

What If Your Child Doesn't Get Healed?

Today I read a testimony that hurt me. I hated the fact that it stung me when I read it because I should celebrate with this couple that they received their answer to prayer. The testimony hurt me because I'm still waiting for God to heal my daughter.

When DÁndra was a baby, a lady told me that she would be healed of Down Syndrome at 3 years old. She turned 12 last May, and she still has Down syndrome.

I read a testimony today of a couple who received a diagnosis that their baby had Down syndrome. Their church prayed, and their baby was born healthy. Hallelujah! I should be doing a praise dance, but I gulped when I read it and cried all day. I'm in a church that has seen lots of healings, and sometimes it has been hard hearing the testimonies.

I fight the urge to leave the community of faith when I feel like my daughter's birth has marked me or made me a burden. I'm a target for every person who has a word about why she has Down syndrome. One well-meaning lady told me that my daughter has Down syndrome because I had a great-great-grandfather who practiced incest. "Ask the Lord if there's incest, and break it over your family," she told me in the church bathroom. I wanted to vomit because I was not about to investigate my family line for sexual perversion.

I mean, the church ideally should be the safest place for people who are weak, frail or disabled, right? My church has bent over backwards to help with DÁndra, and she pretty much blends in with people. I'm thankful for the church staff that has been very committed to her well-being. But there are still individuals who will take it upon themselves to give you a "word" when you have a child with a disability.

I've cried out to God to remove every trace of bitterness in

my soul because I haven't gotten to stand in front of the congregation to tell them she has been healed. Instead, I celebrate what God has done in her now:

- She loves to go to church. She would go to church every day if she could.
- She loves to worship.
- She is a fiery prayer person.
- She is prone to being independent which is a typical tween attitude.
- She is far more sensitive and caring about people than most people that I know.
- She is extremely outspoken and verbally coherent. You can understand what she is saying, and she has something to say.
- She's funny, a jokester, and makes me laugh.
- She has taught me patience and compassion that I didn't know I had.
- She has opened up a whole new world I didn't notice of people with disabilities. I'm extremely sensitive to how people with disabilities are treated and perceived.
- She has made an advocate for people who can't speak up for themselves.

My dream is to see the church become the safest place for people with disabilities. I dream of individuals with disabilities being able to step into the house of God and for one moment in His presence, feel normal, loved and significant. Every moment of life, they are told without words that they are inconvenient and stupid by society that prizes beauty and strength. I would love to see a church where they can forget they are disabled and blend in with the community of faith because we are all disabled by sin, fear, poverty and more.

I dream of the church being a place where Christ can step into their life without hindrances. If they get up from their wheelchair and leave their crutches—hallelujah! If they don't, we are still a part of their life and we will fight for them. But there's no pressure of perfection, performance or "get healed or something is wrong with you." Thankfully I have never ever felt that at my church.

My church isn't perfect, but it is a cocoon of acceptance and love for DÁndra. She doesn't even know she has Down syndrome because she has blended in with the congregation. When we're praying for healing, I've asked her if she wants to go down and receive prayer. "No, Mom, I pray for them," she says.

When God doesn't heal your child, know that healing is flowing. It may not be in the bright, shiny package you want it to be so you can show it off. It may be in the moments that she wants to pray for someone else to receive healing or when she says, "Mommy, is there church tonight?" When you say, "No honey, we don't have church tonight," she looks disappointed and asks, "Is there church tomorrow?"

Receive the healing God wants to bring in your heart. I pray for God's healing to flow in you. May you know His healing touch of love, acceptance, grace and strength to take care of your child. And may His healing flow through you.

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