



What's It All About?

Today was oral speech presentation day at Candi's new school. The topic for everyone was the same: "The Best Day of My Life." For Candi, her "best day" resulted from many previous "worst days." She was born with a physical disability that left her with a scarred, deformed face, and a tendency to feel less than attractive. Additionally, Candi stuttered whenever she felt timid or nervous. For as long as she could remember, she'd cried out to God in prayer, begging Him to deliver her from being taunted and haunted by her peers for being disabled. To add to her misery, last spring her family experienced the "worst day" trauma of losing their home and belongings in a

tornado that ripped through their community. They were forced to move in with her grandfather for a while. One evening her grandfather overheard her crying out to God for deliverance from the distress of being haunted by her disability. The next morning, he counseled and charged her to start making the following confession until she could believe it: "I am beautiful; I am blessed; I am beloved." Candi heeded the instructions and faithfully muttered those words, even until the day they finally moved into their new home and neighborhood. The move gave Candi a fresh start and a new school that had other students with physical disabilities. The students welcomed Candi and encouraged her by their perseverance in overcoming their own challenges.

When it came time for her oral speech, she rose to address her peers with a fresh confidence, minus the stuttering: "I am beautiful; I am blessed; I am beloved."

How did God use the negatives of the tornado and her disability to bring a positive response to Candi's prayer? Have you ever experienced God's positive power in the midst of a negative situation?



Learning From God

Even when our circumstances change seemingly for the worst, we can have hope because God is always with us, and His provision and purpose for us will prevail. Let's read our lesson's text to find out how this promise played out in the lives of Hagar and Ishmael.

Genesis 21:8–20, NIV—The child grew and was weaned, and on the day Isaac was weaned Abraham held a great feast. **9** But Sarah saw that the son whom Hagar the Egyptian had borne to Abraham was mocking, **10** and she said to Abraham, "Get rid of that slave woman and her son, for that woman's son will never share in the inheritance with my son Isaac." **11** The matter

distressed Abraham greatly because it concerned his son. **12** But God said to him, "Do not be so distressed about the boy and your slave woman. Listen to whatever Sarah tells you, because it is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned. **13** I will make the son of the slave into a nation also, because he is your offspring." **14** Early the next morning Abraham took some food and a skin of water and gave them to Hagar.

He set them on her shoulders and then sent her off with the boy. She went on her way and wandered in the Desert of Beersheba. 15 When the water in the skin was gone, she put the boy under one of the bushes. 16 Then she went off and sat down about a bowshot away, for she thought, "I cannot watch the boy die." And as she sat there, she began to sob. 17 God heard the boy crying, and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven and said to her, "What is the matter, Hagar? Do not be afraid; God has heard the boy crying as he lies there. **18** Lift the boy up and take him by the hand, for I will make him into a great nation." 19 Then God opened her eyes and she saw a well of water. So she went and filled the skin with water and gave the boy a drink. 20 God was with the boy as he grew up. He lived in the desert and became an archer.

What I Have Learned

The characters from our lesson's Bible text demonstrated a variety of emotions or feelings in response to the situations they were in. Identify the appropriate person who displayed the feeling or emotions below. Also, provide the verse or verses where the answer was found.

1.	Who	displayed	anger or	bitterness?

Name:	 	
Verse		

2. Who displayed grief or sorrow?

Name:	

Verse: _____

3. Who displayed hopelessness or defeat?

Name:	 	
Verse:		

4. Who displayed concern or encouragement? Name: ______

Verse: _____

Keep In Mind

"God heard the boy crying, and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven and said to her, 'What is the matter, Hagar? Do not be afraid; God has heard the boy crying as he lies there. Lift the boy up and take him by the hand, for I will make him into a great nation'" (Genesis 21:17–18, NIV).

Choosing What's Best

You can be assured that God is always present, positive, and desiring for you to prevail, even in the midst of negative circumstances. Take a moment to consider whose words or counsel most affect how you view yourself and the world around you. Also, evaluate whose words or counsel you may need to avoid or listen to. Make your declarations below.

I will be careful to listen to and embrace the words of:

I will strive to stay clear of the words of:

Doing My Part

Our Lord God is a mighty deliverer. Read and reflect on the words from Psalm 34 this week and be reminded that He is near to hear and respond to you when you cry out to Him.