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noah

Adessa had never been called “the miracle boy” prior to April 27, 2007. Until that day, he was best defined as a sometimes-shy 11-year-old with a generous streak. He loved fishing, video games and going to church. But in an instant, a lightning strike changed all that, and Noah Adessa was dead in the mud next to the tulip tree in his family’s backyard.

In the moments after Noah’s death, his mother, Lisa, and sister Emma raced into the rainstorm that was pounding Virginia Beach, Va. While performing cardiopulmonary resuscitation on Noah, Lisa pleaded with God for her son’s life.

“Not now, God!” she cried. “Don’t take him now. Please!”

It was at that moment, the family says, that a series of miracles began.

The bolt that had killed Noah had knocked out the electricity and phone service on the block, except for the neighbor’s house. It was there that Noah’s eldest sister, Hannah, called 911.

The second miracle had already happened. A paramedic crew who had the equipment and training to deal with a situation such as Noah’s had pulled into a parking lot a few blocks from the Adesas’ home minutes before Noah was struck.

“We’re not positive how the accident happened or even why Noah was in the backyard during the storm,” says David, Noah’s father who serves as pastor of

Harvest Assembly in Chesapeake. “But since the day he was struck down, we’ve seen miracle after miracle and have never stopped being amazed at what God has done.”

The paramedics were able to revive Noah. As the ambulance transported him to the hospital a television news helicopter followed it. One reporter called Noah “the miracle boy,” and the name stuck.

At the hospital the family learned Noah was comatose. Doctors told them he would be in a vegetative state for the rest of his life because of the oxygen deprivation his brain suffered while he was dead. Despite the poor prognosis, the family says the miracles kept happening and their faith for a full recovery continued to grow.

Early on, doctors noted the lightning had burst Noah’s eardrum and severely injured one eye. The Adesas feared Noah would be partially deaf and blind. But when specialists checked the injured ear and eye a couple of days after Noah’s admittance to the hospital, they were completely healed.

“Noah has defied the odds since Day One,” David says. “Rather than focus on the things God hasn’t done, we decided to focus on all the things He has done, is doing and will do.”

In the days after the accident the family asked others to do the same. To keep family and friends informed of Noah’s condition,

the miracle boy

By Kirk Noonan

Miracles: David and Lisa Addesa say they are amazed by the strides Noah makes each week.

the miracle boy



David chronicled Noah's recovery in a blog.

On May 7 he wrote how doctors had tried to wean Noah from a ventilator, but that he was not able to breathe on his own. A week later David wrote: *Noah was released from the intensive care unit and transferred to the fifth-floor transitional area. What that means is that Noah has demonstrated the ability to breathe*

A little more than four months after the day Noah had died and been revived, he returned home.

without a ventilator. He is now breathing through his tracheostomy tube by himself.

Four days later Lisa and her sister, Rachel, asked Noah to blink once if he could hear them. He did. Then they asked him to blink twice if he heard and understood them. He blinked twice.

Two weeks later David tried

to coax Noah into saying "good night."

"Just start moving your lips, and something will come out," he told his son, as he demonstrated how to move one's mouth.

Noah slowly began to mimic his father.

It became clear to me that Noah was really trying to get some kind of sound out of his mouth, David wrote. Since then we have heard some sighs, but no syllables yet.

In early June the family endured a devastating blow when Noah's neurologist told them the most recent MRI showed no signs of improvement to Noah's brain. Despite the setback, the Addesas refused to lose faith. While visiting a family in their church who were raising a severely disabled daughter in their home, David and Lisa and the girls became convinced Noah must one day go home with them.

A few weeks later a team of specialists met with David and Lisa to ask permission to pull Noah's tracheostomy tube. Doing so, they said, would prevent his progress from being impeded. Noah adapted perfectly to life without the tube.

At the end of June, the medical chief of staff told the Addesas, "Noah is there ... it's simply a struggle for him to synergize his intentions with coordinated muscle movements."

In layman's terms, David wrote, Noah is no longer considered comatose.

Three days later, Noah's doctor said Noah's brain activity was normal. David pressed the doctor, wanting to know what he meant by normal.

"Normal in the sense that his brain waves are that of a normal 11-year-old boy," the doctor explained.

A little more than four months after the day Noah had died and been revived, he returned home.

Our opinion is that Noah clearly knows he is home, David wrote on the blog. He knows his siblings, he knows his parents, and he knows his house. He even recognizes his dog.

Fast forward to December 2008. The living room and dining room of the Addesas' home now serves as Noah's bedroom and rehabilitation center. A poster of New York Yankee superstar Derek Jeter hangs above Noah's bed. In one corner is a sword his best friend gave him after saving his allowance for a year. On a table there is a stack of Noah's favorite books.

In the center of the room Noah sits in his wheelchair. He is alert, smiling and capable of making sounds with his mouth. It's been a little more than two years since the accident, and Noah has grown. He is slender, his face punctuated by large brown eyes.

Lisa and 17-year-old Emma gently tend to his needs and eagerly engage him with jokes, stories, quips and laughter. Noah takes it all in and laughs at the appropriate moments.

"I always try to put myself in his shoes," says Emma, who has the same certification to care for Noah as Lisa does. "I like to try to figure out what he goes through and make anything better that I can."

Noah is not yet fully recovered,

continued on page 18

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Team effort: Each member of the Addesa family plays a part in caring for Noah.



but this is a family that refuses to mourn or waste time struggling to come to terms with his condition. Instead, they celebrate little and big milestones with equal ecstasy. That Noah can breathe on his own, has control of his trunk, can sit up, can eat snacks and small meals orally, can make sounds and can smile and laugh

are all indicators that God is slowly mending him.

“He’s a million miles from where he used to be,” David says. “We know things are connecting well in his brain.”

Since the day Noah was struck, people from around the world have contacted the Addesas to say they have heard Noah’s story and

are praying for him. Some have even committed or recommitted their lives to Christ.

“God has brought so many people into our lives,” Lisa says. “We’ve had opportunities to be a light to people who are struggling.”

The Addesas are quick to note how blessed they have been as

well. For months after the accident, meals, restaurant gift certificates, gas cards and offers to help poured in. Perhaps the greatest gifts they received were the intercessors who have held Noah and the family up in prayer since the day Noah was injured.

“The intercession that has taken place for Noah has helped

him,” David insists. “There are no medical reasons for his recovery so far.”

That alone gives the Addesas the faith to believe that God will continue to heal their miracle boy.

“I don’t expect Noah to be in his present state a year from now,” David says. “I expect to

see measureable, clinical progress. I don’t have to drum up any faith to believe that will happen, either — I just look at what God has already done.” **tpe**

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E-mail your comments to tpe@ag.org.

MY JOURNEY

Keeping my eyes on what God has done, is doing and will do



two years ago on April 27 I was at a prophetic conference five hours from home. As I stood in line for prayer, my cell phone vibrated in my pocket alerting me to a voice mail. Thinking I would make the time in line useful, I listened to the voice mail.

“Daddy,” my oldest daughter cried, “Noah just got struck down by lightning. Please come home.”

As I flew back to Virginia Beach, Va., where we live, my mind ran through the facts I knew. My wife and children were in the intensive care unit of a local children’s hospital. Noah — my then 11-year-old son — had been struck in the face and chest by a lightning bolt. He had died in our backyard, but was resuscitated by a local paramedic team that happened to be near our house when the lightning struck. Looking back now, I can honestly say that night was the darkest night of my soul.

Upon arrival at the hospital, I walked into the ICU with my soul frozen in a wasteland of shock, hoping for enough fortitude to somehow help my family cope with this tragedy.

Since the day Noah was injured, I have discovered some Kingdom realities I had never considered before.

The first reality I learned is that where we go with our pain is extremely important as to whether or

not we arrive at the destiny God has for us. There is not a cell in my body that believes God struck down Noah to teach me a lesson. I choose rather to deflect that blame to the one Jesus called “the thief [who] comes only to steal and kill and destroy” (John 10:10, NIV). Case closed.

Second, when tragedy strikes, many people succumb to something I call the disease of disappointment. Yes, I would have liked Noah to walk out of the hospital uninjured the day he was admitted. But that did not happen. Does that mean God does not heal today? No, it doesn’t.

“When John had heard in prison about the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples and said to Him, ‘Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?’ Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Go and tell John the things which you hear and see: The blind see and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them’” (Matthew 11:2-5, NKJV).

John had been the forerunner who proclaimed Jesus’ ministry. Jesus called John the greatest prophet. But 40 days later John was still in jail when Jesus showed up for His first church service in His local synagogue and declared His job de-

scription. “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives” (Luke 4:18).

I can only imagine what John must have thought as reports of Jesus’ doings reached him in prison. It would certainly be understandable for him to gripe: “This doesn’t make sense. If You are who You say You are, why am I a captive sitting in this cell?”

It’s a fair question. After all, John had done his best to obey God. He proclaimed everything he was told to proclaim. He lived the life of a Nazirite and did his best to prepare others to meet Jesus. Even so, he remained imprisoned.

John’s attention shifted to what God was not doing and what He had not yet done. That happens to many people when they go through tough times. But that’s not the place God wants our attention to be — especially in times of crisis.

Notice Jesus’ advice to John in Matthew 11:6: “Blessed is he who is not offended because of Me.”

That verse tells me that during crisis or tragedy we should not feed ourselves on what God is not doing or on what He has not yet done. The reason? In doing so,

we set ourselves on a course that could neutralize our faith and eventually allow our bitterness toward God to replace the love we once held for Him.

To avoid such a mistake in my own life, I quickly stopped asking why Noah was struck by lightning. Truth is, I don’t really need to know the answer to that. I just need to focus on what God is doing and what He has done.

Noah’s saga is accented with things God has done, is doing and will do. Because of it, our family continues to hold firmly to the truth found in Romans 8:28: “And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.” **tpe**

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Editor’s note: Send your 1,000-word, first-person My Journey article for consideration for publication to tpe@ag.org.

E-mail your comments to tpe@ag.org.

David Addesa can often be found at Noah’s side talking or reading to him.

