

Walking Through the Fire

My first nine pregnancies were relatively uneventful; the births were quick and safe. I expected this one to be the same. Our first child was born in Tweed Heads Hospital, in November 1986. Our next seven children were born at home in Australia's capital city, Canberra. The large number of children in our family may be a surprise to many, especially in a culture where small families are more common. We accepted each new child as a blessing from God; thus, the many faces who grace our table each night.

Blessing followed blessing, and we found that with each new baby we were filled anew with an irresistible love that came packaged with that unique child.

With each new child born into our family, rather than greet him with indifference, we became as enchanted as though we had never seen a newborn child, as though this new baby were the first of his kind ever to join our family. With each new babe, we fell more in love and delighted more in the individual preciousness of our children.

God loves each of us as if there were only one of us.

~Augustine

After reading this quote, I understood more of God's parent-heart towards His children. We are made in God's image, and therefore, we cannot help but imitate this love for each new addition to our family. Our decision to allow God to plan our family came after our third child's birth. Life without any one of the children born before or after her, each with a unique personality and gifts, is unimaginable.

This pregnancy was almost identical to the previous one. I did all the right things: I ate well, exercised, and rested in between. During my first pregnancy I had used alcohol and cigarettes, which are known to cause harm to a mother and developing baby, before I had any idea I was carrying life within. Amazingly, he was born nine months later totally healthy. After becoming a Christian, my lifestyle changed completely, and my body no longer suffered from any harmful substance. During this new pregnancy I didn't even take a Panadol.

In the beginning of this pregnancy I spotted at four–five weeks, but that was probably just breakthrough bleeding. I wasn't concerned. I was thankful that the all-day sickness that I was familiar with was shorter than in my other pregnancies, and I felt the baby moving early, at around sixteen–seventeen weeks, making baby's reality more tangible. At thirty-five weeks I was frequently breathless, which can be a sign of anaemia. Victoria, our midwife, suggested I have blood tests to check on my iron levels. I now regret not making the time to have the tests performed. Even if the results were normal, at least I now would not have something else to blame myself for. I could have supplemented with iron and folic acid, and this may have averted what was to come.