



DISABILITY MINISTRY

BEYOND 2021 CONFERENCE
SARAH FLANNERY

INTRODUCTIONS

- Sarah Flannery
- <https://sarahmflannery.com/>
- Twitter: @sarahmflannery
- Facebook: facebook.com/sarahmflannery
- E-mail: ministrywithsarah@gmail.com

GETTING TO KNOW YOU



Church staff / volunteer?



Children's / Family Ministry role?



Existing disability ministry?



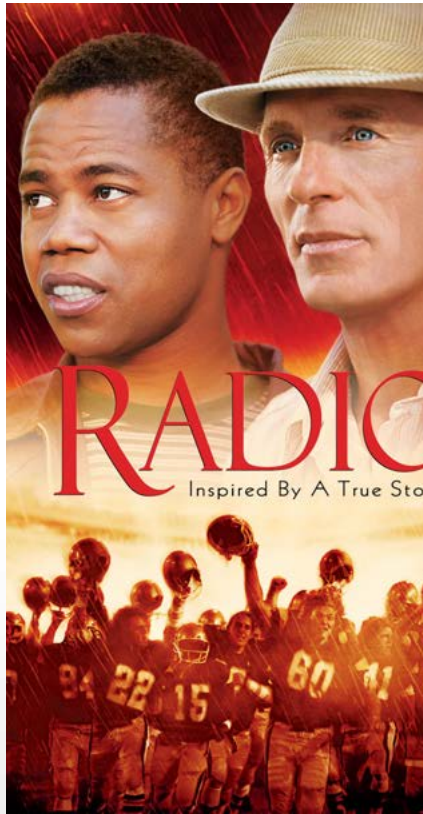
You or someone close identifies as disabled?

PLEASE USE THE CHAT!

Questions

Topics

Stories



DISABILITY REPRESENTATION

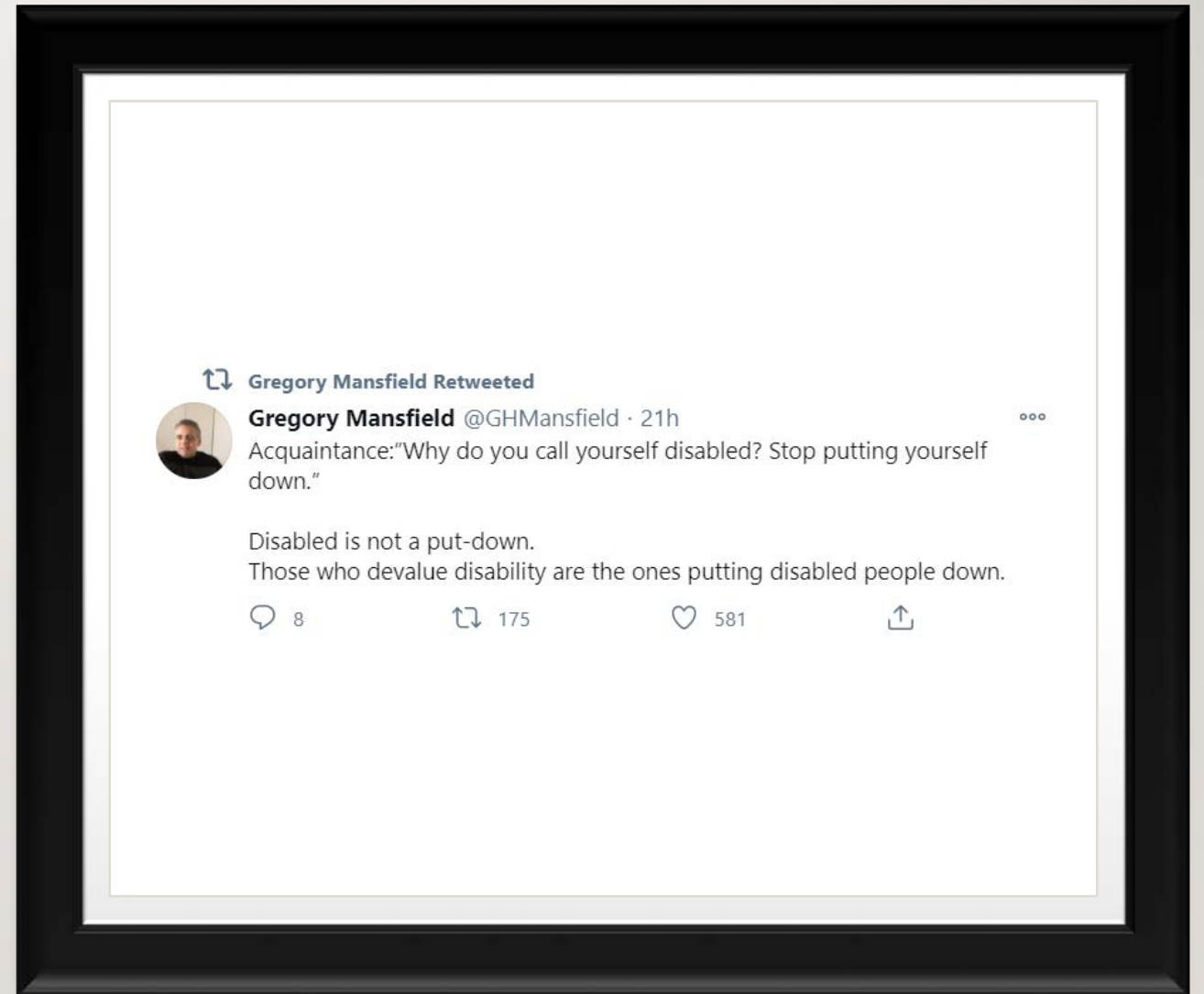
- Inspiration porn
- Often missing day-to-day
- Rarely glimpses the parent/sibling/child experience
- Always need more!

DISABILITY REPRESENTATION IN SCRIPTURE

- Moses
- Jacob
- Goliath
- King Saul
- Women with infertility
- Mephibosheth
- Zacchaeus
- Woman with the issue of blood

LANGUAGE

- Always evolving, at different rates for different environments
- Euphemisms for disability are now considered unacceptable
- “Disabled” and “disability”



“SPECIAL NEEDS”

“It crosses diagnosis, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, etc. and the argument it makes, is that as people with disabilities (or disabled people) our NEEDS aren’t special. We need the exact same things that nondisabled people need, to eat, to sleep, to live, to thrive, to engage in society and more. There’s not a need you have, that a person with a disability does not. Our needs maybe more complex, or require skillsets the ableds don’t have (such as ability to cut through pages of bureaucratic morass, the ability to deal with patronizing ableist microaggressions), but they’re still just basic needs.”

~ Rebecca Cokley

REASONS TO USE “DISABILITY”...

... and avoid “differently abled”, “challenged”, “handicapable”

1. People with disabilities want you to
2. ‘Special Needs’ as an educational term is outdated
3. All the other words make us gag

Meriah Nichols of www.meriahnichols.com

LANGUAGE

- Avoid phrases that imply disability is necessarily a form of suffering
 - “suffers from”
 - “unfortunately”
 - “is a victim of”



Tara Moss  @Tara_Moss · 23h



Wheelchairs are freedom machines. They are chariots of independence. Please stop describing wheelchairs in negative terms - 'stuck in' 'confined to' etc. Having a [#wheelchair](#) is frankly awesome for those who use them and would be so much more so in a more [#accessible](#) world.



 128

 2.5K

 12.5K



WHAT IS DISABILITY

- ADA definition: “a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities”
- My definition: Any challenge to a person’s ability to participate in a ministry area without accommodation.

HIDDEN DISABILITIES

- “significant emotional, behavioral, developmental or neurological conditions lacking outwardly apparent physical symptoms” (Key Ministry)
- Don’t get caught with a narrow understanding of disability
- Discovering and accommodating hidden disabilities:
 - Earn and offer trust
 - Speak openly

WHAT DOES DISABILITY MINISTRY LOOK LIKE?

- Representation at the decision-making table
- Diverse ages, noises, faces, reactions, and needs in primary worship
- Mainstreaming vs. segregation
- RECIPROCITY
- Sacraments
- One person at a time
- Practical implementations

COVID-19 AND DISABILITY MINISTRY

- Look to disabled families to lead right now
- Prioritize live-stream and at-home worship/discipleship options

DISABILITY MINISTRY AND ANTI-RACISM

- Ableism is a tool of racism
- If healthcare and education are difficult for white, disabled families—how much more so for black and brown families!

QUESTIONS & DISCUSSION

Seeking input?

Topics?

Questions?

Stories!

DISABLED VOICES TO FOLLOW

- Haben Girma
 - Twitter: @HabenGirma
 - habengirma.com/book
- Shannon Dingle
 - Twitter: @ShannonDingle
 - Shannondingle.com
- Heather Avis
 - Instagram: @theluckyfewofficial
 - Scootoverbook.com
- Gregory Mansfield
 - Twitter: @GHMansfield
 - gregorymansfield@gmail.com
- Rebecca Cokley
 - Twitter: @RebeccaCokley
 - <https://medium.com/@rebecca.cokley>



THANK YOU!

MINISTRYWITHSARAH@GMAIL.COM