

Parent's Speech (Dad): Ben, I'm identifying with a quote from Billy Graham I came across recently who, at 90, said the biggest surprise in life is how quickly it passes. That's true.

I remember your birth and bringing home a red wagon from a garage sale for Chris so he wouldn't feel displaced by a baby brother.

I remember you wearing a much too heavy motorcycle helmet straddling the fuel tank and falling fast asleep, helmet resting on the tank.

The years pass so quickly: pets and chores on the hobby farm. Hot tub chats and evening "coffee" times before bed.

I remember you leaving for a year in Australia with your friends so soon after high school and you were grown up.

I remember you wrestling over which school to attend and driving up to Peace River country – the 4 years went so quickly - and then you leaving to see the world again with just a backpack and an occasional internet banking record hinting at your whereabouts – it was a long year.

Ben, I can hardly speak to you tonight as a son leaving home; that happened many years ago.

You are a man and have been for some years. A man I love and am proud of.

Yet in the years since that transition I've enjoyed our many conversations by skype and phone and know this processing of life we've done in part that way also is now being fulfilled in Amber as it should be. That's a wonderful thing and I rejoice in that.

You've developed wisdom. You've stayed connected to family as you moved to Alberta and built your businesses.

And the best is yet to come.

You are very well equipped for marriage. You are sensitive, compassionate and care about the needs and feelings of others. You are a clear communicator, direct and honest. You are thoughtful about your goals and relationships. Amber has a very fine husband and I'm happy for her and the two of you.

Amber, it's our joy to welcome you into our family, and your family into our family - for that's what marriage is. You and Ben will have wonderful years willing out the blessing we spoke over you.

I'm delighted to have heard from your lips that Ben is the kind of man who exceeds your expectations; he's a remarkable man, human with limitations like us all, but one worthy of the extraordinary person you are.

I wish you much joy with Ben in the years the Lord gives you together, growing into increasingly deep and satisfying unity with each other and with the Lord as the giver of every good and perfect gift, including – today - each other.