

FIRST PERSON: Remembering God's faithfulness and goodness as a special needs parent

I vividly remember one of the NICU doctors telling me back in 2018 that even though Mason was born a micropreemie, he believed we should see him close the gap of developmental delay by the age of 3 with the help of therapy.

I held onto what that doctor told me for a long time. However, when Mason was nearing 3 years old, my husband, Myles, and I started noticing some things that were a little different from what his peers were doing.

Challenges at home

Mason was nonverbal. He didn't respond to his name. He didn't make eye contact. He made repetitive movements. He didn't necessarily play with other children but would play near them. He didn't eat solid foods. He had impulsive, inattentive behavior and would get extremely upset about minor things.

Mason's needs were starting to be greater than we could control at home, so we started looking for outside help.

At the recommendation from his occupational therapist at school, we started looking into programs that could be beneficial. We soon learned we needed some sort of diagnosis for insurance to cover any type of therapy or program.

In January 2023 Mason was diagnosed with autism. While my initial reaction was absolute shock and denial, all of the signs were there.

The next few months were spent learning everything we could

about autism. We were naive and didn't know anything about it. I contacted every type of therapy facility and provider I could find within a 30-mile radius of our house. Myles and I grieved the childhood we dreamed our son would have. We were flooded with anxiety and fears of what Mason's life would be like.

But one particular Scripture passage came to mind in the midst of it all. "The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; His mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness" (Lam. 3:22-23).

The only way we've been able to keep trudging along this path is to take it one day at a time.

Becoming a special needs parent was never part of my thought process, and I always assumed parents with a special needs child must have endless faith and patience.

Now, as we have come to understand more about the dynamics, I realize all of us are only able to do it by the grace of God. We have good days and plenty of bad days, but all it takes is one look at my little Mason and I'm reminded that God is good.

I have a page of notes in my phone filled with Mason's milestones, "inchstones" and wins – things he has said or done that I don't want to ever forget. This past year I have added more to that list than I ever have. I never thought I would thank the Lord for my child eating a chicken nugget!

Mason has come so far in his five years of life. The NICU alarms of his oxygen and heart rate dropping will always be ingrained in my mind. From starting out at 1 lb. 14 oz. to being a physically healthy child today is a blessing in itself.

I have never had a conversation with Mason. He has never been able to tell me how his day at school went or if he's feeling sick. My prayer is that one day he will. His big sister,

Alana, understands him best. We say she speaks “Mason.”

God provides

One way we have seen God provide for our family is through Alana. She is two years older and is his biggest fan and cheerleader. Mason’s psychologist told us Alana would be his main teacher and mentor. And boy was she right.

Alana has a nurturing personality who thinks of others first. God knew our sweet daughter would provide balance in our family.

As Sanctity of Human Life Sunday approaches, it will forever hold a different meaning in our household. It is a reminder that every life has value, even an autistic child’s. Mason is a living, walking testimony of God’s faithfulness and goodness. Those who have walked this journey with us still call him “Miraculous Mason” or our miracle baby, and he truly is.

EDITOR’S NOTE – This story was written by Lauren C. Grim and originally published by The Baptist Paper.