

A TRUE FATHER'S DAY STORY

Perhaps one of the best Father's Day illustrations is the story of Derek Redmond, a runner in the 1992 Olympics.

Derek was competing for the medal in the 400 meter race. Less than half-way through the race, he ripped a hamstring muscle and fell to the ground in agony. While the rest of the runners moved past him, Derek managed to get to his feet and began struggling to move forward.

Then something caught the attention of the television cameras. An older man wearing blue shorts and a Nike "Just Do It" cap pushed past a security guard onto the race track. It was Derek's father, Jim.

At first Derek shrugged him away, saying, "I'm going to finish the race." Jim said to his son, "We've started everything together. We'll finish this together."

He put his arm around his son and held him as they crossed the finish line together. The crowd erupted into thunderous applause; it has become a classic moment in sports.

In fact, Oliver Irish, columnist for the UK based "Observer" called it one of the top 10 "teary moments" in sports. He said, "Not many moments ... remain so poignant that they can reduce grown men to tears, but this is a bona fide weepy."

I remember seeing the event unfold. It was a powerful moment. This story challenges me, as it challenges all fathers, to do whatever I can to help my children finish the race. Even if they stumble along the way.

In the book of Isaiah, God said, "Listen to me...you whom I have upheld since you were conceived, and have carried since your birth. Even to your old age and gray hairs I am he, I am he who will sustain you. I have made you and I will carry you." (Isaiah 46:3-4)

Fathers, by God's grace may we live with such strength and integrity that we can say these words to our sons and daughters.