

## Melinda's file folder

**M**Y WIFE AND I have been blessed with three children: a son and a daughter who were born to us, and a daughter who came to us through adoption. While our children were growing up, I kept three folders in a file cabinet at home—one folder for each child. Whenever they wrote me a note, gave me a Father's Day card, or drew a funny picture, I dropped it into one of their folders, which have filled up with wonderful keepsakes over the years.

The other day I pulled out Melinda's file folder. She's our youngest, our adopted daughter who came to us from overseas when she was four months old. She's now 19 and a sophomore in college. Melinda and I chuckled as we read a little cardboard booklet filled with crayon pictures she created when she was six years old. The booklet's cover said, "When I Was Adopted." Inside Melinda had written, "My family went to the airport. They waited and waited. I was two hours late. Finally I arrived. I smiled at Daddy."

Another item in the folder is a letter addressed to God printed in large green letters. As a seven-year-old Melinda had written, "Oh, I like how you gave up your life for us. And the way you created people. Black, white, tan, or peach. Teachers, boys, girls, ladies, men, moms, dads. Oh, I just like that. But I especially like food." We laughed out loud at another letter she evidently had written after I disciplined her for some misbehavior. The note said, "Daddy, I will always [always] love you, even though you get angry. But that will not stop me. Love, Melinda."

The folder contains a card covered with tiny inked fingerprints and a passport photo required for her immigration and citizenship papers. There's also a neatly-typed four-page document she composed when she was 12 called "Reasons for a Dog." (It proved so persuasive that shortly afterward we

bought her a Cocker Spaniel that's been in the family ever since.)

My favorite item in the folder, though, is a copy of a scholarship application Melinda wrote when she was in high school. Her assignment was to tell about someone who's had a major influence on her life. Here's part of what she wrote:

*'Imagine giving up your child so that someone else's life could be blessed.'*

"The ability to impact the lives of other human beings is our greatest power. You can choose to use this power to promote the growth and happiness of other individuals, or you can use it to hurt them and better yourself. I am blessed that the person who made one of the biggest impacts on my life did so in an extremely positive

way. She allowed me to live the life that I am living now, to be the person I am today, by making one decision. . . . This person is my biological mother, and she positively impacted my life by entrusting me to the hands of my parents through adoption. I don't know my birth mother very well. Actually, I don't know anything about her, except that she loved me and wanted what's best for me. . . . I thank her for her unselfishness.

" . . . Adoption is an act of unselfish love. . . . When my biological mother 'gave me up,' she didn't abandon me or just cast me away. She parted with me so that I could live a life she couldn't offer me. The love she displayed when she gave me up for adoption exemplifies the kind of love God has for us. 'For God so loved the world, that he gave his one and only Son . . . ' Imagine giving up your child so that someone else's life could be blessed. . . .

I don't know if my birth mother is a Christian, but I am so thankful that God used her to help me understand the magnitude of his love."

We all can be God's adopted children. Somewhere, I think, God has a file folder with your name on it. ■



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