny had visited early and hidden their gorgeous eggs! I think the Easter Bunny thought it would be too much for us to search for eggs while trying to get to church on time Sunday morning, and he was right ☹ Oh, here's a pic of the kids with their eggs; Dude is still recovering from his egg coloring tantrum:



After the egg hunting , we attended a fun Easter event at the community theater up the street, and the weather actually cooperated. There were Easter egg hunts, games, lunch, and plenty of prizes for everyone, and the kids had a blast. We returned home and made a last minute decision to check out another Easter drama at a friends' church.

It seems that the Easter Bunny made another visit to our house on Saturday night since Sunday morning the kids woke up to a laundry basket for each of them full of surprises. We went to church, and I enjoyed a whopping class size of 13 first-graders to teach! Problem was, all of their jacked-up-on-candy brains could only think about the other aspects of Easter, and we had difficulty doing some of our planned activities. It's often difficult to accomplish much when I have a class of that size anyhow, so I took it in stride and we went to the gym early to run around and burn off some of that sugar! At adult worship, we were blessed to see enough friends join us so that our group filled up an entire row! It's not about quantity, but it was amazing to see some friends there who don't regularly go to church and some whom we've been inviting for years and haven't come until now. I am so excited to see what God is doing in the lives of those I care about!!!

We went out to brunch, took a family nap, and then we took the kids to the movies. No, we didn't see Hop, which might have made sense for Easter, but our older kids have already seen it. So we took in Rio, which is a cute family movie about a

couple of rare parrots – fitting for our family since we reside with a jerky parrot of our own, and we had fun.

Overall, one of the best Easter seasons *ever*; actually, this season just keeps getting better and better every year, especially as I become aware of what the season is all about and how to really celebrate it. I am truly blessed!

So a belated happy Easter to everyone! I hope you all had a wonderful Easter and have many more to come! Celebrate Easter, celebrate Jesus, celebrate love, celebrate family – Easter is great & we have God to thank!

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## 7 Years Ago

7 years ago my best friend, the love of my life and mother of my children left this world. Cancer claimed yet another victim.

This year, I will spend the day with two of my Florida family. I'm not sure what we will be doing, but throughout the day I will be thinking of her.

After 7 years, the pain in my heart is dulled. Time has done that. Memories, mostly pleasant, have filled the have filled the places where pain once stayed. Life continued even when I didn't want it to.

I've tried to remember what the pain I had experienced. Others have lost loved ones this past year, I had hoped my experience could help, but I know nothing will relieve the pain. It must be lived through. It must be experienced. It must be faced for healing to occur.

I know for a fact that time will not heal all wounds. Some



stay with you the rest of your life. Those wounds, both physical and mental, are part of your life. You live with them. They become part of your fiber. They become a part of who you are.

On this 30th of December, I will pause to wish all a Happy New Year. May it bring joy to you and yours. If not joy, may it bring just a bit of hope and peace.

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## A Christmas Blessing

Speaking of family outings, we found a fun place weekends ago in Fort Wayne Indiana – it's an indoor ice skating place, and they have THREE ice rinks! But we didn't have time to try ice skating; our family was more interested in the bouncy castles. At \$5 / head from 1-4pm, it wasn't a bad deal. The only problem was that they had the bouncy castles in the ice arena area, and it was freezing in there! The kids were ok, but we weren't able to stay as long as we wanted, plus they were all frozen by the time we left. If they had just noted their arrangement on their website, we could have dressed for the occasion, but that's ok, it was still fun. After that, we had a delicious dinner at Golden Corral – YUM!

But something strange happened there – I was waiting for a man to finish at the buffet, and he apologized for taking so long (he wasn't) and then handed me a "Christmas blessing" on a folded up piece of paper. He was vague in the details; just mentioning 'Christmas Blessing', so I opened up the paper, and it was a copy of a newspaper article about the man's family – mainly his elderly mother. Looking at the picture in the article told me that the man who gave it to me was Raymond, whom you'll read about below. Although the article was from

1996, he mentioned that he was with his mother that day at the restaurant – she is doing well here in 2010, 14 years later! I find the family's story inspirational, and I thought I'd help the man spread his family's touching story – the story featuring his mother's boundless faith and he and his father finding Christ. Below is a copy of the article he gave me; I hope you find it inspirational reading on this very special holiday. Merry Christmas!

*'She taught us by what she did'*

*Thanksgiving this year had a special glow for Arlene Berger, 74, and her family.*

*They gathered for the holiday meal in the new house the Flushing Township resident, severely brain-damaged in a 1994 traffic accident, shares with one of her sons, his wife, and two children.*

*Her house was built with funds from her accident settlement and her family is determined life will be as meaningful as possible for the woman left with physical as well as mental impairment.*

*Her progress has been awesome, as has been the help she's received from others, according to two of her five children.*

*Raymond, 47, the eldest of her four sons, and David, 32, the youngest, this week recounted details of their mother's accident and her life of righteousness.*

*With 15 years separating them, they hold different views of how their mother's faith affected them.*

*"I used to mock her; my other brothers did," Raymond said of his youth in Flint.*

*David said, "She was the most giving person, many of us thought to a fault. I remember a couple of times she didn't know how she was going to pay her bills, and when I asked her about how she had spent her money, she had given some to this person, some to that one."*

Raymond concurred, "We thought she was being used. We told her there ain't no God and to quit giving everything away. But we weren't thinking like she was."

Their Bible-reading Baptist mother was living up to the passage: "Give, and it shall be given to you." (Luke 6:38)

"Now she's on the receiving end," said David. "Because of the way she was before the accident, people want to do for her."

Church members are showing up to care for her to a degree the family never could have imagined.

"She gave everything away her whole life, and now her kids all want her to have an enjoyable life," David said.

It was not just her older sons who derided her faith.

Raymond, a Flint truck plant employee, recalls his late father chasing ministers away from the door.

"He had been anti-religious. He worked and he drank. I didn't really know him until I was old enough to drink, old enough to go to the bars," Raymond said.

In 1981, their father had a massive heart attack. His wife's church prayed for him, and he survived to embrace salvation.

He lived the last two years of his life a Christian.

Raymond said he also has been saved, and has seen the difference faith has made in his life. "That was a miracle," he said. "I never thought I'd see my dad in a church. I never thought I'd see myself in a church."

David, on the other hand, attended John R. Rice Baptist Academy in Davison and went on to graduate from a bible college. He teaches at Bridgeport Baptist Academy during the day and works at Delphi Saginaw Steering Systems at night.

He was the assistant pastor at Landmark Baptist Church, where

his mother was headed Feb.24, 1994, when her car was hit in the driver's side by a Jeep Cherokee whose driver had run a red light, he said. He was notified that his mother had been taken to Hurley Medical Center, where she was in critical condition.

She underwent two emergency surgeries in short order.

A CAT scan showed 11 brain hemorrhages and blood on her brain stem, he said.

"She was in a coma the whole time," David said. "After three months, the doctors told us she might not ever come out of it because of her age and the length of time since the accident."

Her children were told of the probability that she would never be able to walk, talk, or feed herself.

"Well, you ain't God," Raymond told them.

After three-and-a-half months at Hurley, she was moved to Riverbend Nursing Center in Grand Blanc, where she stunned David by allowing nurses to walk her in "baby steps" the first day.

She progressed out of the coma. Raymond remembered first noticing her fingers tapping to the inspirational music tapes her family supplied.

Raymond and David recall the times she responded with an "I love you, too" to each of them.

Arlene Berger received three months of therapy at Riverbend before transferring to McLaren Regional Medical Center to build skills she would need for living at home.

His brothers and sister back David up in caring for their mother, who lost her left eye and use of her left hand in the accident and now has an erratically functioning mind with an IQ of 90.

*"A lot of people live for themselves, don't do for their kids. And then the kids don't do for them," David said. "She taught us by what she did."*

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## love stories

It was the spring of 1983 when I first met my future wife. At this time, we were not aware that we would be together in a few short months. What I did realize was easier to identify. I found her to be very attractive, with a strong personality, an infectious smile and a bit reserved in the setting. Most people would have said she was shy, but I noticed something else was holding her back, shyness had nothing to do with this. At that time, I wasn't sure what it was. I observed, that she was watching the group intently. I was intrigued and captivated, too bad she came with her boyfriend. ☐

About a week later, I met her for the second time. I realized at that point why she was reserved and observant. She had a hearing loss, and this helped her compensate for that loss. The second time we met, we both knew we would be good friends. Two weeks and two meetings and we felt some connection. Nothing yet to indicate that a different relationship was in our future.

A couple of weeks later, this wonderful lady brought another charming lady with her at the weekly gathering of our little group. She was not quite two years old. I'm not sure what this little girl was told before she got to my apartment, but I got the biggest leg hug ever. She sat with me most of the night, and I was smitten. (So yes, little draclet, I loved you before I fell in love with your mother.) She became a common addition to our weekly game night group. I knew at that point I would

do almost anything for that little bundle of energy and spunk.

Weeks went by, and as my love for the daughter grew, the relationship with the mother grew too. I was there when a tearful lady needed someone to talk to after a break up. I was there when her first trial at seeing others went askew. At the end of May, I finally asked my future wife out. Somewhere in the many walks and long talks after that date, I fell in love a second time. Whirlwind romance occurred and marriage followed the following January. In less than 1 year's time, I went from a single man, to a husband and father. The father part came first. My love of the daughter won me the heart of the mother. Without that initial caring, the second relationship may not have happened as quickly.

My lovely wife always told me I had 3 strong characteristics that pushed her toward me. I was dependable, stable and loving. For many years I thought it was how I treated my wife, but later I found out it was how I treated the daughter. Yes, my unconditional love of another woman gave me almost 20 years of love from a wonderful wife. Through the years, she loved her daughters more than she loved me. I can't say the same thing, but I loved them almost as much. And one of them I loved longer....

She taught me what love was, after I showed the ability to love.

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## **A weekend with two sides**

I had a longer weekend then most since I took Friday off. The day was filled with some time of quiet reflection for me. I was in need of some time and space to think. That evening and well into Saturday morning was filled with friends and

companionship.

Since I was up so late, Saturday was one to recuperate until the evening. Then on to my oldest daughter's house for our regular Saturday gathering. It started late, and went long. The end of the day was filled with a strong sense of family. We were there to support each other when it was needed.

There was laughter and fun this weekend. We shared food and good times. We shared in common interests. We shared fun in the life of others. In that, life continues.

One year ago on the 13th of August, future laughter was never heard. Sadness filled many hearts. Other loss was averted, but the anxiety was left behind.

It has been one year, but the loss is still there. The loss remains and will remain.

It has been one year, but the love is still there. That love seems to grow daily.

It has been one year, you are gone, but not forgotten. Memories remain, however short they were.

It has been one year, and that is not a magic number. Time heals, but scars remain. Pain fades, but the hurt is still real.

Friends, family and love continue. In those things there can be strength. It is not weakness to shed tears, it is strength and love.

We miss all of those we lose, but on some days a special one is remembered.