

NFP is not just birth control; how infertility deepened my appreciation for natural family planning

It's NFP Awareness Week, and I'm reading a lot of posts about natural family planning. I worry that in all the advocacy to encourage people to exchange artificial contraception for NFP, people who are unfamiliar with NFP will think it as just another form of birth control.

✖ What I love about NFP is how it reminds us that we are *not* in control.

Two people don't make a baby.

Men and women don't have the ability to create another life.

Only God can do that.

That is how using NFP has enriched my faith and my marriage. Through NFP you can discover precisely what you can do to give yourselves the best possible chance to conceive a child-without any intervention that interferes with the actual marital act.

But in the end, you have to recognize that a couple can only conceive a child if the third person in your marriage, God, steps in and adds that life-giving spark. Only He can create the soul, the tiny life that grows into the beautiful child you will hold in your arms one day.

My husband and I have never conceived a child. And so it's true that we have never experienced a surprise pregnancy at an inopportune time when finances were tight, when our house was crowded, or when we were completely overwhelmed. So it would be easy to brush off my perspectives on NFP as those of a mother who longed to conceive and can't imagine trying to prevent conception long term.

But even through our infertility, NFP has enriched our lives.

NFP, after all, is not about saying no to God.

It's about saying yes.

Using NFP leaves a window open, a door ajar.

NFP says to God, “We recognize that we are not in control. We are going to do the best we can to make what we feel are the best decisions for our family, but we are also leaving this in Your hands. You are the giver of life, the One who knows better than we do what we can handle, what lies ahead, what plans you have for us.”

NFP says, “Jesus, we place our trust in You. And we will be grateful for any gift you give, especially the gift of life.”

God sent our children to us in a different way. And we endured years of infertility before we started down the road to adoption.



So I can't credit NFP with creating our family. But I credit it for assuring us that we had given our own fertility every chance, with helping John and me grow closer as a couple through prayer and discernment, and with reminding us to treasure, even more deeply, that the gift of life is never, ever to be taken for granted.

I am so, so grateful that we never said no to God, that we were always open to His plan. When we finally began our adoption journey, I believe we were able to see the path more clearly because we had always been open to life.

And adoption was just another step along the way to creating our family.

We are not in control.

Two people do not bring a child into their family from the other side of the world.

Only God can do that.

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