

# Overcomer – The Story of Jacqueline Williams

*By Jacqueline Williams*



This story highlights the life, strength, and faith of Jacqueline Williams. Born with severe physical challenges caused by exposure to the drug Thalidomide, Jacqueline's journey is one of overcoming physical, mental, and spiritual obstacles to arrive at a place of peace and strength in Christ.

## **What is Thalidomide?**

Thalidomide is a sedative drug developed in Germany during the 1950s and 1960s. It was commonly prescribed to pregnant women suffering from severe morning sickness. The drug gained popularity due to its affordability and availability without a prescription, and it was marketed in 46 countries.

Although the FDA never approved Thalidomide for use in the United States, an American pharmaceutical company, Richard Merrell, shipped approximately 2.5 million pills to more than 1,000 U.S. doctors. These pills were given to about 20,000 pregnant women.

Thalidomide caused a worldwide tragedy. Around 100,000 babies died shortly after birth, and thousands more were born with severe birth defects, including missing limbs, loss of hearing and sight, internal organ damage, facial disfigurements, and more.

### **Jacqueline's Story**

My mother, suffering from severe morning sickness during her pregnancy, was given a sample of Thalidomide at a women's clinic. I was born on January 1, 1968, with my feet turned completely backward. Doctors told my parents that I would never walk or live to reach adulthood.

By God's grace, there was hope. My parents took me to Le Bonheur Children's Hospital, a pediatric facility that treated children with birth defects. The doctors were able to correct my feet, but the journey to walking independently was long and difficult.

Much of my childhood was spent in hospitals. I had 24 major surgeries. I went from using a scooter to a wheelchair, then crutches, braces, and a walker. I couldn't attend public school due to the many surgeries and medical appointments, so I was enrolled at Crippled Children's Hospital School, a special hospital and school that cared for children like me—free of charge.

The nurses there took incredible care of us. Every morning, they helped us into our wheelchairs and took us to breakfast—eggs, oatmeal, bacon, and toast. Afterward, they rolled our beds into a room that resembled the White House, where we had our lessons.

I had my final surgery in sixth grade and was able to start public school shortly after. By seventh grade, I no longer needed crutches or braces. I could walk on my own.

Today, I'm 57 years old. I walk independently, although I can't bend my legs and have a noticeable limp. Thalidomide stunted my growth—I stand only four feet tall, with short legs and long arms. I use my hands to help myself get up and down from furniture. The drug also affected my heart—I underwent emergency heart surgery for a closed heart valve and live with another murmur today, though it causes no issues. I give all the glory to God.

I have all ten fingers, but only nine toes. Thalidomide is still used today as a treatment for some cancers, and I pray its effects never again harm others.

### **A True Overcomer**

I am a woman who has overcome unimaginable obstacles and hardships. I have not only survived—I have thrived. I've experienced abuse, rejection, abandonment, and

manipulation. I searched for love in all the wrong places. But by God's strength, I prevailed. His protection carried me through.

God gave me this life so I could share my story. My journey is one of resilience, faith, and healing. I hope it inspires others to face their challenges and find strength, peace, and deliverance through their own faith in God.

**Overcomer by Jacqueline Williams — [Available now on Amazon](#)**