

[00:00:00.000] - Lisa C. Qualls

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[00:00:07.260] - Melissa Corkum

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[00:00:32.500] - Lisa C. Qualls

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[00:00:53.410] - Melissa Corkum

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[00:01:03.980] - Lisa C. Qualls

Welcome to the Adoption Connection podcast, where we share resources by and for adoptive and foster moms. I'm Lisa Qualls.

[00:01:12.460] - Melissa Corkum

And this is Melissa Corkum. Don't worry, we get it and we're here for you. Hi, friends. Welcome to Episode 97 of the Adoption Connection podcast.

[00:01:22.820] - Lisa C. Qualls

This week, we have a special guest, Maria Hansen-Quine, who's a friend of ours. She is going to share with us her story of how she built her family through adoption. So Maria is married to her husband, Sam. They live in Arizona and they have nine beautiful and diverse children. She refers to her kids as precious jewels because she passionately believes that children are sacred gifts from God. Seven of their children came to their family through adoption and two were born to them. Sam is also an adult adoptee, which makes for an even more interesting conversation. And Maria so believes in the value of children that she has devoted the past 22 years of her life to working with children from hard places. Currently, she's working as an inner city school counselor. Her experience with her own family and as a counselor has led her to write a book with her daughter called *Be Different & Be Kind: A Story about Diversity*. We'll have that in our show notes. But I think you're really going to enjoy this book for children and for educators and parents who are teaching children about diversity. This is actually the second time that Maria has been on our podcast. She was also our guest in Episode 80, where we talked about pandemic schooling, which is still a very relevant conversation.

[00:02:45.780] - Melissa Corkum

Let's jump into your conversation with Maria.

[00:02:52.540] - Lisa C. Qualls

Hello, Maria. Welcome to the Adoption Connection podcast.

[00:02:55.930] - Maria Hansen-Quine

Hi, Lisa.

[00:02:57.490] - Lisa C. Qualls

It's really good to be talking with you this morning. We were fortunate enough to actually see each other in person at the Refresh conference, which ended up being canceled after we were there, which was really unfortunate. But we also got a lot of time to talk together. I'm so glad.

[00:03:14.910] - Maria Hansen-Quine

We did. It was really really sweet. It was a sweet time in the midst of the crazy, right? Right.

[00:03:20.320] - Lisa C. Qualls

And at this time that we're doing this interview, we're all a few weeks into quarantine, and most of us are schooling our kids at home, which is a real shock for a lot of people. So there's a lot going on. So I want you to start out by just sharing who you are and share your story with us.

[00:03:42.230] - Maria Hansen-Quine

Okay. Sounds good. And like we talked, that's a big question for me. So my name is Maria. Start with that. I am married and have been married for almost 24 years, I think is what we're going on. My husband and I met in college. And in terms of adoption, even before we got married, we said, we're going to adopt one child and we're going to have one biological. And so that was the plan that God really had put on both of our hearts. Even for me as a young 20 year old, I had already worked a lot with kids in foster care and kids with trauma. And Mother Theresa was my hero. So I was like, I could do one. People don't have more than two kids. I'm not going to have more than two kids. And my husband, Sam, is an adult adoptee. So we both, when we merged, that was just a unified heart that we both shared. And so really cool. Our first adoption, we adopted first and then had a biological son three years later. And I would say that was like, this is perfect. This is what I imagine my life would look like.

[00:05:13.630] - Maria Hansen-Quine

The really cool thing, though, about our first adoption is that it had God's fingerprints all over it. There's so many, many, many details to it where I saw God so directly direct our steps. I can get choked up just thinking about it, honestly, still. And she's our oldest daughter and she'll be 18 this year. And I could feel my tears. And I've shared this so many times. But the short story is that, essentially, in the weekend, we became parents. So we were living in New Jersey at the time and had made plans to move back to Washington State, which was where we thought we would spend the rest of our lives living because we thought we are West Coast people. Why would anybody live anywhere else? No offense to anybody else. But that was what was on our heart. We had gone to New Jersey, we thought, for me to go back to school, go back to graduate school. I have a clinical social work degree, master's degree, but God had so many other things planned for that time. And it was during that time that our daughter was born. And so we had made plans to move back. I had given notice at my work, we were renting. We had told our renter we're moving back. We had bought tickets to Europe. And then literally on a Tuesday, we were talking to some friends who they had kids, and we used to babysit their kids for them so they could go on date nights. And their two daughters were adopted. And so we had in passing, like six months earlier, said, If the birth mom... We knew the birth mom was pregnant, but she decides to give up this baby for adoption because her life was still very much the same as it was. With the twins, we said, We would adopt this baby. And so on a Tuesday, they called us and said, She's having this baby in a couple of weeks, and she's thinking that she would like to give this baby up for adoption. And we were like, 28 year olds. I mean, we've been married for five years already. We were living the life for some. Some would think we were living the life, right? And so they said that to us, but we were like, Yeah, whatever. That's not going to happen. We got all these plans. So literally, on a Friday night, so four days later, we did nothing. We went to babysit them. We scheduled to babysit them. We walked in the door and they were like, You'll never believe it. The mom had the baby and she wants to meet you tomorrow.

[00:07:49.770] - Lisa C. Qualls

Oh, wow. Had you done anything? Did you have a home study?

[00:07:54.500] - Maria Hansen-Quine

Nothing. Nothing. So we were like, yeah, okay. And we didn't know where it would take. And the mom lived three hours away. And so Sam and I just felt like God put adoption on our heart. We have to walk this out. Now we say that this is probably the one adoption decision that we didn't have a lot of conversation or wrestle with God about. Now, we did. There was certainly moments in it, but for the others, it was like months of wrestle. So we then, quite literally, this is all quite literally, the next

morning, we drove three hours and met the mom at the hospital. And we spent the whole day with her. And I, for pretty much the whole day held my what would become my daughter. And so at the end of the day, and again, we didn't know. How do you know what is going on or what's going to happen? And she was also adopted, and she also had a brother who was adopted from South Korea. So the connection points, and so she just really had a lot of trust in us. And then also because we were friends, that was a really, really, of course, a really big thing to her. So at the end of that day, she said, I want you to get out of the hospital tomorrow. I'm discharged. I want you to have her tomorrow.

[00:09:23.920] - Lisa C. Qualls
Wow.

[00:09:25.530] - Maria Hansen-Quine
So literally, within a weekend, we became parents. Literally, our world got interrupted. Our world and we became parents. I didn't even feel like I could hold a newborn baby. And I didn't get any prep time. And I have to say, too, the thing that I said I was going to have two kids, the thing that I always wrestled with for probably all of my 20s into my early 30s was I'm going to have two kids and my life is going to look a certain way. And honestly, Lisa, even as Sam and I got married, because I was almost 30 before I had my first, I was like, do I even want kids? And I did have this, that's like, I've got all these other things I want to do. I've got these ideas of my life of how I want it to be. And I don't even know if I want to be a mom, but I feel like I'm supposed to be. I feel like this is what's expected of me. And you know how many kids I have.

[00:10:32.720] - Lisa C. Qualls
Why don't you just mention that here?

[00:10:35.380] - Lisa C. Qualls
I have nine. Nine. And so that was a real struggle for me. And the beautiful thing about that, and so I call my kids jewels. And it's taken me a while to figure out where that came from. And I do feel like it came in that moment. I'm going to cry again. We haven't even started. I'm going to cry. And it was a Saturday. On that Saturday in the hospital when I was holding my daughter, I did hear the Holy Spirit say, she will be one of the best gifts I ever give you. So I did hear that. And that's so that was in the midst of, oh, my gosh, is this really going to happen? I did hear God say that. And so I think... And so my thinking around her as a mom of one sweet, precious jewel was, she's a sacred gift from God. He gave me this picture. It might sound crazy to some of you where he handed her literally from heaven, he handed her down to me. And it was this sweet gift that he was entrusting with me. I share that because I was so I share that because I was so against, do I want to be a mom? Kind of a nuisance. They're going to interrupt my life. And so really, the sweetness of God to be like this. And so we used to call her sweets, and we still call her that. And it came out of this, she would be one of the sweetest gifts I will ever give you. That was how I first became a mom. In the sweetness of all of that, I was like, yes, okay, I want adopted. Three years later, because who has kids close together? Three years later, we had our son biologically and we thought, this is it. This is it. We're set.

[00:12:27.680] - Lisa C. Qualls
I know that you added more children to your family through adoption and also through the birth of another child. But let's fast forward to when Jax and Julia came home.

[00:12:38.670] - Maria Hansen-Quine
I am very passionate about thriving and really believe that God has plans for all of us to thrive, right? Even in the season that we're in right now. And so it was another few years later where God again started stirring our heart for adoption. And he gave me the word grace and said that your next child, your next jewel, their life will be defined by grace. So I thought it was a girl. And it was. It was like a, I remember it. Again, it was like a Tuesday scrolling through my Facebook page. I was not even on Instagram then. And God, literally, I saw this picture of a little girl. And God said, she's your daughter. That's your daughter. And it was like I saw her and she looked familiar to me. We began a process for her. And our kids were very much so. I mean, it's so amazing the way that God works if we let Him. And that's not to say that things are easy, but they're good in the midst of sometimes really being hard. And so we started that paperwork process for her. And we called her Julia, J E W L I A. And I

wanted to call her Jewel. And my kids were like, we're all Jewels, mom. You can't call her that. But the JEWLIA, Jewelia Grace, is what we called her because we thought she was our grace child. This is who God was talking about. And he was talking about her.

[00:14:14.230] - Maria Hansen-Quine

But he wasn't just talking about her. Now you can probably see it. I can feel it in my throat. So during that time, our kids started saying, We should adopt a boy, too. Why are we just adopting one? We're going to China. We know, mom, we know there's lots of little boys waiting there. And we were like, They are crazy. Our kids have lost their mind. But they kept it up. And so after a few months of starting the paper process for Jewlia, we were almost at that point where our home study was done and then all the paper we were sent off, and we were still like, Oh, my gosh, we don't know. And miraculously, I also see that this is God's detail because for about a year, China allowed, it's crazy, two non biologically related kids, if they had really high needs, into the same family.

[00:15:13.530] - Maria Hansen-Quine

So we were in that one year timeframe and our adoption agency typically would say no. And they told us very clearly this might be China's policy, but this is not necessarily our policy. And same as our social worker very clearly said, but then they said, but we'll do it for you. So we were praying about it and just back and forth and wrestle with God, and wrestle with God. You and I met at Refresh. And I have so many stories of where God would speak to me through different things in my life when I would go back to Refresh every year. And so that year, I remember Sam and I were like, we already have seven kids. When we were really praying through, first of all, we maybe know a few other families that have that many kids. Who has nine? Because we were praying about a possible little boy. I remember going to the speaker dinner at the end of Refresh. You know how we do for the breakout speakers? Yeah. And we all sat down and we sat down at a table, not intentionally. And the other two family couples had like, one had like 17 kids, the other one had nine.

[00:16:36.310] - Maria Hansen-Quine

And God, in his grace and perhaps humor, was like, here you go. Here's some. And so we were able to pick their brain. And also in that weekend, the adoption agency, they knew we were wrestling with this. We were having conversations back and forth. They sent us a picture of who would become our son. And he had lost one eye to cancer already in China. But it was retinoblastoma. And retinoblastoma, that's the type of cancer. It's not typically aggressive. It's normally very easy to manage. It normally does not return. That's not typical. We thought, Okay, yeah. Okay, God, this is like, we heard God calling us to him and we were like, Okay, yeah, we can do this. You just lost one eye. This is our perspective and we can manage that. God, we hear your trust calling us. We will trust you in this. It was about three months later that the adoption agency called us and said, His cancer is back. His cancer is back in the other eye. What do you want to do? I remember the person who called us, we'd had a long relationship with, she was sobbing and trying to compose herself.

[00:17:58.180] - Maria Hansen-Quine

And I, Sam and I at first both said, We can't do that. We can't do that. We both spent a few hours praying separately. In that time, God, to both of us said, he's yours. I've called him. I've called you for him. I remember calling Sam and being like, so I feel God's just thinking he's going to be like, and him thinking the same thing about me. And in that time, God had changed both of our hearts. And so we did a medical expedite, which I didn't even know those existed. And a few months later, Jax came home and Jewlia came home. They both got to come home, and God in his sweetness, we had the summer. There's so many stories involved, but we had the summer without any cancer. And then the cancer came back again. So this is now the fourth time or so for Jax already. And the team didn't expect his cancer to be aggressive because typically cancer, retinoblastoma is not aggressive. So they treated it with a super incredible type of chemo where it's called the inter-artery, where they would put chemo literally through his hip area, and it would travel all the way up to the eye. And it would directly go into the eyes. So the side effects were really minimal. To our shock, I mean, really, we found out that the cancer treatments were not working.

[00:19:33.150] - Maria Hansen-Quine

And again, there's a connection point with Refresh because we had done, I don't know, it's hard

timeframe sometimes, right? Eight months of intra-artery chemo, and we were feeling done. We were like, how much longer can we do this? All of his treatments were in Seattle. And so he had weekly appointments. And then just once a month... Now it sounds like just once a month, but at the moment it didn't. We would go and he would have the intra-artery chemo and then spend a night or two in ICU. And so the impact on our family, the impact on our work, all of that was just a lot. And so I remember coming, again, somehow Refresh happened to be like a point there. And I remember coming to that weekend just a mess and emotionally just broken and struggling with just feeling weary with everything that was going on. I remember God just so intentionally met me there that weekend. It wasn't even through any specific speaker per se it was through the worship and just Him restoring me. I do remember our friend Darlene really intentionally praying for me and spending time with me and God just honestly using her to somebody to rub up against and to just make that sound weird but to just restore.

[00:21:12.480] - Maria Hansen-Quine

I remember leaving that weekend feeling like, okay, we can finish the end of this chemo. We thought that God was, and both Sam and I that weekend just felt restored, and felt like we can finish. We thought he was preparing us to finish well and really what he was doing was preparing us for what was ahead. And we had no idea. And sometimes I give the analogy of that I thought I was standing on top of a mountain. We were finished. We had a couple more treatments left. And instead God was preparing us for the darkest valley that we would ever walk through. The next one or two treatments after Refresh. And I remember walking out of the hospital and I was carrying Jax, and he had this polka dot blanket that he still has. And he was wrapped in it. And he had just been really struggling more so than usual. And I remember carrying him and walking out and talking to him. You've been to Seattle Children's. They have it. Many times. They had that giraffe statue. And I remember walking out and I was trying to distract him and I was trying to... Something was going on. And I walked over to the statue and I was like, hey, because we had seen that before, talking to him about this statue and pointing it out to him. And he said, I can't see it. And that was the point where his vision never came back after that moment.

[00:22:44.430] - Maria Hansen-Quine

You know God and his tenderness, you know I'm doing some writing. So some of this is from... There's clarity in some of these moments we got because God has revealed some of these stories to me later. There's so many more stories. But just a couple of years ago, God.. I'm going to like full on cry.

[00:23:05.070] - Lisa C. Qualls

It's okay. The people listening to this, all you listeners out there, I know that we understand the tenderness of this story and your love for your kids and for the Lord.

[00:23:17.120] - Maria Hansen-Quine

It was really a sweetness. I wrote it all out, because I feel like I was one of my other kids in this. But God essentially revealed to me that the last face my sweet voice saw before he has lost his vision was mine. He didn't show that to me until a couple of years ago when I started really... I heard God asked me to start writing and he asked me to write a book. And so it was in that process that he showed me, revealed to me that moment. And that was such a gift to my heart. And we went home thinking because Jax had lost part of his sight just partially through some of the other chemo treatments. And so we thought, this is just another side effect. It's going to come back. It did not cross our mind that his vision would forever be gone. And we didn't even tell the doctors about it right away because we thought this is just a normal, right? And so after about a week or so of being home, we were like, maybe we should let them know. This seems like it's not coming back. We called the doctors and told them what had happened. And they also thought, Oh, yeah, it's probably just... It's okay. You're scheduled to come in next week. We will look at it then. You're right. It probably is just the normal. But the other thing they did is our head doctor who tried to retire. This was early spring, and he had semi retired and had planned to retire many times during these next several months. They emailed him. He was in Italy on a trip, and they emailed him and told him what had happened. The moment he got that email, he called and said, You have him come in the next day. I don't know if you've ever had a doctor cry on you.

[00:25:16.630] - Lisa C. Qualls
I have. When we lost Kalkidan, yeah.

[00:25:20.690] - Maria Hansen-Quine
There's something like, right? It's not an experience that we don't ever expect our doctors to cry on us. And so we went in that day, they did a lot of different tests, and we had two separate doctors cry. And what they learned had happened is that the cancer had spread down his optic nerve and was hanging outside his brain, the wall that goes into the brain. And the reason he had lost his vision was because the cancer had eaten up everything on the optic nerve so much so that his vision was gone. And again, by the Grace of God, because had he not lost his vision, it might have been a while before we realized the extent of where the cancer was going. We then went into, I don't know how to describe it, high gear. You're going to have a port. He's going to start, I call it traditional, but systemic chemo next week. It was like, this is now completely different. And so we went from the type of chemo that I explained to you now, essentially, you need to stay within an hour of Seattle. And he can't be home except for maybe about once a month for a couple of days, and he will lose his hair. He's going to have to fight for his life. At that point, the doctors were pretty optimistic feeling like that they would get the cancer. Right? So we, I mean, you know, are having to tell your kids this is happening, this is what this is what it's going to look like, but we really don't know. This is what's going to have to happen. And it was harder than anything that I've ever walked in my life. And this is no disrespect against the quarantine that we're all going through right now. But essentially, our family was in a quarantine for that time because if Jax even got a cold, it could land him in the emergency room fighting for his life because every time he had the systemic chemo, his body would be so beaten down, there'd be no white blood cells. And he could not be out at all. And then if any of us were out and in contact with him, we risk exposing him to so many different things. Again, there's so many stories during that time.

[00:28:10.520] - Lisa C. Qualls
Well, and let me ask, too, you were separated from your family for long periods of time, right? Just you and Jax were in Seattle, and Sam was a couple of hours away with the kids. And anybody who's experienced anything like that, it is unbelievably hard. Unbelievably. You know, we experienced that only a little bit when Kalkidan was hospitalized at Seattle Children's. And the profound loneliness and responsibility I felt being there by myself wa... and the isolation. The isolation.

[00:28:47.720] - Maria Hansen-Quine
Yeah. And sometimes we were in that sometimes too, we couldn't even leave the floor. I mean, the room, not even the room because whatever was going on in Jax's little body, we couldn't even leave his room. One time he was in isolation for 10 days, and he couldn't leave that room, that hospital room. Sam and I tagged off, essentially for other kids, we imposed more trauma on him. And our one sweet little guy that I called Curious George, what happened during that time is that all of his grief and loss that had stayed under the surface came up. And so his healing from all of that has been a long journey because the parent... Again, his own adoption story, we know some of the details, but we kept leaving him. That's what it happened with all the moves that he had in his life before he came to us. He also didn't get to see his brother being really sick because if you were under a certain age, if Jax was showing certain symptoms, they could not go into the hospital room. So the only time he would see him was the one or two days a month where he was well before his white blood cells started going back down. So in his little brain, none of this made sense.

[00:30:14.070] - Lisa C. Qualls
Because Jax seemed okay-ish.

[00:30:17.320] - Maria Hansen-Quine
Yeah, a couple of days. And I later had to have a real, felt really ugly, but conversation like, this is what was going on with your brother. You just never got to see it. Because he needed to have that be a part of his process, of processing through everything that was going on. But the tenderness, yeah. So it was me and God, Lisa. Honestly, I wish I could say, lots of people came to visit us. They didn't, and this is going to sound bad, but I think people don't know what to do. I really did feel very isolated

during that time. But God met me. People sometimes say that, and it sounds like an easy or a simple answer, but he really did. And he taught me to believe in miracles during that time because there came a point where the doctors looked us in the eye and said, we're going to have to end chemo and you need to meet with the hospice team because he's not going to make it. And so there was different things during that time. Jax had his last remaining eye surgically removed during that time. There's so many things that happened during that time.

[00:31:36.220] - Maria Hansen-Quine

Really more than anything is that God met us and showed himself to us in a newer way. And you know, when you look at eternity, when you have to... So there was a weekend where the doctor said, I guess pretty early on, and even when Jax was doing intra-artery chemo, I had these experiences with God. And I had an experience where I was... this was during the first type of chemo, where I remember one night putting Jax to bed and then just sobbing and praying and asking God to heal my son. I thought I was, I didn't realize the type of healing I was asking for. Because at that time, his cancer still seemed pretty mild and there was not even a consideration that he would ever lose his vision. I heard God clearly say, I'm going to heal him. Don't you worry about it. I'm going to heal him. From that moment on, I started praying for an excessive medical miracle with no expectation that that was literally what we would need. That weekend where the doctors came to us and said, He's not going to make it. I, in my spirit, I just was like, No. I really was like, This is not what God has told me.

[00:32:58.460] - Maria Hansen-Quine

I was like, I need the head of oncology to come tell me. I'm not going to believe you unless you send in the head of oncology. So he came in a couple of hours later and told us the same thing. I said, no, because he was scheduled to start chemo the following week. I was like, No. And so what they did was like, okay. I was like, If we ever get to that point, we will do it. But I do not feel like the point is now. They said, Okay, well, on Monday, we'll do another MRI. So they had done a spinal tap, and the spinal tap had shown what spinal taps do is they... And he had them weekly. He had weekly spinal taps. Spinal taps, they show that there are cells that have gone outside down the spine, which then means that it's traveled through the brain. And so for them, it was like, We'll do the MRI. Then probably thinking they would give us more evidence because spinal taps are early detection, which is why they do them. And God, to both Sam and I said, better things are yet to come.

[00:34:07.310] - Maria Hansen-Quine

And we really held on to that and didn't know what that would look like. So on Monday, we had the MRI. And you can get MRI results scheduled quickly. You can get results back real quick. And so the doctor, there was one doctor, and this was the only time I ever... And she's a good doctor, this is not a knock on her, but this is the only time I saw her smile was when she came in and told us there's no cancer in his brain.

[00:34:35.780] - Lisa C. Qualls

Oh, wow.

[00:34:38.040] - Maria Hansen-Quine

There's no cancer in his brain. So we continued chemo and long, long, long. There's a lot of things that could be said. So I could write a whole book just about Jax's story, and maybe one day I will. There's just so much that happened. But the other really cool thing about that time is that in terms of our life, tangible needs? You think about expenses, right? You can imagine even things that insurance doesn't cover or whatnot. God brought these people that rallied around us, and I feel like he excessively blessed us and took care of our needs and we didn't have to do anything. So there was our friends that started fundraising, and it was crazy the amount of money that they raised for us, and we had nothing to do with it. There was people that came and did our laundry. I don't think I cooked the meal for eight, 10 months. All to say, Lisa, is that during that time, God used so many different people to take excessively bless us and take care of our needs. They were people we knew and they were complete strangers. They were people that from our church, our pastor there at North County. Then again, people we didn't know. It just blows my mind to this day of the way that God served people's hearts in the way that they so tangibly took care of us.

[00:36:10.890] - Maria Hansen-Quine

Thousands of people prayed for Jax, right? Somehow, honestly, across the globe, not just where we lived, and his story caught the attention of a lot of different people. I really truly believe that God used the prayers of many people to do the many miracles that he did in Jax's life. Again, so many things that we could say, but Jax now, those of you who are wondering, he is six. Him and Julia both are finishing first grade. We since have moved to a new state, which is another whole long story. But I'll just say that Jax is thriving. He can read and write and Braille. He is one of the... I have eight other jewels. He's one incredibly intelligent, articulate, gifted little guy. There's no way to explain his life except to say that there's God. This is going to sound bad, but God made me put a little extra anointing on him. Certainly has protected his life because the amount of trauma that he's gone through is medical trauma alone and then adoption trauma, his story.

[00:37:27.330] - Maria Hansen-Quine

His orphanage in China was incredible. They always told us we took him to the best hospital they did. They flew him all the way to Beijing from many provinces over. They told us we took him to the best hospital possible. And we really truly believe he did. God had to have used nurses in China that nurtured him. There's just no other explanation. And the orphanage director, it was a smaller orphanage compared to some of our other kids. There was 100 kids there, and he clearly cared about Jax, and we can see that in his life. So I think you know that we're in... So we're doing... We've gone from... You go from every month test, every two months, every six months is where we're at where they're checking Jax's brain for cancer. The last MRI showed that it had a cyst in his brain, which was unexpected for all of us. But it's the thing where they say, We don't know what this is going to do. It could do nothing. We know of the way that cysts operate. It's so small right now. They don't know. And so in May, he scheduled to go in for another MRI where they'll see what has happened. We're asking people to pray with expectation that God will heal him. We know and believe that God can do that. And so that's our prayer is that another excessive medical miracle that we have that MRI. And the doctors say, Oh, my gosh, I don't know what happened, but it's gone. It's just gone. And so I think, I don't know if, I don't think I said this, but Jax is riding a bike.

[00:39:15.870] - Lisa C. Qualls

I love the videos of him riding his bike. It's so sweet.

[00:39:19.090] - Maria Hansen-Quine

It's like miraculous. So many steps to that and God's goodness in that. So, I mean, he is doing really well and we're definitely at a place as a family where we feel like we're thriving again. And that doesn't come easy. I don't say that easily. But we moved to Arizona, moved four teenagers to a new state. Let me just say that. Sam and I fight to thrive as a family. We fight for that is the better way to say it. But definitely that's where we are as a family. And it doesn't mean that we're not working really hard for especially a couple of our kids every single day. And we probably will, into adulthood and that's okay. And so that's the summary version of my story.

[00:40:22.500] - Lisa C. Qualls

Well, you know what? When you get that book written, everybody will get to hear a whole lot more. Well, this has been just a wonderful conversation, Maria. I'm so thankful that you would share this time with us and with our listeners. I will have in the show notes, I'll be sure to put Deborah Gray's books. I'll put links for the Refresh conference. And you have an Instagram account. Is that where you put most of your energy on Instagram? Okay. So we'll have links for your Instagram and anything else so that people can reach out to you or just follow Jax's story and pray for you. But well, thank you so much, Maria. It's been a real blessing to talk to you.

[00:41:05.260] - Maria Hansen-Quine

Thank you. It's been my honor.

[00:41:11.090] - Melissa Corkum

It's so fun to hear some of Maria's story. I've known her for a couple of years, and I actually didn't know hardly any of that. What I took away from that, though, is I know for me that I can get all wrapped up in kids who have big behaviors and challenges, and get all wrapped up in the next thing,

dragging my kids the next therapy, watching the next conference, all of these things. And I love how centered Maria is around just prayer and her faith, and just remembering at the end of the day, God's in control. And I think that keeps us grounded from flying off with all the ideas and having all the big behaviors, I think, run our life.

[00:41:59.200] - Lisa C. Qualls

Well, and for me, it's so easy for me to run to fear when things feel like they are just spinning out of control. But when I can remember that God is with me, and that he has a plan and a purpose, I can calm myself down, which is really, really important. So for those of you listening who are people of faith, we just want to remind ourselves and you that we do not do this alone and that we don't even really have to be in charge because God has got it.

[00:42:29.340] - Melissa Corkum

Yeah, I love that.

[00:42:30.620] - Lisa C. Qualls

If you would like to learn more about Maria and her family, you can follow her on social media and you can find all her social media things and her book, where you can find her book, all in the show notes of this episode. And you'll find those at theadoptionconnection.com/97. Before you go, we'd love to connect with you on social media. You can find us on Facebook or Instagram as The Adoption Connection.

[00:42:59.760] - Melissa Corkum

Thanks so much for listening. We love having you. If you enjoyed this episode, please leave a quick review over on iTunes. It will help us reach more moms who may be feeling alone.

[00:43:09.510] - Lisa C. Qualls

And remember, until next week, you're a good mom doing good work, and we're here for you.

[00:43:16.900] - Melissa Corkum

The music for the podcast is called New Day and was created by Lee Rosevere