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This is the story of my child's recent harrowing yet overcoming entry into our world.

My last day of work was Friday, and the next day on Saturday I went into labor at 11:45pm. (It makes sense psychologically: "okay I'm done with work, now ready for the next thing.") Obviously, I did not sleep that night!

At around 2am we phoned our wonderful midwife Lorri, who lives in Goldendale, so she made the 1.5 hour drive down. The delivery room was our home movie theater. There I had hung up hanging star lamps, had meditation music playing, and the ceiling was painted black with twinkling blue LED lights pinned up to look like a starry night which reflected magically on the water below. I didn't have any pain killers whatsoever~ but that wasn't even on my mind! All I could do was concentrate on getting through it, and getting it out of me! It was the most intense, painful, powerful, & bad ass thing that I've ever done!

We didn't know the sex of the baby, so as soon as I had that baby in my arms I felt around and it was a girl! Exactly what Travis and I hoped for!! Her name is **Phoebe Estelle**, which literally means  "bright star."  I knew Estelle meant star when I chose the middle name, but I didn't know at the time until Travis told me later: in Greek, Phoebe means "bright." "She's our Bright Star!" we said.

Phoebe was born Sunday, August 23rd at 1:34pm, 5lbs & 7 ounces & 18" long. She was full term at 38 weeks + 6 days. Phoebe came out healthy and for the first five minutes, we got a couple pictures, & Travis read a bible verse over her, **Jeremiah 29:11**.

But, very soon it was clear she was having trouble and getting weak. *She couldn't use her lungs.* She had breathed in meconium while she was in the womb, and the sticky substance made her lungs collapse and not receive oxygen, although not for her lack of trying. She's was a fighter from the start. The paramedics soon came and as I handed Phoebe off to them I told Travis, "God's will be done," not knowing what would be the outcome. There's nothing you can do but surrender to fate when you have no control and anything could happen. It was easy to give her up... she was going into better hands from that moment forward.

Travis said he went from complete joy to complete fear within a span of 10 minutes. He left with her in the ambulance leaving me behind at home. A couple blocks away at Memorial hospital, strong Phoebe was fighting the nurses kicking and squirming so they had to sedate her. She had collapsing lungs, pulmonary hypertension, pneumonia, her heart was shunting blood the wrong way, and she was so cold they couldn't get a temp. She didn't react well to the first medicine they gave her. Each intervention they tried wasn't working, and with each bad news after another, Travis became more traumatized and in shock. They stabilized her on a ventilator to keep her lungs open with 100% oxygen, but for the care and medicine she needed, she would have to be air lifted by Life Flight to Spokane Sacred Heart Children's Hospital.



you got this!



I met up with Travis at Memorial hospital. My mom's a nurse so she snuck me in the back door to avoid any "COVID hold up." Travis and I we didn't know if Phoebe would make it or not...we spoke about bracing ourselves—that we may lose the only child we had together so soon. We said, "**no matter what happens, she will always be our** ❄️ 'bright star.' "❄️

Travis left with our daughter on the 45 minute life-flight to Spokane Sacred Heart Hospital. The team on the airplane cared for her as if she were one of their own. As soon as they got to the hospital, he couldn't go in with her. In order for either of us to be able to see our daughter, we would have to be tested negative for COVID-19. After hours of scouring clinics, we finally found places where we could get tested and thank God we were both negative, which meant

Phoebe could get out of isolation and we would be allowed to see her.

My parents drove me up to Spokane the next day and they bought us a week stay at a hotel across from the hospital, and they stayed in a room across the hall. I don't know how we would have managed without them. We're so thankful we were in Spokane—being in familiar territory was a comfort to us where we visited Phoebe day after day. Eventually, we moved to the Ronald McDonald charity house for the remainder of our stay.

I sang 'Twinkle Twinkle Little Star' ❄️ to her at her basinet. She was hooked up to so many wires and tubes all over the place keeping her stable, keeping me from holding her. Sadly, because of COVID-19, Travis and I were not allowed to visit Phoebe together, so we had to take turns. Still, we were so thankful to see her and that she was receiving the best care.

Each day we came to see her we were told she was getting better and better! As soon as she could, they removed sedatives, other medicines, then the ventilator turned into a CPAP, which turned into a cannula, they lowered the oxygen support until eventually the only thing keeping her from coming home now was being able to do well without the supportive air pressure and feeding orally. Finally, she was free from all the wires/tubes! She was drinking milk and doing great! After two weeks in the NICU, Phoebe was discharged!



In two weeks, she made a miraculous recovery—the doctors were surprised with how fast she healed. It was the most heavyhearted and tiring two weeks, but through all the pain, we knew Phoebe was worth it. She is a strong fighter and truly a bright star❄️ in our friends' and family's lives! I'm so grateful for her—she was quite the surprise and so special!

Our precious Phoebe Estelle might not have made it. Even though we were scared & heartbroken, we found so many reasons to be grateful & blessed. We are so thankful we live in an time of advanced medical technology, for the medical professionals' care & compassion, for the thousands of people praying for her & us, for the generosity of so many, and for the many blessings that met us every day. Thank you for all your support & prayers over this last month.



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