

# INTRODUCTION

**G**od, help me! Are you listening? It's not fair, they're hurting my children and I don't know what to do! Why won't you answer me? Are you real? God, if you exist, please do something now! I can't take it anymore! Please help my children, they need You now more than ever!"

I cried for so long I was emotionally numb to my tears. I lost count of how many times I prayed and yelled these words out repeatedly with no response from above. It was to the point that I was beginning to lose my faith in God. My heartache and the clarity of my cry still seems as if the experience was just yesterday. As the years continued to go by, my tears were still intermittently falling, as those painful and daunting memories continue to haunt me.

Raising a son with autism has been a struggle; but adding the intense behavior challenges on top of this diagnosis was beyond my worst nightmare. Nate was an amazing young man, but his behavior would often mask his true character.

My daughter was a typical middle schooler who just wanted to fit in, but who knew the cost of fitting in had such a high price with no guarantees. Naomi was extremely shy, but once she warmed up, her personality was confident, bold, and sassy. She was even more tenacious than me. However, when facing the residuals of the beast of bullying, there is absolutely no guarantee that life for its victim would ever be the same.

I could have moved anywhere in the United States with no strings attached to get the best services for my son. I wasn't too worried about my daughter; with her bubbly personality, she could adjust anywhere. Based on my extensive research, the county we were headed to was highly sought after, and families from all over flocked there to take advantage of their top-notch schools. Their resources for children on the autism spectrum were amazing,

so this was most definitely going to be a good move for us. Besides, I would accept nothing less than the best for my children.

I couldn't wait to move out of Texas. This state was so huge I could drive for hours and hours and never escape. Why would I want to leave since everything I could wish for was at my fingertips? There were plenty of great jobs with amazing salaries and benefits that would allow me to afford the big, beautiful home that I always dreamed of. The downfall was it was entirely too hot, and the hurricane season and I were an unbalanced blend. More importantly, I needed to find a school district that could best serve my autistic son. Even though the cost of living was incredibly low, the tradeoff was being isolated from nearly all my relatives. The world was my oyster, but I chose to move back to the east coast. I just couldn't get used to people wearing shorts with cowboy boots on Christmas.

The east coast was my stomping ground; the environment that nurtured me from birth. This is where my family roots were grounded. I couldn't wait to plant my feet on the rich soil on the land I considered to be home. I yearned deeply for the four seasons, where each season gave closure to different phases of my life. Although my mother was with me, more than anything we missed being near family.

When the plane lifted off to head back east, it was my daughter's first time flying and my son was too young to remember his first experience. Nate was seven and Naomi was almost four and a half. What an awesome age to create new memories on this plane ride that fascinated them both. They were in awe as passengers, on a real airplane that they both only remembered seeing on TV. My innocent little angels; I promised myself that I would always do my best to protect my most precious gifts from God. I was so excited about our new life and looking forward to experiencing countless adventures with my children.

I sat comfortably yet clueless in my seat, daydreaming as we flew over the soft white clusters of cottony clouds trimmed with a brilliant gold lining from the sun's reflection. What a beautiful day on May 15, 2010. Little did I know

less than three hours away on the other side of this breathtaking view, I was destined to encounter multiple organized systems filled with lies, deceit, abuse, neglect, and bullying; exacerbated by spiritual warfare that would traumatize our lives for years to come. This journey took me for an unexpected ride on an incredibly intense and emotional rollercoaster, taking me to places that I never imagined while adding the title “super-mom advocate” to my job description.

From my experience, all I can say is I wish someone could go undercover in some of these schools and hospitals as a fly on the wall, to disclose what really goes on behind closed doors with children with special needs and children who are being bullied. The lack of accountability of many of the professionals involved in making major decisions in my children’s lives was astounding. If I didn’t live through this experience for myself, I would never believe what I witnessed.

During that time, I didn’t understand why God didn’t answer my many prayers, but I later realized that the hurt and pain I had endured during this heartfelt journey was not in vain. This experience birthed the purpose that God had for my life. As I reflected on all the heart wrenching events that took place during this unforeseen voyage, I thought about how God used Jesus to bear all the sins in the world for each of us. I tried to put myself in Jesus’ shoes, even though His shoes are far too big for me to fill. I wondered if God used me to bear the weight and intense emotions of every parent who has been in a similar situation; and if He used my children to bear the pain of every child who has endured similar experiences to bring the validity of these problems to life.

Just knowing what Jesus went through for me, as He was fully aware of His destiny to fulfill God’s scripture, I dare not complain about the tiny cross I had to bear which only included a few problems, compared to the massive cross that Jesus had to bear for the world. This was my assignment from God, the cross I had to carry that would ultimately help free the minds and

struggles of so many families who are bound to a point of paralysis when fighting against these issues.

Although traumatic, these real and life-changing events made my children and I much stronger and more resilient. My prayer is that this book will give those directly affected the encouragement that they need to make it through their storm, and it will bring awareness and compassion to others with insight regarding how they can make a difference.

If given the opportunity to choose a different path for my life, I wouldn't change the course of these daunting life events. God orchestrated these events, guiding me to ultimately write this book to help millions of people. Not just those with children with autism, victims of bullying or those battling spiritual warfare, but to open the eyes of all walks of life and professions. Bringing full awareness to these common yet serious issues is the only way a major change can take place. I truly hope this book makes a difference in your life and opens eyes and changes lives throughout the world.