A Gift of Life

Sometimes we focus so much on what we don't have that we fail to see, appreciate, and use what we do have. I have had many personal experiences that have helped me to develop my laws of life. My most important law for life is to put things into perspective and be grateful for my blessings. I tend to become so overwhelmed and wrapped up in what I don’t have that I become blind and fail to realize what I do have. I always try to set aside a minute to reflect on the good things that God has blessed me with. However, sometimes this is hard to do when you feel that God isn’t giving you what you deserve.

When I was thirteen years old, my parents were very excited to tell me that there would be a new addition to the family. I was going to have another little brother or sister. At the time, I felt so uncomfortable with the fact that my mom was pregnant. I am the oldest child in my family and most of my friends are the youngest of theirs. It always bothered me that my little brother and sister were around whenever I had friends over to the house, and now there was going to be another little kid to throw into the mix. It was embarrassing to me that there was going to be a thirteen-year age difference between me and this baby. I felt so resentful, and I know that it broke my parents’ hearts to see that I was so unhappy about something that they were so grateful for.

I still haven’t figured out why my initial reaction to this news was so horrible, but as it got closer to the time of the delivery, I started to grow more accepting. I realized that my feelings couldn’t change the situation so I might as well learn to accept the fact that I was going to have another little brother. I still remember the day that my dad came to pick me and my sister Ava up from school to go to the hospital and see the new baby. I was actually really excited to see him for the first time. I could tell by the look on my dad’s face that he
was worried about something. He told me and Ava that the delivery went well and that the doctor took the baby for some testing. I figured this was a normal procedure, but I could still sense some uncertainty in my dad’s voice.

When we got to the hospital, my mom was excited to see us, but she also looked very distressed. I kept asking my parents when we would be able to see the baby, but they didn’t have an answer. My mom and dad had seen the baby for only a few minutes before the nurses took him for testing. The environment was really stressful, and I really didn’t know what to think. We sat in the hospital room for a while waiting to hear from the nurses. Eventually they came in and told my parents that my brother was having difficulty breathing and that he was going to be put in the neonatal intensive care unit. I now knew that things were pretty serious. The days passed very slowly, and I began to pray more than I ever had in my entire life.

A week passed and Nicholas was still not responding to treatment from the neonatal doctors. His lungs were underdeveloped, and he could not breathe on his own. I had never seen a human being attached to so many machines. He was placed in an incubator that helped him to breathe, and the doctor gave him a treatment that was supposed to inflate his lungs. This treatment was allowed to be given only three different times, and my brother still hadn’t gotten any better after the third treatment. By this time, a priest had been to the hospital to pray with my family and baptize my brother. He wasn’t going to survive. This was the first time I had ever seen my dad cry, and it broke my heart.

God truly worked a miracle for my family. The doctor said that he would not survive if his lungs didn’t inflate after treatment, but eventually they did. Ten days later Nicholas was released from intensive care and could breathe on his own. Only by the grace of God did my brother survive. The doctors and nurses were amazed. They had done everything that they could, and somehow he ended up surviving. This was the first time that I had ever seen the work of God so prevalent in my life, and it was definitely a turning point for me.

I felt absolutely horrible for the way that I reacted when my parents first told me the news about the new addition to our family. Today Nicholas is four years old and every time I look at him, I thank God for his gift of life. I can’t imagine my life without him. He
completed our family, and he brings a smile to my face each time that I see him. I now realize that any form of life is a miracle from God and should be recognized with great joy and appreciation. God works in mysterious ways, and he gives each of his children to us for a specific reason. He put my brother in my life to help strengthen my faith in Him and to teach me to put things into perspective.

Each time I pray to God, I thank Him for his blessing of my brother and for all the other small things that He has blessed me with. When I become irritated by insignificant issues, I always try to put them into perspective. I think back to that horrible week of my life when I almost lost my brother. My life could be a lot worse, and I have so much to be thankful for. Sometimes we focus so much on what we don't have that we fail to see, appreciate, and use what we do have. As I grow and mature into an adult, I will always remember my law of life. Put things into perspective and be grateful for all of the blessings that God has given me.