DAY 18: REBECCA CULTRARA

"PORTRAITS OF GRACE" MAY 18, 2019

My name is Rebecca Cultrara. I have been a wife for 30 years, a mom for 29 years, a teacher for 10 years, librarian for 6 years and a Pastor's wife for 12 years. I live in Frewsburg, NY with my husband and oldest son. My two younger sons have autism and live in group homes in the Buffalo area.

My life as a wife began on July 30, 1988. This was a journey I could never imagine being on when I was younger. As any girl dreams, I wanted to get married and have a family. I had no idea my family would not be like I had imagined. God blessed us with 3 wonderful sons. We would learn a few years later our middle son had autism. That took us on a new journey into the world of autism. This was something we had not planned on. Neither did we plan it when your youngest son was also diagnosed with autism when he was 3 years old. His diagnosis came a couple of years after his other health issues. I knew we had not planned to have special needs children. God planned it. We were chosen to parent these special guys.

I look back over our lives while the boys were growing up and I realize, even though it was hard at times, I wouldn't change a thing. We dealt with our middle sons' bolting which led me to putting a twin bed in their room and a lock on the door. I couldn't sleep unless I was in their room. This continued for 6 years. The boys lack of fear was fear of mine. My youngest (he was 3) got outside when my oldest went to get something out of the car for his dad. I chased my baby down the sidewalk towards a busy street. He was laughing and I was praying he wouldn't get hit by a car. Just as he got to the intersection, out of no where a man jumps off his bike and grabs my son and puts him in my arms. I cried and hugged my baby and when I looked up he was gone. If you ask me, I'd say he was an angel.

My sons' disabilites never kept us from serving the Lord. My husband and I worked at a Christian school for many years. We both taught and he was also the principal. It wasn't long before he felt the call to be a pastor. Finding the right place wasn't easy. Some places weren't accepting of our sons. We even had a friend of ours tell us, as long as we had the boys at home, my husband would never pastor. He was so wrong. God brought us to Frewsburg. The people here fell in love with our sons and welcomed us with open arms.

I was asked once if I ever asked "Why God?" Why me? My answer, Nope. I know God gave me my sons for a very special reason and my job is not to ask why but to give them all the love in world I can. I wouldn't trade them for anything. They are my world. I am on Facebook and part of pages that deal with autism. Its amazing how many moms I have been able to help, because I have gone through what they are going through now. My sons are now 22 and 26. We have been on a new journey in the world of adult autism. We don't know what the future holds, but for now we are keeping the faith and trusting God to continue to guide us through our journey. Proverbs 3:5-6

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