

## ANSWERING THE “WHY” QUESTION

*As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" "Neither this man nor his parents sinned," said Jesus, "but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life. John 9:1-3*

Bill was a young man who had experienced several great tragedies, but God was beginning to provide clear direction in his life. Through his late teens and early twenties, he had seen combat with the United States Marines. As a result, he suffered a serious wound in his right leg. After fighting infection in an army hospital for more than three years the leg was amputated

When he was discharged, Bill returned to his home in the Texas panhandle. He and his new bride purchased a house and waited anxiously for the arrival of their first child. The precious girl was born and while celebrating together at the hospital, a tornado ravaged the neighborhood where they lived and destroyed their house. Bill was able to rebuild the small house and eighteen months later, their first son was born. They were now the ideal family - two kids and a mortgage.

As He often does, God had different plans. Bill began to sense God's leadership toward full-time ministry. Responding to the call, he sold his possessions and set out to get an education. He moved his young family to Brownwood, Texas and registered as a freshman at Howard Payne University.

Working full-time to support his family, he also enrolled in classes at the university. It was a busy time, but he rested content in the knowledge that he was following the leadership of God.

There had been several experiences that had caused Bill to ask the question, "Why?" "Why did he lose his leg?" "Why was their house destroyed?" However, it seemed that all of that was behind them now. Perhaps they did not fully understand the reason but they could clearly see God's hand at work.

One day, Bill's young son, two weeks shy of his first birthday, began to run a fever. After a few days, the child was taken to the doctor who diagnosed a case of the flu. However, the boy did not respond to medication and the fever continued. Within a few days his legs became limp.

The next year overshadowed all of the previous experiences of Bill and his wife. His son was diagnosed with a disease that doctors predicated would be fatal. They traveled across the state of Texas, seeking treatment from various hospitals. On more than one occasion they were evicted from an apartment when neighbors discovered the child's disease. After several months, it appeared the baby would survive but there was no hope of him being able to walk or live a normal life.

The child did survive the illness. However, it left him with serious physical problems. Although he regained some use of his arms and legs, he did not have the strength of a normal child. In spite of constant physical therapy, it seemed that the doctor's prognosis that he would never walk would be true.

Bill's wife remained hopeful through her prayers and efforts. She cared for every need, working and praying that he would be able to live a normal life. At the age of eleven, he began to take a few steps and learn to walk. When he became an adult she wrote these words:

*You are an adult now. I can no longer lift you and carry you and protect you as I had in the past. . . . I am very thankful that you can now take care of yourself both physically and financially. This is what I had hoped you would be able to do. Even though you had not experienced the physical healing I had hoped and prayed for, I*

*am thankful for what you can do. 2 Corinthians 12:9 says that God's grace was sufficient and through our weaknesses we had to look to His strength. Your personality, your patience, your smile and concern for others has been an inspiration to many whose life you could never have touched otherwise.*

Bills' wife, my mother, taught me that there is more than one way to see the work of God. In every problem and experience of suffering, I have seen the power of God.

- When our first son was born, a thousand miles from the nearest relative, complications called for emergency surgery. As I stood in the hospital hallway, watching them wheel Sharon to surgery, through the tears in my eyes, I saw the power of God.
- When Matthew was bitten by a rattle snake and we had to make the thirty mile trip to the nearest hospital, I saw the power of God.
- When doctors told us that Sharon had cancer, in the midst of the most difficult six months of our lives, we saw the power of God.
- When a church where I had invested thirteen years of my life disappointed me, I saw the power of God.

Sometimes His power was displayed as He miraculously altered a situation. Other times, His power was recognized as He altered my estimation. Every time I have opened myself to the ways of God, His power has been clearly revealed.