



MCDONALD family



October 2020

A few months ago, we started to notice a change in the spirit of our eight-year-old daughter Annabelle. My wife and I discussed often what we were noticing, but we could not put a finger on the cause for the change. Annabelle is an active young girl with all kinds of ideas of fun things to do. She enjoys coming up with games and activities for her and her siblings and friends to do, always finding a new twist to add to the game. We were playing hide and seek a few months ago, and Annabelle came up with the idea for the person who was “it” to drink a glass of water instead of counting before they could go find the hiders. She is just always full of fun ideas. Sometime in July, though, we noticed that she was not acting like herself. She had very little energy and was also eating all the time. We could see that her arms were becoming very slender, but her belly was growing bigger. She was not playing with her siblings like she used to and was, in fact, very cranky towards them whenever they tried to play with her. She almost did not want them near her at all. All she wanted to do was eat and read. She has always had a healthy appetite, but now she was always snacking. We wondered what was wrong.

Our initial thought was that she had somehow gotten worms, which is not uncommon for where we live. She was tested for parasites, which came back negative. She had x-rays, an ultrasound, blood tests; and everything checked out okay. They concluded that she was constipated. Well, what caused it? The next week we found a local pediatrician who did her schooling in the UK. At the appointment, we answered a bunch of questions, and the doctor did not seem concerned about anything. She ordered more blood tests and a urine analysis and then sent us home with a laxative.

The next day, I finished language school and was fixing to eat lunch with my wife when I got a call from the doctor. The urine analysis showed sugar in Annabelle’s urine, which could only mean one thing: Type 1 diabetes. We were told to go to the hospital immediately for confirmation and to prepare to stay for a few days. Shocked, dismayed, devastated, heartbroken—pick one! We were hit hard with this news. At the hospital, a few more tests were done, and Annabelle was placed on insulin and monitored closely that night in the ICU. I went home with our other four children. Over the next three days in the hospital, Elizabeth was taught about how to monitor and administer Annabelle’s insulin shots.

Type 1 diabetes, also known as juvenile diabetes, occurs when the immune system attacks and destroys the insulin-producing cells of the pancreas. A healthy pancreas will produce insulin that allows sugar from our foods to enter the blood cells and create energy. A person with Type 1 diabetes will be dependent on insulin for the rest of their life.

God has shown Himself strong in this whole trial. Friends of my wife have gone through Type 1 with their child and have been such a blessing to us with advice and even shipping supplies to us. We purchased a monitor, which is in Annabelle’s arm, so we can do our best to keep her within the normal blood sugar range. The monitor allows us to set alarms from the app on our phones so we can be aware when Annabelle’s sugar levels are too high or too low. The first couple of weeks that Annabelle was home, I would get up at 2 a.m. and poke her toe with a needle to make sure her sugar was normal. Now, I do not have to do that because the app will let me know if there is a problem. We have gotten into a rhythm of this unexpected new life. As surprised as we were with the news of diabetes, God was not surprised at all. He has given grace and strength to Annabelle, Elizabeth, and me as we work through it.

Another phone call came from the doctor a few days after coming home from the hospital. Annabelle also has celiac disease. Not only does she have to stay away from carbs, but now we know why she was so bloated—because of the gluten. Eating gluten creates inflammation that damages the lining of Annabelle’s small intestine and causes malabsorption.

I am happy to report that our sweet, energetic, adventurous, playful little girl is back. She is running around, jumping, scootering, riding her bike, and smiling. It warms my heart every time I see it. She is a trooper and mature beyond her years. She comes to me before every meal and snack to get her insulin shot. Before we had the monitor, she was pricking her own finger to do her readings.

Thank you for praying for us and specifically for praying for us in this trial. God has been good to us in this time of need. With new ongoing expenses, we have received unexpected one-time gifts, for which we are very grateful. Thank you again for praying for Annabelle.

God bless you,
Corey McDonald

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