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Obedience in the Mountain

My dad has always been an avid hunter. Throughout my childhood, I recall hunting and eating all kinds of creatures. Living in the northern mountains of western Canada allowed us the opportunity to live off the land more than most people. It was a tradition that every fall, we would look to shoot Moose and Elk, with Elk being the better tasting of the two.

By this time of the hunting season, there was already a few feet of snow on the ground so being out in the cold was part of the custom. Since we were in the Rocky Mountains, it was always a hard terrain as well. We would travel deep into the mountains where a family friend had a little one-room cabin which had no electricity or running water, only a wood stove for heat. We would get to bed and plan to wake up extra early, around four in the morning. I remember because I would hide under my covers as dad would get up and start the fire to try and warm up from the extreme cold.

We would dress in our many layers of clothes and socks, put on our hiking boots, and eat a good breakfast. It was a long day ahead with lots of hiking and hopefully shooting. In the beginning, I was pretty young during most of these trips, so I was trusted with a small rifle to carry while dad had the large rifle for the large animals we were after. He was like a billy goat when he was on the hunt and would trek through the deepest of forests in search of the kill. We would walk up and down the mountains seeking any sign that we could follow and track down.

I have the fondest memories of following my dad into the woods with my little gun on my back and the greatest hopes. It could be -20 degrees Celsius out there, but nothing could hold us back. The snow would be as high as my knees as we walked into the unknown as we were hundreds of miles from any other living person. We were in such remote places that it's possible that no one had ever walked there before us.

Our day could be miles and miles of walking through the thick forest, with my dad being relentless in his pursuit. As I followed, his pace was never too fast for my short legs, and as I think back, I realized he slowed down his day so that I could be with him. As he stepped, I would step into his footprint so the high snow wouldn't be too difficult for me. Some days we were blessed with a good hunt, while others, we would get up and try again. It was the actual time out in the wilderness and being together that was the most important part of our trips.

The Lord brought these memories to my attention when I was going through a difficult time. I was faithful to do my best to obey Him in my life and in my choices, but I ended up going through some difficult times, which made me reconsider my choices. I was left feeling overwhelmingly alone, as if God had abandoned me in the middle of our walk through life. I was hit with the greatest fear that God had led me this far only to abandon me right in the middle of nowhere. These emotions were, of course, false, but they sure felt real.

I didn't realize that I was worried about God abandoning me along the way. He desires to lead our steps through life as it says in Psalm 37:23, "*The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD, And He delights in his way.*" As I followed Him through life, I also left behind my own abilities to make it without Him. He likes when we totally rely on Him. But the fear that I was unqualified rose up in me, and soon when I was in that place of total reliance on Him, that is when He would figure out that I was not good enough and He would leave me alone.

These emotions were lies of the enemy, so intensely trying to get me to stop following God but praise God for the Word. It says in Psalms 9:10 "*And those who know Your name will put their trust in You; For You, LORD, have not forsaken those who seek You.*"

God helped me by reminding me of my trips into the wilderness with my natural father. We were in the middle of the deep Canadian Rocky Mountains, and we were alone, just the two of us. My survival was completely my dad's responsibility and not my own as I followed in his footprints. If he abandoned me out there and left me on my own, I would surely have died. I would have starved to death if I didn't freeze to death first or have fallen prey to a wolf or mountain lion.

In the midst of my worry and concern, the Lord asked me a question. He said, "while on those trips into the wilderness, did you ever consider that your dad would abandon you"? I answered, "no," there was never a moment that it crossed my mind that he would leave me out there to survive by myself. God then answered back to me, "and neither would I leave you." It says in Hebrews 13:5, "*Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."*"

In this walk with your Heavenly Father, there are many adventures ahead for the two of you. There may be times where you have many questions and concerns about where you are, and if those emotions of abandonment rise up, you can cast them down with the Truth of God that you are never alone with God and you will never be left alone. Never!

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