

Bullying

I have some disabilities and very few friends. Everybody makes fun of me, tells jokes about me and calls me names. Sometimes they even push me around. My parents would like to help me and I do go to the church youth group, but don't always feel included.

Your honesty is awesome! Thank you for not pretending that life is all easy and for asking for help. That is such a great first step! Thanks for sharing your pain with us. You are not as alone as you might think. Absolutely everybody has times when they feel lonely or like they don't fit it in.

If you're being bullied don't try and deal with it alone. Many people have kept quiet for years, afraid that things would get worse if they told. But something needs to be done. You've made a great first step by telling your parents. Also tell your youth pastor, friends and teachers. And don't hold any details back. You shouldn't live with that knot in your stomach that churns every time you enter a room in fear that the bully might be there. You have the right to live your life free of fear and harassment.

Since your parents are aware of the bullying, they may want to consider speaking with your school administrator or principal. It's the school administrator's job to make sure each student feels safe while on school property. You may need to begin documenting what happens so you have a record of it to show the school officials. If you are continually being physically threatened, the school has a legal responsibility to address it.

There are dangers associated with not dealing with the problem of bullying and holding all the pain associated with it in. Not only do you suffer from fear, anxiety and increased self-esteem problems, but it can lead to withdrawal, depression, eating disorders, self-harm or other psychological problems.

Being bullied can make you feel very lonely and it's easy to think that you haven't got any friends. You're probably not the only one being bullied who has to spend break or lunch hour on your own. Keep your eyes open. If you see someone else on their own, try to start a conversation. To have friends you also need to be a friend.

There was a specific time that I remember feeling very lonely and excluded. I found out that a bunch of people that I thought were my friends planned a party and I wasn't invited. It hurt a lot and while I was pouting and crying about it, it occurred to me that my greatest fear was that everyone in the world would want to join the *"We Hate Tiffany Club."* It might sound like overreacting, but somehow I have a feeling you might understand how it felt.

Then a very quiet, calming, peaceful feeling came over me as I realized that even if everyone in the world joined this club, I would still be loved! God loves me and He will always love me! He loves me more than I can imagine! If we spend our time really believing this, then we don't *need* other people to love us. Which isn't to say that we don't want them to, and it hurts when they don't. But we can go to others and give the love that we have inside.

There are a couple other website links that have wonderful information on bullying prevention and what to do if you are being bullied. Check them out:

www.bullying.co.uk
www.bullystoppers.com

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