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learned a lot about childhood trauma and how it can manifest itself in the mental well-being of their lives as they mature. My experiences were nothing compared to some of the children with whom we worked. My heart would be broken again and again as I watched how those babies tried to cope with situations that were sometimes beyond horrific. Yet, while my life's trials paled in comparison, there was a mutual connection through the feeling of helplessness and insecurity we all experienced. Through that shared awareness, my time there was not only rewarding but cathartic as well.

Both my mom and my biological father have passed. But if it were possible to go back in time, I would seek to comfort that young mother in those early years of my life. I only wish I could have been there as I am now to comfort her and to help her know it would all work out in the end. I would try to help her understand that it would be ok to slow down and drink in those troubled times of being a new mom, to cherish that little boy that looked to her for everything. My encouragement to her wouldn't be for personal gain; but rather to try to give her peace of mind knowing that with God, she would be able to do the impossible. Also, I would want to share with her that, as hard as it may seem, it was possible to find joy in raising a son. Finally, I would ask her to slow down and not be in a hurry to fill that void left by the man that fathered her child. Instead, I would ask her to seek to fill her emptiness with God and perhaps reflect on scripture like this one from Proverbs 31, ""*She girdeth her loins with strength, and strengtheneth her arms…Strength and honour are her clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come"*. Yes, there would be many things that I would love to say, but most importantly, I would tell her that I loved her even when it didn't show, as I'm sure she did for me, even when it didn't feel like it.

The last time I hugged her goodbye, we stood by the fireplace warming ourselves in the chill of the November morning. Mom was dying of cancer, and my company had afforded me a couple of weeks to work remotely, allowing me precious time to spend with her. It was the last time we were together on this side of Glory. As we said goodbye, that final hug reminded me of that one so long ago on that bed in that tiny apartment in Evansville. She had lived a lifetime, and now we had come full circle.

This Mother's Day, if you had a wonderful relationship with your mother, know that you are blessed beyond measure. But, if you found those memories of your mother bringing pain, try to seek forgiveness and even search in your heart so that you can forgive. In the end, you will find that those troubled eras of your life were surrounded by treasures of the heart that were hidden away, waiting for their discovery when the time was right. In a way, forgiveness may absorb those painful memories, making them more precious than diamonds. Remember, wherever you place your treasures, there your heart will also be. So, hug your mother while you can, for you never know when it might be the last in your life. And have heart knowing that someday, she will meet you on the other side of glory, as our Saviour awaits us, standing with open arms.

Thanks be to God.

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