



## A dad remembers And rejoices

**D**ear Bonnie:  
Your call from Tulsa, telling us that you are expecting your first baby, has filled the old home place with joy.

Your mom—and your brothers and sisters—are ecstatic. You could tell, of course, when Robin grabbed the phone and started squealing. I believe she's more excited over your "good news" than over the birth of her own two children.

What do I feel?

Well, while the rest of the family is back in the kitchen celebrating, I have withdrawn to my quiet place back here in my study to think—and remember.

I'm proud of you and Marion. During your two years of marriage you have proved yourselves hard workers and able managers. Marion has a great future ahead, and you are, already, an outstanding artist and illustrator.

Thus when you announced, several months ago, that you wanted to have a baby, I knew it would cost you something. Choosing a baby over a career is a difficult decision. You and Marion are earning good salaries. That will be chopped in half when you stop work—while your expenses will increase.

But yours is the finer decision. Your mom and I are proud you have chosen a baby over money.

There are, in the lives of most women, three significant times. They are menstruation, marriage, and childbirth.

The first time begins at the marvelous moment when a girl's body announces she is no longer a child—but has become a woman.

For some girls this is terrifying. They have not been taught that their body is fearfully and wonderfully made. They do not know that the sign of blood is not a signal of death, but the heralding of a new age—that the menstrual cycle is not a curse but the signal her body is now capable of bearing new life.

I realize, as a man, I've never had to go through the monthly bloating and cramping caused by the menstrual period. I remember, too vividly, all those times during your teen years when I would hear you moaning in the night. I would go into your room and spend long hours sitting on the side of your bed, rubbing your back and praying.

I suffered with you, sweetheart. I know it was painful. The missed days of school. The times of aloneness, hurting upstairs in your bedroom or lying on the sofa with a heating pad.

Not all women suffer as severely. But you, and your mom, know the agony of such pain.

I was first exposed to all this when your mom and I were dating back in high school. I knew almost nothing of female anatomy, and could not understand her monthly cramps.

I remember a long trip home from college our sophomore Thanksgiving. We were in the back seat of a friend's car, traveling through south Georgia and north

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Florida. Your mom, who was then wearing my engagement ring, was in severe pain. She lay across my lap, moaning and wetting my trousers' leg with her tears, while I rubbed the small of her back and felt totally helpless. It seems I've been rubbing backs ever since—hers, yours, and your two sisters'.

But out of those times of agony your mom gave birth to five wonderful children who have all grown up to love the Lord and honor their parents. You were the third conception. You are the product of her pain—not only in childbirth, but in those earlier years as she got ready.

Now, sweetheart, you, too, are pregnant. You and Marion, in love, have joined together to create another life. There will be more pain as the baby is born, but it will all be forgotten in the glory of the miracle.

Thus the other two stages of woman's life are inexorably bound to that first significant event of emerging adolescence. They are the times for which every woman is

created—marriage and childbirth. Even though a woman may never marry, or marries and remains childless, the yearning to mate and reproduce remains. And many confess they are less than complete until these moments are achieved.

You, though, have been blessed with a wonderful, loving, God-fearing husband. Now you are blessed with pregnancy—the time when a woman achieves her greatest physical beauty. From the time you were conceived to this pending moment of birth, God has been preparing you to create new life.

That is the reason you are such a fine artist. You love to take nothing and turn it into something beautiful. That is what you and Marion have done. You have taken common sperm and ordinary egg and put them together in love. The result is the new life which grows in your belly.

It is a marvelous picture, Bonnie, of what Christ has done for us. The blood of Jesus is the central issue of our salvation. Some look upon blood as ugly, but it is the blood which makes us capable of reproducing.

Ahead of you lies the greatest fulfillment of human experience. Although the male is spared the pain of the menstrual cycle, yet he is also denied the honor of creating new life in his body—and the ultimate joy of giving birth to a living child. And one day, as Christ gave us the mighty Holy Spirit, out of your inner being will flow new life.

Your mom and I are immensely happy for you. The fact we already have three wonderful grandchildren does not diminish our joy. For you are a special person. You are God's gift to us. And now, you will bear God's gift to you and Marion.

So, the old home place is filled today with rejoicing. I, too, am proud. These tears, which you cannot see, are tears of nostalgia. But your mom and I renew our covenant with you, not only to pray for you and the new life which grows in you, but to stand with you as you take this next wonderful step toward spiritual fulfillment.

Afer all, that's what parents—and grandparents—are for.

Lovingly,  
Dad

*NOTE: Bonnie Ranzino is an artist/illustrator for the Oral Roberts Evangelistic Association. Her husband Marion is the assistant registrar at Oral Roberts University.* ◀