

## LEARN FOR LIFE BLOG

### **REFLECTIONS ON MOTHERHOOD, GRIEF, AND TIME**

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One morning on my drive to work, sitting in traffic on 35, an unexpected thought entered my mind. I started thinking about who I would visit if I could travel back in time. My first thought was my son at six years old. I would go back to those nights reading *Llama Llama Red Pajama* before bed. It is still one of my favorite children's books. There is something about that season of life that I deeply miss now.

It was also an especially difficult year for me as a mother. We had just moved, and I had started a new job that turned out to be very different from what I expected. Most evenings, I came home exhausted. There were many nights when I sat beside him reading aloud, but mentally I was somewhere else entirely.

Now that he is in double digits, I find myself longing for those moments I did not fully realize were fleeting. I miss when his arms seemed longer than his body, when the terrible pandemic haircut we gave him was still growing out, when we could both fit snuggled together in his tiny twin sized bed.

Then I thought about the second person I would visit if I had a time machine.

Many people might choose Jesus, Martin Luther King Jr., Van Gogh, or another historical figure who shaped the world. But I would choose my mother.

My mother died when I was in my early twenties. Because of complicated family dynamics, I did not grow up with her, and we lived in different countries for most of my life. By the time I was finally ready to have a relationship with her, she was diagnosed with brain cancer and died.

I still remember where I was when I got that call. I was sitting in my room at the Quarters on 24th studying for finals at UT. When my dad called, it felt like space and time stopped. I could not fully process what I was hearing.



I did not cry that day. I did not cry the day after. I did not cry when I told my roommates and friends, or when I told my church mentor.

But I have cried many times since then. Since losing her, Mother's Day has carried a quiet ache for me. It is a reminder of a phone call that will never come, of arms reaching for an embrace that disappears before it can be held.

Every year, we are surrounded by advertisements, movies, and social media posts celebrating smiling mothers and picture-perfect families. But behind all the glitter and flowers, there are also people grieving with their mothers. There are mothers struggling under the weight of motherhood. There are women facing infertility, strained relationships, loss, regret, and longing.

Mother's Day holds joy for many people, but for others it carries sorrow, emptiness, or complicated emotions that do not fit neatly into a greeting card or a department store commercial.

So while we celebrate motherhood, I hope we also make space for the fuller reality of being human. I hope we remember those whose Mother's Day looks different. I hope we hold them gently in our hearts and lift prayers for the many quiet griefs that often go unseen.