



Happy Holidays from the McGee clan. This is our second year to send out a family letter and we are excited about how the Lord has blessed us this year.

The year started off with a bang with our celebration of Stacey and Kevin's wedding. Stacey had been with us since she was fifteen. It was so exciting to see her transform from a quiet teenager who basically kept to herself to a beautiful, assertive, confident young woman. She is now very good at expressing herself and never misses an opportunity to make those around her laugh. We love her sweet spirit and can't wait for her and Kevin to decide to have babies. We think they will make incredible parents. In January we also started visiting a new church. We visited about four times before Don and I both felt this is where the Lord wanted us to be and on Valentines Day we joined. Our pastor is incredible and we are learning so much about the Lord and how He wants us to serve Him.

Don took a trip to San Francisco in early February for work and during this trip Adam became very sick and I ended up at the hospital with him. He had a tummy virus and became dehydrated but once they got some fluids in him he was back to normal within a few days. Aaron was making strides at independence and started standing alone and within a short time was walking and exploring everything! Ever since he became mobile he has been a bit more of a challenge as he determines to explore the world around him with no regard for the NO s that mommy reminds him of continually. I was able to attend

the Jazz Explosion with Mary and Don and I went to an Avalon concert. Both events were incredible and we were excited to be able to participate in them. Nicole went to New Life Weekend, a weekend that the church sets aside for the youth to have time away from home and grow closer to the Lord.

Don took another trip to Atlanta in March and I was able to take a short trip up to Tyler with the kids for Spring Break. I realized quickly how difficult a trip is to make with three children on my own. It gave me a renewed appreciation for everything Don does to help with the kids and household responsibilities. But we had a good visit with the Merritts and are looking forward to another visit soon. Nicole went through tryouts for cheerleader and we were so excited to find out that she had made the squad!

On April 1, I found out (to my extreme astonishment) that we were pregnant with McGee baby #4. Don was ecstatic and as soon as I recovered from the shock, I was excited as well. I never would have planned babies only 18 months apart, but God is good and He must know something about me that I don't! We gathered at Tammy's house for an Easter celebration and had a great time watching the kids search out and find Easter eggs. It was also great because on April 9th, we celebrated Nicole's fourth year since she gave her heart to the Lord. We are so blessed to see our children deciding to follow God. Don and I attended a Covenant Keepers Marriage Conference at church and learned a lot about keeping our marriage a priority. We were even able to repeat our vows and make a renewed commitment to make this marriage everything that the Lord would want. Nicole turned 12 and as part of her birthday celebration, we rented a limousine and with 5 of her friends headed out to Galveston to the Flagship hotel. The girls had a great time and they were so fun to be around. The Lord has really blessed Nicole with some incredible friendships and we are so pleased to see her learning so much about nurturing relationships.

In May, we celebrated Aaron's 1st birthday. It was hard to believe that a year had already passed. We were so happy to have our family all around us as we celebrated such a happy occasion. I was able to take part in a Ladies Retreat in Galveston. We also were thrilled to attend Anne Kirkpatrick Myers' college graduation ceremony. She has worked very hard and it was great to see her accomplish her goal. Nicole spent some time in Lake Charles with her cousins Lindsay and Kristen.

In June, Nicole took part in a cheer camp that was held at HBU. The girls all worked very hard and their performance at the end of the week was incredible. I attended a Premier Jewelry party with a friend at church and I actually won \$500 worth of free jewelry. I never win anything so I was so amazed that I was the person who won. I had a great time picking out some things just for me to enjoy. I also volunteered to teach crafts for Vacation Bible School and the kids were great. We celebrated Fathers Day with the world's Number 1 Dad and I was blessed enough to have a 12 year friendship restored after 4 years of lost communication. God is so good.

In July, Nicole participated in Reality Week which is a summer camp held for the youth in Jacksonville, Mississippi. She returned with renewed vigor at serving the Lord and cultivating a closer relationship with Him. We spent July 4th with one of Don's friends from work and the kids were able to see some fireworks. I went to an Outrageous Joy conference with my mother-in-law, Ann, and we had a great time. If you ever have a chance to see Patsy Clairmont, Barbara Johnson, and Lucy Swindoll, do not miss it. We had an ultrasound performed this month and we were tickled to find out that we were expecting a girl. Nicole was able to spend time at Grandma McGee's with her cousins Robin and Diana and Adam celebrated his fourth birthday. We had the party at the Birthday House and the neat thing about it was it was the same place we had Nicole's fourth birthday party. The kids were able to ride a horse, visit a petting zoo, have their faces painted, hit a pinata and see a clown. Everyone had a great time.

In August, Don was asked to teach a Junior High Sunday School class. After filling in for a few weeks, he decided this was NOT where the Lord was leading him to serve. He is looking for other opportunities to serve within the church. We were blessed with a visit from the Merritts from Tyler and school started back for the kids. Nicole started 7th grade and the boys are both in Mothers Day Out two days a week. Nicole is doing well in her studies and Adam is learning a lot about self-control. He is doing much better with his behavior issues and learning to get along in a group situation.

In September, the whole family headed out to Columbus, Texas. We have friends that have a Christian Family Camp and we spent five incredible days away from television, telephone, beepers and the hustle and bustle of daily responsibilities. It was a great time of restoration for us as a family to spend time away from the daily grind and alone with each other and the Lord. Adam caught his first fish and Nicole spent a lot of time horseback riding. We are planning to return in January. If any of you are looking for a good place to retreat, Crier Creek Christian Family Camp is the place to be. We'd be glad to give you information and a personal recommendation.

My baby shower was in October and I was very blessed to receive so many nice things for Abbey. Her closet is exploding in pink! In fact, her whole nursery is a pink with bows explosion. But it is just the way I wanted it. No one could make any mistake that it is a little girl's room.

Unexpectedly, in November, Don suffered another injury to his back and after a few days of hospitalization, he underwent surgery for a herniated disk in his back. He also had weeks of physical therapy and recovered quite quickly. He is such a trooper and was determined to feel better and be able to help me in time for Abbey's birth. He has been an awesome help with the kids and household responsibilities. He is such an incredible husband and father. Once again, God is so good!

Hands down, the most incredible gift we received this year was the birth of our daughter, Abbey Noelle, on December 3rd. She arrived at 11:32PM and weighed in at 8 pounds, 4 ounces. After three days of induction and problems with hospital scheduling, it ended up being the best birth experience we have ever had. We delivered in one of the nicest birthing rooms, recovered in one of the nicest private rooms and the delivery itself was fairly easy (once the epidural finally took effect!). I only pushed through three contractions and she was here! This month, Adam performed in a Christmas program for Mothers Day Out and it was so fun to watch him prepare by learning the songs. Don was released to return to work after six weeks on short-term disability.

Most of December was spent preparing for Christmas with the kids. We've also been trying to adjust to having a newborn in the house and sleep deprivation. The kids had a wonderful Christmas and Abbey is just precious. I just love having a big family. As we enter the new year, our plans are to start shopping for a home of our own. We are very excited about the possibilities and are praying that the Lord will open up just the right place. Well, that about wraps it up. I'm sure you were wondering if the letter would ever end! I am just awestruck at how incredible the Lord is. My heart's desire is to always be able to find His blessings, even in the midst of struggles. We love all of you and want you to know that you are always on our hearts and in our prayers. May the Lord bless you through the coming year.