



A MATTER OF FAITH

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My seven-year-old little guy has been taking Karate with me for about two years. He has been anxiously awaiting his brown belt test. Brown is the last belt earned in our style before the black belt. When the sensei [teacher] deems a brown belt nearing the skill level of black belt, he will give him a red belt. This makes the level of brown belt very special. My little guy has waited a long time and worked very hard to earn the right to test for his brown belt. For months, he has asked after class when he would be testing. He has had to watch many kids get to test and receive their brown belts. It has

been frustrating for him. The sensei knows how much effort he has put into

Our Father

this. My little guy is very young to be at this level and the sensei wanted to make sure that he was prepared for this test. He will not test someone until he is sure that they are ready and prepared. This past Saturday, we pulled into the parking lot of where we take karate at the same time the sensei arrived. I told him how hard my son had been working

on the material he needed to know for his test. He smiled at me and said, "I have a brown belt in my car. Let's see how he does." I have tested quite a few times and always get a bit nervous but it was nothing compared to this. I knew how hard my son had worked and how much he wanted to pass this test. Usually during a test, several people will test together. He was going to test alone. I wanted to do it for him. All I could do was stand by and watch. My heart was racing as he stepped out on the floor. I wonder if God ever feels this way about us? I know God knows all things so he need not be anxious, but I

wonder as he watches his kids living their lives if he watches with anticipation? I know God loves us and that he wants the best for his kids. I know that God cares for all the details of our lives. God knows how many hairs we have on our heads. That task on my behalf has become easier and easier. "Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father. And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows." - Matthew 10:29-31 (NIV) Can we make God smile? Does he see us the way that I saw my little boy? Does he share our desire like I did with my son for his success? I grew up in a church where God was distant. The focus was behaving by a certain code in order to

please God. There were tons of rules and expectations. To break the rules was to fall out of favor with God. It was also to fall out of community with the other members of the church. The idea of God as a father was swept under the rug. God was to be feared and that fear was wielded like a weapon to control the behavior of the church. The

thought of God watching and enjoying his kids was very foreign. Fathering my kids is teaching me the truth about God. My little guy by the way nailed his test. I am so incredibly proud of him.

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