

Answered Prayers

BY JOYCE LARSON YEXLEY



Joyce Larson Yexley with Amy, 18



Amy, 9



Amy, 32 months

“Amy has had total brain damage. She will probably be severely retarded, multihandicapped, blind and deaf.”

My daughter was only 1 week old, so I didn’t know how this doctor could declare this catastrophic outcome to me. Did he know he had broken my heart? My greatest joy in life was being a mother. How could any doctor tell a mother this news? Why was this happening?

My tears welled up and my body went limp. My husband, Dave, put his arms around me and took me home. We drove home in silence, tears streaming down our cheeks.

We couldn’t speak. When I entered the house, I grabbed a large trash bag and threw every baby gift and congratulation card into it. Dave looked at me in dismay as I threw the sack in the closet.

“And don’t take it out of

the closet until I know that Amy can come home,” I warned.

After 10 days, Amy suffered a severe bleed on the brain that caused hydrocephalus. She needed brain surgery for the placement of a shunt to drain the fluid off her brain; the doctors told us to prepare funeral arrangements in case the surgery was unsuccessful. We prepared for the worst, but God had other plans.

During her recovery, Amy stopped breathing several times, but she was successfully revived again and again. After six weeks, the doctors didn’t know how or why she survived. I started to question how so many doctors could be so wrong. My faith was still searching for answers too.

Night after night I read my Bible, seeking relief.

“God help me,” I prayed desperately. “My heart is breaking.”

Then one evening I read, “Dear friends, don’t be

surprised at the fiery trials you are going through, as if something strange were happening to you” (1 Peter 4:12, NLT).

Indeed, I was surprised. Yes, this was a fiery trial. It certainly felt like a strange place to be. Time had stopped. My life was changing, and I didn’t know how to make the pain go away. I wanted to get off this journey. Would someone please wake me?

I decided to give it to God. No one else could truly comfort me, even though Dave was a rock of support. When we finally brought Amy home, we were determined to love and cherish her. I tried to do everything to prove the doctors wrong.

I kept a journal of Amy’s every waking hour. I recorded the number of arm rotations, leg lifts, sit-ups and musical stimulation sessions.

At 4 months, Amy began uncontrollable seizures.

Answered Prayers

After much prayer and weeks of treatment, the seizures stopped. God still answers prayer!

When the doctors tested Amy's hearing they labeled her deaf. I knew Amy could hear, but the tests indicated oth-

stimulation. Every night, I sat in the bathtub with her and floated her pacifier in the water. She loved her pacifier, so I would let her retrieve it with her right hand several times, then I would hold her right arm and make her use her left hand to grab it. After 30 days, Amy could grab it. Yes, another answer to prayer. Thank You, Jesus.

For two years, Amy was enrolled in an early intervention program for handicapped children needing stimulation and therapy. I kept believing God was in control. Then when Amy reached 30 months, God delivered another answer.

As I turned around in disbelief, Amy's classroom teacher shouted, "Did you hear that?" Amy had just played "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star."

erwise. The team of doctors said her reaction to sound was merely a reaction to vibrations. I refused to accept their diagnosis. We continually played music tapes in her bedroom every night. She listened to every gospel song, Christmas song and nursery rhyme.

At 7 months, Amy wasn't using her left arm. Her brain injury was affecting use of the left side of her body. The doctors expected her lack of muscle control and gave no encouragement.

One doctor bluntly told us, "Didn't you see the CAT scan? There is nothing between the ears."

Although I didn't believe him, his insensitive words were crushing.

I decided Amy needed more

While I was visiting with Amy's teacher at the intervention class, I heard someone playing the piano in the therapy room. When I turned around, I saw Amy leaning in her walker by the piano, holding one hand over the keyboard and hitting the keys with her right index finger.

As I turned around in disbelief, Amy's classroom teacher shouted, "Did you hear that?"

Amy had just played "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star" on the piano with one finger.

The teacher asked me if we had a piano at home.

"No," I replied, "but we play nursery songs every night on a cassette tape."

A few weeks later, Amy's

grandparents gave us an organ so Amy could sit and play the keyboard.

I had to strap Amy into a chair for support to sit upright at the organ. We had no idea what we would hear. To our amazement, Amy started playing Christmas songs. With both hands, she played "Silent Night," "Joy to the World" and "We Wish You a Merry Christmas." Amy could not read. She had never had a music lesson. But she sat and played the organ at 3 years old.

This was truly abnormal. Since the day Amy was born, she had been labeled abnormal. I hated that word. This day I embraced it. Amy was special!

Doctors had little explanation as to why Amy could hear, but I knew. It was an answer to prayer.

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding" (Proverbs 3:5, NIV).

I value doctors. However, I believe in God and His living Word. Dave and I took Amy to more than a dozen doctors the first two years of her life. But the only hope we found was in God's Word.

Today, Amy is 28 years old. She endured more than 30 corrective surgeries in the first 18 years of her life. I learned that God uses all types of people to answer our prayers.

God is in control of our Amy. She cannot read or write, but she can play the organ and sing praises to the Lord. Blessed are the pure in heart. **tpe**

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E-mail your comments to tpe@ag.org.

ABCs OF SALVATION

To know God and be ready for heaven, follow these steps:

A. Admit you are a sinner.

"There is no one righteous, not even one ... for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." Romans 3:10,23 (See Romans 5:8; 6:23.)

Ask God's forgiveness and repent of your sins.

"Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." Romans 10:13 (See Acts 3:19.)

B. Believe in Jesus (put your trust in Him) as your only hope of salvation.

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." John 3:16 (See John 14:6.)

Become a child of God by receiving Christ.

"To all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God." John 1:12 (See Revelation 3:20.)

C. Confess that Jesus is your Lord.

"If you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." Romans 10:9 (See verse 10.)

For further help, contact the Assemblies of God church near you.

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