

The Good Fight

by Roy Borges



Father's Day has passed again without a card or letter from my daughter, Rita. I prayed and hoped that this time I would hear from my only child, but it was not to be. I carry a picture of Rita when she was age two in my wallet, and I look at it from time to time. She's a grown woman now, with three children of her own. I have never seen them or spoken to them. I've been in prison since before they were born,

and in my daughter's eyes I am a failure.

Will I ever hear from them? I wonder as I write from my prison cell.

One weekend I listened to Marvis Frazier, the featured speaker at the Prison Fellowship program, being held on the recreation field. Marvis told us he had trained hard as a boxer and become the number one contender in the world with an undefeated record. His heart

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had been set on winning the title back for his father, Joe.

Marvis said he walked into the ring confident that what he hoped and worked so hard to accomplish would become a reality. But it was not to be.

Larry Holmes ended Marvis Frazier's hopes of winning back the title for his father and demolished his dream of becoming the world heavyweight champion with a devastating knock-out. He was left sitting alone in the ring, feeling like a total failure. But then Joe Frazier stepped into the ring and wrapped his big arms around his son and told him he loved him and that he could never be a failure in his eyes.

Marvis Frazier's eyes were filled with tears as he told 300 men how Joe Frazier's embrace in front of the whole world showed him that he didn't have to win anything to gain what he already had—his father's love. In the midst of his greatest defeat, he found his greatest joy. He knew that he would never be a failure in his father's eyes.

Marvis told the men on the recreation field that day that we could never be a failure in our heavenly Father's eyes—that we

could be confident of God's love. "God demonstrates his own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8, NKJV).

God may or may not choose to show us why he does things or allows things to happen. He may want us to trust him, to keep fighting the good fight against sin and evil and to keep up the faith. But we can be sure he has a purpose and a plan for each of us.

The One who makes dreams come true had a bigger plan for Marvis Frazier. A bigger fight to fight—the good fight. Now Marvis is a champion for Jesus Christ, and he takes the message of eternal life into prisons.

Marvis Frazier's story helps me understand that my love for my daughter, like Joe's love for Marvis, cannot be compared to the love God has for me. Our human love for one another will fail and disappoint us. But God's love will never fail. It will always be there in the Person of Jesus Christ.

God's plan for each of us is much bigger and better than our plans for ourselves. No one is a failure who believes in Jesus Christ. The apostle Paul, languishing in a

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Roman prison, didn't think he was a failure. Listen to the words he wrote to Timothy: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith" (2 Timothy 4:7).

Paul's words encourage me to keep going no matter how many times I fail or how difficult the fight may seem. God has a plan, and one day when I see Jesus I will know it was all worth it. But until that day pray with me, "Lord, help me to fight the good fight and to keep the faith." □

Roy Borges writes from a prison cell in Florida.