

SOPHIE MEINHARDT MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP 2012

HOW GREAT IS OUR GOD?

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I've never really given much thought to God or how great he is. I knew He had a plan for me from learning that in school, but I never really had a clue what that was. I grew up learning about all the classic Old Testament stories, like Adam and Eve or Noah's Ark, but I never wondered about their meanings or who was behind it all. Whenever I would meet one of my parents' friends when I was little, they would always say how blessed I am for the family I have. Unfortunately, I was never warned or never got any tips on how to deal with a family falling apart. The mind spinning constant reminders on to be grateful for what God has blessed me with seemed to be mandatory for my brain to handle. This plan that seemed to be bubbling from the start will open up my heart and I will finally understand the greatness; God's Greatness.

When I was about 5 years old, my parents got divorced. I never really knew much of what to think of or of what the next stepping stone in my life would be. I mean, I was just a genetically small kindergartener going with the flow. Before the divorce, there were constantly fights, and thick irritating air floating around our house. But, overall my childhood seemed fine. However, when the fights did happen, it was never fine. Some were worse than others. When those bad nights occurred I would just escape my life completely and question God saying, "Why me, God? What have I done wrong?" I didn't know that God, Creator of all things, couldn't stop one fight. Everyone made him seem so great, but I found it selfishly unfair.

As the divorce was taking place, my brother and sister and I would stay with my grandma. Occasionally, we would attend the seemingly meaningless court sessions. My grandma was just so gracious and kid-friendly about everything. Her house became a place where I could runaway to whenever I needed and talk about anything. Every time we were with her I would doze off into my own little

heaven. There's always been something about her that's so warm and welcoming. We would watch a lot of movies to the point where we knew every line. Somehow we seemed to have a different movie for each part of the day or mood. "Wind in the Willow" was our absolute favorite! It would put the four of us snuggling into bed and sleeping before it even got to the main point! "Ever After", "Big Fish", "My Dog Skip", "The Princess Bride", and the Back to the Future series were our top picks! She also used to read us books and I remember her voice being so calming and soft like an angel's would be. Haha, I don't know why I remember this, but she used to take me to Oak Dale for kindergarten some mornings and would drop me off in the same spot. After school, she'd come pick me up, drive us back to her house while we chatted about my kindergarten drama, and then she'd make me Spaghettios while I watched the kid show "Lazy Town."

After the divorce was finally completed, I never thought my family would be the same again. We had moved to a smaller house and had completely changed our lifestyles. I had some of those hopeful fairytale-movie-moments that make you think your parents might actually get back together. I knew that they would probably not, but somehow I still hoped. All my friends had the normal Mom and Dad family base. I did too, but I was never eating dinner with them at the same table, on the same night, or at the same time. So many people gave my family a lot of care and love, but I still felt like I was alone. Even praying to God at night seemed to fail.

Everything soon started changing after a year or two. My mom had gotten re-married, I had two new step-sisters, and we were suddenly moving again. We moved to the house I am currently living in now. Life with my dad was always fun! He was so loving and fun. You could tell he was just trying his best to make our childhoods up to us. We used to bunk with my Aunt Sandie and Uncle Chris's house on the weekends and it was a total blast! They had three kids Caitlyn, Christian, and Makenzie. Kenzie is my age and I swear she was like an angel from Heaven to me! That whole family was, to all of us! I don't know how to explain it, but we just clicked from the first day on. They were as good for us as we were for them. All the memories we built up through the mess was just unbelievable!

Unfortunately, disaster struck again. Our second family, my aunt and uncle, were moving to Kentucky, five hours away. It was a heartbreaking time for us. The air to our lungs was being removed. After the move, we started staying at my grandpa's condominium. That was great, but it still was never the same. We made it through though.

My dad soon met a girl and got married! She had four kids, Stacey, Ally, Gina, and Kevin. I was no longer the youngest with two siblings below me! It was so great! They have moved into a house and we now all stay there during the weekends. We have now just recently found out that my cousins are moving back to Cincinnati! Now I feel like my heart has been filled up again!

My life was a roller coaster, and will probably always stay that way. I was like Adam, Eve, and Noah, hiding from the flood that had filled up my life. I had blinded myself from seeing that God had given me more than what I had before. Seeing what God had given me really made me realize how great he really is and how I should always keep that in my heart. Not only did I get my family back, but I gained two new amazing families! I was given the opportunity to be with the one person so many other kids don't get, my grandma. I had found a person, and family, that was there to pick me up when I fell. My prayers were in the process of being answered before I had even started worrying. I guess it is true that when God runs for you, he'll go the extra mile just because he loves you! After that experience, I try to cherish the small moments, and make the best of the worst. Sometimes I just want to spend my time in prayer thanking God for what he's given me. I guess my parents' friends were right. Be thankful for what you have.

Now, as I'm smoothly riding at the very top of my roller coaster, my heart, my mind, and my soul have never felt so open and filled with the burning passion of the Holy Spirit, the grace of the angels, and the love of the Greatest Father of all. This experience has changed my life completely. I will always keep God in my life and know that he is the greatest thing that has ever walked into my life. How Great is our God!