

Seeing God's Faithfulness in My Sister Heidi
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Editor's note – The author has received permission from Heidi to share the following account.

Many years ago, one night I was suddenly awakened by the violent shaking of the bed that my sister and I shared. Groggy and baffled, it took me a minute to figure out what was happening. My healthy, 12-year-old sister was having a grand mal seizure. This black night marked the beginning of a long and difficult road for my sister and our whole family. To our shock and dismay, seemingly overnight Heidi had developed severe epilepsy, and each day was filled with grand mal seizures and petit mal seizures. Her life changed abruptly. Despite years of appointments with top-notch specialists and handfuls of medication, Heidi was not seizure-free, and she could barely walk a straight line. Ten long and discouraging years yielded nothing hopeful, and we worried about her future. The desperate prayers my family offered on her behalf seemed to barely clear the ground, hanging just above our heads like heavy, gray clouds, so remote from heaven.

And then after 11 years, when we were utterly defeated, Heidi seemed to show signs of slight improvement. The doctors were skeptical and insisted that she continue her daily regimen of medications. Her form of epilepsy was a life sentence, they insisted. But every week Heidi seemed to be less “foggy” than the last, like feeble rays of sunshine fighting to break through the clouds. Very, very slowly and with great trepidation, Heidi secretly began to wean herself off her medications, and she had no seizures. When she told us, we were simultaneously anxious and ecstatic.

Due to the numerous seizures that she had sustained over the years, Heidi had very limited memory. We could re-gift the same present for her on birthdays and Christmas, and she wouldn't notice. But one day Heidi said with a smile, “Hey, this looks familiar!” She was definitely on the road to recovery.

Most of her past schooling was just a blur, so would it be possible to ever catch up? Her confidence had worn thin over the years, so she took a simple job to get started, and she remained seizure-free. Eventually, Heidi married and had two daughters. When her marriage fell apart, she gathered the courage to leave, but worried about how she would support her beautiful children. Heidi determined to go back to school and get her social work diploma. Was she reaching for the stars? She would have to upgrade her high school courses because the years of seizures had erased much of her memory. I remember getting a late night phone call. Heidi whispered, “Bonnie, how do you add fractions? What does lowest terms mean?”

Heidi possessed a tenacious work ethic. She did get her social work degree and then a couple years later, she also went to university to get her education degree. We were bursting with pride that as a single mom with no earthly resources other than guts and sheer determination, she supported her daughters, studying

and holding down a job. Currently, my sister Heidi is the music teacher at a large elementary school, despite no formal music training. She taught herself how to play the piano and the ukulele, and is responsible for the school's impressive musical productions. She also works at a group home.

If you met my sister Heidi, you would see a middle-aged brunette with a warm, cheerful smile. When I see my sister Heidi, I see God's faithfulness. Seeing God when we least expect it, feeling the warmth of His glorious face when we have given up, is truly a thing of beauty.

James writes, "But let **patience** have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing." (James 1:4) We are all waiting for something. Wait upon the Lord. (2 Corinthians 4:16) "We do not lose heart."