

How I Survived a Bad Year

Some nightmares break with dawn. Others survive the daylight.

For over a decade, each even-numbered year starting in 2000 has been life-changing. I've named them after their greatest accomplishment:

2000 – went to my dream school – Florida State University

2002 – met Justin Jett, the love of my life

2004 – made his name mine

2006 – baby boy #1

2008 – baby boy #2

2010 – baby boy #3

2012 – Signed agent and publishing contracts for my book!

Last year ruined the trend.

2014 – The. Year. Of. Suck.

Early in 2014 mixed two major life changes for our family. My biological family broke internally, and my spiritually community was torn as well.

Some disaster strikes quickly, ripping a hole in your heart open without warning. Some tragedies warn you, but you're never prepared for the depth of the cut. They leave you breathless. Gasping for air.

We saw it coming, so I wrapped my arms around Justin while he held on to the reins, and waited for our eight seconds to be over so I could get off the ride. Life bucked, and we fell, our feet caught in a stirrup of consequences. Justin and I grabbed our babies tight while circumstances beyond our

control dragged us through gravel for the rest of the year.

There is a cycle of blaming others, blaming ourselves, blaming no one. Heart-bruises hurt, and when pressed, they cry. Pain returns.

We're not through this valley yet. I watch my husband—one of the kindest, smartest, most amazingly loving people I've ever met—experience forms of embarrassment and humiliation that rock my soul. It's been a lesson to my children every day, and I praise God for his example. Justin leads us as he follows God.

We've likened this past year to the Israelites journey from Egypt—tongue in cheek. I'm thankful for a roof over my head and more than honey bread to put on the table.

Occasionally in our home, you'll hear Justin or I yell from the laundry room or as we pass each other in the halls ... "We thank God for the manna, but we're praying for the Promised Land."

Our personal prayer has become our mantra. Our secret to surviving. In the times you find yourself huddled in the darkest corners of your troubled heart, I pray it can be yours as well.

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