

# **WHEN YOUR MAMA CALLS YOU MAMA**

*A Story of Dementia*



# WHEN YOUR MAMA CALLS YOU MAMA

*A Story of Dementia*

MAE HOOVER



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# INTRODUCTION

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**T**he Bible tells us in one of the Ten Commandments that we are to honor our parents. That is the only commandment with a promise – that if we honor our father and mother our own life will be long.

You never expect to parent your own parents, but sometimes it happens.

Usually it is healthiest for the parent to be with family. It is healthy for the grandchildren to hear the stories and learn about the family history. It helps the children to learn how to minister.

There may come a time when you, as the care-giver, are no longer able to provide the needed care for your parent. Too often the health of the care-giver fails before the aged parent's does.

Before that happens it is time to evaluate what is best for the entire family. Health and well being is the consideration – not convenience.

When heavy lifting is needed, or when constant medical care is needed, or when the parent becomes a danger, it is time to make the dreaded decision to seek professional help.

Support groups are available to encourage and instruct.

Attitude is the most important aspect of this problem on the part of the care-giver. I had to remind myself of what kind of care Mother gave me when I was a baby, and the sacrifices she made for me throughout my life. When my patience grew thin, I had to count my blessings.

The Bible also tells us to think about the good things.

## CHAPTER ONE

# MAMA

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**T**he first time Mama called me Mama was initially funny. I remember calling my kids by the wrong name, but then I realized she actually thought she had called me by the right name. It gave me a sinking feeling and took away any doubt about her condition. My heart was broken.

Some years earlier one of Mama's sisters who was a reflexologist told Mother she had "hardening of the arteries." Mother asked her doctor and he said everyone her age had that. I shrugged it off at the time. I now know that is one of the tags used for dementia. It indicates blockage of the arteries to the brain, which causes loss of memory.

According to WebMD There are several things that could cause dementia:

Diseases that cause degeneration or loss of nerve cells in the brain such as Alzheimer's, Parkinson's and Huntington's; Diseases that affect vessels, such as stroke, which can cause a disorder known as multi-infarct dementia; Toxic reactions, like excessive alcohol or drug use; Nutritional deficiencies, like vitamin B12 and folate deficiency; Infections that affect the brain and spinal cord, such as AIDS dementia complex; Certain types of hydrocephalus, infections, injury, or brain tumors; Head injury—either a single severe head injury or longer term smaller injuries, like in boxers; Illnesses other than in the brain, such as kidney, liver, and lung diseases, can all lead to dementia.

Alzheimer's disease is just one form of dementia, but it accounts for more than 50% to 60% of dementia cases.



People with Alzheimer's disease may:

Not remember details about themselves or family members; Not recognize you or other family members; Not be able to identify what they like to eat or cook; Not be able to recognize and use a spoon or cup appropriately; Have difficulty identifying what month

or day of the week it is; Have difficulty recalling in which city or state they live; Not be able to recall important details such as their address or telephone number; Have trouble distinguishing shapes and colors; Have a hard time understanding basic directions like “follow me” or “please sit here”; Argue more often; Believe things are real when they are not; Wander, often at night; Have difficulty managing money; Show compulsive or repetitive behavior; Lose interest in conversation; Have a hard time dressing for the weather or occasion; Forget to shave or shower; Have trouble with tasks such as washing dishes or setting the table; Need help with toileting; Not be able to draw a circle or square; Not be able to speak or write their name; Have problems dressing themselves; Have problems with speech or may not speak at all; Forget appointments; Have difficulty cooking or following recipes.

