Choosing Life No Matter the Cost

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Choosing Life No Matter the Cost
by Kristin (Kuhn) Koning ’00

A Cedarville alumna shares her testimony of learning to trust God's sovereign plan for her family.

NOAH SCOTT

My doctor had been called into the room to take a second look at our ultrasound. He rested his hand gently on my knee and let out a heavy sigh. "I'm so sorry," he began quietly. "Your son has polycystic kidneys and a sac of fluid protruding from the back of his neck."

Although my shock trumped my tears, I remember taking a deep breath and having a clear sense that even though we were not in control of this situation, we knew Who was! My tears flooded over as through the fog of medical lingo I heard, “...lungs will not fully develop ... cannot survive outside of uterus.”

Our lives were forever changed that day. Mike and I had a decision to make. Run to our Savior's lap and trust Whom we professed to believe — or run away from a God that would allow such heartache. The pain was truly more than we could bear. It was evident we were not strong enough. We found comfort in knowing that our baby's Creator loved him even more than we did. Jeremiah 31:3 reinforced this to us, “I have loved you with an everlasting love.” Luke 12:7 says, “Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered.”

To others our situation looked like a tragedy; Noah's condition, a mistake. Our Creator had a purpose and a plan for Noah's life, no matter how brief. I began speaking Truth to myself over and over. God's ways are always perfect. He is good (yes, to me, now). He is sovereign. His ways are not my ways. We were determined to trust our Savior, all the while hoping and believing God could do a miracle for our son.

The body of Christ poured out love and prayers and encouragement to our family. It was a humbling place to be. There were many God-orchestrated moments. During a visit with my mom [Rebecca (Selden) Kuhn '78, Coordinator of Academic

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Engagement] in Cedarville, I was able to speak with Dr. Melissa Burns [Melissa (Hartman) Burns ’00, Assistant Professor of Biology] and Dr. Dennis Sullivan [Professor of Pharmacy Practice and Director of the Center for Bioethics]. After my conversation with them, I felt the Lord empowering me to go back and be Truth and Light to my doctor who, just days before, had given us the option of ending my pregnancy — our son’s life! We had seen his heart beating and his 10 tiny fingers and toes. He was fearfully and wonderfully made. I wanted to feel Noah kick for as long as God would allow. We were resolved in believing Job 12:10, “In his hand is the life of every living thing and the breath of all mankind.”

We were heartbroken that we would lose Noah — never hear him giggle and tease his two older brothers, never walk him to the bus stop, never teach him to ride a bike. As the weeks went on, the Lord brought to mind a chapel message by Alistair Begg that I heard as a student at Cedarville from Psalm 31. I reached for my Bible and traced each word with my finger. “But as for me, I trust in you, O Lord, I say, ‘You are my God.’ My times are in your hand” (Ps. 31:14–15). The Holy Spirit reminded me of a truth I naively underlined more than six years earlier, to claim for such a time as this.

Saying goodbye to Noah shortly after birth was the most faith-testing and painful situation we had ever experienced. There were many days our feelings would tempt us to believe the age-old lie: If God really loved us then He wouldn’t have allowed this to happen. But our faith reminded us that what was True before this crisis would also be True after. God didn’t change. Our hearts began to heal. Two years later, we were excited to be expecting again.

JOANNA CLAIRE

We knew there was a 25 percent chance this baby could have the same condition as Noah. But we were not prepared to learn at our 13-week ultrasound that our baby girl was in heart failure. Her heartbeat was 75 beats per minute, half of what it should have been. The doctor delivered the news, “She will likely not make it through the weekend.” Our hearts broke. Here we were again.

I began to question God. What didn’t I learn the first time? Why this road AGAIN? I slowly learned that it wasn’t about me. My babies were made for His glory. I may never know the scope of the impact their lives have made here on earth. I chose to be thankful for each moment I had with my daughter.

At biweekly appointments we saw the buildup of fluid in her abdomen grow. The reality was at any moment her heart could become too overwhelmed to take another beat. We named her Joanna Claire because we wanted a permanent reminder that God is gracious and that He used our daughter as His shining light. We believed God formed her wonderfully stubborn heart. Fourteen weeks later it took its last beat.

Joanna’s life and death were unimaginably difficult for our family. Never has 2 Corinthians 12:9 been more real to me. “But 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 of my weakness, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.”

EMILIE ALYSE

Almost two years later, our perfectly healthy daughter, Emilie, went to be with Jesus just one week before her due date. With no medical explanation, we were left again with a choice — do we believe? Even in this?

I have learned that when God enables us to rejoice and praise Him through our suffering (Hab. 3:18), it demonstrates powerfully to those around us that God is still God. He never changes. He IS in control. By His grace, Mike and I choose daily to trust His hand.

I think about our beautiful children every day and what our family could have been like. The impact of loss is real. They have left a legacy of life for our family. In sharing Noah, Joanna, and Emilie’s stories, I get to tell of God’s fierce love for every single life, no matter how small or how brief or how broken. God has a plan for each of us. That is His marvelous GRACE.

Kristin (Kuhn) Koning ’00 is married to Mike and mom to three other fearfully and wonderfully made children: Trent, 13; Drew, 11; and Annalise, 3. To read more of her family’s story, visit koningklan.blogspot.com.