

How I Live With My Son's Asperger's

Often, I get questioned. It comes with the territory. My husband always says, "I can answer anything with three words: I don't know!" Unfortunately, most people aren't satisfied with that answer so that leaves me searching far and wide to come up with something. There are some questions that have a definitive answer and others that have many.

But one question I struggle with when asked has to do with my son and his diagnosis of **Asperger's syndrome** (a high-functioning form of autism) at age 3.

We believe in divine healing according to the Scriptures, and particularly the example provided by the ministry of Jesus in the Gospels. Because of that, people are often puzzled that anyone professing said belief could do so and have a child with a so-called disorder.

I could get on a real soapbox here! Is there even such a thing as perfectly normal—or a perfect life, for that matter?

Perfection is a man-made ideal. We have no ability, with our limited human understanding, to truly know what God defines as perfect. Even with the biblical account of Jesus, the spotless Lamb of God, we still can't possibly comprehend a flawless deity. We can read, imagine, study and even experience it, but we will never know in this life what is meant for us in the next. Too many people try way too hard to figure it all out in the here and now. I prefer to save some things for later—it's called heaven.

It reminds me of what Dr. Lester Sumrall said: "If we knew everything here on earth and had the answers to every question, we wouldn't need faith, we wouldn't need a Savior, and we wouldn't need a heaven."

I love the Message Bible's translation of Hebrews 11:1: "The fundamental fact of existence is that this trust in God, this faith, is the firm foundation under everything that makes life worth living. It's our handle on what we can't see." This is where we plant the seeds of hope—what we can't see—and let it take root in our faith—the fundamental fact of existence.

Hope is that handle to hold on to so our faith doesn't fail. Hope is not some illusive thing. Hope is a verb—a word to show that an action is taking place. It can keep us moving and believing and trying in the midst of adverse circumstances, because we know our God is able!

How do I go on every day? How do I watch someone get a miracle when mine doesn't seem to materialize? The answer is that I don't have all the answers. I just have faith, and I just have hope.

We think we know what our miracle is and what our answered prayer looks like. If we're not careful, we'll ignore everything God has done and is doing on our behalf. The answer may come in an unexpected way, but it will come because our Father God knows what we need and how we need it.

It's made quite clear for us in Isaiah 55:8: "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord" (NIV). Whew! I'm certainly thankful for that. Can you imagine trying to do life on our own? What a mess we make when we attempt to do so!

I've heard people say that hope is vain, and I do not agree whatsoever. Who could observe the indelible work of the cross of Christ and say such a thing? If we want to share in the resurrection, we must share in the cross. No one wants to hear that, though. We want an easy, breezy life without cost, but nothing worth having comes easily—or free.

I love, love, love the writings of the great novelist Flannery O'Connor. Among her great works is *A Prayer Journal*, which

I've been re-reading and cry the minute I start. In the front pages are quotes of hers that I've written down, and this is one of my favorites: "There are some of us who have to pay for our faith every step of the way and who have to work out dramatically what it would be like without it and if being without it would be ultimately possible or not."

The **Christian life** is a journey, and every journey is made up of steps. It is hope that makes every step of faith possible. I think the great Martin Luther King Jr. sums it up beautifully: "We must accept finite disappointment but never lose infinite hope."

There is this life and the life to come—the finite and the infinite. So, therein lies my answer, because He is my answer. Nothing is forever but my forever God.

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