

# MAGNOLIA MINDS: Certainties in an Uncertain World

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*Editor's note: May recently placed first in the Baptist College Division of the 2021 State Speakers Tournament, sponsored by the Discipleship and Sunday School Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board and supported by gifts to the Mississippi Cooperative Program. Following is the manuscript of her speech.*



May

On September 18, 2013, I was taken from my biological family and placed into foster care. I was a ten-year-old who had just had her life flipped upside down. Everything that was once certain in my life immediately became uncertain.

Over the next couple of years, I bounced from foster home to foster home. With each transition, I felt less and less loved, and life became more and more uncertain. In 2015, the court terminated my biological mother's rights. She no longer had the opportunity to get me back in her custody, and at the age of 12, adoption became a possibility for me.

I was given the opportunity to be fostered by a wonderful family who said they wanted to adopt me. As we neared the adopted date, on January 15, 2016, my case manager told me that the family I had grown to love and trust no longer wanted

to adopt me. Once again, my fears of abandonment and rejection were a reality. Once again, what I had begun to think was a certainty was inevitably uncertain.

A few months later, my social worker came to visit me at the Baptist Children's Village, a place I called home for three years. She encouraged me to open myself back up to the possibility of being adopted. Despite all of the heartbreak I had experienced, I felt a nudge to say yes and try again. Little did I know how God was working in the middle of my uncertainty to prepare a family for me in the same city where I was taken into state custody.

On October 20, 2016, my adoptive mom read my then three-year-old adoptive brother a Bible story before bed. The story was about how God appeared to King Solomon in a dream and told him to ask for whatever he wanted. My mom posed this question to my brother, "If God came to you in a dream and told you to ask for whatever you wanted, what would you ask for?" His response? "A big sister."

The next day, they saw a post on Facebook from The Mississippi Heart Gallery with my picture and information. In a matter of weeks, I got to meet them; a few months later, I moved into their home, and one year later, I was adopted into a forever family. The court date for our adoption was October 20, 2017, exactly one year after my brother asked God for a big sister.

For four years of my life, the only thing I knew for sure was that relationships with those closest to me were uncertain and brought heartache, but as Judge Broom signed off on my adoption papers, my mindset flipped. Because of one family's obedience and kindness, I began to experience the tangible love of God. I began to see how even when my life circumstances had been uncertain, His love for me, His pursuit of me, and His presence with me never wavered.

In 2018, a man named Cory Asbury released a song called,

Reckless Love. As word spread about this new anthem, people became skeptical of his lyrics. Critics wondered how someone could describe God's love as reckless, so he wrote an explanation.

In his explanation, Asbury writes, "He gives His heart so completely, so preposterously, that if refused, most would consider it irreparably broken. Yet He gives Himself away again." This type of love sounds outright ridiculous, but it beautifully describes the love God has for His children.

We can find one example of God's assured love in Luke 15:4-6. The passage reads, "Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Doesn't he leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? And when he finds it, He joyfully puts it on his shoulders and goes home." Once again, a statement about the love of God sounds completely absurd. Why would He leave ninety-nine good sheep for just one? The answer? Love. 1 John 4:8 says, "Anyone who does not love does not know God, because He is love." I am sure of God's love because that's who He is He can't separate Himself from Himself.

The bridge of the song, Reckless Love, is poetic yet full of truth. "There's no shadow You won't light up, mountain You won't climb up, coming after me. There's no wall You won't kick down, lie You won't tear down, coming after me."

Upon hearing this for the first time, I immediately broke down in tears. God went to great lengths to change my earthly status of orphan to adopted, and even greater lengths to change my eternal status from orphan to a child of God. Being certain of God's pursuit of me brings me great comfort because I did not feel loved or pursued for so long.

I have experienced some lonely days. For a lot of my life, I had no idea who would still be in my life and who would leave. My adopted family of almost four years has shown me loyalty.

They have relentlessly pointed me to the One who will never leave or forsake me. His presence in my life is something I am sure of, regardless of my circumstances. A.W. Tozer once said, "There is a strain of loneliness infecting many Christians, which only the presence of God can cure."

While I will never be certain what tomorrow will bring, I know some things for sure. When I feel unlovable, God's love remains the same. When I am unfaithful, God is always pursuing me. On my best day and my worst day, God is with me. He exceeds all expectations and hopes. He puts His heart on the line no matter the consequence, and that is what makes God our certainty in an uncertain world.

*May is a member of The Exchange Church, Pearl. Opinions expressed on this website are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, The Baptist Record, nor the publication's Advisory Committee.*