



NightLight

A NEWSLETTER OF McLEAN MINISTRIES

"take heed....as to a light that shines in a dark place." II Peter 1:19

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Dear Friends,



Listen carefully:

Unless a grain of wheat is buried in the ground,

dead to the world,

it is never any more than a grain of wheat.

But if it is buried,

it sprouts and reproduces itself many times over.

John 12:24 The Message



Mary's father, 94, peacefully passed while sleeping at his home into the presence of his Father on April 11th. Funeral and burial services with full military honors were on April 17th.

To fellow military personnel, he was greatly respected as a high ranking overseer of munitions for the United States military, also including Europe and the Far East.

To them he was Colonel Grammer, serving in the United States Air Force. He may not have been *personally* known by them, yet it was his reputation of integrity and efficiency which guided them through the Vietnam era. This would also include leadership in the Strategic Air Command. (When Mary was a young girl, she accompanied her father to work one day. By the time she had watched him pass through several high security electronic doors, which yielded to his hand, voice, or retina, her mind was asking in wondering amazement, "Just who IS my daddy!?")

After his military retirement, Gene Grammer entered the demanding world of civilian industry for a few years. But his heart was being drawn to embrace three different but strongly related areas: **God, family, and the land** which produced him. It was in those three realms I first came to know, respect, and learn from the man who became my father-in-law.

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Gene Grammer was headed to the rank of general, but that promotion became supplanted by the far greater commitment to his wife and family. It was clear that the promotion to general would require too much of his life away from them. His choice for them meant an eventual return to the land where he grew up. When he made his greater loyalty known, which brought his ascendancy to general to a close, he was free to pursue **the ongoing call** to a deeper obedience to God, which included a greater focus on his family. The pull of his boyhood roots brought him back to the East Texas soil which had first nurtured him to become the leader he eventually became. It was not the end of an ascendancy on a military level, but **the continuation of a God-ordained destiny**. He went around the world and had come back where he began. **Full circle**.

Two examples which characterize this godly and gentle man follow: (1) One day while driving his tractor, Gene raised his right hand in the air and kept it there as he steadily plowed a long straight line. You could not hear his voice over the drone of the noisy tractor. An untrained eye would be wondering what he was doing. But we knew. He had been listening to a message on worship that had stressed among other things, the meaning of raised hands to God. He was not brought up in a church tradition that had made place for that expression. But when he heard the Scriptures call to him for that worship form, he found the place to regularly practice it! Not with others. But alone, him with his Father, on his tractor in the garden. The abundance of produce from those fields fed not only family, but many neighbors, friends, and church members. It was not only an abundance of garden produce though, but even more so an abundance of spiritual food. (2) More recently, as Gene's health and physical ability declined, he became frustrated at how long it took him to put on his garden work boots. As he sat on the stool one morning in the bedroom, God spoke to him: "Son, take these extra 10 minutes to spend with Me." He told Mary what a blessing it became every morning to sit still on that stool on purpose and pray. What had been a frustrating struggle to put on his shoes became a precious time for Gene. He graciously adjusted to the loss of his independence with humility and the wisdom to welcome the help of others.

His love for God, expressed in daily practical forms towards his family, and over the land he had daily sanctified by regular prayer and thanksgiving, paints a clear picture of how the three aspects of his days of retirement converged in **a circle of ongoing life**. Yes, he had retired from the military lifestyle. But he had come home and embraced a higher call as a son of his Father, as a father to his family, a spiritual father to his spiritual children, as an intercessory prayer warrior, and as a childlike worshipper driving his tractor. **Full circle**.

As he aged, like all of us, he waxed lyrical in details of his early formative years, and especially military adventures. But more and more **his focus was on God, on family, and the land**. Even when Gene could only speak in phrases, he never failed to continue to pray in complete sentences before every meal, holding hands around the kitchen table. He was laid to rest just a few days ago. It is fitting that on the earthly level, Gene Grammer is now a planted seed. He will not abide alone. Because of his planting, many others will truly live. They will live to grow in wisdom and humility, and eventually along with him, rise to be harvested home.



One Grandson's Tribute to Gramps

Gramps was the embodiment of humility. He had many reasons to be proud – college graduate, football star, long and distinguished service in the Air Force, reaching the rank of full colonel, with many honors and rewards. For a while after retirement, he worked as an industry consultant as many high-ranking officers have the opportunity to do...and then he gave it up.

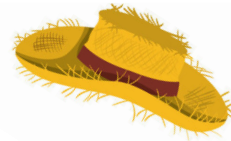
*For nearly my entire living memory, he and his beloved wife (of 70+ years, eventually) lived on his family's original plot of land, a hundred acres in rural East Texas, where he had farmed as a boy with a donkey and an iron plow. **As long as I knew him, he lived simply** – wake up early, get some coffee, have a simple breakfast, and then spend the rest of the day working in his enormous garden, growing every vegetable you can imagine, and periodically other crops like cotton, to show the grandchildren how much labor was involved in the materials we take for granted. They would have a classic Southern “dinner” in the early afternoon, then rest in the heat of the day before working outside again until “supper”. Rinse and repeat, just about every day for more than 30 years. **Visiting their home was like entering another dimension, almost, where time ran on nature's clock, taking care of the land was your job, and family and friends always came first.***

*He and Grammy were devoted to each other, to God, and to their family. They rarely traveled, except for a few graduations, weddings, and other family occasions. Perhaps not remarkable, in a sense of earthly achievement, but for us **they lived life as it is meant to be lived, as caretakers of a little piece of God's creation, with the presence of Christ in every moment of their days, and with deep love and joy for the people around them. May the same be said, in some small way, of each of us.***



Closing Thoughts...

(by Mary)



God is good...all the time. Whenever anyone would say, "God is good" to my Daddy, he would always reply, "All the time!" I'm a Daddy's girl. Yes. God is good, all the time. Even now. Even in grief. O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusts in Him.

(Psalm 34:8)



Daddy, 73 and Kira, 4 (our oldest granddaughter) heading to the garden.

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