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Stitches

I can not forget the day on June 10th, 2010. That afternoon was probably the worst nightmare for our family. I missed my class bus, so my mom decided to take me to my class. It took about 10 minutes from our house to walk to my class.

“Mom, can we get a snack from the bakery on our way?” I asked.

“Sure, but we would have to leave 5 minutes earlier from our house.”, she replied.

We left our house and headed to our local bakery. I grabbed my favorite sausage bread with one hand and held on to my sister’s stroller with the other. “Make sure you don’t let go of it and run away like last time.”, my mom said. I was too focused on my snack to answer her.

As we approached the crosswalk, I noticed the green light starting to blink. leaving my mom and my sister behind, I took off. “Mom, hurry, the lights are about to change.” I started running again. I must have blacked out after that because the next thing I remembered was looking at my family’s face laying down on a hospital bed.

Luckily, I was fine. The accident left me with minor stitches on the side of my head, but the accident had probably left even worse stitches in my parent’s minds. They were so relieved when I woke up. My dad came straight to the hospital from his work. My mom called my grandparents as she was close to panicking. She regrets not running and catching me due to my sister.

I went through a lot of changes in the past few years. Our family moved to the United States. I attended 3 different elementary schools. Although I still had the stitches, it didn’t really affect me. The only thing that bothered me was that the hair wouldn’t grow anymore in a particular spot, which meant that people could clearly see my stitches whenever I got a haircut. Each time I was introduced to a new environment, I always had to explain the story about the accident. Since so many people asked me about my hair, “stitches” and “accidents” were one of the first English words I had to learn. People have always remembered me through my race or my scar. I realized that these stitches have slowly become part of my identity.

As time passed by, I was more and more annoyed by the people asking about my unusual hair. Some people even laughed at it before they heard the true story behind it. When people don’t think before they speak, they could really hurt someone’s feelings.

One day, one of my classmates asked, “What’s wrong with your hairstyle?”

“I got into a car accident,” I replied. Then, he just started laughing at me like he had heard a joke. “Does your hair not grow anymore? That sucks for you.”

I was starting to get frustrated with him. My friend told him to stop. “It’s not something to laugh about, Cole.” He called the teacher for me, and he was sent to the office. I wasn’t in a good mood for the rest of that day. When I returned home, I told my mother about what had happened at school that day. I was already annoyed with everyone asking me about the bad incident. It started giving me stress.

“If this is giving you a lot of stress,” my mom said as she pointed towards the empty spot on my head, “you can get surgery later to cover it up.”

As time passed by, fewer people started asking me the question that irritated me. I think I was a lucky child who grew up in a healthy environment with great supporters around me. Most of my friends respected the difference and treated me like everyone else. They wouldn’t make fun of my stitches’ in fact; they would protect me from those who were trying to make a joke out of me. It felt like my stitches were being healed, both physically and mentally.

As I grew more mature, my mentality began to change as I learned new lessons. One day, our youth group pastor specifically pointed me out during his message. He asked how I felt about my stitches. I didn’t know what to say. Then, he told me that stitches are one of my identities. It is something that makes me special. He also mentioned that my stitches could signify that God has given me a second chance. The message made me rethink my stitches.

Years later, I was no longer stressed about my stitches. When my mother asked me about surgery to cover up the

empty spot on my head, I disagreed with her as I no longer needed to hide it nor be stressed about it. My stitches have become a part of my special identity, which represents me.