

BUT MY CHILD IS DIFFERENT!

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Blessed With a "Different" Child

- A. Our society tends to excuse a child by saying they have a challenge that exempts him/her.
- B. There are clearly special needs people in the Bible: blind, lame, epileptic, demon-possessed.
- C. The Bible doesn't give exemptions for people with challenges.
 - 1. Biblical principles are infallible.
 - 2. Applications people draw from these principles are not infallible and may not be appropriate for all children.
 - 3. Some types of uniqueness:
 - Hypersensitivity.
 - Processing difficulties.
 - Autism.
 - Down Syndrome.

Blessed?

- A. Children are a blessing and a reward. *Psalms 127:2-5*
 - 1. Having a different child sometimes doesn't feel like a blessing.
 - 2. Society often sends a message that if your child is not typical they are inferior.
 - 3. This verse does not except "different" children.
- B. *Psalm 139:13-16*
 - 1. God personally designed every child, even "different" children.
 - 2. All children are fearfully and wonderfully made.
 - 3. Your child's uniqueness has value
- C. First, you cry.
 - 1. Death of a dream.
 - Raising a "perfect child" who will glorify God.
 - How can these children know or glorify God?

2. God's punishment?

- It can feel like God is punishing through this situation.
- Jesus took all punishment on the cross.
- God intends good for His children. *Rom 8:28*

3. Which one of us is God?

- Saying "I should have known."
- God is the only one powerful enough to control everything and righteous enough to always do what's best. *Jer 29:11*

What Is God Doing?

A. Fix "deficits" or strengthen weaknesses?

1. Delight in differences.

B. We and our children are born in the image and likeness of God. *Gen 1:27*

1. Born for relationship with God.
2. Capable of glorifying Him.
3. God gets to decide how our children glorify Him.
4. Their value comes from being made in God's image, not in their accomplishments.
5. God is big enough even to use sin to glorify Himself.

C. Not a walking elephant.

1. May not be born to walk but fly.
2. In so-called deficits is the seed of uniqueness.
3. God is doing something particular and special.

D. God uses challenges to glorify Himself!

1. Differences may result in unusual abilities.
 - Even those whose function remains low glorify God.
 - Each child will reflect God's character in a unique way.
2. These things take time and effort.
3. God is sovereign over the whole process.

Training a Different Child

A. "In his way." *Prov 22:6*

1. Our children have their own individual ways.
2. He has a physical weakness.
 - Work with, instead of against, natural tendencies.
3. He has a sinful nature.
 - Don't neglect the heart.
 - Your child, like you, needs to learn to die to himself and live for God's glory. *Phil 2:4-8*

B. Your own temptations.

1. To make life easier for him.
 - Making excuses for him.
 - Overprotecting.
 - "Mad Elephant!"
2. To make life easier for you.
 - Inconsistency.
 - Cutting corners in discipline.
 - Seeking to glorify self instead of God.
 - Overly harsh discipline.

C. "It's OK - he can't help it."

1. Much harder for him.
 - But God commands you to teach him to obey.
2. Not impossible for him .
 - Help and support.
 - Patience and consistency.
 - Lots of prayer for grace!

D. Love the way Jesus loves.

1. Great sympathy and compassion.
2. Never tempted to tell people who need to change that they're fine the way they are.
3. Never placed comfort, convenience, or reputation ahead of the Father's glory.

I Wanted a Miracle

A. For me.

1. My dreams.
2. An easier life.
3. Deliverance from the challenges.

B. For Eric.

1. To have a more normal life.
2. To give God glory by following my plan.

C. The Apostle Paul wanted a miracle, too.

1. For him.
2. For God.

D. “My grace is sufficient.”

1. God wanted Paul to remain weak to perfect His power in him. *2 Cor 12:9*
2. Our sufficiency is from God. *2 Cor 3:5*
3. When we are weak God is strong. *2 Cor 12:10*
4. We can learn to be content in all situations. *Phil 4:11-13*

E. God chooses the weak, foolish, and despised.

1. To make them wise, righteous, holy, and redeemed by uniting them to Christ by faith.
1 Cor 1:27-31
2. God gets the glory!



Books

Fitzpatrick, E., Newhesier, J., *When Good Kids Make Bad Choices*.

Hendrickson, Laura, *Finding Your Child's Way on the Autism Spectrum*.