

## Epilogue

I mentioned in the “Introduction” section that I would come back to the story of my Dad, Bill Wright. I would like to tell you how baseball and softball gave him peace in his final days before he passed away in 1982.

In the “Introduction” section I talked about growing up playing baseball, but I did not mention anything about my church background as a child. When I was about five Dad was in the hospital for an operation. At the time he was a deacon in our church (as was my mom), but during his stay in the hospital there was some significant conflict between Dad and the senior minister of the church. For many, many years this left Dad with some very bad feelings toward the church, and he stopped attending. My mom would occasionally take my sister, brother and me to church, Sunday School and Vacation Bible School, but it wasn't until after I married my wife Diana in 1976, and we joined a church in Abilene, TX, that I affirmed my faith in Jesus Christ.

After I left the Air Force in the summer of 1980, Diana and I (and our newborn son, Jeff) moved back to Plano, TX to be closer to Mom and Dad. While I was putting in a yard that summer a neighbor, Gary Marshall, came down and introduced himself. When he learned of my passion for baseball and softball he encouraged me to join his church's softball team, which I did, and Diana and I eventually joined the church. Not long thereafter my mom visited a few times, and then we all collectively convinced Dad to come with us. He enjoyed the service and the sermon very much, and the next Sunday he reaffirmed his faith and joined the church. I remember him saying that day “I feel a tremendous sense of relief,” and on the following Wednesday he passed away.

## Epilogue (cont.)

I will be forever thankful that Gary invited me to that church, and baseball and softball played a significant part. I will also be forever thankful that Dad put his negative emotions and prior experiences behind him, and found peace with the Lord in his final days.

If you regularly attend church, invite a friend or neighbor. If you have had conflict with someone at a church and it is separating you from God, I pray that you can move beyond it and find peace in the love of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Finally, when you spend time with your son or daughter on the baseball or softball diamond, or just riding in the car on the way to the store, cherish every moment. Tell them you love them, just as Jesus stated His love for us. Teach them to lead lives that are full of joy, love and happiness. Encourage them, while you also hold them accountable. Attend church, study the Bible together, and talk about what you believe.

Most importantly, always remember—we are ALL children of God!

May God's blessings be with you always!

*Rick Wright*

