

People always say, 'At least the baby's healthy!' But what if she isn't?

By Grace Smith

May 29, 2015 (LifeSiteNews.com) -- "So are you hoping for a boy or a girl?"

"It doesn't matter as long as the baby is healthy."

This is the conversation that I listened to as I stood next to my special needs sister.

I bet you have heard this line before; or possibly even said it yourself.

Most people do not seem to think through this statement, so I am going to bring up a few things that you may have not thought about.

My biggest question for those who say this is, "What if the baby isn't healthy?"

My sister was born with Trisomy 18.

"Edwards syndrome (also known as trisomy 18 [T18]) is a chromosomal disorder caused by the presence of all, or part of, an extra 18th chromosome. This genetic condition almost always results from nondisjunction during meiosis. It is named after John Hilton Edwards, who first described the syndrome in 1960. It is the second-most common autosomal trisomy, after Down syndrome, that carries to term.

Half of the infants with this condition do not survive beyond the first week of life. The median lifespan is five to 15 days. About 8% of infants survive longer than 1 year. One percent of children live to age 10, typically in less severe cases of the mosaic Edwards syndrome."

I apologize for the lengthy description, but I thought that it was important to show how serious my sister's "disability" is, so you don't think that I am some random person commenting on this topic with little to no personal experience.

And my sister clearly is not what most people consider a "healthy baby."

I want to explain what I believe is the mindset behind the statement, "...as long as the baby is healthy."

Please keep in mind that this seems to be a society mindset; not necessarily the mindset of every individual.

Ninety percent of babies who have Trisomy 18 are aborted. Ninety percent!

Our culture tells us that children who are different and require more help are not worthy of life. In a culture where "normal" people are constantly told to be "unique" and "be yourself" we do not want to accept those whose "normal" is unique.

In my sister's case, unique meaning 1 in every 5,000 live-births.

Society has told us that if there is a problem just "get rid of it." That there is no need to "fix" something if you can get a new one with minimum trouble.

"Abortion is an 'easy' answer to solving the issue of a special needs child."

"You do not want to make yourself or the child suffer."

"You can get pregnant again and it will be a healthy child."

I have said it before, but I will say it again. I have more compassion, love, understanding, and hope because of my sister than I would ever have without her. She lights up my life, and even when life is rough and it feels like we are going

to hit rock bottom that little face will look up at you with the biggest smile and so much admiration in her eyes, for you, that you know all will be well in the end.

It breaks my heart every time someone says, "...as long as the baby is healthy," mainly because my sister is not.

It hurts so much to hear someone say that, especially when they know that my sister is disabled.

They know that I have a sister, who I love very much by the way, who has special needs, and yet, they say to my face that they do not want a child like her. They basically say that they will take anyone, but a child like her.

I used to get extremely upset over this and it will still hurt sometimes, but I have come to the point where my mindset is, "If they do not get to experience the wonderful love of kids like my sister, they are the ones missing out."

Please keep in mind that I did not put any of this to condemn anyone but to show them how simple phrases that are used all the time can be hurtful and that there is a stigma that people have against special needs children. Our culture needs to uproot this thought process. It is time to stop being hypocritical about 'acceptance' and instead realize that every life matters and has value.

