

JULIE'S STORY-GLIMPSES OF GOD IN EVERYDAY LIFE

Diaper Rash

WHEN IT REALLY HURTS!

SCRIPTURE STUDY

Matthew 5:3-6
 Matthew 27:55
 Ephesians 4:29

PRAYER FOCUS

Dear Jesus,
 Help me to acknowledge my need
 for others and my need for you.
 In Jesus' Name,
 Amen



MY COMING-OUT PARTY

I was not an easy baby, so I'm told. I burst forth from my mother's womb with a bang. Mom was screaming, placenta was flying, Dad was fainting and I was bawling my head off. The wonder of new life was somehow lost in the shuffle. The pediatrician said I looked furious and recommended that Mom lace my formula with valium. Oh, wait. The valium was for her. Daddy named me Julie because I entered the world on a sweltering day in July. He dubbed me Julie *Gail* because he instinctively knew I'd be full of hot air and blow through life like a whirlwind.

Being born on a hot July afternoon had its drawbacks. I am told that I squalled non-stop for my first three months of life. Ray, the lanky teenager next door, peered through my nursery window to see if my Mom was beating the living daylights out of me. Ray was shocked to learn that the ruckuss I caused was entirely of my own making.

Mother assures me that part of my persistent yelling was an insatiable desire to be cuddled and fed. But the true culprit, the source of my agony, was diaper rash. You see, when I was an infant in the days before the flood, pampers were non-existent and central air-conditioning was a pipe-dream.

The only cooling for a muggy summer afternoon was a hamster-wheel powered fan blowing over a large ice cube (a bit of a hyperbole-but almost true). My bottom was raw and I had no qualms about sharing my misery.

I found many causes for unhappiness in my young life. I felt there was a shocking lack of Gerber's banana pudding. I thought hard rubber pacifiers really sucked and the liars at Johnson and Johnson deceived me by calling their shampoo "no more tears." New parents of babies are oblivious to such indignities. They perform perfunctory rituals that include burping, bootie-tying and booger-blowing. More rocking, blubber-belly kissing, peek-a-boo playing and toe tickling are what every little one really wants.

Most doting parents assure me that their wee ones are quite quick to express their needs. Every whimper and grunt is a newborn's way of saying "I need something." Most adults are not so forthcoming. Instead of vulnerable transparency, they exude a calm self-sufficient exterior. We are all needy. We need attention, acceptance, respect, encouragement, affirmation and comfort.

Too often when comfort is served to us, we push away from the table as if our tummies are full and we couldn't possibly partake. But all of us have diaper rash. Underneath, we are all hurting.

Jesus agonized in the Garden of Gethsemane, bursting the capillaries in his forehead from the anguish and stress. But He was not stoic. Jesus went to the three, Peter, James and John, who had stood beside Him for three and one-half years. He cried out to His Father and reached out to His friends. We must do the same.

"Many women were there, watching from a distance. They had followed Jesus from Galilee to care for *his needs*."
Matthew 27:55

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled." Matthew 5:3-6

"Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their *needs*, that it may benefit those who listen." Ephesians 4:29

- Did Jesus Christ express needs in His life for friendship and companionship, for comfort and support? What were they? Meditate on Matthew 27:55. In your opinion, what were some of the needs of Jesus and the disciples that these women could meet?

- What needs are expressed in the Beatitudes? What are the four things we need, according to Jesus? What are the rewards for being humble and vulnerable?

- Read the list of needs below. What are your top three needs? In other words, what do you most enjoy receiving from someone? Circle them below. What would meeting those needs look like?
Acceptance—Affection—Appreciation—Approval—Attention—Comfort—Encouragement—Respect—Security—Support.

- Paul encourages us in Ephesians 4:29 to build others up according to their *needs*. List some words that would impart acceptance, approval, respect, appreciation and support. Write them below, and try to use them this week as God leads you.