



JOEL & SAMMY

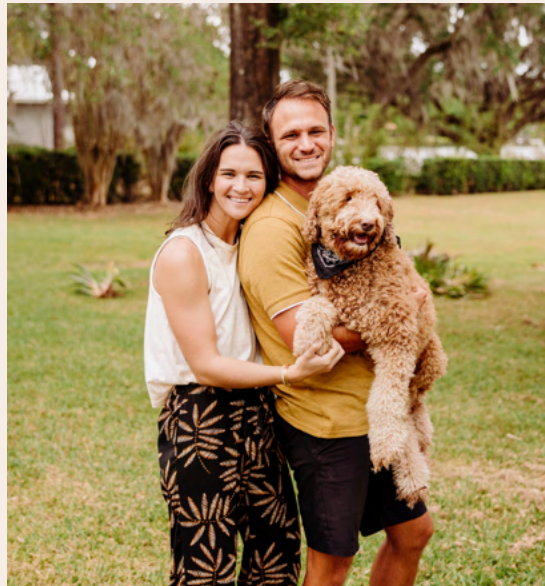
INTRODUCTION



Hi there,

We're Joel and Sammy and we're honored that you'd take the time to get to know us through our profile. Although it's hard for us to imagine the thoughts and feelings you must be having right now, please know that we have carefully thought through our decision to adopt and see it as an honor to be considered to be a part of your life in this way. We don't take this decision or this process lightly and hope you can feel our love and support throughout your journey.





WHO WE ARE

We are a husband and wife in our late 20's. We were both born and raised in Florida and come from large families. We love to travel and have seen many incredible places around the world but at the end of the day we love to be home watching our favorite TV shows and eating pizza with our dog Goose. Sammy enjoys Crossfit and Joel plays pickleball every day.

Some of our hobbies include: photography, boating, playing sports, board games, and spending time with our friends and family. Our faith in God is huge part of our life. We believe that He works all things together for good and we have seen His faithfulness throughout our entire lives.

OUR STORY

Our lives have been intertwined since we were kids. We grew up within a mile of each other and attended the same preschool. In middle school we officially met at our church's youth group and started dating when we were 16. We've been together ever since. We dated for 5 years before getting married in Central Florida in Joel's parents' backyard. It was a special day that we'll always remember. We have been married since 2016. Our story has been one of hardship, growth, perseverance, and love. We have seen God's hand in our marriage throughout it all and we are blessed to be not only husband and wife but also business partners, best friends, and each other's safe place.



OUR HOME

We live in a 3 bedroom home in a quiet suburban area of central Florida. Our house is across the street from our neighborhood's playground and pool. We love that our house is only a few miles from where both of our parents live and many of our siblings live within 15 minutes too. We have made our home a peaceful place that we love to spend time and work from.



This is the nursery we have set up. Every time we walk by it we dream of the little baby that will one day grow up in this room. We have carefully chosen the decor to be bright, warm and happy. The little animals are from Uganda and one of the frames on the shelf was made by Sammy's grandma who passed away years ago.



10 things I love about
SAMMY
(Written by Joel)

1. She is thoughtful. She loves giving gifts to others that make them feel loved. She is sensitive to how others are feeling and knows how to meet people where they're at.
2. She is responsible and reliable. When she receives a task, there's no question that she'll get it done.
3. She is encouraging and supportive. She's always building others up through her words and actions.
4. She is fun and funny. She doesn't like the attention on her but she loves to make others laugh and create an atmosphere of fun.
5. She is an amazing friend/sibling/aunt to her tribe. If you're one of Sammy's most important people, you know it. She's got your back and makes you a priority.
6. She is devoted. Sammy is a loyal wife and passionate follower of God. She is always learning new ways to better herself through studying God's word and uplifting books.
7. She brings out the best in me. Sammy does not accept 2nd best from me but holds me to a high standard and empowers me to be the best man that I can be.
8. She is selfless. She always puts others before herself and thinks about how she can serve their needs instead of her own. She donates her time, resources, and emotional capacity to others, consistently.
9. Sammy has outward beauty but what's seen on the outside is just a fraction of her inner beauty. Her passion for life draws others in and makes them want to be around her.
10. She is capable. Whether it's CrossFit, photography, design, cooking, building websites, or any of her other skills, Sammy can do whatever she puts her mind to.



10 things I love about

JOEL

(Written by Sammy)

1. His humility. Joel is really good at a lot of things, but he would never make it seem that way. He never brags, but loves to celebrate others.
2. He is everyone's friend! Joel has a way of making people feel known and loved quickly. He is great at asking questions and having conversations with others to make them feel cared for.
3. He is Fun. Joel is the life of the party in the best way possible and everyone who knows him loves him.
4. He is hilarious. Joel has a unique sense of humor. He's never embarrassed and will use any silly voice or do any crazy thing to make people laugh.
5. He is smart, both in business and in figuring out how to do hard things.
6. He never stops learning. Joel is always using his spare time to learn about things he doesn't know. He also takes feedback and constructive criticism very well.
7. He is a great communicator. Joel is really good at staying calm and speaking in a way that is clear and not defensive. He's also a great listener. He doesn't interrupt, asks specific questions, and knows how to empathize.
8. He has many talents. He can solve a Rubik's cube, play drums, edit amazing photos and videos, wake surf, always wins at board games and the list goes on. I love how unique his talents are.
9. He is loyal. When Joel is committed to something or someone, he gives everything and is constant. He has been my safe place in our marriage time and time again.
10. He loves his family. It is a joy to watch Joel interact with his family. He takes care of every member very well and would do anything for them.



OUR PASSION

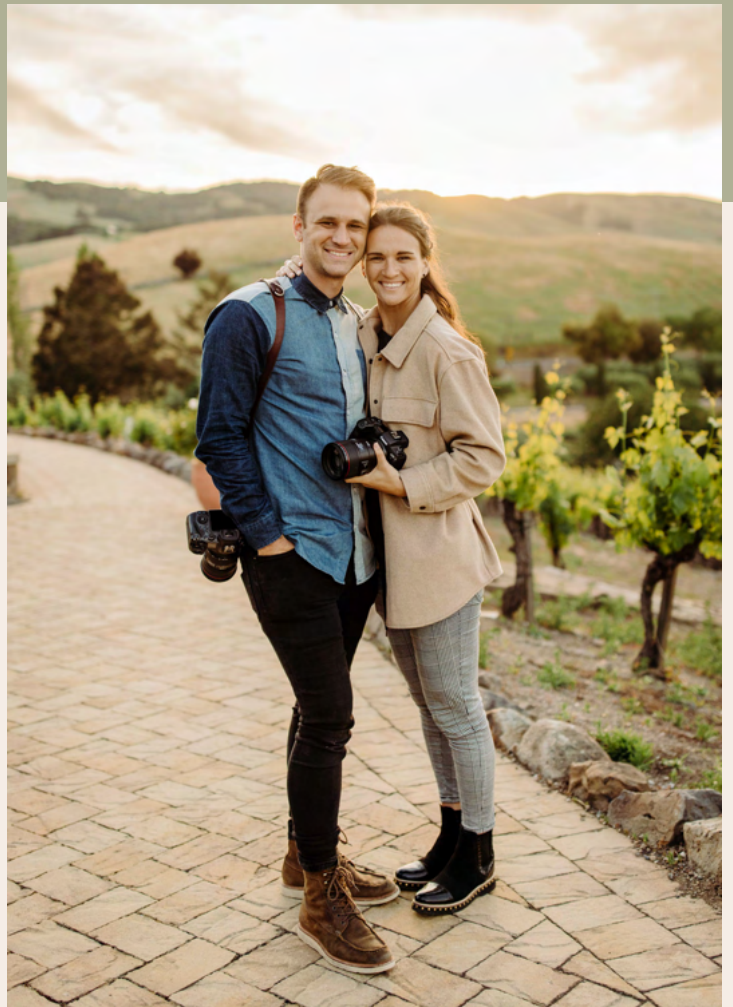
Our biggest passion is volunteering for a nonprofit in Africa. Joel's mom started this ministry in 2008 and we serve on the board. This ministry takes homeless children off the streets of Uganda, Africa and provides resources to either reunite them with their family if possible, or take them in as our own and provide counseling, education, life skills and teach them about the love of Jesus. We have visited our staff and children in Uganda every year for the last 9 years and plan to keep going as much as we can. It is truly one of our favorite places in the world. We love these kids so much and have been so impacted by their stories and the healing work that Jesus has done in their lives.

Our experience with this organization was really where our love for children and heart for adoption started. Getting to see the lifechange in these kids over the years planted a seed in our hearts that one day we would adopt a child of our own.

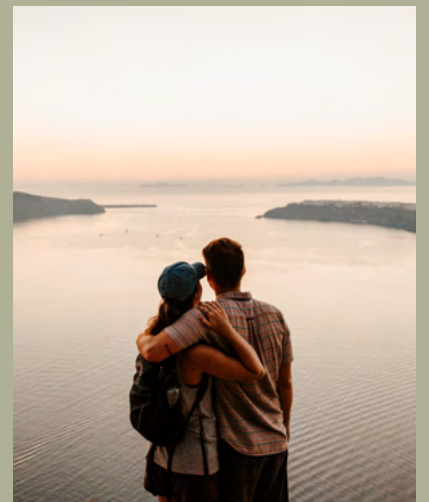
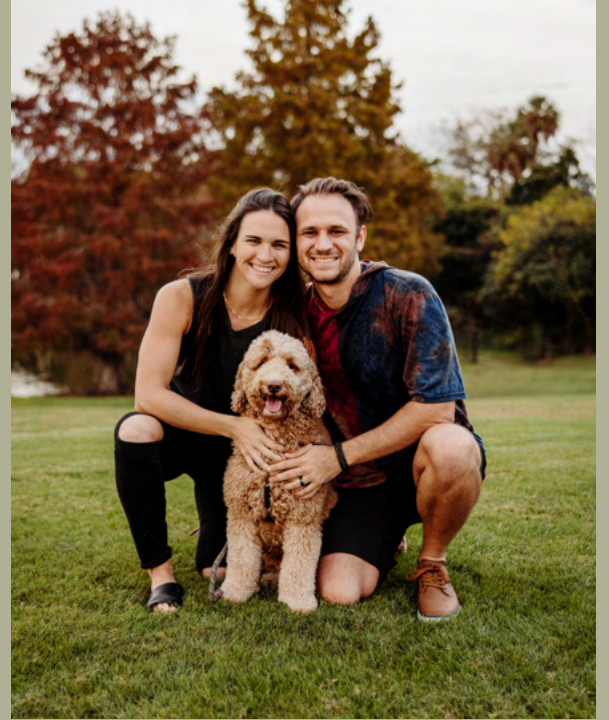


CAREER

After we got married we started our own photography business. Since 2016 it has grown into our full-time jobs and a successful business that not only pays the bills but gives us a flexible lifestyle that we love. We have photographed over 300 weddings together and have met incredible people along the way. One of our favorite things about running our own business is that we are able to create our own schedules during the week. We see this as a huge blessing when it comes to raising a child because we will both get to be home with them during the week since our “workdays” are typically Saturdays. Since our families live within a few miles of us, they are excited and more than willing to take care of the child when we go to work on the weekends.



LIFE TOGETHER



OTHER FACTS ABOUT US

- We have a Golden doodle named Goose. He's 5 years old and the friendliest dog. He loves everyone he meets, especially kids. We often find him laying in the nursery next to the crib we have set up.
- We have traveled to over 20 countries together
- Joel plays the drums
- We live in the same town we grew up in
- Sammy likes to paint with watercolor in her free time
- Joel is really good at making videos and has made many for the non profit we volunteer for
- We love to play board games with our friends
- We own our own business
- Our favorite part of the day is getting to have lunch together. Joel eats the same thing for lunch every day.
- We both attended the University of Florida

Here are some of our favorite photos we've taken from around the world:





FAMILY —

Family is very important to us. We love our families so much! We come from big families, both the youngest of four children. Each of our parents have been married for 35+ years and we have a total of 11 nieces and nephews.

Our families spend a lot of time together as almost everyone lives nearby. Sometimes it's a simple family lunch on Sunday where we sit around the table and share what's going on in our lives. Other times it's spending the day on the boat or in the swimming in the pool.

We are very invested in the lives of our nieces and nephews. We love attending their sporting events, school programs, and spending intentional time with them. We are so excited to have a child that will grow up living so close to so many cousins. All of our family is completely supportive of this adoption and has promised to be there with us every step of the way.

OUR VALUES

We believe it is important to know and say the things we value. This is a good way to remind ourselves of the way we want to live. Below are the values we have for our family and try to live by.

- Forgive, even when it's hard
- Family first
- Always tell the truth
- Create memories together
- Speak kindly to and about each other
- Serve others
- Be a safe place for others to share their feelings
- Never judge others



WHY ADOPTION?

There has been a reoccurring theme in our life that we have seen again and again: life is never just one thing. It's joy and suffering. Loss and gain. Hope and disappointment. Gratefulness and devastation, all in one. It's not one or the other, it's often times a mix of all of the good and bad at once. We know firsthand that life is messy (to put it lightly). We have experienced devastating pain, loss, betrayal, and brokenness. It was through the hard moments that we have learned how to hold onto hope. We have learned how to dig in and not give up on each other or ourselves. We have pursued healing and growth when sometimes it seemed easier to quit. We have learned how to fight for each other. God has showed us that He will use us for His purposes, no matter what our pasts look like or what we've been through. Our story has been hard. Many times we asked God why. Why so much pain? Why so much brokenness? One of the biggest and most obvious answers to the "why's" for us is adoption.

We believe that we have walked through so many hard times so that we would be equipped to walk through this hard adoption process. We believe that we experienced deep pain so that we could empathize with you. We believe that we learned how to run towards healing so that we could be parents who run alongside a child who might need to do that too. We believe that God does not waste pain. We all carry wounds, but in spite of those wounds we believe we can live a life that is full and purposeful. We want to show a child how to do that as their parents. So why are we adopting? Simply put, we don't feel like adoption is about fulfilling our own dreams, but about giving a child a loving and safe home where they are free to be whoever they want to be, where they will know that they are always deeply loved and accepted. We dream of being parents who will raise a child to love themselves and others, who can see their story as beautiful and full of joy, hope, and gratefulness in the midst of the hard parts.



OUR PROMISES

- To honor this child's story and protect it, and yours.
- To raise this child in a safe home where they will always experience love, compassion, support, forgiveness, understanding, empathy and comfort.
- To provide for this child's needs in every way, and to put his/her needs before our own.
- To surround this child with people who love and cheer them on.
- To carefully express to this child the love that you, their birth family, have for him/her and to honor you in every way.
- To create fun memories, traditions and experiences that this child can cherish.
- To take this child on adventures and expose them to different cultures and people.
- To teach this child the importance of respecting, loving, and serving others.
- To raise this child to know the hope that is found in Jesus.
- To love this child unconditionally.



THANK YOU

for taking the time to read this. We hope you find peace in this journey and always know how strong, brave and special you are.

With love,

- Joel & Sammy

