

Last Words

What would you do if you suddenly realized you were about to die? No time to get your life in order or even make a phone call? I had a dream like that. I slipped off a cliff and instantly knew I wouldn't survive the fall. Only time for an arrow prayer: "Here I come, Lord." But some people don't even get that final chance to prepare to meet their maker. I'm thinking of those who died in the recent mid-air collision. They probably had no idea one second that their lives would end the next. It could happen to any of us, ready or not.

A character in a movie I recently watched had just a little more time to anticipate death. With his plane going down, he dashed off a few words to his daughter, hoping the note would be found in the wreckage. They'd quarreled, you see, and he wanted her to know, "*All is forgiven. I love you. Dad.*" What relief and consolation that message brought his daughter! She still grieved, but she didn't have to suffer forever over her last spiteful words to her father. He loved her unconditionally and had forgiven her everything.

The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. He... does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us. As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him, for he knows how we are formed; he remembers that we are but dust. (Psalm 103:8-14)

I learned that Angela Hunt (author of *The Note*, the book that inspired the film of the same name) intended a deeper meaning by the seven simple words written on that slip of paper. She meant it as an illustration of our Heavenly Father's unconditional love and compassion for his wayward children. We always mess up, but God always loves us. These facts apply to everyone on earth. Unfortunately, not everyone loves him in return and accepts his offer of salvation in Jesus Christ.

Read the passage above again and notice the repeated phrase "those who fear him," meaning those who love and respect God, who reverently worship and stand in awe of him. Is that your attitude? Then those promises are for you. Those saved by faith in Jesus can enter eternity, whenever the moment comes, knowing, "*All is forgiven. I love you. Dad.*"

S. Johnson