“Why Are Children Born Blind?”

I have asked the question of why children are born blind. I get no satisfaction from any of any religious explanation. The fact of the matter is that the Almighty can see but these little children cannot. It is cold comfort to hide behind some doctrine when an innocent child will spend his or her life in darkness.

It’s a great question. In fact, God considered it such a good question that it is included in the Gospel of John:

> As [Jesus] 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 works of God might be displayed in him. . . .” (John 9:1-3)

So the first answer of why babies are allowed to be born blind is so that God can put His goodness and His power on display through the person’s life.

I can imagine that an immediate response might be, “How sadistic and egocentric can you get? Why would a good and loving God allow such pain and distress just to set Himself up to get glory?”

And my response would be, “When we start to understand God as He really is, as majestic and powerful and beautiful and most of all GOOD, we stop pushing back at His actions that reveal His character. Just like we don’t raise a fist at the sun and scream, ‘How dare you shine so brightly that I can’t look at you without hurting my eyes?! How dare you pour such radiant light into the world that it lights everything up? Stop being

so shiny and bright!'"

Another answer is that in the scope of eternity, there are many worse things than being physically blind. It would be far worse to live a life disconnected from God, refusing His invitation to the abundant life Jesus came to give, and enter hell with perfectly working eyes.

I do realize that this may seem callous, which is why I need to tell you that as a survivor of polio paralysis since I was eight months old, I have lived my entire life handicapped. I may as well have been born with a disabled body like a baby born blind. So this question is not a hypothetical, theoretical question. This is my daily life. And I have seen God "display His works in me" (John 9) in many ways not *despite* my handicap, but *because* of it. My very weakness is what allows His strength and joy to shine through me in the weak places.

Jesus went on to say immediately after the above statements that He was the light of the world. The juxtaposition of these two details, I believe, is making a statement: that things that exist in the physical realm point to corollaries in the spiritual realm. Blindness comes in various forms, physical and spiritual and emotional and intellectual, but Jesus is the light that makes all the difference with those kinds of blindness.

I do think it's easier to grasp this truth when we cultivate an eternal perspective, remembering that our life on earth is but a short breath compared to the bulk of our existence that will happen on the other side of death. Blindness, for believers in Jesus, is limited to life on earth. All physical maladies will be restored to perfection in the New Heavens and the New Earth, which means no blindness, no lameness, no illness of any kind in the next stage of life.

You might ask, "But what about babies born blind who don't

become believers in Jesus? What is the point of their blindness then?" It seems to me that the promise of healing and wholeness through a relationship with Jesus could be even *more* appealing to someone born blind. It might be the very best way for them to come to the place where they trust in Christ.

One final comment, addressing your statement that "the Almighty can see but these little children cannot."

There was a time when the Almighty restricted Himself to a human body while living on earth, leaving all His power and privileges behind in heaven when He took up residence in a young girl's body. I believe He experienced an even worse kind of blindness than merely physical blindness as He hung on the cross, absorbing all the sin, all the dysfunction, all the sickness, and all the brokenness of life in a fallen world into Himself for three hours. He was so immersed in the horror of a sin-sick world, I believe, that He could no longer "see" or sense His Father—because that's what sin does, it separates us from God, and the Bible tells us that He actually BECAME sin for us (2 Corinthians 5:21). No wonder He felt lost in sin's blindness. (Thus crying out "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?")

So I would respectfully submit that Jesus, the Almighty, very much knows what the deepest kind of blindness feels like. He is Emmanuel, God with us—God who understands what it's like to be human and live in a broken world. Including blindness.

I do hope you find this helpful.

Sue Bohlin

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“Why Does God Create People Born Blind, Deaf, Etc.?”

Why does God create people who are born blind, deaf etc.? Why don’t they get a chance to live life the way others would?

The great thing about your question is that Jesus Himself answered it! This account is found in John 9:1-3:

> As He passed by, He saw a man blind from birth. And His disciples asked Him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he would be born blind?” Jesus answered, “It was neither that this man sinned, nor his parents; but it was so that the works of God might be displayed in him.”

God’s got a plan for people born with a disability. In their weakness, He can display His strength, His goodness, and His grace. This passage was life-changing for Nick Vujicic, a young man born without arms or legs. After a time of despair-filled depression, he heard this passage and it was a major “light bulb moment” for him. It changed everything. Nick has grasped that the reason he was born without limbs was so that God could be glorified in him in a special way. Today, he is a life-changer in the lives of millions of people worldwide. Check out his website “Life Without Limbs” at www.lifewithoutlimbs.org Here’s a YouTube video of Nick: www.youtube.com/watch?v=H8ZuKF3dxCY

Actually, this is not an abstract concept for me; because I was crippled by polio as an infant, I’ve lived my life as if I were born with a disability. It’s not a matter of “their” weakness, but “our” weakness.

I respectfully suggest that the reason it’s easy to put an

inordinate amount of stress on the idea of living a “normal” life free of physical limitations is the culture’s emphasis on the temporal, physical dimension of life. Consider 2 Cor 4:17-18:

> “For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.”

When we ONLY look at “the seen,” the temporal, we can forget that the lasting, unseen realities outweigh them. I can promise you that since God has shown me that the limits of my physical life are only “momentary, light affliction” that are producing in me “an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison,” it allows me to focus on the things that really matter—things like letting God shine His light through me. He has shown me that He has been using my disability to scoop out my soul and create a bigger place for Him to fill; that He balances my physically diminished capacity with a larger spiritual capacity—and I’ll take that trade any day!

Now, I do realize that not everyone born blind, dear, lame etc., turns in faith to Christ. Some people live their whole lives consumed by bitterness and anger at God for allowing them to be born that way. That is so sad, that they miss the opportunity to experience God redeeming their painful experience and turning it into something good and beautiful (in the unseen, eternal sphere).

I have written an article on our website called “The Value of Suffering,” that gives more reasons that God allows people to be born with disabilities and experience other kinds of suffering. I hope you will find it helpful in answering your question more fully:

Blessing you today,

Sue Bohlin

P.S. I just came across a phenomenal blog post by Randy Alcorn titled "Insights from a Precious Disabled Child of God." He offers a short essay by a marvelously articulate 22-year-old woman. It's one of the best things I've ever read.

> **Hearing God, and Sensing Life**
> *Cass Harris 4/16/11*
>
> As I stood on the beach near my home in Alaska, taking in God's creation, knowing full well that my precious Audience of One had my heart completely, I couldn't help but remember.
>
> God had never been silent in my life. At 10 months I was diagnosed with a mild case of cerebral palsy. Too early to tell all the implications, the doctor gave my mother and father the gravest of warnings. Known debilitations were the inability to talk, walk, comprehend, eat on my own, use my hands; the list was endless. There was also a possibility of epilepsy, but no one wanted to acknowledge that. So, being the people of faith that they were, my parents did the only thing they knew to do. They thanked the physician, took me home and prayed like crazy that they'd know how to raise a special needs child.
>
> As it turned out, my cerebral palsy wasn't nearly as bad as—according to the doctors—it should've been. My speech abilities left something to be desired, but I was communicating. My entire right side was two times weaker and smaller than my left, but I was walking. I'd never use my right hand as a hand I could depend on, but I could move it. I misunderstood numbers, but I could comprehend the tools given me to overcome that. The dreaded epilepsy turned into a reality when I was 12, and by the time I was 16, I'd already undergone three brain surgeries to 'fix' the disorder. In all, my life was an unsung miracle. At least

among most humans.

If there's anything I've learned as a disabled individual, it's that the quantity of misinformed or ignorant individuals is never ending. And on top of that, as sweet as they may come across, those people are the ones that talk and squawk the loudest. My heart was totally God's, but they had no problem questioning that. And they had no problem testing their boundaries of information in front of my very innocent and sensitive heart.

"So! Cerebral palsy, huh? Did you know that as recently as 1985 they still left kids like you in caves to die in parts of the world?!" The fact that I was born in '89 made that 'fact' even more fun to spout.

"It's too bad that your parents didn't catch the fact that you had cerebral palsy and epilepsy before you were born. Would've been so much easier on your parents to just try again, rather than stand by and watch you suffer through so much. You really are proof that abortion is merciful!"

Of all the insults, and all the "well-intentioned fact spewing," the merciful abortion line got to me the most. What God did they think they understood when they sweetly put the words "merciful" and "abortion" in the same sentence?!

As many disabled Christians will tell you; by the grace of God, having a disability, at times, is just a fast track to understanding His heart. When the rest of the world can rely on intelligent authors to explain heart issues; or motivational speakers to get them out of a funk, there isn't a known formula to explain away and comfort life-long rejection just because you don't look right. Sure, parents can give you love and support. And yes, friendship is still very possible, but, the only One that can truly make such pain worth living through is my Lord.

I remember the times that I'd brokenly inquired and cried out to God about how to handle the fact that my young heart felt as if the entire world just wanted me aborted; only because of two or three sweet yet ignorant individuals. I also remember feeling God's arm around me, rocking me to sleep after a mind-numbing seizure and my thought that "maybe abortion *would've been a Godsend!*"

His answer was simple, but amazingly just the thing that my broken heart had needed at the time. And to this day, at almost 22 years old, I still remember smiling as I heard Him explain.

"Child, your heart breaks because you only hear the fact that people are trying to reason away their moral mistakes by making it logical; and you're the perfect subject. My heart breaks, however, because in announcing that they think abortion is merciful, they are telling **ME** that they believe I wasn't involved in your creation. That I somehow turned my back while you were being created, and when I looked at you again, there was an irreversible mistake that I could just hope one of my other creations would step in and fix themselves.

"What they don't seem to understand is that the precious ones they decide they should have aborted, are the ones that I created exactly that way for a reason. Although I love each creation, I also love the fact that there are some where their hearts are 20 times stronger than their bodies, and I can give them tasks that I would never give someone who is what some may deem perfect.

"My Precious Little One, I made you this way because I love you. I knew that your strong will, crazy adventurous heart and love for people would have been amazing tools used to make you forget me if you had the chance. And although you still walked away for a time, and didn't hear or see me, you remembered the fellowship we were perfecting within your

imperfections—not outside of them.

“Abortion? Why would you ever take the chance away to see just how deep My love goes, just because you want to ‘try again.’ My sweet Baby Girl, I knew what I was doing when I allowed your mama to carry you in her womb the way she did. I saw the pain she went through, and I had one hand on your little head, and the other hand held your heart, the entire time.

“You’re my beloved, my child. And I wanted you here. Don’t let the world tell you otherwise.”

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