

The Runaway

I was fed up with parental over-control and decided to run away. I obviously could not get what I wanted at home and simply decided to make it on my own. I didn't feel loved because my parents would not give me what I needed to be happy. So I secretly packed a few things I knew I would need and waited for the right opportunity to make my escape unnoticed by my parents.

Well, there was one major problem with my plan... I was in the first grade! However, as we all know, whatever the age, cradle to grave, we humans tend to think we know more about life than we really do. Loaded with righteous indignation and over-estimated confidence, I made my escape – almost! I was half way to the front gate when dad saw me, instantly and correctly assessed the situation and ran out the front door. I made to the chain link gate, slammed it behind me and ran for freedom.

My dad was just shy of 6' 2" and was a lanky, athletic tennis player. He jumped that gate and cleared it, except for the cuff of his slacks. That cuff caught the top swirl of the gate décor and held fast, dropping dad like a sack of potatoes body first to the ground. Memory of the muffled "thump" of his fall still hurts me today and that was 63 years ago! With stinging tears of guilt and a heart full of both love and remorse, I dropped my things and ran back to see if dad was OK. He was, we hugged and I cried.

What brought me back? Easy answer. Love! I think we are all a bit like that. We feel cheated by life, frustrated with circumstance and often forgotten by God. We didn't get what we wanted from Him, feel over-controlled by His laws and we run! Commonly, one of two things brings us home:

1. Frustration with life away from Him (eg., the prodigal son's hunger); or
2. Love that has been dormant but re-awakened.

There is a short but powerful verse wherein God refers to being hurt (Himself!). In Ezekiel 6:9, God literally says the words, "...how I have been hurt" by hearts who turned away from Him. The most powerful part of that verse is that it assumes we care if our heavenly Father has been hurt. Like my 6 year-old self who loved dad enough run back to see if he was hurt, we, even as adults, are still God's children who, if we love Him, will run back rather than run away – just to make sure our Father is not hurt by our actions.

I have an idea... let's just all decide to stay home, with Him.

-Ray Wallace