

After Cancer Scare, MLB Pitcher and His Wife Experience Miracle Pregnancy

As baseball season begins this week, a Triple-A pitcher for the Texas Rangers organization has much to celebrate. Jon Edwards underwent surgery to remove testicular cancer in December; one day later, his incredulous doctor had a good report.

Now, defying the odds in a turn the media proclaims a “miracle”: Jon and his wife, Katelyn Edwards, are expecting their first baby this fall.

Briefly on the mound for the Texas Rangers during pre-season, Edwards was reassigned to the Triple-A team this past weekend—though he’s not one to be down in the count. They share their story in an exclusive Bound4LIFE interview.

Bound4LIFE: Jon, what has been your journey to becoming a pro baseball player?

Jon Edwards: Even though I had grown up in a Christian home, I have something of a prodigal son story. The St. Louis Cardinals drafted me out of high school in 2006. When I first started playing professional baseball within that organization, I got distracted by various things and was relieved in 2010.

I cried out to the Lord and asked for His help. I had identified with baseball as my identity for so long. He showed me what I was supposed to do and who I was. I began to develop a personal relationship with God and trust Him—with baseball and every other area of my life.

I went to play independent baseball in San Angelo, Texas,

where the Lord put it on my heart to start pitching for the first time. I had always been in the outfield. In 2012, I joined the Rangers' minor league team as a pitcher and it went awesome.

I started that year in rookie ball and finished on the AA team, which was three levels higher than I had ever played with the Cardinals—and I was in their system for five years. In half a season, God did that.

Katelyn Edwards: It's a testimony to what God can do in your life when you surrender it all to him.

Jon: As I got to know the Lord better, I felt like I was on a dead sprint to where He was taking me. That's when I met Katelyn.

Bound4LIFE: Katelyn, how long have you two been married? Share with us some of your love story together.

Katelyn: We've been married over a year now. Our engagement was very quick: we met in January 2013, were engaged in February, then married that November—all within a year! We met through my brother Jonathan; I came with him one time to an event, where I got to know Jon.

I had been seeking the Lord and trusting He would bring the right husband at the perfect time. When we met, we both just knew right away.

Jon: For three months, I had been praying about meeting my wife. When I met Katelyn, it all seemed too good to be true: She was abundant beyond what I expected. I recognized her genuine relationship with the Lord right away. We had a lot of things in common.

The first time we went out on a date, to Roots Coffeehouse, I told her, "I think you're my wife." And she said, "I think you're my husband." So it was like, what do we do now?

Katelyn: One thing that allowed us to move so quickly was we were in the same place spiritually. It's what really drew us together. When I listened to him talk, even that first day meeting him, I could hear in his voice how he had a relationship with the Father. That was something I was looking for. We had common ground there.

The Lord had been preparing him ahead of time, so when we met we would be ready to take the next step together.

Bound4LIFE: Right in the middle of this exciting journey, what happened?

Jon: In December, I noticed some things were not right. One of my testicles was enlarged and things were not functioning as they are supposed to; I knew I needed to see a doctor. Our primary care physician referred me to a urologist, who immediately sent me to have imaging done.

Soon after, the urologist notified me it was testicular cancer. He was very concerned this was something that could spread to my lymph nodes and beyond.

When you hear you have cancer, it's a big deal. One day I felt like I was getting ready for the season, and the next day everything came to a halt. I remember coming out of there holding back tears, then crying with Katelyn.

I was thankful I had her and other family praying for me, encouraging me. They reminded me of God's promises—that He wants me healthy, and Jesus paid the price for healing. We began to hold fast to that promise and trust God with the results.

Bound4LIFE: One medical protocol in this situation would be to consider the future possibility of *in vitro fertilization* (IVF), which is a new issue for many people. What did doctors recommend and how did you respond?

Katelyn: They really just made plans for us to go to a sperm bank. They set the appointment. We didn't have any time to talk about it; it was just put in place for us.

The medical provider came in, told us about the IVF process and what location we would go to next. We both were thinking, *Wait a second, I don't think this is something we've talked about.*

Jon: Everything happened so fast after we learned about the cancer. And I understand, he was looking at it from a worst-case scenario—if there was more chemo or other treatments. He was anticipating, *Well, everyone does this.*

Katelyn: He left the room, and we discussed it quickly. We realized we didn't have peace about doing this. Not that we are against it for someone else; it's their personal decision. We just felt it wasn't what we were to do. We were going to trust God no matter what.

Jon: After Katelyn and I talked about it, I told him, "We don't want to do this, we don't have peace about it." He explained again how the process works, which we appreciate, and told us, "This is why you need to do this."

I said, "Sir, with all due respect, Abraham had children in his 90s. We are just going to trust the Lord with this. We believe God wants good for us and we'll have babies when that time comes." We left it at that and moved forward.

Bound4LIFE: What was the medical team's plan to deal with the cancer?

Jon: The doctor wanted to do surgery immediately, which we prayed about and agreed to. Right before Christmas, I went in for surgery.

Katelyn: When Jon and I went in, we were standing with faith that they were going to remove the mass and everything was

going to be clean—no residual cancer cells. The doctor came out after the surgery to tell me how it went.

I remember sitting down with him and hearing a lot of concern in his voice—because the mass was so large. The surgeon ended up finding four different types of cancer, and he thought more of it may have spread. But I just knew Jon was completely healthy.

Jon: The day after surgery, the CAT scan came back clean: my lymph nodes, torso, everything completely cancer-free.

Katelyn: The urologist came in and he was shocked. He hands us the report and says, “Read this.” And we don’t know what it says, it’s all doctor lingo! “That is very good,” he finally told us.

Jon: We had a good rapport with him. Right from the get-go, I told him we were Christians standing by faith and trusting in the Lord. He replied, “Faith is good, but I am for science too.” I totally understand that, and I am thankful for doctors because God uses them mightily to help people.

Through the whole process, after the CAT scan and other tests, each time he joined in our thrill at getting a good report. By the end, he was truly impressed. It was like we saw layers of his heart being peeled back, and God was doing work on him.

Bound4LIFE: Then early this year, you two headed off to Rangers spring training?

Katelyn: After we got through the surgery and receiving the good report, it really re-sparked a conversation about when the right timing would be to start a family. At that point, we sensed it would be somewhat soon.

We headed out to Arizona at the beginning of February. By the first week of March, that’s when I took a pregnancy test because I was just feeling a little different—not morning

sickness, just a different feeling.

So we were in Surprise, Arizona, at spring training and it was: *Surprise, you're pregnant!*

Bound4LIFE: Do you view life in the womb differently now that you are expecting?

Katelyn: When you find out you're pregnant, it's so amazing to think about. *There's a little person being created inside me, who already has life immediately.*

Even though I'm early on in my pregnancy, every day I am mindful that there is a little baby on the inside. In the decisions and choices I make, I want to do what is going to benefit and protect this little baby.

Jon: One day after we found out we were pregnant, Katelyn sent a text message and used the phrase "super daddy" about me. In that moment, it really sunk in: *Wow, I'm a dad.* To be called that I felt excited, blessed, privileged; there's a lot of emotion in that. It made me walk with my chest out a little more.

Katelyn: You were feeling what a blessing and an honor it is that the Lord would trust us to be parents.

Bound4LIFE: Jon, last week you were reassigned to the Triple-A team after pitching for the Texas Rangers since last August. What is your feeling on where things are headed—and what has been your experience so far?

Jon: I really feel a peace. It's just God doing it so I don't really feel like I have control or a burden I have to carry. I've spent the last month and a half in the major leagues. I've seen the impact you can have with this platform, sharing the goodness of God with people.

One thing any good sports team seeks to foster is good chemistry among the players. We're like brothers in the

clubhouse. It's a family environment; and in that, I have had opportunities to minister to guys.

I am not trying to force anything, just be who I am and who God's called me to be. People see it, and when things are tough they have sought me out. Then I'm able to point them towards Jesus.

Some of them are saved, some may not be—either way, I remind them and show them how much the Lord loves them. He wants to be a part of our lives.

Bound4LIFE: Growing up in Texas, I know many people look up to baseball players. *(Full disclosure: My brother is married to Katelyn's sister.)* What is your message to those who see you as a role model?

Jon: I really want people to know God loves them. When people see me, I want them to see how much Jesus has in store for them. A lot of people know God is sovereign, but not as many know how much He wants to be involved in every detail of our lives.

During the off-season, the message I share with youth is: *Know your identity in Christ and be solid in that.* Because when they do, they make better choices and they don't have to go through some of the hard things I experienced when I first entered the "real world."

I desire to be a man of integrity who walks with the Lord. When people see our family, I want them to see a happy, joyful family that loves the Lord.

Katelyn: It's the fruit of what a life with Jesus brings. We've learned we can trust the Lord with our lives—with anything.

Follow Jon on Twitter and via Round Rock Express, the Texas

Rangers' Triple-A team.

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