

Why I Thank God for His Grievous Gift

My phone rang at 2 a.m., jarring me awake. I was in a hotel room, 1,000 miles from home. *Not again*, I thought. *Which will this be—hospital or jail?*

It was jail. My son was calling to tell me it was all a mistake; he shouldn't have been taken to jail. And so I faced one more event in a long and challenging journey.

Ten years earlier, we had opened our home to foster a 9-year-old boy who had been taken from his alcoholic, drug-addicted mother. God said this boy was a gift.

The next years were not easy. The neglect and abuse he had experienced overshadowed everything we did for him. Fetal alcohol syndrome, attachment problems, little education prevailed.

His mother's rights were terminated, and we were encouraged to adopt him. We welcomed him fully into our family.

The challenges of the early years paled in comparison to the difficulty of his teen and early adult years. Calls from jail and hospital evolved from middle school bullying, gang membership, drugs, alcohol, mischief, stealing, girls and wrecked cars.

This was a gift? If so, it was a grievous gift.

But he truly was a gift. Perhaps more a gift to us than we were to him.

How? This became the question God kept before me: Could I continue to receive this boy as a gift?

Slowly the Father opened my eyes and heart to see many ways He

had blessed me. I recount them in my book, *When You Love a Prodigal*.

And now? How is he now?

Prayers have been answered. Love is winning. God continues to give good gifts. He is married, with a stepdaughter and two little girls. He works harder than I have ever seen him work. He asks for prayer, advice and sometimes a listening ear.

He says, "Pray I can stay on God's path. It's narrow, and it's easy to fall off."

And how am I?

I'm grateful. I am such a different person because I received this gift. And as hard as the journey has been, my gratitude overflows. {eoa}

Judy Douglass is a global writer, speaker and encourager. Her most recent book, *When You Love a Prodigal*, has ignited her podcast of the same name. She directs Women's Resources at Cru. You can find her at .