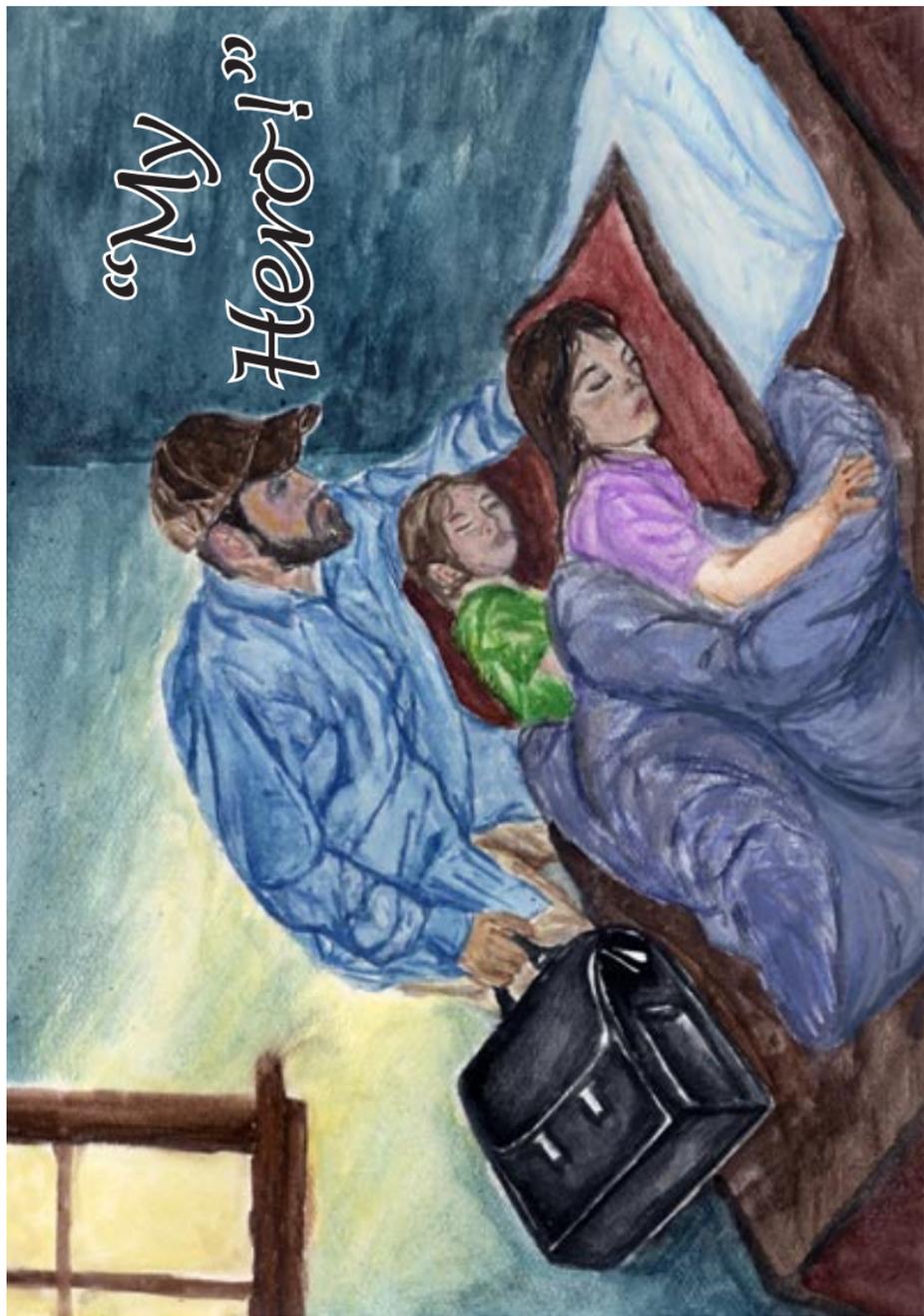
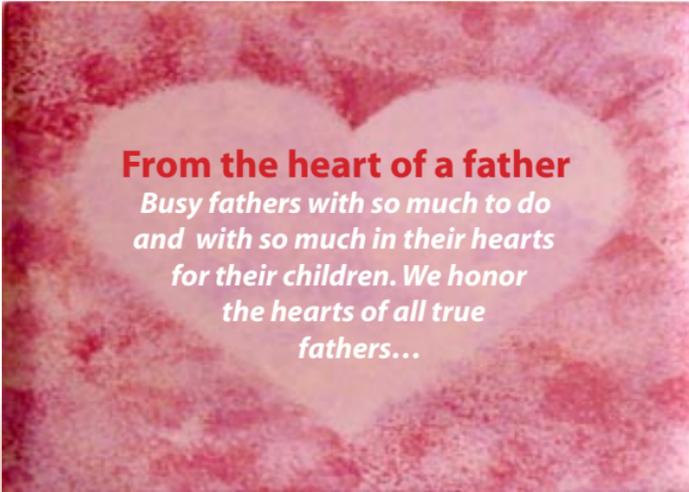


“My Hero!”





**From the heart of a father**

*Busy fathers with so much to do  
and with so much in their hearts  
for their children. We honor  
the hearts of all true  
fathers...*

**When I was still their hero...**

*Leaving is so hard,  
kneeling down,  
gazing with wonder,  
upon my two small children.  
One three, one six,  
both innocent.*

*Leaving is so hard,  
when you know you haven't taken the time  
and made the most of every opportunity.  
Someone once told me  
that it's not the big things  
but the small things that count —  
those bedtime stories,  
those questions they ask  
because you are their father,  
their source.*

*Leaving is so hard.  
I bowed and prayed,  
realizing I had to leave them again,  
not wanting to squander this precious time  
while they are young,  
while I am still their **hero**.  
Even though sometimes all I can see  
are my failures, my shortcomings,  
my inability to be a father,  
a husband.*

*Quietly they rest,  
undisturbed by life's troubles and hardships.  
Peacefully they sleep, while I cry,  
realizing how often I miss those small  
opportunities  
that I vowed I wouldn't  
but continue to,  
and continue to vow to change.  
All the while my own tendencies  
and inner workings churn on.*

*Oh, how I want to change!  
I don't want to look back  
with regret.  
I want to remember with  
fondness  
the days of their childhood.  
When I was their hero...  
when leaving was so hard...*



# H·E·R·O

The word “hero” is often heard these days. One hears the term applied to people where it is not really appropriate. Do toughness and fortitude on the field of sports really constitute a hero?

A firefighter who disregards his own life for another’s life is a hero. True heroes are the people that you do not usually hear about. They are always in the shadows and never in the spotlight, and they would not have it any other way.

*When asked, “Who is your hero?” only 28 percent replied, “My Dad.”*

*In the past, that number would have been 100 percent. The divine command to “Honor your father” no longer holds sway.*

## Who would you name as your hero in a national poll?

Today we have lost our ability to see the heroic.

In the article *“Heroes: They’re Hard to Find”* in Sept. 2001, *U.S. News and World Report* writer Kim Clark asks the question: “Who’s your hero?” The author reports on a Harris Interactive survey, August 15, 2001, poll of 1,022 Americans.

Of those polled, more than half could name *no public figure* alive today — no politician, no athlete, no scantily dressed superstar they considered heroic. (Indeed, about 1 in 6 had no hero at all.)

When asked what they would expect out of someone in order to consider him a “hero,” respondents told pollsters they would expect their heroes to persevere despite adversity, to go beyond expectations, to stay level-headed in a crisis, and to risk themselves for the sake of a better society. To find someone they would consider a true hero, those surveyed had to resort four out of five to those in past history who had not been such easy prey for the modern media. **Jesus Christ** was number one, the most widely admired hero. He was followed by **Martin Luther King Jr., former Secretary of State Colin Powell, John F. Kennedy, and Mother Teresa.**

But even these five have come under fire recently. Strong attempts have been made to defame each one, including the Son of God Himself, in movies wrongly depicting His life..

Nearly 1 out of 4 Americans has recently crossed somebody off a list of heroes, mostly because of “unethical conduct.” Cynicism about motives is also contributing to disillusionment with our heroes. More than two thirds of all Americans who have lost respect for a hero said it was because the individual was overly concerned with personal recognition.

The survey shows the fruit of the current desire to investigate and expose the “**feet of clay**” of anyone who might possibly become a “hero.” The author says: “Today’s obsession with clay feet may be a reaction to a long history of deifying heroes. The ancient Greeks, who are the ones who gave us the term ‘hero’ in the first place, also gave us the concept of ‘hero worship.’ Until the days of Watergate, Americans

seemed to turn a blind eye to the flaws of their heroes. George Washington was a controversial character while he lived — he was much criticized for both his generalship and his presidential economic policies. Yet he survived in our memories as a hero whose only failing was chopping down his father's cherry tree. In the 20th century, sportswriters winked at Babe Ruth's carousing, and political reporters kept mum about JFK's philandering. Many blame the modern media for tearing down potential heroes by publicizing the mistakes of the great. But media giants wouldn't spend so much time on such stories if they didn't sell so well. People seem to enjoy proving that everyone else is no better than they are! Media gives the people what they want..."

Most people do not have a father the stature of a United States President. But the days of idealistic heroism are at an end. Our eyes have been opened to their *feet of*



## *“Feet of Clay”*



*“Alas! My father has feet of clay!”*

*clay.*

The dictionary explains the phrase “feet of clay” as: *‘a weakness or hidden flaw in the character of a greatly admired or respected person.’* An example of its usage would be: “He was disillusioned to find that even Lincoln had feet of clay.”

Though the phrase “feet of clay” has come

into common usage today, you may be surprised to know that the phrase is actually from the Bible (Daniel 2: 31-40). King Nebuchadnezzar (of Babylon) has a dream. A statue that appears before him has a head of gold, breast and arms of silver, belly and thighs of brass, and legs of iron. The feet of this statue are made of iron and clay. A stone hits the feet of clay composite, and the whole statue breaks into pieces. The prophet Daniel’s interpretation of the dream is that Nebuchadnezzar was the head of gold (a great king), but after him would come successively weaker kingdoms (like the statue with feet of clay). These kingdoms would finally be replaced by the kingdom of God which would fill the whole earth.

Interesting thought!



Who is a  
**HERO**  
?

**“The word ‘hero’** no longer means one who has willingly put himself in grave physical jeopardy for the benefit of another. True heroes are people who overcome evil by doing good at great personal risk. Through self-sacrifice, fortitude and action — whether they succeed or fail — heroes provide a moral and ethical framework — and inspiration — for the rest of us.

“Unfortunately, our modern definition of ‘hero’ has been corrupted to include all manner of people

*who do not warrant the title. The athlete who just set a new sports record isn't a **hero**. Nor is the 'daring' movie star or even the adventurer out to be the first solo climber to scale Mt. Everest. They may be brave — but they don't meet the definition of a **hero**, for whatever they achieve benefits only 'self.' Real heroes are selfless..."*

—**Oliver North**

**“I WANT TO BE LIKE YOU”** — admiring a father, admiring how he works, admiring how he talks, thinking that there is no one like him. These are the typical responses of a child to his father. In a society that is quickly losing the sense of proper respect, **Father's Day is a time to remember who the real heroes of this world are.**





## THE FIRST “HERO” — GILGAMESH

About 2800 B.C., one of the first “heroes” in recorded time, a great warrior named Gilgamesh ruled the Mesopotamian city of Uruk and, in his spare time, slew wild bulls and felled the massive cedars of

Lebanon. Ancient clay tablets discovered in modern-day Iraq tell a fantastic tale of his journey to the underworld to seek eternal life. The profound advice the tavern keeper gives him strikes home in many of us as we spend great energies in our personal quests: Gilgamesh is advised to spend his heroic energy in a more useful way. He is told to be a better husband and father: “The life that you seek you never will find... Gaze on the child who holds your hand. Let your wife enjoy your embrace! For such is the destiny of mortal men.”

Some of the ancient clay tablets say Gilgamesh eventually ruled the netherworld. Yet it appears he was not intrepid enough to take on the tavern keeper’s challenge. Even the earliest heroes, it seems, recognized that slaying beasts is a snap compared with spending years as a supportive spouse and patient parent.

*“Who can compare  
with him in kingliness?  
Who can say, like  
Gilgamesh,  
‘I am king?’”*



# THE EPIC OF GILGAMESH

The Epic of Gilgamesh is, perhaps, the oldest written story on earth. It comes to us from ancient Babylon and was originally written on 12 clay tablets in cuneiform script. It tells of the adventures of the historical King of Uruk (from where we get the modern-day name of that place: Iraq).

Gilgamesh was a hero — more beautiful, more courageous, more terrifying than the rest of us; his desires, attributes, and accomplishments epitomize our own.

Yet he is also mortal: He must experience the death of others and die himself. Yet he journeyed far and wide to find eternal life. Gilgamesh cannot rest as his fear of death drives him on in agony.

“How shall I find the life for which I am searching?”

Gilgamesh explains his great fear of death and his anxious search for a way of escape — to all those he encounters on his miraculous and arduous journey through forest, mountain peak, and dark seas... He finally encounters a wise woman who is the keeper of wine. Her name is Siduri.

Siduri tells him: “Gilgamesh, where are you hurrying to? You will never find that life for which you are looking. When the gods created man, they allotted to him death, but life they retained in their own keeping. As for you, Gilgamesh, fill your belly with good things; day and night, night and day, dance and be merry, feast and rejoice. Let your clothes be fresh, bathe yourself in water. Above all, cherish the little child that holds your hand, and make your wife happy in your embrace; for this too is the lot of man.”

In the end, Gilgamesh returns to his home seeing the futility of his search, and dies as any mortal man.





*“Pay to all what is due them:  
respect to whom respect is due,  
honor to whom honor is due.”*

Romans 13:7

**HAPPY FATHER'S DAY!**

*Significant Greetings by*

