By Gary Andrews
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Many years ago Linda and I returned to a city where we once lived and worked, to visit with some old friends. Most of the time these experiences are tremendous and so was this particular one, only this one had a story to go with it that I will never forget.
This story is very sad; however it shows the strength and faith of a strong family and their relationship to Jesus Christ. We have known these people for many years and went to church with them. Our children were about the same age and they played together on many occasions. Their oldest son had breathing problems when he was young and had a tracheotomy. The hole in his throat was apparent to everyone but this never slowed this youngster down. His parents handled this problem very well and never once did I ever hear a complaint from them concerning this. I am not sure I could have handled this medical procedure with the faith and courageousness that they did.
The tracheotomy is nothing compared to the story we heard when we visited with them again. One of Unknown to us because of lost communication, our friends had added three more children to their nest. One of the saddest stories I have ever heard was when the father related to me the story of a child they lost. Their young daughter was born with a hole in her heart and problems with her lungs. Her name was Naomi.
As he told me the story of this brave young child I kept thinking he would break down and shed tears. He didn't, but I know he could see the tears in my eyes. He spoke of her energy and how she would win the hearts of her doctors and nurses. She loved books and memorized many Bible verses. She also loved to sing.
Naomi's mom home schooled her children so she could be with them and also care for Naomi during her time of illness. One day as her dad was working he got a call from his son to come home immediately. This was a call he had received on several occasions only to see Naomi pull out of her complications and live to see another day. However, this day was different.
When he got home Naomi was laying on the sofa. He went and knelt down beside her and Naomi asked if she could say her Bible verses. After she recited them to her parents she asked her mother if Jesus came to save her from her sins and her mother answered "Yes" in a very understanding way.
Naomi had one final request that her Mom, Dad, and oldest brother hold hands with her and that her brother lead them in prayer. When he finished his prayer this brave young girl turned her head in her mother's lap and went home to be with the Lord. She was 4 ½ years old.
I think of this story often and hurt for this family but this is not what they want. They want us to see beyond death and know about eternal life. The courage I see in this mother and father and their faith in God has got to be an inspiration and encouragement to anyone.
I know that there are many parents that have had children pass away and it has got to be one of the greatest hurts. We can sympathize and share the pain with these parents, however until someone walks in their shoes they can never experience the hurt. I thank the Lord every day for the parents that have lost children and go on with life and see the rewards that will come someday!
Prayer: Lord thank you for the children you have blessed us with. I pray that I have taught them and raised them in a way that is pleasing to you. Thank you for the assurance of knowing that

one day we will all live with you in your kingdom. Amen.
(Suggested daily Bible readings: Sunday – Psalm 116:12-16; Monday – James 5:7-11; Tuesday – Revelation 14:13; Wednesday – Ecclesiastes 7:1-2; Thursday – 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Friday – 1 Corinthians 15:50-58; Saturday – Psalm 147:10-11.)
Gary Andrews is the author of Encouraging Words: 30-days in God's Word. To obtain a copy go to his website www.gadevotionals.com