

My birth line allowed me to see the blessings of persevering through adversity, and my adopted line allowed me to see growth into abundance, both of which God has used to lead me in establishing my identity in Him. Please take a moment to look through the rest of this section to see how God has had His Hand on each stage of my life.

### Humble Beginnings



Shortly after my brother, Christopher, was born in August 1984, my biological father was incarcerated and would never return. This left my biological mother to raise me and my brother, who was born with multiple life-altering health complications, on her own. After navigating through the coming years as a single parent, my biological mother decided that we would have a better chance at life if we were placed into foster care. During this process, it was determined that it would be better for our individual development if we were placed into separate homes.

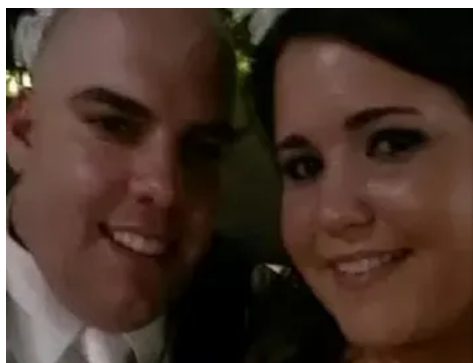
### A Brand New Name

As of this date, it is unclear how long I was in foster care, but I was placed into a foster home around 100 miles away from my brother, and subsequently adopted in June 1989. I stayed in the DFW Metroplex, with a move from the Dallas area to Fort Worth (Texas), while my brother was adopted by a family over 2000 miles away, in Maine. This separation understandably left a void in our hearts. Fortunately, our families understood the bond that we shared, so they supported us in maintaining contact through letters and phone calls. As our childhood years progressed and our contact continued, I was increasingly inspired by the growing faith my brother exhibited in the face of all the adversity he had experienced since his birth. As a result of God speaking through my brother's influence, I felt called from an early age to dedicate my life to those whose lives had been significantly impacted by broken homes.



## Mercy through Forgotten Identity

As I entered into my adult years, I realized that the gift God had given me to make a difference in the lives of those impacted by broken homes was the ability to see strengths and opportunities that few people could see. To nurture this gift, I went off to Waco (TX) to get a college degree. Even though my parents visited frequently and I had frequent phone conversations with them, college was the first time that I was away from the structure that living with family provided. This was also the first time that I had gone significant periods of time without talking to my brother. Without a purposeful effort to nurture the supportive structure that had been built over the years, I found my identity in my social life and being the “life of the party.” This continued after I returned to



Fort Worth, after completing college. Throughout my college years and initial adult years, I placed myself in positions that could have led to consequences that severely limited my ability to achieve my goals and dreams, but by God’s Grace I escaped these situations without any such consequences.

## A New Perspective

In another gift of God’s Grace, I met Lindsay Stepp in 2011, who became Lindsay Tiblets in 2012. God used Lindsay to show me that there were things that are more important than being the life of the party and more important than knowing everything about your favorite sports team. My priorities slowly started to shift and I started realizing that I was finding my identity in worldly things. One profound point in time where this became clear was when Lindsay found a book that my brother had given me years before, which I had put away to “read later.” I started reading through this book, “Resolution for Men,” and started realizing that this Christian walk that I thought I had was actually my parents’ faith and not my own. After finishing the book, I rededicated my life and committed to getting to know Christ on a more personal level. I would like to say this was an immediate change, but it was not. The decisions I had made in my young adulthood and initial adult years had wired my mind and temptations continued to creep at every door. But God....provided the escape and the temptations started to decrease in intensity.

## A Legacy Established

After a substantial amount of trying to have children, Lindsay and I experienced the heartbreak of miscarriage. We then took some time to grieve and started trying again. After being unsuccessful for some time, we started looking into assisted reproduction. A couple attempts were made at some techniques that yielded more of a natural conception. After these techniques



did not work, we decided to take a month-long break from the assisted reproduction process and to pray about whether or not to move forward with in-vitro fertilization. During the early stages of this break, God came through again, and we became pregnant naturally. Our first child, Grace, was born in October 2018.

As you can see through this testimony, God has been graceful throughout my life. God has used a single parent who did the best she knew how to raise two boys in an extremely adverse environment, a family who adopted a 5-going-on-6 year old and raised me as their own giving me access to all life could offer, a brother who continued to share Jesus with me despite never-ending adversity in his own life, a woman who gave me perspective on what is most important in life, and a child who allowed me to get a taste of the unconditional love that a father has for his child (and how amazing that makes the sacrifice that God made by sending His only Son to the cross to die for the sins of generations and generations of people who continue to rebel against Him on a daily basis).

I am still growing, I still battle temptation, and I am still bearing the consequences from the decisions of my past, but through daily prayer and meditation on God's Word, I have a place to surrender all of this weight and to have renewed hope. I know who I am in Christ, and love walking with others as they find who they are in Christ.

“Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”  
1 Corinthians 10:31 (NKJV)