

Star Wars: God's Grace and Redemption

I was 11 when the first Star Wars movie, *A New Hope*, came out in 1977. You can do the math on my age.

I instantly fell in love with the film and the ones that followed. Although I was 17 by the time the third one—*Return of the Jedi*—premiered in 1983, I hadn't grown out of it. They were all riveting, especially when we discovered that Darth Vader turned out to be Luke Skywalker's father and Leia turned out to be his twin sister. It was high drama at its best for a kid like me.

But oh how the years have passed quickly. With the stresses and responsibilities that come in life—marriage, children, bills to pay and so on—I sometimes feel as though I completely lost touch with my inner child a long time ago—in a galaxy far, far away.

Shed no tears for me, however. It's my son who has paid the price. He's now 11 years old and, through all of these years, I have not allowed myself to connect with him on his level. I can't begin to tell you how sad that is and how much I deeply regret it.

With God, however, it's never too late to repent. It's never too late for redemption. "In Him we have redemption through His blood and the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace" (Eph. 1:7).

With the release of this weekend's newest adventure in the Star Wars saga, *The Force Awakens*, I have been afforded an opportunity to redeem myself with Joshua. He loves all the Star Wars movies, and he's still young enough to be smitten with Star Wars Lego. He has built many things—but that's another story.

This past weekend, Josh and I sat down and watched five of the first six Star Wars movies together. We had watched some together previously, and I had taken him to a Star Wars convention three years ago. But the excitement for me faded away. This, however, was a great time for us to bond and for him to ask me questions about the movies concerning things he didn't quite understand. I did my best to enlighten him.

Josh's passion for the Star Wars movies is obvious, but Josh is also a very godly young man, and he is aware of the biblical parallels between good and evil. We talked about how Satan wanted to be like God and how God expelled him from heaven, similar to Anakin Skywalker wanting to keep his wife from dying—something only God can do—in episode three. Anakin couldn't have those powers, so he turned to evil.

However, I like to believe that it was God who redeemed Darth Vader at the end of Return of the Jedi. Of course Darth Vader never professed Christ, but he realized the dark side (Satan's kingdom) could be overcome. It's never too late.

And you know the rest of that story.

Despite my past behavior, I don't believe that I am or have been a bad father. I won't condemn myself because Romans 8:1 says, "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit." But I also know I could do much better.

With the rekindling of the Star Wars saga, I have been given a second chance to connect with my son and to get to know him better. I cherish the opportunity and can't wait to take him to see *The Force Awakens*. Who knows what surprises—and thrills—lie before us?

I believe it also gives me a chance to connect with Josh spiritually and to help him become even more of a godly young man than he already is. I am very proud of him for his

openness to the Word and his voracity in following Jesus.

Has your relationship with your children waned? Are you struggling to connect with them? Ask God to help you find something—a passion of theirs—that you can share. Like a good friend, get to know your child all over again and revel in their company. It will melt your child's heart and bring lasting benefits.

“A wise son makes his father glad” (Prov. 15:20).

And as I always like to say, “there is that.” {eoa}