

People would pat me on my belly saying, "Oh, you are so tiny!", thinking that they were giving me a compliment. On the outside I would smile, but on the inside it tore my heart out. I thought that maybe if I ate more or rested more, this little one would be bigger. A verse that was a real source of encouragement was 1 Chronicles 16:12, "Look to the Lord and His strength. Seek His face always. Remember the wonders He has done and the miracles He has performed..." Even though I was uncertain of what would happen, I knew that I had a God who knew every detail.

Contractions started six weeks early. My obstetrician, Dr. James Boulton, consulted with my pediatrician, Dr. Robert Moriarty, and they decided that a C-section would be performed. Brandon was born weighing in at a whopping 2 pounds and 12 ounces - precisely the weight indicated from his biophysical profile, and measuring 15 1/4 inches! The first time I saw this little man, my heart melted. He was so tiny, and oh, so perfect in his Mama's eyes! He remained in the neonatal unit for the next five weeks. Feeding was quite an issue. It would take close to an hour for 10 ml. of milk. On many feedings, I would opt for a gavage feed.

As the weeks and months went by, I noticed that Brandon wasn't able to do things other children his age were doing such as holding his head up, sitting, or crawling, and I began questioning my pediatrician. This began a battery of tests and appointments.

When Brandon was fourteen months old, I received a phone call that left me feeling numb. A doctor told me that she would clear her schedule because we needed to talk. The next day I was given a piece of paper that said Brandon was diagnosed with a Trisomy 18 syndrome with a mosaic pattern. He also tested positive for a viral infection which could mean horrible things for him if it occurred while he was still in my womb.

The paper she gave me said that 90% of the children die before their first birthday. Most children were G-tube fed, didn't walk, talk, had lung problems, kidney problems, and the list just went on. A line at the bottom said that mosaic kids had a "somewhat longer life span" but no one could tell me what that meant. My pediatrician later told me that mosaic children were rarer than hen's teeth.

I phoned the genetic clinic and asked if they knew anyone that was 5 years old- the answer - no. I asked how about 3 years old- the answer again - no. I was devastated!!!! We had prayed so hard for this little one and now I was being told that I

could lose him at anytime. The grief that I experienced washed over me like a tidal wave. After each wave would hit, I would hold on tight to the one who was my shelter in the storm. Here is a brief excerpt from the journal that I kept ...

*...yet I will rejoice in the Lord. I will be joyful in God
my Savior.
kkuk 3:18*

Haba

"Lord, I don't know what to say. I know without a shadow of doubt that You have had your hand upon Brandon since his conception. I know that you love this little soul with all your heart. I can't even comprehend how he is doing the things he is doing. That in itself is a miracle! My prayer is that you do a mighty work in him and use this situation for your glory. Allow us to enjoy your child for years to come. May he love you with all his heart and serve you wholeheartedly. I pray that he has such a tender heart towards others. Continue to wrap your arms around this precious little one. Thank you, Lord. I love you and trust you."

For the very first time, I finally understood what surrender meant. I couldn't be with Brandon twenty- four hours a day. Even if I could, it wouldn't have made a difference. I needed to release him to the one who could make a difference. For the first time I comprehended what God had done when He surrendered His only Son for us.

As the years went by, we were bombarded with Doctor's appointments and therapies. It got to the point that when his therapists would go near him he would scream uncontrollably. No one could tell me if Brandon would ever be able to walk, talk, or to do all the other things that we take for granted.

Brandon has experienced things that other children may have not. But through them, I can honestly say that it has shaped him into the wonderful young man he is today. I am so thankful for the gift of my son. He truly is everything a mother could possibly ask for. Having an extra gene has given him an extra dose of love, compassion and faith. He has taught me so much, and I am moved to tears when I see how God, in His faithfulness, has answered my prayers above and beyond anything I could have imagined! I love you with all my heart, son!