

I Have Been Blessed with Epilepsy

Crystal Laney

When I was 12 years old, I was diagnosed with epilepsy. Now, at age 32, I look back at everything in my life that was in some way related to this diagnosis or the medication that was taken for it. So many things have happened that were horrible at the time but have helped to shape me into the woman I am today.

I have nocturnal grand mal seizures. When I have a breakthrough seizure, I fall into a semi-unconscious sleep for hours. If awakened, the ER has to administer an amazing amount of pain medication to stop the most awful migraine a person can imagine. This medication doesn't even really stop the pain; it just sedates me enough to put me back to sleep. I chew on my tongue and cannot speak for up to 5 days after because I have bitten chunks out of it. I claw myself and have ripped my arms to shreds. I have lost continence and then slept in the mess. These seizures and the side effects of the anti-seizure medications have caused many issues. Among them: depression, migraines, blurred and double vision, forgetfulness, being fired from a job, having to drop out of college, the miscarriage of a child, and birth defects for a child.

Stress is a huge trigger for a lot of people with epilepsy, myself included. I didn't realize until a few years ago that I had caused a lot of my seizures because I allowed stress to be a chronic part of my life. I worked for many years in a stressful job environment because I thought we needed the money. I tried to deal with problems in my life that were out of my control, instead of giving them to God. I tried to be all things to all people except my husband and son; then wondered why my marriage was always in turmoil and why my son disrespected me.

So, how is epilepsy a blessing? I didn't see it for a very long time. God had to show me that I was putting other things before Him, before my family, and before my health. These idols were money, a false sense of control, and unfounded pride. I was allowing chronic stress to overtake me, because I was deciding what was most important for my life instead of asking God to tell me. As I started to focus on the things God thought were important, the idols disappeared along with the stress and the seizures. I have been seizure-free for several years now.

I walk in a close relationship with Christ. My priorities are centered on Godly values. My family is my next priority, and my health has greatly improved as well. I live each day to glorify the Lord and have refocused all my efforts away from things that cause stress and sin in my life. God has so richly blessed my family and me because of these choices. The epilepsy forced me to see how deep my need for God truly is. I couldn't control it, but I could control other areas of my life that had a profound effect on it.

I do not claim that my epilepsy has been cured. I will never say this is a remedy for anyone else's seizure disorders. I do know one thing though: a right relationship with God is a real stress reducer! Matthew 6:33 says: "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." God continues to bless me when my relationship with Him is good. One blessing that I am thankful for every morning is that I wake up to another day, seizure-free.