

## Heppner Family Story

Yes, they are all ours. No, we did not plan to have sixteen children. And no, we are not a perfect family... life has not always been as bright as this picture.

If you look back almost thirty years ago, you would see a scared teenage girl, pregnant and alone. You would also see a young man running...and searching. Those two teenagers could not have envisioned what God had in store for them; their futures looked bleak...

*"...No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him..." 1 Corinthians 2:9 (The Holy Bible)*

God brought them back together when their baby was almost one. They got married. They had their second child. Life was good. They had the "perfect American family"... a mom and a dad, a girl and a boy. They were done having children (so they thought), but God saw the bigger picture and intervened. More babies came, bringing much joy, but life became increasingly more difficult. With each pregnancy, they questioned God, as they felt inadequate for taking care of the little ones they already had.

In asking, they gained wisdom.

*"If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him." James 1:5 (THB)*

They put aside the world's idle passing words, and received God's life-giving and true Word.

*"Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will." Romans 12:2*

They learned a truth; "Children are a blessing from the Lord..."

*"Sons are a heritage from the Lord, children a reward from him." Psalm 127:3*

They realized they were saying no to God, while He was saying, "I want to bless you".

*"But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." Romans 5:8*

God used the truth that children are a blessing to reveal how they were building much of their lives on the faulty and ever-shifting foundation of the world's words and ways. They realized that God wanted to bless them infinitely, and they began to rebuild on the firm foundation of God's Word.

*"...God's solid foundation stands firm, sealed with this inscription: 'The Lord know those who are his,' and 'Everyone who confesses the name of the Lord must turn away from iniquity.'"2 Timothy 2:19*

Well, that is a little background on our family. Before taking the step of giving God control in that area of our lives, we had many fears and misconceptions. Since surrendering to God, the freedom and provision have taken us by surprise.

*...Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching... Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." John 8:31-32*

Looking back on *our* plans for our lives, we are amazed at how empty our lives would have been in comparison to all God has for us!

*"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full." John 10:10*

And so it is with every area of our lives. When the Spirit of God tenderly pursues our hearts and says, "I have so much more for you than where you are now," the enemy of our souls speaks lies to our hearts, to cause fear and distrust. Lies like, "If you surrender to God, you'll lose your freedom." or "You won't have any fun." Or, "You'll miss out on your full potential"...

In truth, we experience countless unimaginable blessings as we continue to surrender to our dear Lord. The greatest of all these blessings is knowing God more and more fully. He satisfies our heart's deepest desire. Having an intimate love relationship with the Creator of the universe, the One who formed us with a grandiose plan for our lives that extends beyond the here and now, gives purpose and immense fulfillment.

*"And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent." John 17:3*

*"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you," declares the Lord, "and bring you back from captivity..." Jeremiah 29:11-12, 14*

Have you sensed a gentle tug at your heart, a yearning for something more? (Or someone more?) Is there an emptiness that you are trying to fill?

Are you worried that in accepting the blessing of God on your life, you won't be able to handle the corresponding responsibility? We understand; we have been there.

*"And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus." Philippians 4:19*

God is faithful. His grace empowers us (and will empower you) to embrace all that He has for you.

*"...He said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me." 2 Corinthians. 12:9*

Like us, you may have regrets for choices you have made. You will not regret saying yes to God.

*"... I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me... Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus." Philippians 3:12-14*

*"...If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" 2 Corinthians 5:17*

*"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." Romans 6:23*

*"Because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions--it is by grace you are saved." Ephesians 2:5*

*2 Corinthians 5: Jesus answered and said, "You must be born again." John 3:3*

Our prayer for you is that you will open the door of your heart, and receive the blessing of God on your life today....

*"I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with Me." Revelation 3:20*

*"I tell you, Now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation." 2 Corinthians 6:2*

"God, I receive the gift of your Son for payment for my sins and the gift of an eternal and abundant life. I want to receive the life you have for me. I accept you as my Savior and Lord."

*"To all who received Him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God." John 1:12*

We encourage you to read the book of John, asking Jesus to speak truth to your heart. If you need a Bible, let us know. We would love to talk further with you, to hear your heart and pray for you.

Blessings!  
DuWayne and Miriam

Scripture quotations from the NIV by IBS.