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One Year Later...He's Still in All the Details

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Seasons come and go. Some offer ease, everything falling right into place. Others test us with storms and stress. While recently I've told of my stormy parenting trials and tests (like in **THIS POST** [1] and **THIS ONE** [2]), right now I'm reflecting on a time when **things fell perfectly into place.** [3] I'm reminded of how God's always preparing us for His purposeful plan! ***Reflecting on that time just a year ago reassures me of His always sovereign hand…***

This time last year, wide-eyed and a bit shell-shocked, I sat next to my boyfriend (WHAAAATT!? A title I boycotted!) in our Pastor's office still surprised God led me to that seat. You see, after a series of events and repeated attempts at praying it all away God kept opening doors, including the one of my heart.

There we sat, staring at our beloved, wise pastor as discussing dates—***wedding dates!*** After eliminating those that wouldn't work, one was left. **July 18.** *It stared at us from less than six weeks away.*

So soon!

I lost the ability to exhale as space and time stood still for just a moment. But the pause wasn't even long enough ponder what just happened or to produce a prayer. We needed to seize each precious minute before tying the knot!

I recall turning my head to look at Matt, wishing for his hand to cover mine with an unspoken, romantic and reassuring whisper that he was, indeed, ALL IN and this strong, capable hand of his would comfort and protect me on this new path God paved for us. Instead, his hand sat paralyzed with the same stunned sensation I'd just experienced. I can't blame him! His almost eight year stint with singlehood was twice the length of mine and his life was about to take a major turn!

I wanted to snatch a piece of paper from Pastor's desk and start writing all the details to tackle before our wedding date. Phones calls, decorations, Scripture readings, a reception, dresses for our five daughters and…wait!…what would I wear?! All unknowns.

I'd need to further prepare our five kids, which we'd already begun by getting their blessings. What would we do with his house and how could we possibly prepare mine for four more, including a man who'd swallow half my closet space?!

But instead of scribbling on Pastor's pad of paper, I made out his muffled voice saying something about more meetings to cover marital concerns and plans for the ceremony. I'm certain he saw my mind racing because this pastor of mine in some ways feels like the father God passed certain characteristics to me from, like strong convictions, unheralded hope in Christ and a few type A tendencies (I hope that's okay to say!). In fact, this very Pastor, many months prior, looked me slyly in the eye to tell me he'd be marrying this Matthew Hagen and me. With a defensive emotional jolt but feeling a bit flattered, I embarked on daily prayers for God to either open doors wide open or slam them shut.

'God, give us Your wisdom and make Your calling clear!'

Pastor was right. ***Matt and I fell in love, rationally and romantically***. ***My soul suddenly longed for a second chapter, one with this very man.***

Scheduling those sessions, I wondered what would happen when we walked out the protective doors of Pastor's office into the wide world of reality. It had to happen. After prayerfully considering all angles, God had carried us to that moment. Now, ***our relationship had reached the bridge where pure, God-pleasing dating could lead to new life and bonded, covenant love.*** We chose to walk (actually sprint!) across! It's one of the biggest transitions a single parent in love makes: ***marriage and blending families***.

We walked out of that first soul-stunning session and, ahhhh, relief! Matt's strong hand finally held mine as the baby blue sky and soothing sun encircled us, an officially 'engaged' couple. No big ring, no world-stopping romantic moment outsiders wanted from us. ***Just a soulful promise made***

between Matt, myself and God in the presence of our Pastor.

My hand in his, and His, ***I felt the comfort I longed for, listening intently for the Lord and promising again to follow my sovereign Savior.*** He'd been faithful in leading me through all kinds of waters already. This life-changing decision would be no different.

Between those premarital counseling sessions and before July 18 so much miraculously happened! We planned a small, perfectly sweet wedding, found a photographer, remodeled parts of my house, created space for five girls, moved his lovely ladies in and prepared his home for renting. We found rings and wedding attire, collected decorations, completed reception details and even planned a lovely honeymoon.

While we put one foot in front of the other, God placed each piece of the puzzle into our frame perfectly. If a complication arose, God patched the problem right up. A couple sweet friends stepped out of the woodwork to save the decorating day! Matt merely mentioned needing renters to avoid two mortgages and God produced them! Families and friends approved, opening their calendars on short notice to celebrate our vows. ***Reflecting back, I clearly see God showing up and creating clarity!***

So now, here I sit, just weeks before our first anniversary and I still see the sweetness of God's plan. Without a doubt, God gives us peaks and valleys along the path. But, ***He's always crafting, forever preparing us and fulfilling His plan in us. And the best part is it's all for His glory!*** All we need is to trust and surrender.

I know He's in this moment with each one of us! For me, I refuse to let this time of year escape without letting my mind wander to a time when God broke open my heart with His hand to pave a blessed, straight path right to the heart of the most wonderful husband.

My sweet husband, I'll always remember it's not just about the anniversary and what came after. It's proof of God's glory and how He prepared our hearts and lives to receive one another. It's a reminder of how sovereign He is and what He still has in store. I'd follow that path from the past all over again because now I know a bit more about what He was building. I love you!

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