

# I AM NOT DISABLED – GOD CALLS ME DIFFERENTLY ABLED!



**My name is Michael.**

I was born May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1987 a healthy baby boy 8 lbs. 1 oz. I am the youngest of three. My mother took me home from the hospital with the report that every parent desires, a healthy beautiful baby. My parents were filled with all the normal joy and expectations for me, but when I was 2 weeks old I became very sick with a fever and my mother couldn't arouse me so they rushed me to the emergency room.

The doctor told my parents that I had spinal meningitis and the infection had traveled to my brain very quickly. I was rushed to the children's hospital where they began a very long treatment of medicine. They believed they had taken care of all the infection after a 4-week treatment of medicine and sent me home with my parents. But at my first follow-up doctor visit the neurologist found that my head was swelling again from what the doctors believed was probably the same infection.

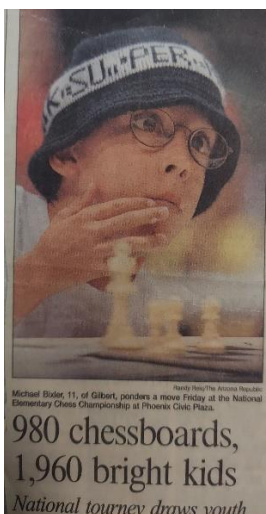
The doctors decided they needed to do brain surgery to do a biopsy to see if it was something else. What was discovered was that the previous treatment had not gotten into all the tiny areas in my brain and the infection was spreading rapidly to the healthy parts of my brain again.

The outcome worried the doctors, and they told my parents that they should not get their hopes up that it was not likely that I would make it through the night because the infection was fast-growing and killing my brain.

At the time although my parents were not saved, they knew that there was only one place they could turn to. They both went to the hospital chapel and left their baby boy in the hands of God. My family didn't believe what the doctors said, and whether it was denial or faith at the time they believed that I would be fine. I made it through the night, and I am here to testify 34 years later.

The final diagnosis after the infection was healed was that I have Cerebral Palsy due to the extensive damage the infection had caused to my brain, and this also caused me to be blind in my right eye. The doctors also told my parents that I would never walk, that I had 70% brain damage, and would most likely not progress in any normal growth in my life. But this is my testimony that the devil is a liar and I stand here before you all to testify of how God can use even the least of us to demonstrate His Love and Power.

I competed in the first-ever National Games for the Special Olympics in Ames, Iowa at Iowa State University. I won the gold medal in the 400-meter race. I have stopped competing with Special Olympics. I had double knee surgery a few years ago year and I had to literally learn how to walk all over again.



I traveled to Mexico with Amore Ministries to help minister to families and help in my best ability when I was younger to build houses for families who lived in the place where garbage was dumped. I have had to honor to speak at other churches in my area to share what God has done in and through me and that He can do the same for all of us who choose Him.

I am enormously proud to say I was able to work for a non-profit company called Nobody's Perfect Inc. I worked there for 12 years I was their first employee. The company helps people who have different types of disabilities to get jobs in the community. I do not work for them anymore. Sadly, the position I worked at ended due to the company no longer could find recycling centers to sell the toner cartridges too that we collected. The company had contracts with county and state offices where we had barrels to deposit toner cartridges. There was a co-worker who drove me to the locations for pick up and this co-worker would assist me in the completion of my job to go to these offices to collect and transfer these items to recycling centers. I enjoyed the interaction with staff both in the offices that we collected from and those around me in the company that were there to support us in our abilities.

I graduated high school in 2005 with a 96.8 GPA, and I got a full-ride scholarship to the International College of Bible Theology as a theology major. I finished my associate's degree, I recently was able to receive my bachelor's degree, and currently moving forward to my master's degree, and I have the desire to move to my Ph.D.

What I want to share with you is that God can use even the least of us to build His kingdom. Even though I need some help here today to communicate what I would like to share with you all is that I want you to know and see through me that I serve a Mighty God Who can use me just as I am, and He can use you too just as you are.

I want you all to be encouraged, empowered, and excited to know that He has plans for each of us. We only need to step out of ourselves and allow Him to work in and through us. He wants us to share with those who do not know Him, to be a light, and to show each of them how much they need Him.

Despite my obvious difficulties, I have the joy of the Lord in me. That every moment of every day, I am in awful pain, but I don't let that define me and I don't quit. I am defined by Christ, look what He sacrificed for all of us. God can use us right where we are in the issues of our lives. There are many examples in the Word where God uses the most unlikely people to do His will. The Apostle Peter may have been the most outspoken of the twelve apostles in Jesus' ministry on earth. These are scriptures that have shown how God can work through even the least of us, I may be physically challenged but He uses me just as I am.

(Mark 8:29, Luke 9:20, Matt. 16:16-17). (Luke :6-8). (Mark 1:17). (Matt. 16:18), (Matthew 9:9), (Acts 9:1, 2), (Acts 9:3-8

I have been so blessed to have so many people who God has surrounded me with. Of course, there are my parents and family, there is Momma Cathy and Daddy Gary who imparted God's love in me at the very beginning of my walk with Christ, there is Chrissy she has not only been one of my closest friends and helpers, she gives me guidance and Christ-centered wisdom when I am a hot mess for whatever is going on in my life, and God continually brings new people like the family I have found at Valor Christian Church.

There are so many others that I couldn't possibly mention them all, but God has seen to it that I am surrounded with love, support, and encouragement. Each of us goes through seasons and when there is a need to be met God aligns each of us with the right people for that season. Be ready and remember we must also be strong in the Word that you won't be taken in by a wrong spirit. And then after all is said and done it is up to each of us. Each of us has God's love, the support of our family, and our friends. But most of all you must give yourself wholly to God through the washing of your sin by the blood that was shed that you receive Christ as your Savior.

I have no answer for why I have Cerebral Palsy or why there are so many physical attacks against people, but what I do know is that God can use that which the devil meant to destroy us, and I can choose to allow God to turn it around for His perfect will. So, when Satan tries to bring you down, you tell him who you are in Christ. Speak the authority that you have in Christ "I am the healed, I am an overcomer, I am highly favored of the most High King and that no weapon formed against me will prosper.

God can and will use each one of us in a mighty way we just have to surrender ourselves to His will and not allow the enemy to speak into us that we are too weak, that the difficulties that we have can't possibly be used to do anyone any good. I may have a disability in the natural, but God has a better plan in the Spirit, and He has re-labeled me as Differently Abled instead of disabled. Each of us has the most unique qualities and it's our different abilities that He will use to show His love. Jeremiah 29:11" 11 I know what I'm doing. I have it all planned out - plans to take care of you, not abandon you, plans to give you the future you hope for"

Today I am for most of my day confined to a wheelchair, my desk chair, or my recliner. I do live in my own home, and I have family who come in to assist me with my physical life needs. I study the Word, I enjoy social and spiritual time at church, I watch movies, and enjoy reading anything I can find on history. I share God's Love via the internet through my life experiences and the way God helps me to see Him working on my behalf. God has plans for me and I am here for Him to use me to grow His kingdom by spreading His love for each person I am able to reach through whatever means He makes available to me. And I am still ready for when He brings my body complete healing.