

Bridgett and Me

I was a long-awaited first child. My temperament was extremely compliant from day one. My sister, Bridgett, on the other hand, pushed every limit from the time she was an infant. And we have her grouchy-, swollen-faced childhood pictures to prove it.

From the time she was in diapers, it didn't matter what my folks wanted her to do, Bridgett challenged them. My poor, longsuffering mother would have to go to war just to get Bridgett's hair combed. Usually, while the battle raged, I was sitting perfectly still somewhere, immaculately dressed and meticulously coiffed.

During junior high and high school, Bridgett continued to chart her course, attempting to be her own person, not a younger version of me. Imagine! My parents often wondered, "How could two sisters be so different?" I wondered too. After all, wasn't she supposed to be just like me?

With those expectations, however, I couldn't appreciate her for who she was. And the feeling was mutual-for years. I thought she was rebellious; she thought I was a huge bore!

I've observed that things are no different in my spiritual family. We sometimes miss out on great opportunities to interact with and support others because we have difficulty adjusting to their temperaments and ways of doing things.

During the month of February, we talk about love and the special people in our lives. I thought it was important to broaden the discussion on connections to include information that would be helpful to us in our friendships and familial relationships as well.

Our cover story by Paula White "Wired for Relationships,"

gives us some practical insight and spiritual grounding so we can make the most of the relationships God entrusts to us. I hope you'll find some encouragement for any of your associations that are troubled or in need of strengthening or perhaps a new direction.

My sister and I loved each other, but the last thing she wanted to be was me. Although she has done well in her professional career, she chose a different spiritual path than I. I prayed for her for years, but considering our history, I'm not sure that I made it harder or easier for her to accept Christ and find her way in the world. At times, we disconnected.

Then in the fall of 2004, I was called on to minister at my church on a Sunday when my sister was in attendance. At the end of the service, Bridgett came to the altar for prayer. I've had the privilege of leading her to the Lord.

Bridgett rededicated her life to God and took off like a rocket! We're still not the same person, but, thankfully, we're no longer disconnected because we have an eternal bond that supersedes all others, even when the sister thing gets complicated for us.

In the body of Christ we don't have the liberty of distancing ourselves or disconnecting from our brothers and sisters. We surely can't do it without loss. The apostle Paul put it this way: "God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be?" (1 Cor. 12:31, NIV).

Finally, I'm thankful that Bridgett didn't feel it was her destiny to be just like her big sister. If she had grown up with my strengths, she might have also developed my weaknesses, then she wouldn't be the sister she is today-the one God knew I needed.