

Southern Adventist University
Knowledge Exchange

The Main Thing Devotional

Office of Ministry and Missions

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God Still Wants You!

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Part of the Religion Commons

And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. (Luke 15:20)

Transformation starts with a revelation of God’s character. When I was nine years old, I ran away from home. Why? The reason was obvious, how could I live at home if my parents would not buy me a Ninja Turtle figurine? Because of that, I decided to give my parents a class in child rearing by hiding under my bed. Before I knew it my mother began calling out my name and I intentionally refused to answer. We played this “game” for a while and then my dad joined in, “Joseph!”

Soon, what started as a gentle call turned into an intense bellow, “JOSEPH!” In that moment I discovered two things; hiding under a bed does not constitute as running away from home, and more importantly I realized my parents wanted me more than I wanted that toy figurine. Jesus once told a parable of a son who ran away from home because he desired his father’s belongings more than he desired belonging to his father.

In Luke 15, a son squanders the inheritance of his father. The young man becomes so destitute and hungry that he eventually finds himself craving the scrapes of food offered to pigs; everything that he thought would make him happy has only left him empty. Having hit rock bottom, the son heads homeward and in a dramatic plot twist his father runs towards him, not to humiliate him but to embrace his son and cover his shame. What is unique about this parable is God, represented by the father, is depicted as running. In Bible times, noble men never ran in public, yet God seeks to highlight that if we ever caught a glimpse of Him running, it would be enthusiastically towards a repentant sinner. The son thought he would have to earn his father’s love, but the parable illustrates this profound reality – you do not need to earn what you already have. God still wants you!

Reflect

- Can you relate to the parable of The Prodigal Son? If so, how?
- Can you think of times in life when you felt far from God, but he saw you from a distance and ran towards you? What was the experience of God still wanting you like?
- Why do you think it is so important to have a correct view of God’s character? How can it be transformational to our experience?

NEWS & RESOURCES

- **Signup Now to Join An Employee Lifegroup!** If you seek to belong to a spiritually transformative small group community on campus while personally growing in your spiritual walk, consider joining one of the four employee LifeGroups currently available at www.southern.edu/belong. Scroll down to “Enroll in a LifeGroup” where you can register. There you will find information about when and where each of the following LifeGroups are meeting:
 - **Relationship Principles of Jesus LifeGroup** led by Tammy and Bob Overstreet
 - **Thriving Life LifeGroup** led by Amy Ortiz-Moretta
 - **Following Jesus LifeGroup** led by Greg and Mary King
 - **Bridge Builders LifeGroup** led by Reginald Horton
 - Is God calling you to start an employee LifeGroup with your colleagues on campus? Click [here](#) to find out how.
- If you are feeling anxious or have recently experienced loss or grief, call 423.236.2782 to talk to a counselor on campus! (This is a free service for Southern students.)

- **Talk** with Chaplain [Anna Bennett](#) or [Joseph Khabbaz](#) if you need someone to pray with or have a desire to grow spiritually.