

Special Needs

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We so often hear the term "special needs" thrown about in our society. But what exactly does that mean? Let's begin by defining the words: Special: Surpassing what is common or usual; exceptional. Need: a lack of something required or desirable.

Of course, people that use the phrase "special needs" often attribute their own personal definition to it. For example, a couple who has a baby that is born with Downs Syndrome will be told, "Your baby has "special needs." It may be a child that has Cerebral Palsy, Cystic Fibrosis, Autism, severe asthma, ADD/ADHD, and the list can be as long as one wants to make it.

Please understand, as a parent and medical professional I fully recognize that a child having a physical or mental deficiency will require unique care to help compensate for the particular lacking in its life. Some of that care requires much of our time. That is where the "special need" comes into play. One surpasses what is common or usual care when there is a lack of something that is required (physically or mentally).

How do we with a Christian world view look at the term "special needs"? First we need to look at Psalm 139:13. "For You did form my inward parts, You did knit me together in my mother's womb." God is in control. Intellectually, we understand that as a result of the Fall and the introduction of sin into the world, there will be babies born with physical and mental limitations. This question was asked of Jesus in John 9:2 : "Who sinned, this man or his parents that he was born blind?" To me, the answer in verse 3 would bring great comfort to any parent who would naturally ask that question. Jesus replied, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him." We are all uniquely created for the ultimate purpose of glorifying God with out life.

Personally, I think we need to change our perspective regarding "special needs," as it goes beyond our physical appearance or mental abilities. We also need the understanding that with any unique situation God allows in our life, Hw also provides His grace and strength (2 Cor 12:9-10).

The reality is that each child born into this world has a "special need." He has a heart that is damaged due to sin (Ps 51:5). No matter what the outside package looks like, each one of us has a heart with the "special need" of Jesus Christ. We trust that the testimonies of families who are dealing with some special issues in their family will help each one of us as we walk "along the way."