

## **My Adoption Journey**

By Erika Godwin

Adoption is a big part of my life. My sister and I were adopted (open adoptions) and my parents are both involved in adoption work. I also currently work at an adoption agency. Growing up, I frequently went to adoption conferences and got to hear my parents speak on adoption. Because of this, I am a big advocate for adoption, and hope to one day adopt as well.

I was born on April 13, 1988 to a 23 year-old woman named Marlene. Four days later I came home to the Godwin's. As I grew up, I became curious about my birth mother and asked my dad about getting in contact with her. My parents and Marlene corresponded a few times over those years, and my dad told me that she would be thrilled to hear from me. She wanted to be in touch with me, but was willing to wait until I was ready for that. I used to write letters every once in a while, but once I got to high school, I began to keep up with her through e-mail. I now send her pictures or an e-mail almost every week. I have not yet met her in person, and I am not sure when that might happen. I think I am ready to meet her face to face, but she lives so far away, so I am not sure when we will be able to see each other for the first time. I am really curious about how that will go, because it's like having this long distance relative who I have heard all about, but have never met before.

I do not know much about my birth father and have not communicated with him. I really want to know at least what he looks like, but that is something I may never know, and I am ok with that. I brought up the subject with my birth mother, but she has not had any contact with him since before my birth. My parents are very accepting and supportive of my desires to find out more about my birth father and to be in contact with my birth mother. My adoption has always been a welcomed topic of conversation, and I feel that this openness has made me comfortable with being adopted. I personally feel openness between the child and adoptive parents is very important. Never once have I had a question I was afraid to ask. I love my parents and am very grateful for the life and opportunities that they have given me. I also love my birth mother for loving me enough to put my best interest before hers. She was unmarried when she had me, and my birth father wasn't involved.

I am thankful to have been adopted both by God and by my parents. I truly believe God had and still has a perfect plan in where he placed me. Sometimes I do wonder, though how my life would be different if I had not been adopted and what it would be like to live with my birth mother and her family; however, never once do I wish I could change families. God continues to unfold His perfect plan by giving me opportunities to share my story and by the people he brings into my life. It is a good reminder even now of how He chose to save me. I can see His grace in bringing me to Him through various circumstances in which He has placed me.