

The Daniel Family

We were married and had our plan in our minds, I would finish college, start teaching, and then we would start our family. Some time went by, well almost two years and still no children...so we decided to try the help of an infertility clinic, I still wasn't pregnant and remember the day the doctor called after we tried another infertility process with no success and I knew in my heart that that was it. I knew God had closed the door in our hearts to continue infertility treatment and in that same week as God closed one door He literally opened another door that same week.

I had heard about an adoption seminar at a local church and ironically it was coming up that weekend, but it wasn't just about adoption it was about International Adoption. What? Why us...well that day we went and learned many things about adoption, one of the biggest was that "adoption is not second best, everyone doesn't need to follow the same path, and God's plan for "you" is unique, He puts the seed in your heart to adopt! God began to show me that to be a mother doesn't have to look like everyone else, you get a chance to do something different." At the time I had no idea where this amazing journey was taking us.

After that day, we were on board, everywhere we went we would see people who had adopted from China, we even looked at older Chinese people and wondered if our daughter would one day look like that...we were committed, we applied, got paperwork done and got logged-in! We felt like we had "control" again. We had done our part. We knew that this was God's plan for our family. Now, we expected the rest of the journey to go smoothly. At that time, the wait from LID to referral was 6 months. It was the end of October, so we expected to get our match in May of 2006. I remember feeling such relief that we were on the road to becoming parents!!

Very soon after we received our LID there was a drastic slowdown and we were informed that the wait to referral was going to slowly increase to at least 2 years for a match. Once again, we felt a loss of control and had to release our expectations. We had no idea when we would be matched with our daughter. We did not realize that the journey would bring so much, still not a child, but again more "waiting". Why are we still waiting? Well, God had some things to still show us, like, "accepting His plan," "be open-minded to whatever He may ask of you," "understand what He can do," but probably the biggest one for us was to "release our expectations". Ouch! As we "waited" we learned so much personally, and we still kept seeking Him. We found ourselves getting support from friends, family, a group called First Friday's, a China waiting family support group, but mostly kept finding ourselves coming to God in prayer, together and by ourselves....we had to keep surrendering our will to Him.

The "wait" was difficult, to say the least, and I had my moments (several) through the wait. I would be angry, literally physically crying, even down on my knees praying for God to help me through this pain, asking why am I having to go through this, why is this taking so long? I would be frustrated with the process and then would shift back to feeling a complete trust in the Lord...but basically I had immersed myself in the "wait"...what else was I supposed to do. I would occasionally check the well known waiting family "rumor" websites, which suppos-

edly gives the latest updates on what is going on in the match room. Pretty empty, but at least it was tangible and gave us some "small connection" to our goal.

Finally, we had gone about as far as we could possibly be stretched and thought we were going to be the next group to get our matches, it was happening. NO, what? ... they only matched two days worth of matches, this was a record, this was the fewest days ever matched! Why us? I was mad, frustrated, done, and remember thinking "there is no joy in becoming a mother". My fear began to increase as the wait just hung there, was this ever really going to happen?

But, then it happened. It was finally our turn! In May of 2007, one year later than we expected, we got "the call". We saw the face of the most beautiful child we had ever seen! This was exactly why we waited so long. Finally seeing her face was a relief, indescribable joy, beyond thankful, God is so faithful! All the years of anguish were just washed away with a picture. God had promised us that He would honor our requests if we came to Him in prayer and it was finally our turn!

We traveled to China to get our beautiful Laney and learned as we got our daughter, that one of the best pieces of advice really is true "this is not about you". Jay remained my physical "rock" during this long journey, but God showed me how to trust Him through any circumstance regardless of how difficult, bumpy, or completely unknown the road may seem. He gave me time to reflect on why I wanted to become a parent, and to learn that becoming a parent is more than decorating a bedroom, having a baby shower, getting to the end...it's all about His journey! God can take painful things and turn them into something beautiful. He took the pain of infertility and abandonment and created a family! And for this we are forever grateful!