

My Real Life *Bella*

by Heather Ruesch

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him and he will make straight your paths” (Proverbs 3:5-6).

I grew up in a loving Christian family where, at a very young age, I remember hearing this Bible verse from Proverbs. Little did I know that God would use this verse to carry me through some of the most difficult times in my life. It's truly amazing to look back and see how our merciful Savior was able to take a seemingly hopeless situation and bring such awesome blessings from it! That being said, if someone had told me that then, I never would have believed it. I had to learn that I could trust in Him first.

Recently someone told me of the movie *Bella*, named after the daughter of a young girl who had an unplanned pregnancy. Of course, right away I ran out to get it since that sounded so much like my own story. After watching I was astounded at the similarities between this story and my own. What a treasure!

I was in college; working as a waitress and having the usual amount of fun that goes along with that newly found, semi-grownup “freedom.” I was in a long-term relationship that was slowly becoming a bit too claustrophobic and found myself wanting some space—and less responsibility. After ending the relationship, a co-worker and I began to spend a lot of time together. He was the epitome of everything I had been missing. Carefree and spontaneous, he gifted me that

“freedom” I had been craving. Looking back, now I know that “freedom” might better be termed “irresponsibility.”

After only two months of knowing him, I was pregnant with his child. Ouch. I hardly knew this guy. How was I going to share the rest of my life with him? That is what you do in this situation, right—get married and spend the rest of your life lying in the bed you made? It seemed pretty hopeless. He wasn't a bad guy, and he had a lot of great qualities. But the cold, hard truth is that I hardly knew him. As if that wasn't enough, my mind was swimming with all of the other implications I was going to have to deal with. What about school? What were my parents and my family going to think of me? What about money?

(I had none.) I could barely take care of myself—I was supposed to be living the life of spontaneity and fun! This was definitely not what I had in mind. This was not part of my “perfect plan.”

Well, one thing was right. There was no “perfection” in my plans. I had sinned. I

had gotten sidetracked with what I wanted and what felt good for me at the time. Freedom does that if you're not careful. Scared and very aware of the fact that another **human life** was now in my hands, I didn't know what I was going to do.

I broke the news to my boyfriend and soon after to my mom and two sisters. It wasn't until we sat down with his parents that I was challenged with some of the moral mind-games that Satan tries to play.

What about an abortion?

The words hit me like a brick in the face. Abortion? No. Not an option. I could feel the sweat beading up on my forehead.



You're going to ruin your lives. You've got so much going for you.

I left there that day feeling defeated—like I didn't have a choice. I wasn't the only one involved here. Didn't I have to think of everyone else too? If I did keep this child, was that selfish of me? They're the adults here, after all. Part of me wanted to trust they knew what they were talking about and that I just didn't see the big picture. What if having this baby **was** the end of my life as I knew it?

But God has a way of using what we see as crisis to be the means by which He brings us closer to Him. In the middle of what seemed like the biggest mess I could make for myself, my prayers seemed to me like daily conversations with God. The theme: **TRUST**. More specifically, Him showing me I could trust Him every day, every hour, every minute, every second. He would be with me all the way and teach me how much He valued the life of my child—and my own life as well.

There were so many people that God placed in my life after that day to help and support me. I made up my mind that no matter the cost—to me or to others—I was keeping this child. God showed me He valued life so much that He would provide for me and would bless me for trusting in Him and His plan for me. I look back on this part of my life and can't help but envision a road map with a beginning and an end. And all along there are places where I have veered off the path but He's put me back on. Sometimes it's right away and sometimes it takes a little longer. God not only accomplishes His will

in spite of our mistakes, He taught me that He can even accomplish His will *through* our mistakes. Wow!

Isabella Grace was born May 4, 2000. She has been an instrument in which God has shown me His grace and compassion for His children, surpassed only by the death of His son, Jesus Christ. Upon Bella's conception, life did change forever, and I am eternally thankful. I now know that there is a purpose for my life. Despite the unplanned way in which Isabella came to be, I have been shown what a gift it is to become a mother. There is no higher vocation for a woman than this. I am truly blessed and even thankful for the mistakes I've made because they have led me to such a greater understanding of Christ's love. God is always in control. No matter how big or small the challenge may seem.

One year after Bella was born, I met my husband, Matt. He is a Lutheran pastor and a wonderful husband and father. Since being married, God has added two more beautiful children to

our family: Paul, 6 and Sofia, 2. Additionally, having always had a love for children and music, I continued on to earn my Associates Degree in Early Childhood Education. I have worked in daycares and preschools for the last eight years and have been honored to play a part in the healthy growth of so many of God's smallest blessings! He's given me opportunities to pursue my love of singing and song writing as well. All of these are things He's given me to further learn to trust in His forgiveness, love, and care for my every need!



**Sofia, Heather,
Bella , Paul, and
Matt Ruesch**