

July 3, 2006

## **Encouragement for Today**

### **“Coming Home”**

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[http://proverbs31.gospelcom.net/speaker\\_micca.htm](http://proverbs31.gospelcom.net/speaker_micca.htm)

### **Key Verse:**

Luke 15:7, “I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance.” (NKJ)

### **Devotion:**

I love this time of year. The days are long and the evenings are warm and peaceful. I can hardly get my children to come in at dusk from play. Watching them enjoy summer, takes me back to my childhood. I can recall the warm summer days when I played with childhood friends in the neighborhood. Each day was a new adventure. We played from yard to yard as if the day would never end. Yet at sunset, one by one the children would answer to the call of their parents to come home. My dad would whistle. No matter how far my journey carried me from home, my father knew that the sound of his whistle could be heard, recognized, and obeyed.

Responding to his call, I would jump on my bike and head for home. As my house came into view, my dad could be seen standing on the front porch waving me home. I didn't realize it then, but he didn't have to wait for me. Dad could have called and then continued about his business. Instead, he displayed a father's heart. Dad waited and watched until I was safely home. My arrival seemed to bring him joy. I knew this by the smile on his face, twinkle in his eye, and his open arms.

It reminds me of a bible story about the lost sheep. Jesus was revealing the Father's heart toward His children by revealing the shepherd's heart toward his sheep. He asked, “What man, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost until he finds it” (Luke 15: 4, NKJ)? In the same way, our heavenly Father is not only concerned with those who are safely in His flock but is most troubled about the one who has wandered far away and is lost. God calls to them because He knows, “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me” (John 10:27, NKJ).

I'll never forget when my son was six years old. The sun was setting and like my dad, I stepped out onto the porch and called for him to come home. Nothing. I

called again, but there was no sign of him. Frantically, his dad and I searched the neighborhood calling his name. We walked door-to-door asking if our son was there. Each time we were disappointed. Eventually, with flashlights in hand, our neighbors joined the search. When my husband phoned the police, I felt my body go numb. We were living out our worst nightmare—our son was lost.

Before the police arrived, a neighbor's van on their way home from a ballgame pulled into our driveway. My husband met them at the car and explained that our son was missing. He was interrupted by a faint voice from the back of the van.

"I'm here Dad," said our son.

Moving slowly to the front of the car, our son was afraid his dad would be mad at him for going to the ball park without permission, especially seeing the search party that had gathered. Yet, his dad wasn't angry. In fact, he displayed a father's heart. He grabbed his son and with arms of love, held him tightly.

"I'm so glad you're home, son, I'm so glad your home," he whispered in his ear.

Perhaps you have wandered into a distant land, but you can hear the faint voice of God calling, "Come home!" Maybe you're afraid that your heavenly Father will be mad. Instead, there is great joy in heaven when one sinner repents and comes home. You may feel as if you're lost for good, but God knows where you are. You have not escaped His attention. The Father knows His children and calls them by name. Those who listen, follow, and obey will find their way home and be welcomed with open arms. With a Father's heart, God is waiting and watching from the front porch of heaven for your return. If you don't know what to say to Him, use these words from a hymn written by William J. Kirkpatrick.

"[I'm] coming home, coming home, never more to roam. Open wide your arms of love. Lord, I'm coming home."

### **My Prayer for Today:**

Dear Lord, forgive me from straying from you. I want to come home. Fill me with your love and presence so that I never stray again. Thank you for being my Father. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

### **Application Step:**

There is no sin too great, too deep, or too damaging that cannot be healed by God. If you hear God calling you home, answer yes! Tell God you are sorry for

your sins, get involved in church, read your bible and pray. Re-commit your life to Him and turn from your old ways.

### **Reflection Points:**

What is keeping you from coming home?

Do you think what you are clinging to is better than what God is offering you—freedom, joy, and life?

Do you believe that your heavenly Father will respond to you like your earthly father? Perfect love casts out fear. God is love.

Where have your choices in life gotten you?

Is it time to come home?

### **Power Verses:**

1 John 1:9, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (NKJ)

Isaiah 55:7, "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts. Let him return to the Lord, and He will have mercy on him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon." (NKJ)

John 10:27, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me." (NKJ)

Psalms 91:15, "He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honor him." (NKJ)

### **Additional Resources:**

Do you know Him?

<http://proverbs31.gospelcom.net/knowHim.htm>

Radically Obedient, Radically Blessed, by Lysa TerKeurst

[http://proverbs31.gospelcom.net/newresources\\_radicallyObedient.htm](http://proverbs31.gospelcom.net/newresources_radicallyObedient.htm)

Who Holds the Key to Your Heart, by Lysa TerKeurst

[http://proverbs31.gospelcom.net/newresources\\_whoHoldsKey.htm](http://proverbs31.gospelcom.net/newresources_whoHoldsKey.htm)