

A crippled teenager



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

A Crippled Teenager It is not a pleasing thing to be a crippled teenager.

Adolescence is hard enough in normal circumstances, but when you add on other struggles it becomes a whole other world.

It was as if a cow came falling from heaven and landed smack on top of me. One minute I was running, catching, and having a great game, and the next minute I had doctors looking all over me. Football was an expected sport for most boys in the town I grew up in, and if you played well, you were indestructible, or so we thought. During my eighth grade year, I was having a wonderful game and I too thought I was capable of anything. It was a high pass that required a massive leap into the air. The pass was caught, but I hadn't thought about my landing yet.

But oh, I would be fine; I always was, until this landing. I came down on my arm as though it would have still broken had it been made of steel. The popping of the bone alone was enough to turn your stomach. That unfortunate day changed life as I had known it for a while. Yes my voice still squeaked, and my hormones ran strong, but for the most part my days never changed.

The thought of being able to move any part of my right arm had left my thought process for the time being. It was the most awful thing a thirteen-year-old boy could possibly imagine. I could not write, I could not eat, and as for taking a normal shower I had no hope. I felt like a helpless baby left to die. Life around the house was not so great either. Every day father would come home complaining about his terrible day at work, and how the old man in charge wasn't paying a penny more than he was required. But it was not

just the boss that was the money problem. Every night at the dinner table we would sit down in silence waiting for fathers speech that had become as common as the table prayer.

It started off with the day at work, but slowly made it around the entire table letting each one of us know what we couldn't be buying all the time. Had it been a television shows it would have made quite an amusing comedy, but this was real for us, and we didn't think it funny. It started with mother every night, and I guess it was because she did the shopping. It was as if he had our monthly budget and bills sitting directly in front of him to read off the expenses we had.

By the end of the month I think we were all able to quote the prices better than he could. He laid into mother about why we needed this type of cereal, and then why my sister Erica needed a new dress. Mother just sat in silence and ate her hard cooked meal that four out of five of us were very grateful for. No one ever said anything because they knew it would be an endless battle that would ruin whatever peace we did have at the table. He would move on next to my sister, and ask why she had to have whatever it was needed. After giving sister a lecture about not asking for things that we don't need, he would then move back to mother because in the end she was the one who bought the product.

This pattern move around the table through mother, sister, and brother until it came my turn. When it became my turn everyone knew that dinner as far as we had known it, was now out the window. I was not peaceful, I did not know how to keep my voice down, and on top of everything I never spent

any money! I never asked mother for anything, and either my grandmother or myself bought everything I owned. Keep in mind I was still upset about being a cripple and not having any fun. So when the conversation came to me I was always ready. I almost looked forward to it every evening because it was a way for me to release some of the energy and anger I was not able to release in football. Father and I would go at it for who knows how long until he would give up and say that I was just a disrespectful, ungrateful kid. At first it would hurt me to hear that, but mother always comforted me and thanked me for sticking up for her and the rest of the family.

I began to learn that the things father would say at the dinner table were just merely words coming out trying to release his frustrations. Father took me to the hospital after a long three months to get my cast removed. We talked like men the whole way there and back. We stopped to get a burger, and father didn't even complain about how much they cost. We ate and talked like men, but more importantly we talked like friends. I never knew until then how important it was for a son and a father to have a good relationship, but I would not trade my father for anything in this world, including another broken arm.