

STRUGGLING WITH AN ALLIGATOR

Some years ago, on a hot summer day in South Florida, a little boy decided to go for a swim in the old swimming hole behind the house.

Jim Davidson, motivational speaker and syndicated columnist, tells what happened next.

In a hurry to dive into the water, the youngster ran out the back door, leaving behind shoes, socks and shirt as he went. He flew into the water, not realizing that as he swam toward the middle, an alligator was swimming toward him. The boy's father, working in the yard, saw the two as they got closer together.

In utter fear, the father ran toward the water, yelling to his son as loudly as he could. Hearing his voice, the little boy became alarmed and made a U-turn to swim to his father. It was too late. Just as he reached his father, the alligator reached him. From the dock, the father grabbed his little boy by the arms just as the alligator snatched his legs.

That began an incredible tug-of-war between the two. The alligator was much stronger than the father, but the father was too passionate to let go. A farmer happened to drive by, heard the screams, raced from his truck, took aim and shot the alligator.

Remarkably, after weeks and weeks in the hospital, the little boy survived. His legs were extremely scarred by the vicious attack of the great reptile. And on his arms were deep scratches where his father's fingernails dug into his flesh in his effort to hang on to the son he loved.

The newspaper reporter who interviewed the boy after the trauma asked if he would show him his scars. The boy lifted his pants legs and then with obvious pride said to the reporter, "But look at my arms. I have great scars on my arms, too. I have them because my daddy wouldn't let go."

Here is the message from this story:

Most of us should be able to identify with this little boy because we have scars, too; not from an alligator, most likely, but scars from a painful past. Some of those scars have caused us deep regret. But some of those wounds are because God refused to let go.

If you have a painful past, you can take real comfort that in the midst of your struggle, our Lord has been there for you. I can certainly attest to His strength and His grace in dark and troubling days.

We all need to take responsibility for ourselves and be extra careful not to swim in perilous waters.

Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead (Philippians 3:13 ESV).