

The Runner and His Son

Have you ever felt that God has left you alone and abandoned you? You became a Christian and you were going along enjoying His presence and fellowship and suddenly He seemed to be no longer there. What has happened? Does God still love you? What will you do, give up or seek more diligently?

Once upon a time there was a man who was a famous and talented runner. He had a little son who he wanted to grow up to be a runner like himself.

So one day when his son was finally able to walk well and just starting to run a few steps, he took his son to the trail that went for miles near their house, through woods and meadows, up, down, and around hills, and beside ponds. The son was very excited to be taken on this trip, just him and his dad. He had seen his dad run in races before and he wanted to be like him. Today, he would become a runner just like his dad.

And so they started out, the father holding the hand of his little son. But they had gone only a short distance when the father said to his son, "You can do it on your own now. Just follow me." With those words, he increased his pace and was soon out of sight.

The little boy tried hard to keep up with his father, but as soon as he lost sight of his dad, he quit trying and collapsed in a heap sobbing. He cried because he realized he wasn't a great runner like his dad and was disappointed. But then he also realized he was alone, abandoned in this dark woods and who knows what dangerous animals might be lurking behind these trees.

He was still crying and feeling sorry for himself when he heard a voice behind him. "Son!" He turned and there was his dad who had not left him at all but who had circled around behind and was following him.

He was so relieved and rushed into his arms. "Daddy, Daddy!" he shouted. His dad picked him up and swung him up to ride on his shoulders. Together they walked back home.

The little boy said with a downcast expression, "Daddy, I'm sorry I'm not a great runner like you."

"Son, I'm proud of you. You did very well for your first time. You will get better and some day you will run as fast as me," his dad replied.

The next week, they went out to the trail again. And again, the little boy was left alone as his dad ran on ahead. The little boy wasn't quite so scared this time when his dad disappeared around the bend, but he still couldn't go far before his little legs gave out. He sat down and began to feel lonesome and afraid.

He was just on the verge of tears, when from behind a bush next to him, he heard, "Son."

He replied, "Daddy!"

Again, his father picked him up and carried him on his shoulders as they went home.

Each week they went back to the trail and each week the little boy was able to run a little farther before he had to quit.

And so the years went by and the boy grew and grew. No longer were the trips weekly, but almost every day. No longer did the boy cry when his father left him for he knew he was not really far away and would come and get him when he was too tired to go further. He knew his dad was there even if he couldn't see him for awhile.

Then one day as the boy was running by himself, he rounded a bend and there was his dad, waiting for him to catch up and run together again for awhile. His dad didn't have to come back to get him and carry him anymore.

So the running sessions changed. Father and son would run together for awhile. Then the father would run faster until he was out of sight. His son would keep on even if he couldn't see his dad, knowing he was still there, just out of sight. So he kept on running and kept on growing.

As the boy grew, his father could no longer out distance his son so easily and the son was able to keep him in sight for longer and longer times.

By now the son was a teenager when his father said to him, "Son, you are almost grown and it will not be long until you are as good and as fast a runner as I am." This encouraged his son and he kept on trying harder.

Then a day came that as the father increased his speed, so did the son. Along the trail they raced, the father pulling ahead, but not able to get out of his son's sight. His son was too good of a runner to be left behind anymore. From that day on, the son ran always seeing his father ahead, but in sight, and the gap between them became less and less.

Until one day as they ran, together they raced, matching stride for stride, never more to be separated. The son had become as good and as fast a runner as his father.

Scriptures for discussion:

Matt. 7:7

Heb. 12:1-2

Hosea 6:3

II Tim 2:22

Heb. 10:35-39