



DISABILITIES MINISTRY

"And when they could not bring [the paralyzed man] to Jesus because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him..." — Mark 2:3-4 (paraphrased)

REFLECTION

WE ARE ABLE!!!

I have worked in special education for over 30 years. Although our society tends to use words such as "handicapped" and "disabled," I have learned that those terms are far from the truth. Why do we focus on what we do not have versus the abilities we have been given by God? Everyone has skills that differ from others. Sometimes those skills are reflected in our occupations. Historically, skills often defined the person – the carpenter, the forester, the baker – and so we developed last names accordingly. Perhaps if we could truly define our God-given abilities we would see names like: Mr. Kind-hearted, Ms. Courageous, Mrs. Fearless, Mrs. Faithful, Mr. Loving, Mr. Dependable or Miss Friendly.

Over the years, my students have taught me so much more than any class or instructor could impart. In spite of their blindness, deafness, cerebral palsy, traumatic brain injury, intellectual skills, autism, drug addiction, emotional instability and fragility, I have learned the meaning of God's word by seeing examples of unconditional love, kindness, perseverance, joy, grace, forgiveness, diligence, trust, respect, and courage in their everyday lives. For them, life tends to be lived in the moment. Today is important. This minute is valuable. We could all benefit from their wisdom. Live, learn, laugh, and love unconditionally. Focus on your own abilities, what you CAN do – not on what you can't do. Perhaps no one would be called "disabled" and we would be recognized and valued because WE ARE ABLE – in God's eyes and our own.

*~~ Julie Foster
We Are Able workcamp director*

Disabilities Awareness Month

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