

Created to be

by Kathryn Epling



I never expected to cry over a onesie.

But one September afternoon, that's exactly where I found myself: standing in my infant son's bedroom, holding a onesie, and sobbing. I had a five-year-old who was adjusting to kindergarten, a three-year-old taking a rare break from constant motion (and words) during naptime, and a tiny six-month-old who had just graduated to 0-3 month clothes. Four months earlier, a doctor had first uttered the words "Down syndrome" about my baby, and I was still reeling, trying to make sense of the diagnosis. I was exhausted. I was depressed. I was overwhelmed.

And I was desperately behind on laundry.

Of course, this happened to be the day that Joey, my sweet little baby, was in need of both a diaper change and an outfit change. I carried him up to his room, peeked into the cute little wicker baskets that lined his closet, and realized they were empty. Or almost empty. On second glance, I noticed one tiny clean shirt at the bottom of a basket.

It was brand new, with the tags still on it, a rarity for the third child (who also has older cousins, thus plenty of hand-me-downs). You might think I would jump at the chance to put something new on my baby, but there it sat, the last to be picked, this adorable little Carter's onesie someone had so lovingly selected for us. Even then, when it remained

the only option, I found myself hesitant to pick it up. I hadn't realized until that moment, but I had truly been avoiding that shirt.

I held the shirt and read it: "I want to be a fireman when I grow up!" And then I started to sob. The weight of those words. The reality of his disability. All of the pieces I had been trying to hold together came apart with one little sentence.

"It's not fair!" I cried out loud. "This is not fair! He's never going to be a fireman when he grows up. He can't! It's not fair, God!"

Now... friends. I recognize the ridiculousness of this. I mean, now I do. Almost ten years later. I see that exactly zero six-month-olds actually desire to be firemen when they grow up. I know that I likely put similar onesies on my other children, and they are not likely to be firemen, either. In fact, those of you with little ones, enjoy the fact that we can put whatever adorable or hysterical or outrageous clothes we want on our infants, and they could not care less what they say. Because one day they rather annoyingly develop opinions and feel quite strongly about what they wear. But six-month-olds? They just want to be warm and dry and have full bellies. They can't read. They have not yet planned their careers. They, in fact, do not even know what firemen are.

But that day... holding that onesie... it was all too much.

"It's not fair! He's never going to be a fireman when he grows up!"

And then I heard a whisper from God, not audibly, but in my heart, "Of course he's never going to be a fireman. That's not what he was created to be."

That is when it hit me: Joey was created to be something. God created Joey exactly how he is. On purpose, for a purpose.

Over the past several years, God has shown me just how true this is—not just for my sweet boy, but for all of us. Each one of us, created

for a purpose, just as we are. There are no accidents, no throwaways, no do-overs. He wants to use every last bit of us for his glory.

That thing you don't like about yourself? Let God use it for good.

That thing you wish you hadn't done? Let God use it for good.

The thing that caused your world to turn upside down? Let God use it for good.

I'm generally not big on clichés, but I do have one favorite: "If you want to make God laugh, tell him your plans." But if you want to live a life of joy, embrace his plans—even when they're not what you expected.

You were created exactly as you are, on purpose, for a purpose. You were created to be something.