

# In My Hands

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Strength and faith are the words that come to mind as I reflect on the labor of Ms. TF and the delivery of her baby boy. It is such an amazing experience to see a child come into the world. It is an even greater experience when you know the child belongs to a family that has such strong values that it emanates as you enter their room—values similar to my own. The family, and their presence, assured me that the new child entering the world would be greatly loved—a family that reminded me of my own. Her husband, mother, grandmother, sister, aunts, and a few friends accompanied the laboring mother. A small radio in the corner of the room played a collection of songs praising God’s greatness, mercy, and power. I was touched by the music as the message in the songs ministered to my personal needs as well. As labor progressed, the faces of the family members showed concern and anguish.

A profound moment... the soon-to-be father kneeled at the bedside, closed his eyes, and prayed. I remember the prayers my mother prayed with me. There was concern for the possibility of a complication. Each time I entered the room, all faces turned to me as if I had explanations. When is the baby coming? What time do you think he will be here? I wish I had an answer, or the ability to predict so I could give them satisfying news. The colorful squiggly lines on the fetal heart monitor and the heartbeat (which sounded more like the hooves of a trotting horse) were the focus of the nurse’s attention as she stared at the monitor, frequently checking without explaining her interpretation to the parents, family, or even me. I could only interpret the fetal heart status as “reassuring.” And I reassured the parents and family of that.

After several hours, the moment we had all been anxiously waiting for had arrived. The mom felt an uncontrollable urge to push, and I as well as the family members got excited. It all seemed to happen so fast. The doctor told me to sit down at the stool that was placed before the mother. I didn’t hesitate. I couldn’t believe it! It was surreal. Several pushes. Grimaces. The mom was in what seemed like agony and then she became exhausted. “Please get the vacuum. Get the forceps. I just can’t do this anymore. I can’t!” she moaned. With each push the maternal grandmother of the soon to- be-born infant began to repeat, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” My mother would tell me the same thing at my toughest moments, particularly as I have struggled through medical school. She asked her daughter to repeat the phrase. I repeated it in my head. “I can do all things... I can do all things...I can do all things...”

Something sunk in.

An inner strength was discovered. “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me,” said the mother and grandmother in tandem. Before I knew it, there was a beautiful, crying, healthy boy in my hands. The family was ecstatic. I was ecstatic. All felt overwhelming joy.

“I can do all things...” I can’t believe that after what I feel has been my most challenging, difficult, emotionally and mentally exhausting year in school ever, the second year of medical school, I have overcome obstacles, and defied those who doubted me, and those who dismissed my dreams. I am incredibly thankful for this opportunity and experience.