



"The way God has held and directed this family through the adoption process is an inspiration to others."

MARY BETH CHAPMAN

President of Show Hope and *New York Times* bestselling author of *Choosing to SEE*

# Wait No More

*one family's amazing  
adoption journey*

FOCUS<sup>®</sup>  
ON  
THE FAMILY

Kelly & John Rosati

*Wait No More* captures the beauty of adoption and recognizes that we are all made in God's image, created for a purpose, and part of one family. As the Rosatis tell their personal story of the Lord-led journey to fulfill the family He intended for them, you cannot help but come away with the certainty that God truly works all things together for the good when we follow His plan for our lives. It won't always be easy, but it is certainly worth it. This is a great read for anyone who is considering adoption or needs a word of encouragement and assurance that God is in control.

—WILLIAM J. BLACQUIERE

President & CEO, Bethany Christian Services

This is a book that will grip you from the inside out and not let go until you have caught the heart of God for the orphans among us. Sharing candid details of their own journey, Kelly and John Rosati's story will help all of us count the cost before saying yes to the adventure and miracle of adoption.

—BRADY BOYD

Senior Pastor, New Life Church

Author, *Fear No Evil*

Dad to two adopted children, Abram and Callie

Kelly and John Rosati have written an honest look at foster care adoption and all the challenges and emotions that come with that journey. The way that God has held and directed this family through the adoption process is an inspiration to others who find themselves journeying the same unpredictable path. An honest telling of the joys that come through while fighting for the family that God designed them to have, this story will encourage believers and the church to mobilize and move

tenaciously to help the world's 140 million plus children who find themselves orphaned.

—MARY BETH CHAPMAN

President, Show Hope

New York Times Best-Selling Author, *Choosing to SEE*

Our friends Kelly and John have big hearts—hearts that ache for kids who are often overlooked by society. The miracle of adoption has turned their world upside down. Has it been an easy process? No, but as the Rosatis will tell you, good things are worth fighting for.

—JIM AND JEAN DALY

Jim is president of Focus on the Family

and author of *Finding Home* and *Stronger*

Our world is in need of something more than a good story; it needs a God story. *Wait No More* is about the kind of life every family dreams to live—risky and uncertain but filled with a faith that is vibrant and alive in a God who is with them every step of the way. Reading this book will inspire you to live for things bigger than this world can imagine.

—TOM DAVIS

CEO, Children's HopeChest

Author, *Fields of the Fatherless* and *Priceless*

Usually when I read a book I read the first two chapters, the end, and then the two middle chapters, and I'm done. I couldn't do that with this book. The power of this message will make the difference in the lives of children/youth, families, and churches around this

nation. The Rosatis' journey of building their family through adoption from the foster care system became my journey. I read and wept. And I read and cheered. And then I read Chapter 24 and just sobbed and thanked God. Every child/youth in foster care waits for a family that will care, nurture, advocate, and fight to keep them safe and meet their needs. These four children wait no more. The Rosatis' intercession for other children brings hope that others will be inspired to adopt from foster care. Because every child/youth deserves to grow up in a family.

—SHAREN FORD, PH.D.

Manager, Permanency Services, Colorado

Department of Human Services

Adoption mirrors the gospel story, not only in its joy but often in great sacrifices as well. Adoption draws us closer to the world's hurt, even as it reminds us of the preciousness of every child and the sweetness when love springs up where only pain had lived before. *Wait No More* carries all of this, showing one family's experience of how beauty and sorrow so often intertwine in an adoption journey. Sometimes raw, sometimes joyous, always honest, *Wait No More* will undoubtedly spur many families to question whether adoption may be too difficult a road for them . . . and also whether any other path could bring such great rewards.

—JEDD MEDEFIND

President, Christian Alliance for Orphans

In *Wait No More*, we are given a very intimate and transparent look into how the Lord transforms lives and a family through adoption. Kelly and John demonstrate that the only reason to adopt a child

is to love him or her unconditionally. By being available for how God wanted to use them, the Rosatis paint for the reader a very real picture of how adoption is a journey in which we often join in the sufferings of Christ, but in so doing, experience amazing joy as well.

—PAUL PENNINGTON

Executive Director & Co-Founder, Hope for Orphans

In *Wait No More*, Kelly Rosati contextualizes a personal narrative that reconciles a pro-life conviction with the compassionate action of adoption. Kelly demonstrates that in the 21st century, prophetic witness must accompany Christian outreach even in the most dire of circumstances. This book captures the heart of the gospel message as this generation reaches out to the orphan and the hurting, all in the name of Christ.

—REVEREND SAMUEL RODRIGUEZ

President, National Hispanic Christian

Leadership Conference (NHCLC)

*Wait No More* is a touching story of Kelly and John Rosati's personal journey of faith and obedience, leading them to the adoption of four very needy children. As believers in Christ, we have been given a biblical mandate to "care for the least of these," without excuse. And clearly, children without a loving home are the neediest of all. *Wait No More* will open your eyes to the growing numbers and plight of orphans in our world today. The stories in this book will break your heart and challenge you to action.

—DR. WESS STAFFORD

President & CEO, Compassion International



# Wait No More

Kelly & John Rosati



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**FOCUS**<sup>®</sup>  
ON THE  
**FAMILY**

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Photos of Hope and Joshua (top and right) on page 7 of insert and family photo on page 8 of insert taken by Stephen Vosloo. Copyright © by Focus on the Family. All rights reserved.

People's names and certain details of their stories have been changed to protect the privacy of the individuals involved. However, the facts of what happened and the underlying principles have been conveyed as accurately as possible.

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# A Picture of Our Future

I felt as if I was losing my mind. In one quick swoop, my belief that I was following God's will for my life, that my husband, John, and I were going in the right direction, was replaced by doubt, fear, frustration, and anger. I cried out to God for help.

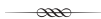
What had started out as a deep desire to help a child in need had left John and me spiraling into despair. Surely this wasn't God's plan for us. Or was it? All I knew was that something had gone terribly wrong. And that my passionate hope to make a difference had turned our lives upside down. If someone had told this Midwestern girl just a few years before that I would be living in Hawaii, serving as a foster mother to an eleven-year-old girl, and feeling completely ready to pull out my hair, I wouldn't have believed it.

Our friend Deeanna had taken Angie, the eleven-year-old girl who was living with us, away for the weekend. John and I needed a break. We needed to regroup. During those few days, John and I wrestled mightily with the Lord about whether we could keep Angie

in our home. We'd known it was only supposed to be a temporary arrangement. But after just one month, we were ready to quit.

Can you believe it? Only one month, and we were in hell.

I kept wondering how I'd gotten to this place in my life.



It was April 16, 2000. John and I were living in Hawaii—John's third air force assignment—and I was working as the executive director for the Hawaii Family Forum (HFF), a nonprofit organization that provided pro-family education to local churches and the community. John and I had been happily married for eight years. The truth was that we'd always planned to have a family but wanted to wait until John's military assignments were more stable. The last thing we ever wanted was to be separated or to have children constantly moving around. We were also committed to my being home with our children when they were babies, and we simply weren't in a financial position yet for that to happen.

We loved our lives and enjoyed our time together immensely. But by the time we decided we were ready to have children, nothing happened. And yet interestingly, and somewhat unusually, we weren't fazed by it. For several months we tried to get pregnant, but the months came and went with no change. It just wasn't happening. We experienced some disappointment each month, but not overwhelming disappointment or grief.

John and I both have said that sometimes it seems easier to trust God in the really big things than it does in the small things, and this was one of those big things that was out of our control. God's timing was also significant. From the rearview mirror, it's clear to us now that God just swept us right into the next phase of life.

We always believed that if we weren't getting pregnant, there was a reason. And to us, adoption seemed like the obvious reason, though we weren't ready to pursue it right then. We know it's not how others might have felt in the same situation, and believe me, the ease with which we stepped through that period of life had nothing to do with us. We attribute it to God's grace. Nothing more. We figured God had a different plan for us down the road, and we were okay with that. We had full lives and ministries, were active with our church, and were all around really happy, content folks.

John and I became involved in the pro-life movement early in our marriage. And my interest in pro-life issues had begun to seriously grow ever since my second and third years of law school. Stemming from my pro-life passion was an eagerness to advance the public-policy cause of adoption.

I learned about a Christian woman named DeeannaMarie Wallace. She had been involved in adoption for decades, both personally and as a calling to help other kids and families. She and her husband, Randy, had nine kids, seven of whom were adopted. She had mentored and supported countless Christian families throughout the adoption process, and her name kept coming up whenever I spoke with anyone about adoption.

Deeanna was developing a reputation as the Christian go-to lady on adoption. I needed to connect with her. Through a series of phone calls and various connections, Deeanna invited John and me to their home for dinner.

Unknown to us, that night would change our lives forever.

John and I held hands and said grace around the dinner table in Deeanna and Randy's modest home. Joining us were their five girls, who ranged in age from five to fifteen and represented every size, shape, color, ethnicity, and background. Several of the girls were

already adopted; others were in the Wallace home through foster care.

“There are orphans right here in Hawaii who need adoptive families,” Deeanna told us passionately. “They’re trapped in foster care, and the church really needs to get involved.”

We looked at their girls. Here they were, former legal orphans in our own state, our own community, our own neighborhood.

Throughout the course of the night, we learned that these girls had experienced abuse, neglect, and abandonment. Unspeakable, harrowing things were done to them by their birth parents, whose job it was to take care of and protect them. We also learned that if a child is in foster care long enough, eventually the birth-parents’ rights will be terminated, and the child will become a “legal orphan.” And then that child will sit and wait. And wait. And wait. And wait.

These kids wake up each day wondering if they’ll have to pack up again and move to another foster home—for any or no reason. And there they’ll sit, and if a loving adoptive family doesn’t come into their lives, they’ll turn eighteen and “age out” or exit the foster-care system. Those who do will likely become adults who belong nowhere and to no one.

Deeanna told us, “Every year in the United States, more than twenty thousand youth age out of the system. And not surprisingly, the statistics show that many of them end up in prison or at homeless shelters and receive government aid, and they sometimes have kids who also end up in foster care.

“In Hawaii,” she continued, “there are twenty-five hundred kids in foster care. And hundreds are waiting to be adopted.”

John and I were stunned. There were children needing families in our own backyard? Could this be true? We were two reason-

ably smart people who'd been completely ignorant about a really big problem. Near the end of the evening, Deeanna showed us a picture of some friends of hers—a military family who had six children, all through the blessing of adoption. Deeanna said we reminded her of them.

Honestly, I thought she must be nuts to think that.

My head was spinning. John and I were Christ followers. We knew that God's Word spoke frequently about God's heart for orphans and the Christian's duty to care for them. We had talked about adoption before, and we were always open to it, but we'd never pursued it seriously. We thought maybe it would happen after we had birth children. As pro-lifers, we'd always said we'd adopt any baby who would otherwise be aborted. That was a no-brainer.

Why would these kids in foster care be any different? How could we do nothing about what we'd heard? We'd been so blessed. We had room in our house. How could we turn our backs on kids in need?

We weren't sure what we were going to do, but we knew we had to do something. Hearing about the needs of these kids awakened John's sense of protection. He's a military man, after all, and he couldn't just sit back and not take action. He had to do something!

I kept thinking about the Good Samaritan in Luke 10:25–37. Remember the story? Jesus told a parable about a Jewish man traveling from Jerusalem to Jericho who gets attacked. He's beaten, robbed, and left for dead.

A priest happens to be walking down the same road, but when he sees the man, he passes by on the other side. Another man comes along, but again, he passes by on the other side. Then a Samaritan comes down the road, and when he sees the injured man, he takes pity on him. He bandages the man's wounds. Then he puts the man on his own donkey and takes him to an inn. The next day he pays

the innkeeper and says, “Look after him . . . and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have” (verse 35).

I sensed that God was challenging us, asking us if, like the religious men in the parable, we’d just pass by and do nothing. Or would we be like the Samaritan, who did something about the person in need right in front of him?

John and I talked and prayed about it *a lot*.

It’s hard to explain. Those of you who have been through this experience of responding to God’s leading know what we mean. Those of you considering it are probably beginning to sense that compelling nudge. John and I have often said it feels as though God’s hand is at your back, pushing you forward.

Talking and praying abstractly about the things that break God’s heart is one thing. Seeing and hearing needs up close and personal—in your face, literally—is clarifying. There was no way we could see what we were seeing—precious faces, voices, and lives of real kids in desperate need—and go back to our comfortable life unchanged.

There was no noble decision making; it was just crystal clear to John and me that we were going to do something. We were completely on the same page, something we paid close attention to. It wasn’t a hard decision; it was the obvious decision, set right before us. When we looked at the pros and cons, the obvious pros were that we were doing what Jesus commanded His followers to do and being who He commanded us to *be*. There weren’t really any cons that could compete with that.

We were excited—thrilled, really. And scared. But we believed as we trusted the Lord with all our hearts, leaned not on our own understanding, and acknowledged Him in all our ways that He was directing our path (Proverbs 3:5-6).

As John and I processed what we had seen and heard at the Wallaces’, we kept coming back to one of the girl’s stories. Susie was a

troubled teenage girl. All of her other siblings were in separate foster homes, and she didn't get to see them very often.

This is common in foster care and struck us as horribly sad. Imagine being removed from the only life you've known, even with its abuse and neglect, and not being able to communicate with your siblings, who might very well have been your only support because of your parents' deficiencies.

A judge colleague of mine often told the story of a little boy in foster care who told the judge he didn't believe in God. When the judge asked him why, the little boy said, "Because I pray every night to God to let me see my brother who is in another foster home. But I never get to, and my social worker says it's because there aren't enough people to drive me. If there was a God, He could get enough drivers."

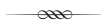
Susie had one sister she wanted to see on a regular basis but wasn't able to. The sister, Angie, was in a foster home across the island, and it just wasn't feasible to get the girls together very often.

"Can you even believe that?" John said to me. "That seems so sad; we should do something about it. We could drive them to their visits."

"Well, I don't see any reason she couldn't live with us," I said enthusiastically. "We could make sure she sees her sister most weekends."

*It can't be that hard*, I thought to myself.

So Deeanna and I agreed that I should start by at least meeting Angie.



I met Angie with Deeanna at a Honolulu McDonald's. She was a beautiful eleven-year-old local girl with gorgeous brown skin, chocolate-brown eyes, and beautiful dark hair. She was medium height,

with a slight frame, and was completely adorable. I was crazy for her from the start. She seemed sweet and fidgety as Deeanna interacted with her playfully and skillfully. Unknown to Angie, our plans for her to live with us were already in the works. Deeanna had talked to her social worker and gotten permission for Angie to be placed in our home.

I asked her questions, and she smiled sweetly, looking me directly in the eyes. Later, I told John, “I think she likes me. We really hit it off!”

We were going to be foster parents! What an adventure. We were so excited.

We had just moved from a rental place on the east side of Oahu into our very own home on the far west side. The house had four bedrooms, and as we had moved in, John and I told the Lord He could fill it up as He saw fit. Having Angie in our home seemed like the beginning of that answer to our prayers. Even though we hadn’t been to foster-care training yet, we could get a criminal background check done and secure a “specific child license” to care for Angie.

After that first near-perfect meeting with Angie concluded, Deeanna and I stayed at McDonald’s to talk further.

I was so jazzed, I could hardly stay in my seat. My mind was whirling. We could do this. We could really help this precious girl have a great life. *She’ll get to see her sister regularly. We’ll take her to church. We’ll show her what good parents can be like. We’ll love her. It’ll be fun. We’ll adopt her if she needs a permanent family. She can go to college, meet a great Christian man, our grandkids will be gorgeous . . .* Deeanna’s voice interrupted my mental ramblings.

“You know, Kelly,” she said very slowly in her sweet, wonderful way, “this could be really hard. Because of the trauma Angie has faced, she won’t be easy to parent. I really want to make sure you

know what you're getting into." She was so serious as she sat there staring at me. Deeanna is a teensy thing, about one hundred pounds soaking wet, but with the quiet determination and strength of a herd of bulls.

You know the muffled sound adults make in those Charlie Brown shows? *Wha wha wha wha wha . . .* That's all I heard as Deeanna talked.

I smiled back at her and wondered why she was droning on about how hard this could be. John and I had listened to plenty of *Focus on the Family* broadcasts and other shows about how important it was to be in charge, set limits, dare to discipline, and so on. I was sure we'd be good parents.

*John and I are rather competent people, I thought. I mean, come on, I'm a lawyer. I've done hard things. Law school. The bar exam. John's in the air force. He's a military man, guarding our country. He has a degree in business. He's been working on the business-services side of the air force his entire career. Why is Deeanna being so skeptical?* I wondered and just kept smiling.

When the questions and lecture finally ended, I asked, "When can I pick her up?"

"Today at three thirty. You can pick her up after school," Deeanna replied, a huge smile breaking across her face as she sat back in her seat, keenly aware that nothing she said would matter at this point.

"I'm picking her up after school!" I told John on the phone, half squealing from delight and anticipation. He was thrilled and got permission to leave work early so we could go together to pick up our new foster daughter.

It was really happening.

We drove to the very far west side of the island, following directions back toward the mountain to her school. I had the paperwork

from the social worker, and when the class let out, there we were waiting for Angie.

She looked at me with complete surprise and said, "It's you. It's really you." She smiled and gave me a hug. I introduced her to John, who opened the door for her and ushered us all into the car.

When I asked Angie what she'd love to do more than anything, she said she wanted to go to an arcade. We were happy to comply. We drove to the local arcade and soon Angie was surrounded by lots of noise and flashing lights, having a blast.

She asked if she could call me Mom. I swooned. "Of course you can call me Mom," I said as I hugged her.

And John was now Dad. He glowed. We had a real dinner together as a family. We thanked God.

"She can finally see an example of a godly dad," I told John later. Her birth father was in prison at the time.

"This is amazing," we told each other. "What an honor to be used by God to help an abused girl in foster care. Kingdom adventures are fabulous. Why didn't we do this earlier? Why don't more people do this?"

And so we were off on our grand adventure. It seemed like a beautiful dream.