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Surrendering Our Children to God

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Surrendering Our Children to God

“We had to give him the EPI . . . peanuts in an ice cream bar . . . EMTs here . . . waiting for the ambulance . . . cell coverage very bad . . . hospital about 45 minutes away . . . we are very remote . . .,” my husband’s voice wavered.



▲ Ingrid Weiss Slikkers

My oldest son has life-threatening allergies to nuts and, now, our greatest fear was happening in the wilds of Utah. This backpacking trip had been planned for a long time. My husband and teen-aged sons would go ahead, and I would join them for the last part of the trip to Yellowstone. Earlier that evening they had shared great reports of their day as we chatted on the phone. “Mom, Bryce Canyon was so great!” And now this.

Almost midnight and alone in our Michigan home, I reached out to friends who immediately started a prayer chain. Another text, “Ambulance here.” Then seconds passed into minutes with no texts. Nothing. Just silence. I felt my body flood with an electrical rush, which I knew was an acute stress reaction. The weakness was so intense I had to lie down.

The silence was now deafening. I knew I needed to breathe; with each breath, came a prayer. A gasped, “Lord, save my son!” came with an exhale but, as I started to inhale again, thoughts of losses came. Others came to mind who had said the same words; parents from my therapy practice that had lost their children from illness or accident who also had prayed this prayer. Why would God answer *my* prayer for a miracle of life?

For someone who strives for control, in this weakened state I felt I needed to respond to my thoughts

with words of obedience — words I hoped would take my thoughts captive, words I had been repeating since I was a child and needed to say now, “Thy will be done.” The lump in my throat expanded. I could hear the word “Surrender” in my mind. “Surrender,” it came again. I knew I had to give my son to God completely and accept whatever that meant. I wanted to yell in anger but I was too limp, and I already knew what I had to do. But why was it so quiet!?!?!?

“Surrender. Surrender. Give it all to me,” came the words again. “I’ve got this. I have the end. I’ve already taken care of it. Just quit thrashing. Be still and know that I am God . . . I gave you this silence so you could hear me. Just yield.”

My son lived through this episode and we are able to talk about it being a miracle. But for me, it was more than that — it was my Mt. Moriah. Although I had verbalized many times that I had given my children to him, it had not been utter release. I had needed that dreadful silence to truly hear.

As this New Year begins, I pray you and I will live our lives in continued, daily submitting of our children to God. ■

Ingrid Weiss Slikkers is assistant professor of Social Work at Andrews University, a child and family therapist, and is constantly learning more about God because of her sons.