

Two Baby Stories in One, God does Amazing Things!!!!

(Jason and Kristi McDonald share their journey of how God changed their hearts' about babies, humbled them, and multiplied their family through His grace.)

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Nearly three years ago my wife, Kristi, informed me that she wanted to have more kids. This came to me as an incredible surprise because we already had two kids, ages 9 and 11. Furthermore, eight years earlier we decided that two children were enough for our family and I had went through with a vasectomy, not considering what God's desires for my family were, but only our personal desires.

We discussed a couple of the options, foster to adopt (which I was hesitant about), open adoption, or a vasectomy reversal. We decided we could not afford either one of the last two options, as I have heard they can cost nearly \$10,000. We prayed and prayed about this for a long time. Kristi printed all necessary forms to become licensed foster parents, but we basically put them in a folder and forgot about them. Eventually, we just about stopped talking about it for almost a year. During that time, Kristi started working in the nursery at church. I admit I was hoping that holding babies in the nursery would cure this desire she had. Contrary to my hopes, her desire for more children only grew.

The next time we talked about having more children we got more serious. Kristi brought up the prospect about fostering, but I wasn't feeling led to pursue adoption through foster or any other way. I did recognize that we made a decision that only God should make. We now firmly believed that we made a mistake not consulting God, through prayer, and instead made the decision to have a vasectomy solely on our own desires. After prayer, I decided that if she wanted more children, then God willing, she should carry those children and have a pregnancy that our family could enjoy. I decided to have a vasectomy reversal.

Kristi did most of the research on the doctors that provide the operation in our area. We found one that was in Seattle and cost more than \$6,000. We scheduled a consultation with the doctor. Just to have the appointment we had to pay \$100. After that appointment we scheduled the surgery for the next available appointment, which was several months later. We also paid another \$200 deposit to set the appointment for the procedure. I felt that this operation was now definite and there was no turning back as we are now financially tied to this doctor.

Within a week after setting the appointment for surgery, our friend Jessica, who was excited for us, was doing some research of her own. She found a doctor in Oklahoma who specialized in vasectomy reversals. He does them at a fraction of the cost we were expecting to pay and he was even a Christian! We researched this doctor and found many positive reviews on him through several internet sources. We canceled our original appointment and scheduled one with this doctor and a couple of months later we flew to Oklahoma.

In the days coming up to the surgery I grew more and more anxious about the decision to use this doctor. My main concern was that this doctor was so much cheaper than the others, "How can this be?" I began to wonder. Then, I was continuously asking myself, "Why am I doing this?", "Why did we choose this discount specialist?", "What if it doesn't work?", "What if it does?", "Are we even sure that we want more kids?" Kristi was very helpful in talking with me about my anxieties and helping me remember that it is in God's hands either way.

On the day of the surgery we sat in the waiting room of the doctor's office. It was very comfortable. His office had Bible verses on the walls and free Bibles and tracts to take on the bookshelf. He thoroughly explained the procedure. Then he offered to pray with us prior to the procedure. The man prayed a very

powerful prayer. He prayed for our family, the success of the surgery, the baby, he even went through the Gospel. It was very uplifting and we felt comfortable being in the hands of man that loved God so much that he gave the gospel to each of his patients before surgery.

Sometime later....

Kristi still hadn't conceived and we wondered if it would ever happen. At the time of surgery the Dr. told us due to his findings our chances of success had been reduced from 85% reversal rating to 60%. We weren't sure if it was successful and was still too early for analysis.

One evening Kristi asked me if I talked to my brother in a while. I told her that I hadn't, as we are not really very good at keeping in touch. She said, "Wouldn't it be weird if his daughter was in foster care? She could stay here with us if she was. You should call him and see how he is doing." Well, I never called him; I didn't even have a good number to reach him. A short time later, my brother called me. As it turned out his daughter was not in foster care, she was doing just fine. However, during our conversation I learned that he now had a son, also named Kyle. Baby Kyle was six months old and, unfortunately, the State of Florida removed him from my brother's care. Kyle seemed pretty confident that things would go well and baby Kyle would be back with him soon. I told him that I would like for baby Kyle to stay with us instead of some stranger's house. It would be a good opportunity for him to know his cousins and his aunt and uncle. Kyle was grateful of my offer. So, we pulled out the foster care paperwork that had been long forgotten and started praying about the situation.

After Kristi and I prayed about this, we had two concerns/goals concerning baby Kyle. The first was, if my brother couldn't get his son back, then the baby would be adopted, and none of us would ever see him again. I felt that it was my duty to ensure that this didn't happen. We wanted to be able to be a part of baby Kyle's life. The other goal was that he would be raised in a Christian home that would share our faith and love for Jesus. All of this meant that we had to be the ones that took custody of baby Kyle. Why would God want anything else?

Kristi and I quickly got all of the foster care paperwork, which had been sitting on our desk for many months, completed and turned in. We soon had interviews with social workers and inspections on our home. Eventually we became licensed with the state of Washington as foster parents. The state did an excellent job of executing all of the procedures for getting baby Kyle into our care. Everything was turned in to the State of Florida on time. Unfortunately, the documents sat there for a long time before anyone could get to them.

In December of 2012, we met with the social workers in Florida and even had an opportunity to play with baby Kyle. We played with him at a nearby playground and took many pictures. He was so much fun to be with. The social workers were helpful and said they preferred a family placement for baby Kyle. They felt confident that he would be moved to us and things would move swiftly. They were wrong.

In July 2013, we were notified by the social workers in Florida that there was a court hearing for baby Kyle in September. They told us that we needed to be there in person, as that would show the judge that we were serious about our decision. We quickly made the arrangements to come to Florida.

The day of the court hearing, baby Kyle's foster parents offered us an opportunity to see him. Kristi and I felt very awkward as we got to their house. We were to be fighting them in court over our nephew, who they wanted to adopt, in just a few hours. We knew they claimed to be Christians, but we couldn't help feeling like it was an "us against them" battle and that God was most certainly on our side. After we went into their house, we played with baby Kyle in their living room and actually felt very comfortable. We put our differences aside and focused on the baby.

Later the same day we went to the court hearing. It turned out that the foster mother was a state attorney and used to work directly with the judge. This was very concerning to us, but we didn't speak up and say anything about it, nor did anyone else. They first motioned that baby Kyle have a surgical procedure to remove his adenoids and the judge agreed. Then the motion to move Kyle to us was made. We all had an

opportunity to speak and I shared my concern that we did not want to lose our nephew to an adoptive family. The judge ruled against moving him immediately as the surgery was considered more important and it should be done very soon. The judge said we would reconvene in sixty days to discuss the placement of baby Kyle and in the mean time we should continue to be in contact with him through video chat. We set up a schedule with the foster family to have baby Kyle every day during our visit. We also set up a schedule for video chatting after we went home. The foster family was really good about working with us even though they were willing to fight us in court over our nephew.

The night after the court hearing, Kristi and I were so confused. We felt deflated, didn't understand what God was doing, and why he had brought us so far to just be told we were going home without the baby. We thought everything was going to go the way we wanted it to go. We had prepared ourselves for the baby and truly felt that he was going to be coming home with us. I told Kristi, "When this is over, we will be able to look back at all of this and clearly see that it was all part of God's plan. We will then be so amazed at the miraculous works and blessing He has for us." I prayed that night, asking God what He wanted us to do. I wanted a better understanding because I felt that we had lost the fight. Right in the middle of my prayer, God spoke to me. It wasn't audible, but it may as well been, because the words practically smacked me in the head. He said, "Be still and have faith".

Be still and have faith? What does that mean? I didn't tell Kristi until the morning. I needed time to consider these words. I felt that we had faith; I mean... we went all the way to Florida with faith that baby Kyle was going to come home with us. That seemed like a lot of faith to me. However, we were not "being still". We had been documenting everything to potentially use against the foster family in court. We wanted to make ourselves appear better than they were, so that we would win our nephew. We were far from being still. I struggled with this because I felt that there was a lot for us to do on our end and we can't just sit on the sidelines and expect God to do all the work. I prayed, "How do we "be still" while doing what we need to do?" I felt so confused, but also motivated; I knew that God was so close to us, but I didn't understand what he wanted us to do.

Kristi received a text from baby Kyle's foster mother. The text read, "If you don't have anywhere to attend church on Sunday we would like for you to join us at our church". Our first reaction was, "why would we want to sit with them at church?" We did not respond right away, because after all we wanted to make ourselves look better than them. After careful thought to the invite, we responded, "What better way to bring our families together than to worship our Lord this Sunday". That night, Kristi told me she was not feeling good about our position to take a more aggressive approach against this family in court. The concept of "being still" was settling on her. After our conversation about it, I began to feel the same way and we stopped documenting all of our interactions with baby Kyle and the foster family.

Sunday morning came and we met baby Kyle and his foster family at their church. It was a nice church, much larger than the one we attend, and I could feel a real love for Jesus by the people there. I was introduced to the pastor and a few other members of the congregation. We stopped by the nursery and saw baby Kyle and all of his little friends. Then we sat with his foster family for a typical Sunday service.

It was all too typical for me too. They even did the same worship songs that we sing at our church every Sunday. That was when I was hit, no... not hit, I was slammed with the most humbling feeling I have ever felt in my life. I was instantly weeping and crying. I sat with my face in my hands and cried. I prayed to God and thanked him. I was so grateful that my nephew was with a Christian family! He was already getting exactly what we wanted to provide for him in the first place. One of our goals for baby Kyle was being taken care of through God's miraculous works, that he would be raised with a Christian family to know and love Jesus. After the first worship song, I walked out of the sanctuary and went to the restroom in an attempt to get my emotional state under control. A gentleman approached me and asked how I was doing and I told him, "I just need some water from the water fountain". I got my drink and he said after the service he wanted to go up and pray with me. I told him I would appreciate that and went and sat back at my seat.

I went back to thinking about how powerful God is and how amazing this whole thing was with baby Kyle and it made me cry again. I cried throughout the entire worship service that morning. I don't think I

have ever cried like that before, but I was just so humbled. At the end of the church service, the pastor invited anyone who wanted to come up and pray to do so. The gentleman I met went down with me. He even asked another gentleman to come with us. We knelt down at the altar and the first thing the guy asked me was if I know Jesus as my Lord and Savior. I responded with a confident YES and we began to pray. I thanked God for his grace and his power and I especially thanked him for these brothers that he blessed me with. It was so reassuring to know that if baby Kyle did get adopted by his foster family he would have a solid Christian upbringing. How could I have been so prideful?

When I went back to my seat I noticed that Kristi was not sitting there. When I looked back to the front of the church I noticed that she was there with baby Kyle's foster mother. Together, holding hands, they were praying for baby Kyle and God's plan in his life. When they returned, we all talked and I thanked baby Kyle's foster family for doing such a great thing for my family. I told them that I was wrong about them, that they were good people doing God's work, and I am grateful for them. It was hard for me to hold my tears back while I said these things, but it had to be said.

We went home to Washington and maintained contact with baby Kyle and his foster family. The foster family seemed confident that the judge would be moving the baby to us in 60 days. The foster mom eventually told Kristi that she had given baby Kyle to the Lord and that she was accepting of Kyle moving with us, if that was God's plan. Three days a week we did a video chat with him. We wanted to ensure that we had a solid relationship with him, so after the next court hearing, if the judge decided to move him to us, we wouldn't be strangers.

Through this time we could feel God's hand bringing our families together. We began to feel that if baby Kyle's foster family did adopt him we would not lose him. We would actually be gaining family as his foster family is, after all, an extension of our family in Christ. This would fulfill our other objective with baby Kyle.

By having faith in God and his plan for us I was able to recognize that he had a plan for baby Kyle. By being still I was able to get out of God's way and allow His plan to be revealed to us. Within a few weeks of our trip to Florida we discovered that Kristi was pregnant!

In October 2013 was the next court hearing. We made our appearance by phone. I had explained that by this point in the case, and in baby Kyle's life, it was in his best interest to remain with his foster family. They are the only family he knows, as he had been there for more than a year and a half. It would be detrimental to him to relocate him to us even though we are family.

We currently video chat with baby Kyle and he is doing fine with the family that he is with. Kristi is now about ready to deliver and doing well, we are all very excited. We have had the opportunity to use our house for ten different kids in foster care and continue to serve the Lord in this way. I believe God has brought me to a place that I would be willing to adopt a child if he brought that child to us through foster or we will continue to foster children that need a temporary home. It is all in God's hands and I am okay with that. I am very thankful to everyone who has prayed for us during this amazing time in our lives, may God bless you and your families as He has blessed us!

Jason McDonald