

A Legacy is Born

By: Matthew Hohnberger

*“Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord:
and the fruit of the womb is his reward...”*

It had been a long hard two weeks for sure! In fact, make that a long hard ten months! I was stressed out to my eyeballs and exhausted from making deals and solving problems. I needed a long weekend to rest and reflect in order to be mentally and physically prepared for the birth of our child expected in the next two weeks.

I like to be prepared in advance, don't you? Not that it has to be exactly planned and executed to the minute, but being fully prepared for something makes it much easier to handle. Well, God does not always see fit to allow things to happen according to our plans.

Friday night arrived with the accomplishment of two of the hardest real estate closings of my life. My 38-week pregnant wife, Angela, and I went to bed early. I tossed and turned trying to unwind. At 10:30 pm, I was vaguely aware that Angela was getting out of bed. Suddenly she exclaimed, “I think my water broke!” A burst of adrenalin shot me out of bed, fully alert. I knew what that meant! Our well-laid plans were likely to change!

This was the last thing I expected. Angela had not had any significant contractions yet so we were sure the baby's arrival was a little ways off. Adding

to our confidence was the fact that our midwife had told us that since this was our first child, he might not even come until after the due date.

“Relax, Matthew. Don't panic,” I tried to tell myself, while making the necessary phone calls to family. I wanted to simply inform them that we were headed to the hospital and would call if anything happened. But when I couldn't reach either my brother or my parents my relaxed controlled attitude evaporated. Hospital, here we come!

During the months of preparing for this event, I had pictured a frantic scramble to the hospital, my wife groaning in the passenger's seat while I hoped and prayed the baby wouldn't have to be delivered on a roadside by an inexperienced doctor and first time father. Fortunately, everything proceeded uneventfully, at least in my eyes.

Arriving at the hospital, the midwife confirmed Angela's suspicion and we were admitted to the birthing room. By midnight the contractions started and I tried to sleep while Angela paced. I wanted to be as ready as possible when my wife needed me.

Sometime between 12:30 and 1:00 am things changed. My wife was undoubtedly in labor and from what I saw I predicted my son would arrive by 5:30 am! It was then that I entered into the deepest bonding with my wife I have ever experienced. I have

found that closeness does not come primarily from great times but is a by-product of living and working through tough times TOGETHER! And that is exactly what we did.

Angela determined very quickly that sitting on my right leg was the best place to be while going through labor. During a contraction I would rub her back where it hurt, hold her tummy, breathe with her, remind her to relax and talk her through it. In the interim between contractions, she would lay her head on my shoulder while I prayed - prayed not only for Angela's strength and endurance but also for my own. I needed strength to continue helping my wife and endurance for the growing pain and numbness in my right leg.

But while my own leg was uncomfortable, the hardest part for me was seeing my wife in pain and not being able to do much about it. When you love someone deeply you want to alleviate their agony or save them from their pain. You want to fix it, take it away or at least bear half of it for them. I could not do this. Feelings of frustration at my helplessness threatened to undermine my resolve. Instead, I had to remain calm, reassuring and strong for her no matter how I felt or how loudly my brain screamed, "This is too much, I can't take this, I am too tired." No, I must be strong for her. She must see love and strength in my eyes and take courage. This is true and deep bonding!

The concept of sacrifice began to take on a deeper meaning for me. It is one thing to deny oneself his desires and pleasures for the good of someone else. But real sacrifice requires denying legitimate needs. I needed sleep. I needed rest. I needed to feel in control of the situation, to feel that I could really do something. But what did my wife need? She needed to know that I was there for her, that she could lean on my strength and draw courage from my presence, that I would not abandon her to her pain when it got too intense for me. How could I accomplish this? I knew from experience that it could only be done if I first took my thoughts off myself, focused them on the task at hand and prayed for strength.

Jesus went through the ultimate pain both physically and mentally for us and by His death showed us

the ultimate description of sacrifice. Can I do any less for my wife? The pain I had was not even close to what my wife was experiencing and definitely nowhere near the pain and price our Savior paid for us. Denying oneself for the betterment of another brings an irreplaceable satisfaction and reward. "So lay up for yourself treasures in heaven where moth and rust doth not corrupt and where thieves do not break in and steal." Shortly, not only would my shoulders bear the responsibility of sacrificing for the needs of my wife but also for the needs of my soon to be born, child of God.

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have a chance
to lift the
banner higher

As I agonized through each contraction with my beloved wife, I could better understand what the Bible means when it compares birth pains to the experience of this world as the time for Jesus' return draws near. We shouldn't expect it to be easy. It is a painful, turmoil-filled, agonizing experience. But the rewards... we won't go there yet.

After four concentrated painful hours I thought we had surely reached the worst. Not so. What we had experienced thus far had been only a prelude for what was to come. As we went

through the final phase of labor, Angela was having intense back labor and felt like she was going to break. At that time I saw a depth of character and strength of purpose in my wife that I had never fully appreciated before. It is in a crisis that character is revealed. What I saw in my wife only deepened my respect, admiration and love for her.

It was somewhat of a relief when the time came to deliver. More realistically stated: TIME TO PUSH! I optimistically expected that this would take about half an hour and it would all be over—after all, I have a very strong and amazing wife! The last few hours had proved that to me in a whole new light.

The next stage of the birthing process filled me with awe for our Creator. Out of all the evidence that we are fearfully and wonderfully made and not some creature evolved haphazardly from slime is shown in full Technicolor in the miraculous birth of a child. God has made a woman's womb to nurture and grow a new life and then at the right time, that same organ becomes a powerful muscle contracting purposefully to bring the child into the outside world. It amazes me every time I think about it. We serve a

God who has designed everything with precision!

At 8:37 am in the morning, a new life was born and with such a cone shaped head that I was worried. No need, the Creator had it planned that way. WOW! That first gurgle of a cry brought tears to my eyes because now, right in front of me was the product of our love. I looked into my wife's eyes and there was a connection there I had never known before. Nor can I put it into words. It was not so much that "this is our child" but more "this is my wife, my all / this is my husband, my all." We both looked at our child and Nathan Scott opened his eyes. We were now looking directly at love. Love was born and born in the most perfect form we will ever see on this earth. And that calls for rejoicing with family and friends.

To me, in this product of love, there is a legacy to be passed on. A legacy Angela and I received through the sacrifice of our parents. They made hard choices denying desires and pleasures in order to be there for us and train us to be men and women for God. We now have a chance to lift the banner higher to improve the world around us. What a responsibility!

Ask yourself the same questions I am asking myself right now. What kind of legacy am I going to give my child through the example of my life? What will I sacrifice for his or her spiritual welfare? How can I teach him about a close walk with God unless I have an even closer walk with God? How can I best train him to fight against the evil pulls of this world and come off conqueror? What are the most important legacies to leave for my grandchildren?

A new priority has entered my life. God always comes first, then Angela, and now Nathan. What is going to be eliminated to make room for him? There will always be pressures from business, clients and problems. There will always be calls from without for my time and attention. But my son needs me. He needs my time, attention and training. I can't give him leftovers. He is counting on me because I am and will be his only daddy. I have an opportunity that comes only once and affects a life and a generation. I must not waste it and must give him only the best!

As I view my son in the light of eternity, I realize

that at the end of my life nothing will matter except how I affect the life of Nathan. Money, power, recognition mean nothing because this world is not our home. We are passing through and must work to bring the wanderers' home - heaven. Will you join me on your knees and commit to guide and direct that precious life you brought into this world for the honor and glory of God?

"Our dear Father in heaven. Lord, I come to you as a feeble, erring human being. I plead for your strength and wisdom to guide the footsteps of my child for You. Help me to draw closer to You so that

my child can be trained and brought up by You through me. Lord, fill him / her with Your presence. Give him a heart to follow You. Give him a humble heart, a courageous spirit and true wisdom. Empower us to impart Your love to the starving, unloved world around us. Strengthen me as the priest of my household and give me wisdom to train, discipline and direct my child for who he is and who You want him to be. I pray in Christ name, Amen."

*...As arrows are in the hand
of a mighty man;
so are children of the youth."*

—Psalm 127:4—

What kind
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Power for Living



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