

# When Your Child Has to Wait on God's Answer

I darted toward the kitchen for a garbage bag after placing a cold rag on my husband's forehead, and that's when I heard it. A nasty stomach bug had made its way into our home and landed on him. My strong, broad-shouldered former football player was reduced to a kneeling position in front of the toilet.

I rushed back and forth to the sink to wet his washcloth, trying my best not to join him. On my last trip, from the corner of my eye, I noticed my son in the hallway on his knees.

*Oh no, not him too. Not now.*

I quickly got my husband settled in bed and ran back to my son.

"Are you OK, honey?"

"I was praying so hard, Mom, but Dad still got sick. Does God even hear me?"

"Oh baby," I said as I pulled him close.

I thought my husband's need for care that night trumped everyone else's, but my son seemed to be in his own crisis. A spiritual one.

When my kids were young, they loved going to the quarter machines that lived in the foyers of grocery stores and restaurants. Inside a cheap plastic egg was an even cheaper plastic toy. It was simple, really. In went the coin and out came the egg. Immediately.

My son expected his prayer that night to work like those machines. And, if I'm being honest with myself, I want it to

work that way too.

*God, please don't let Dad get sick.*

But Dad got sick anyway.

I reassured my son of God's promise to hear us as we pray according to His will, but reminded him that the answers may not necessarily come immediately or in the way we expect. "This may seem like a hard concept to understand, son, but sometimes, things have to get worse before they get better."

It took many years and a great deal of pain before I learned that lesson.

Teaching children theological truths can be challenging. The older they get, the harder their questions become, but moments to instruct them are all around us. Even when we least expect them.

1 John 5:14-15 says, "This is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. So if we know that He hears whatever we ask, we know that we have whatever we asked of Him." {eo}

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