

# **Fort Stockton couple sees God's hand in infertility and adoption**

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FORT STOCKTON—When Warren Camp calls his wife Rachel “a planner,” she giggles and nods, admitting she always has appreciated structure and order.

Yet neither would have planned the roller coaster ride they’ve been on since they married in September 2009. At times fraught with pain and anger, at times with pure joy, the ride has been nothing like Rachel envisioned years ago, due to infertility.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services defines infertility as the inability to conceive a child after one year. At least 12 percent of couples have trouble getting pregnant, with many factors contributing to the difficulty.

“We had talked about adopting even before we got married,” said Warren, pastor of First Baptist Church in Fort Stockton. “Our plan was that we’d have biological children, and then we would adopt after we got that practice set. That was our thought.”

## **Diagnosis prompts treatments for infertility**

The Camps met as freshmen at Wayland Baptist University, dated for four years and earned their degrees together in May 2009. They married a few months later in September and moved to the Dallas-Fort Worth area for his seminary studies. Rachel worked as a teacher. A few years later, they began wanting to start their family. But after several months, nothing was

happening.

"We went in to get testing done and found out I had polycystic ovary syndrome, which many times causes no ovulation," Rachel explained. "Our infertility treatment story lasted about two years from then."

The next two years were an emotionally and physically difficult time, with specialists putting Rachel on oral medication and shots given in her stomach, regular blood pregnancy tests and more.

Besides the personal toll, the couple's financial limits were stretched. Finally, in the summer of 2013, it all came to a halt while the couple was in Colorado for Warren to teach a camp.

"That week at camp, I needed to take a pregnancy test, and it was negative. I was just done. I didn't want to do it anymore. That month was our last one," she recalled.

## **God's plan led the couple to adopt**

The couple resumed their earlier conversations about adoption. The Camps reached out to friends who had adopted and asked many questions about the process. But it took some heart work as well.

"The Lord really started to bring adoption back up to our hearts. We've watched people younger than us walk through infertility and just be so hopeless and devastated. They think if I can't get pregnant then this is the end of everything. I had to keep myself from walking down that path because I am a woman and I should be able to bear children," Rachel acknowledged.

"There were some times I would let my mind go to those places, but the Lord would say: 'Stop. I know better, and I have a plan.'

“What started going through my mind was that God’s plans are better than my dreams. It was my dream to get to see what a child between us would look like, and I had to give that to the Lord.”

Warren had to prepare mentally for the next steps as well.

“I was growing a lot and learning a lot in that season while in seminary, and it was a lot of pouring from my own heart,” he said.

“So that was a good forum for me to just say: ‘That’s not where your value comes from. I love you regardless of those things. God brought us together, and we’re doing what he called us to do. So, let’s keep doing that.’”

## **Saying ‘yes’ to adopting a baby**

In November 2013, the Camps first called the Life Tree Agency in Dallas and spoke to the director, Robin. They were open to babies of any ethnicity, and Robin told them a baby was coming in February if they were interested. Since they hadn’t even filed an application, Rachel admitted they didn’t think much about it.

The couple set out on a fundraising campaign, selling T-shirts and asking friends to pray. They drove to Dallas in January 2014 to turn in their first application, and Robin mentioned again the baby was coming soon. She needed an answer in just a few days.



Rachel and Warren Camp meet their son Hudson Scheley.

"At the agency, people turn in booklets for the people to look through, and they had been looking through all of the families and hadn't had a peace about any of them. Most people we talked to told us it might be a year. So, we expected we were at the beginning of a long journey," Warren recalled.

"I think we knew our answer, but we just needed a little more prodding from people who could say, 'I've been there, and it's going to be OK.' We were affirmed by two different men in two different places that day."

The couple fasted and prayed separately and then agreed: they would say yes to this baby. The next few weeks were a furious race to paint and furnish a nursery, purchase a car seat and skim quickly through parenting books.

On Feb. 12, Rachel got a call at her school. The birth mother was in labor, and the couple should head to Dallas. Hudson Scheley Camp was born around 9:20 p.m., and their first meeting was magical.

"We were just sitting in the waiting room, and we looked out the window and this nurse is holding a baby. We ran out there and she said, 'Here's your son.' We just stared at him and cried," Rachel recalled.

"We didn't have to part from him after that. The birth parents kissed him, told him they loved him and said they were done. I'm excited to tell Hudson that they did care about him. I want our kids to know that their birth parents loved them enough to give them life."

## **'Adoption paints such a picture of the gospel'**

Two days later, after waiting the required 48 hours by Texas law for birth parents to sign away their rights, the Camps took their baby boy home. Six months later, a court hearing made it official.

"It's so cool how adoption paints such a picture of the gospel. People have their own biological children, and they can place them at any time. But we would be in big trouble if we tried to place our children, because they have become legally ours, and we have pledged to love them the rest of our lives," Warren explained. "It's a picture of God giving up his flesh and blood to secure people for himself."

Two years later, the Camps thought they'd try fertility treatments again, now seeing a doctor in Amarillo near their home in Panhandle. Though assured they would find success, three rounds of a more invasive and costly procedure had the same impact—negative pregnancy tests. They headed back to Life Tree in February 2016 with another application.

Quickly matched with a birth mother, they thought lightning might strike twice. But the mom changed her mind after delivering. While disappointed, the Camps said the agency had seen red flags, and they had a peace about

the situation.



When the Camps' adoptive daughter Adeline Rae was born, Rachel shared a hospital room with the birth mother, bonding with the newborn.

In July, another phone call came inviting them to meet a birth mother, who chose the couple quickly and asked Rachel to be in the operating room for her C-section. On Sept. 2, they were in the hospital prepping to meet their little girl.

A kind nurse invited Warren to join them, so the couple witnessed Adeline Rae come into the world that day. The next 48 hours, Rachel shared a hospital room with the birth mother, holding the baby skin-to-skin and just talking to her. After the waiting period was up, the Camps—now a family of four—came home.

And in February 2020, the Camps brought home a third child, a son named Owen William, also a quick process. The Camps are quick to point out that every adoption story is different, and their biggest blessing has been to point out God's goodness and grace through this entire process.

"You were made for God and his glory, to be satisfied in him and to glorify him and enjoy him forever, as the Westminster catechism says. Those things help us remember that's what life is for," Warren said.

"Even now, this story gives us the opportunity not to selfishly lean in and just say we have our family, but this is for God's story and God's glory, and it's about what he's doing in the world."

The pain the couple endured has been worth it in the end, Rachel added.

"Being on this side of it and looking back, the Lord so knew what he was doing—obviously," she said. "This has only been the Lord. We haven't done any of this because we're good people. We serve a really big God, and we're trying to be obedient to him."

And in a few months, Rachel will deliver a biological child to add to their growing family.