

“Saying Good-Bye in This Life”

This article is from the “Among Friends” section of the Church of God Big Sandy’s website (churchofgodbigsandy.com). It was posted for the weekend of Oct. 18, 2025—following the death of the author on Oct. 16. (A version of the article also appeared in the “Edifying the Body” section on March 5, 2022.)

By Shirley Dobbs West

BIG SANDY, Texas—Hellos and good-byes are a large portion of our lives. Hello is the beginning of every relationship.

Our parents may not have said the word *hello* when we were born, but they certainly welcomed us. And that is what a hello does—it welcomes others into our space.

Sometimes hello is just a courtesy, shown to a person we meet on the street. Such greetings can be fleeting, like ships passing in the night.

Yet there are times in our lives when a hello forms a lasting relationship that turns into a marriage, family or lifelong friendship.

Just as every relationship begins with a hello, it ends with a good-bye.

Some good-byes are temporary.

“So long, I’ll be seeing you later.”

One of my friends shortens her response to “Later.”

And there is the proverbial “See you later, alligator.”

There are all kinds of good-byes. We say good-bye to childhood and our teenage years as we say hello to adulthood.

There are the good-byes of our early romances, which probably inspired Shakespeare to pen, “Parting is such sweet sorrow.”

The hardest good-byes are the “final” good-byes in this physical life. (We know that we will be seeing our loved ones again in the Kingdom, but we still experience the temporary separation in this life.)

Good-byes in this life touch everyone’s life sooner or later. Some have to say good-bye in their early years, while others live almost a lifetime without saying a good-bye.

I was 29 when I had to say my first *final* good-bye. It was hard to do. It was to our 3-year-old son, who died from leukemia.

Later I said good-bye to my grandmother, who was present when I was born.

In the following years, I said good-bye to another son, who died from carbon monoxide, my father-in-law and my mother-in-law, my parents, dear lifelong friends and, lastly, to my dear husband of 60 years.

It has been said that it is better to have loved and lost than not to have loved at all. That is also true of the people to whom we have said good-byes.

All of them touched our lives. They brought us joy and laughter. They shared with us love and friendship. They left us with a treasure of memories we can keep and cherish until we say our *final* good-bye in this physical life.