



Links Players

Running To Us

I will arise and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.' So he got up and went to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him, and kissed him. (Luke 15:18-20, ESV)

Running is not a dignified way of moving around the golf course unless you are a forecaddie or playing speed golf. A forecaddie meets his foursome on the first tee, exchanges pleasantries, and off he (or she) runs down the fairway to eyeball the incoming drives.

As the golfers roll down the fairway in carts, the forecaddie gathers the needed yardage and aim points for each player. And then off he runs again.

Speed golf is a whole different game. The object is to play eighteen holes in the shortest amount of time and the least number of strokes. I like running for exercise, but the only time I run on the golf course is to the bathroom or up a hill to see where a blind shot finds its place of rest.

In the first-century culture, you might see children running, but you would never see a Middle Eastern man run. To run, a man must pull up his tunic, exposing his bare legs. This was considered both humiliating and shameful.

This is important information when reading the parable of the prodigal son. First, the son demands his father give him half of the inheritance, essentially saying, "you're dead to me now" to his face. After he squanders it all, the son realizes the only place he'll be fed is as a hired servant back with his father. With his speech in his back pocket, he sets off to return home.

While still a distance away from the homestead, the son sees a figure running toward him. Soon he recognizes his father with his tunic pulled up and bare legs kicking up the dust. The son attempts to give his speech, but the father embraces him and calls to his servants to prepare a party: the best robe, a ring, and shoes on his son's feet. The fattened calf is killed and prepared. "For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found" (vs. 24).

The father took on his son's humiliation and shame. The father restored his son to a right relationship with himself. And the father celebrated!

Our Heavenly Father does the same for us. He waits on the threshold and scans the horizon, always looking for his children (you and me). It is never too late to return. Our Father deems us worthy and runs to us.

He doesn't see our sin; he sees Jesus in us. He doesn't make us beg; he raises us. He embraces us and shows compassion.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for running toward me. Please help me to turn back to you to receive your embrace and compassion.

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