

What is the meaning of being Disabled?

I have been asked to write a piece for my friend's web site. This is my attempt to pen with my heart the things I have seen which are to me nothing short of miraculous. Disability Road denotes that there is something to be traversed and a destination that must be reached.

Let's talk about the word disabled. There are many forms of disability; some disabilities are more visible than others. In many ways I have been more disabled than my friend for whom I am writing this commentary. With the utmost respect for Steve and what he is trying to accomplish through this site, I am in holy fear and understand the responsibility to the reader.

I met my friend when I got a call about doing his wedding. I did not know what a blessing I was to receive through his call.

Earlier when I said there are many forms of disability I was including myself. My disabilities are not as apparent as others but no less crippling. I think it is important at this time to point out what I am saying. There are varied differences that some have to cope with concerning the circumstances of life. I can only relate from where I stand according to the circumstances of my life. I have experienced some physical injuries that changed my life. Always being a very strong man the idea of a life change made considerable challenges to my head and heart. I had given my heart to Christ, the way of Faith without which I believe none of us can make sense of why things happen. Questioning why some lives are so hard and so challenging.

My life started great with fantastic parents. However when tragedy first struck I was still a child. I was entrusted to a summer camp and to persons whom supposedly represented Christ. However evil does not respect it's surroundings and is ready to pounce on every opportunity. Being molested my self-image was changed for the first half of my life. Thinking as children do, I somehow thought this was my fault and never told my parents. Affecting every part of my life and every decision I made caused a disability in me more crippling than any physical injury I could have ever suffered.

The beginning of my freedom to overcome my disability came when the Lord told me to forgive that man. Though it took years I have entrusted him to the Lord. It doesn't take away the bad decisions I made but it allowed me to operate within my present circumstances. Not all my life has been bad. I have 3 fantastic sons and 2 beautiful stepdaughters and I'm also blessed with 5 grandchildren. However, I wish I had known the Lord earlier in my life. Sadly my low self-worth would not allow it. Because I did not fully know about Him it took me 38 years of life to entrust myself to His love. And it also took years longer to forgive the source of all the wounds received through my poor decisions. I thought I could fill my need for acceptance in other people. God showed me I first had to accept myself.

Now for my friend Steve, he has been a light and inspiration to me through many trials. The most important thing he said to me is when facing his own disability he did so by assessing what abilities he had left and to make the best of his life within those boundaries. In many ways he has done better than

I in handling disability.

My abilities were hampered because I never properly assessed them thereby allowing my emotional disabilities to take over. I thought I could just be a nice guy and out work my problems never realizing I was disabled. We cannot overcome a problem unless we admit we have one. Fear and or anger usually manage the limits we place on ourselves.

I was physically strong and able to produce plenty of work but when you find it has no value unless it has purpose and meaning to others it is easy to become disheartened. Sometimes we need to forgive God for what we think. That He has allowed tragedy (Satan's work) in our lives not understanding the opportunity we have to rise above circumstances through Christ. He gives our lives purpose and meaning.

I watched my friend type with an eraser of a pencil stuffed through a sponge for his grip. I know he typed this entire site (one letter at a time) for you in the same manner. Those of you reading this must understand the love and diligence needed to accomplish this because he cares about others. "Not focusing on his own disability" Don't tell him I said this but he is my hero!

I told you I had the privilege of doing his wedding. My friend married a fantastic woman and they make their relationship work. Something I was never able to do. This was part of my disability.

Never let things like fear, anger, disappointment, or acceptance by others limit your life. "Our lives are greater than the body they are attached to" even greater than our thoughts because life also goes beyond what is seen.

My anger drove me down many wrong roads and disabled my perspective of life. It took Jesus Christ and His embrace to save me from my desire to die. I want to share this: it will be never known the lives you can bless by your own overcoming. God can bless a single seed for a harvest. God used Steve to bless mine and he does not go easy on me. That's ok cause I love them. God and Steve because they're in cahoots and at times both hard on me. Always to encourage and always to motivate!

Therefore assess what you have to work with, and through endurance and with a vision you can live a life not being limited by your own thinking or even by what others think. Live your life without the limits of self-pity, anger, fear, or an unforgiving heart. GIVE YOURSELF A DESTINY! Above all do not forget JESUS. He is an indispensable resource for achieving a meaningful life!

In all sincerity and love
Rev. James G. Callender