

I was born December 29, 1978, in a snowstorm. My mother was 15 and my father 18. They were too young and had no way to support me, and so gave me up for adoption. On February 9, 1979 I entered the home of two loving parents who had anxiously waited for my arrival. A few years earlier they had adopted my brother, and now were happy to have a little girl.

Over the years they provided well for me, loved me, and brought me to church, even had me baptized as an infant and confirmed in 8th grade. Now confirmation in the Lutheran Church is a series of memorizing and studying prayers and verses, doing some service work, and taking sermon notes. At the end, you have a special ceremony, say a nice prayer, and you are a member of the church, and have stated that you believe all these things to be true. I consider myself to be one of the rare ones that actually believed that words and trusted in them with my heart as I said them. That day I felt different. I felt special and “filled with the Spirit” though I didn’t know it at the time. What this really meant was that I didn’t have to go to church anymore and I could make my own choices about religion.

As I entered high school and was faced with all sorts of choices (you know the ones) and my mind was filled with all sorts of images, information, and false beliefs. Somehow, I managed to keep connected to knowing that God was real, He was my loving heavenly Father that filled in where my father and birth father lacked. He was more than just an image, more than a belief that made me feel good. Thankfully there was a Christian family that lived across the street whom I babysat their boys every week. The mom, Christine, spoke scripture to me, and helped me understand more about what was going on. She told me the TRUTH about God. I am forever thankful for her and their family for helping me to grow in Christ, and for keeping me strong all the time in high school.

Off to Iowa...Wartburg College. This was a great time to “start over” being in a Christian environment, surrounded by Christian events, and people...wow...I knew the moment I stepped on campus it was the place for me. God gave me the peace. There was one thing holding me back, a non-Christian boyfriend that went to a different school. So, after that was released I was free to draw closer to God. In my second year, I was talking to my friend Anna, and telling her that I really wanted to talk to guys about God, but it seemed that every time I did, they wanted more. She suggested I try the Internet, and in 1998, I told her she was crazy there were only psychos on the Internet. After she told me that she talks to people and all about them not being psychos, I decided to give it a try, of course revealing only limited personal information. Well, I met some psychos, and a few people that were great to talk to and helped me dwell in Scripture and Spirit. Then I came across a guy named Greg that was in college, in Charlotte, NC. He was a Christian, and liked fishing, baseball, and golf according to his profile. I almost didn’t talk to him because at the time I was a vegetarian, and did not approve of fishing. However, God prompted me, and I wrote “Hi!” He wrote back “Blessings ☺” and I jumped out of my chair and said “this is the man I am going to marry,” but it’s not time yet. WOW! Looking back on it, God told me then, that he was the one, right away, because he wanted to bless

me immediately after I made my commitment for Him to be first. You see, the night before, at chapel, we had a healing ceremony, now we were focused on a student that had cancer, but I got spiritual, emotional healing from my past where I wanted to control boyfriends and relationships. Now I told God that I wanted Him to control it, and find my prince charming for me. But it just wasn't time yet, so God let me meet him, but he lived in North Carolina, so we could REALLY take things slow. We talked only on the Internet for 3 months. Then on the phone and Internet for another 5 months, before we ever met in person. The day we met was great. He brought flowers, it was raining, and we hugged, it was just like in the movies. Greg was my prince charming from God.

We both finished college where we were, and spent every penny flying to see each other on breaks. We grew closer to God and each other. Greg really helped me see truth. He pointed out lies that I had believed for years and years. This would often lead to crying and I am sure now, that my roommates wondered why I hung around a guy that made me cry all the time. But, they were good tears, they were tears of healing and even though it was hard, it was good...really good.

We were married in June of 2001. It was a very spiritual wedding. And now I was supposed to suddenly be Cinderella and he my Prince Charming as perfect as it is in the movies, better ever because we had God. Well, it wasn't. I didn't really know how to cook, I hated cleaning, and forget the laundry, we were both good at over spending, I was miserable in my job, as was he. I knew there had to be more, there had to be something better. God had told me that He was "the one" why weren't things perfect?

First my job, I changed to working with special needs kids, and loved it. God gave me the peace when I went for the interview that he was the right one for me. But soon Greg quit his job, and we weren't able to make ends meet. I hated going to church because it was like I "had" to go because Greg was the youth Pastor, and I had to wear a dress, and be all charming, when really I wanted to be at home in my PJ's with a cup of hot cocoa and a good movie. I never even joined the church because I would have had to be baptized in the Baptist church by full submersion to join, and I was not willing to do that. So the church didn't approve of me helping Greg with the kids, but there was nobody else to do it. There was one, Ellen, that taught my Sunday school class. She helped me understand more about the Bible, something, I really knew very little about. One day she read from another book about a modern day martyr. This really hit me, someone who lived their life everyday doing exactly what God said and then died for it. REALLY STRONG FAITH...I wanted that...the faith, and life, not the death.

Climbing further into debt, I wondered how we were going to get out of this one. Greg took a job in Marietta, GA in the same field, which was good at first but then lead to yes, more misery, because it wasn't in God's calling. In this church I gave into the pressure and was baptized. I took a job as a nanny for a boy with special needs, which was great...again exactly where God wanted me, I knew it the instant I read

the ad in the paper. God used my employer, Dawn, to speak truth to me about marriage. Things were getting better, but I wanted more, I wanted the fairy tale. I still hated laundry and cooking. We still overspent. We still had problems. Greg went on a retreat with the men of the church to hear Mark Folk from New Wilderness Adventures. (Kind of like a Wild at Heart Boot Camp put on by Ransomed Heart) I am sure you can read about that in his story, but I was so happy he was going. I knew God really had something to tell him, and I knew it was gonna be good. He came back, I asked what he heard. He said you really want to know the truth? YES...YES...Tell me. "We should have never gone to the church in Shelby, and we should have never come here." PRAISE GOD! I was so happy. I hated being a minister's wife, and was no good at it.

We soon felt God moving us back to North Carolina. I took a job back with the same company I was with before, only a different job. This time I traveled around Charlotte, and work with all kinds of special kids, and help their parents with ideas that they can do to help their child. This was a great time for me to minister to the parents and kids. While in Gastonia, NC Greg was able to gain great healing and freedom from the pornography issues I was just finding out about, and this was great for our marriage. We were closer to each other and God. He was growing strongly as a man of Christ, and was teaching me about spiritual warfare, romance, beauty, breaking curses and agreements, and so much more. We were getting healing together from the past. I was starting to see a glimpse that this fairy tale might actually be real, it may even happen for me, but we were still in debt, and it was holding us back.

We felt God moving us to Shelby, back where we started. By the grace of Greg's mom, we were able to live in a house rent-free. Soon, we praised God because we were free from our debt, and more new beginnings.... I got pregnant. Now this was not our plan...but it was God's plan. He somehow worked it all out...and Jackson was huge blessing. We knew before we married that I would stay home with our children, but we didn't know how. Trusting in God every step of the way He was faithful to us, and provided and continues to provide everything we need. I mean, if we really look back at it...WOW...God Really Does Provide. Being in town with New Wilderness, Greg was able to do more events with them, and he soon felt the call to go on staff. We had to really step out on faith that God would provide with this one. Though the last almost 2 years of raising support has not been shall we say "easy" it has been humbling, rewarding, and worthy of praise, because God has come through for us EVERY TIME!

Now, as a woman, staying home, and having more time than my husband, I always took care of the bills. Let me tell you...this is not a good idea. It is very stressful for a woman to have this responsibility. We were not designed for it. So, I was relieved and terrified, when Greg said that scripturally he was responsible for the bills and handling of our money. You know what...it is really a freedom to let it go, and trust your husband with it.

Back to the beginning...I was adopted...my parents were always very open with me about that, and always said they would help me find my birthparents if I wanted to. So in August of 2007, after seeing the movie "August Rush" I knew it was time to find them. I told my parents who were very supportive, but then it took me 3 months to call and take the first step. The agency sent me the paper work, I filled it all out immediately, except one page where I had to write a statement about "Why" I wanted to do this, and it would be shared with my birth mom. I took 9 months to write that statement. I didn't know what to write other than God told me to. So finally after all this time of continuing to be prompted by God, I just scribbled something down, had it notarized, and sent it off. In a few VERY LONG weeks, I received a phone call from the social worker saying she had located my birth mom, and she was "thrilled" to be in contact with me. She was going to send her an affidavit to be notarized, and then send me her contact information. When I hung up the phone I started crying and immediately felt an overwhelming feeling of "acceptance." I didn't even know I had an issue with not feeling accepted. The day I got her information I called her. We talked about the basics, but mostly cried. I found out that she had me baptized as an infant in the hospital as well. So I realized that I have been baptized 3 times, and it has nothing to do with my salvation. Ever since we have been talking and met in January. Then I was ready to meet my birth father. She tracked him down for me, and I called him. We also have been getting to know everything about each other. This has been very healing for me, even though it will never take the place of my parents who raised me, I need both of them to give me a more complete picture of God. I am looking forward to what God is going to do in these relationships in the future.

Since Jackson has been born, God has used me to minister to many other stay at home moms, and wives in similar situations. This year God is raising me up even stronger in this area. Though I am not out front in New Wilderness, I am offering a vital role in the ministry that I know God has uniquely called me to. I am so excited to see what He is going to do as I continue to mentor these women and once again lead a Band of Sisters...and forever gain more freedom, healing and hope in my life...Yes, my fairy tale is becoming more real each day as I draw closer to Christ because He is my TRUE PRINCE CHARMING!