

It's Not About Me...

It's not about me

Great Minds

Hi all! I cannot believe how long it has been since I've written! There are so many events that have come and gone since my last post that I could not possibly record them all. Some of those were quite momentous though and they deserve a mention. Such as...

- Brittney graduated high school and is now enrolled to start in the local community college in the fall.
- Greg and I celebrated our 25th Wedding Anniversary on June 15th
- We met Robby's fiance (they become engaged during their visit here in early June).
- We celebrated our 4 year anniversary of living in one house yesterday, July 29th. LONGEST EVER!
- Brittney turns 18 on August 10th and her first day of college is August 17th!

Some momentous stuff, huh?!?! Now for some of the latest revelations that have come about in this never dull household. I learned yesterday that Elijah, our 7 year old, has an amazing gift in his adorable little right-brained brain in that he sees differently than I do, or most others for that matter. He explained to me that when he looks at an object he can see all sides of it at once. Front, back, sides, top, and bottom! How cool is that?!? He thought that everyone saw that way. After asking him lots of questions about specifics, I have deduced that if it is something he's never seen before that's not the case, but it is if he's seen something at least once or twice before. It seems to me that it's as if his brain memorizes all angles and substitutes his memory image next time he sees it. I then researched it and found that it's called "Visual Spatial Thinking" and is a classic symptom of dyslexia (yes, we already knew he had dyslexia.) Check out this description I found, **"Generally, these people tend to be bright, creative, "right-brained" thinkers, who think in concepts and pictures. They have the unique ability to see "in dimension," or mentally "see" objects from all sides *without actually moving their eyes or the objects* . This talent lends itself to drawing, building, putting things together, and recalling concrete or visual information."** Taken from: <http://www.learningdisability.com/articles/dyslexia.htm> WOW!

After explaining this to his Dad, Greg went on to say how amazing that was since as he's looking around he can see the word of what he's looking at in his "mind's eye". What?!? I pushed and he explained that everywhere he looks he sees words. When he looks at the picnic table (which is where we were when he was telling us this) he sees the word "table" when he looked at Elijah he saw the word "cute". He literally sees words and sometimes sentences or phrases all the time! I was so shocked. How could we have been married for 25 years and him never tell me this? He said he never really thought much about it until we were talking about what Elijah saw. Then he went on to telling me the words he saw as he was seeing them. :0

There's more... J.Jay returned today from a mission trip with the youth group at church exhausted, 4 pounds lighter, and at least 4 years wiser than when he left. A very contemplative young man I have on my hands. Well, on the way home I told him of Elijah and Dad's visions, er uh... talents and he said, he sees words too! Not only that, he hears music like background music in his head all the time. As with the others, he thought everyone did! That helps explain his amazing musical talent! J.Jay and Greg have Asperger's Syndrome so this must be an Asperger's trait?!? When I am finished writing this I am going to have to research that one too!

All I can say is Wow... COOL!! Personally, I feel very boring compared to my counterparts here in this house! I do not understand why anyone would use the term disability when referring to either dyslexia or asperger's. They are both amazing gifts! I wish I had such gifts... or any gift for that matter. Okay, I do have adHd (yes, with a capital H!) but I don't have anything amazing or special going on in my head. I tried to see words, pictures or something - but it's just not working.

Anyway, I am doing lots of research on the right brain (Elijah) trying to figure out the best way to teach him how to read better. He is really struggling, especially with fluency. I have settled on Phono-Graphix from the book Reading Reflex and am preparing his curriculum for next year. I am also researching left brain (J.Jay) ways of teaching so I can be a much better homeschooling Momma to both of these kiddos. Boy, do I have a lot to learn! A homeschooling Mom's job never ends - but it's never boring, that's for sure. Interesting and amazing stuff.

As for me, with the exception of my occasional yet overwhelming bouts of anxiety about all things educational, parental, and monetary (anxiety that must be chemical in nature or due to being post-menopausal as although I know and can rationalize the stupidity of my anxiety during these bouts, I have zero control and my emotions seem to take over my senses.) I am one incredibly happy and contented woman. I have realized that all I need in life to be happy I already possess.

1. Jesus Christ - who carries me much of the time and is the reason that I can always say with total honesty "It's all good!"
2. My AMAZING, wonderful, hubby who loves me more than I deserve and always makes me laugh. (That should earn me some brownie points with him!)
3. My fun (and funny), loving, and talented kiddos (every one of them!) who always tell me what a great mom they think I am. (It helps that they have no other moms to compare me to!)
4. Our comfy home built "just for us" - 4 YEARS WOW!
5. My friends - I have so many who truly care about me and whom I truly care about!
6. Always having plenty of healthy food in the house (and if I am doing my job well, on the table!)
7. Finally, The Waltons on DVD. Tee hee. Greg and I and the boys watch an episode every night before going to bed. We started at the beginning and are up to season 5 now! It keeps us in a loving and appreciating family mode. I absolutely LOVE the fact that we don't have cable or satellite or watch TV. This may seem weird, but I get a warm, comfy feeling inside when I am out of the loop and others are talking about some TV show that I am clueless about. I never feel like I'm missing out on anything. Quite the opposite! 😊

Even though times are still incredibly tough financially and will be for the foreseeable future, I feel very rich. I truly have it all.. and it's all good!

Posted on on July 30th, 2009 in [Homeschooling](#) | [No Comments](#) »

What's the point?

I have been reflecting on a number of things recently and when I decided to finally write a long overdue blog entry I was immediately struck by the accuracy of my blog name "It's Not About Me..." I originally named it because in my world my life is not about me. I am living for the Lord and it's all for Him! What struck me though was how that accurately and a bit painfully describes so many aspects of my life right now. I suspect many of you reading this will relate!

As a parent, the older my kids get the more I have had to come to the realization that everything I have done for my children is for them, and it's not about me. For the most part they do not appreciate it, nor will they anytime soon. This was, and continues to be a very hard reality for me. Of course, in my heart I am doing everything for them, but that selfish part of me sure would like some recognition. Private recognition, public recognition - ANY recognition! Sad and selfish, but hey - I am just being honest. Personally, I have given my entire life and career up to be a full time homeschooling mom and I can honestly say that I have never regretted that decision. At the same time, it's not so easy to stay motivated and focused knowing that I have at least eleven more years to go, especially when the rewards are so meager. I hear that they do appreciate all their parents have done for them some day, but it is rumored to generally not take place until after they have kids of their own. We are raising our kids to be adults which means that the older they get the more they pursue their own aspirations, leaving you in the dust and too often with very little, if any recognition for all your years of devotion, dedication, and sheer hard work! Can you relate? If you are a parent of children under 12 or so, you're not there yet - but be prepared! On the other hand, if you have offspring between the ages of 12 and 29 - you are most likely nodding knowingly as you read.

In life, it is at this exact spot where the rubber meets the road. Am I going to give up? Allow the voice in my head that says, "What is the point? They won't remember my hard work and dedication. They will probably grow up and not even appreciate it at all. For all I know, they'll grow up to be embarrassed that they were homeschooled in the first place! All the years and tears I invested in raising my kids to know and love the Lord, they may choose to turn their back on the Lord totally... I am just wasting my time... my life!" It's at times like this that I have to quiet that voice and force myself to remember that it's not about me! Honestly, it's not about them either. I am raising my kids in a loving, solid, Christian, homeschooling environment with everything I have in me and will as long as I have breath in me for one reason and one reason only. When I get to heaven I want to have them all right there with me as I hear the words I have been living to hear, "Well done my good and faithful servant. Well done."

So if the daily drudgery of parenting is getting you down and the thanks and appreciation you get seems nonexistent at best - just remember... It's not about you! Mothering is a thankless job, but a worthy one. Mothers shape the future, the leaders, and the nation. They may not recognize it or give us the credit, but that's not the point anyway. So to all you mothers out there, Hang in there! When the going gets tough... hang in there! When nobody is watching... hang in there! When no one seems to care... hang in there! This Mother's Day whether you get breakfast in bed - or not, cards, flowers, or nothing for Mother's Day... hang in there! They may not say it, they may not show it but way deep down inside they know that you are the one who gave them their wings and taught them how to fly. Let them fly and laugh in the wind. It's not about you.

To all the mother's reading this who can relate... HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY!

[He's the writer](#)

Hi all! I guess I am down to blogging an average of once a month nowadays... Works for me! Today has been a catharsis of sorts for me in several ways - so I figured it best to end this cathartic day by sharing it with you in a blog entry.

Our sermon at church was yet again awesome and as if directed specifically to me. I am continually amazed at how every week it seems as though the sermon is meant especially for me. So cool how God does that!?!?!?

Anyway, today was about the purpose of a Christian's life. So many of us are trying to live out either the story that we are writing, or in some cases the story that others are writing for us (and we are the victim). We typically consider our lives successful when and if we see visible/tangible results that makes us look good. The fact of the matter is, this life is not our story at all, rather it's God's story which is coming true. If we are truly living God's story, we may not see or get any tangible results, at least in this life - but we still keep the faith because it's not about us. What God truly wants most out of us, out of me, is simply put - faith. To keep the faith - come what may. Faithful to the end. Life with God is not about visible or tangible results. Success is not determined by what makes me look good. Success is keeping the faith and living out my part in HIS story! Wow, so simple and yet so profound.

The final question for us to ponder was "Who's story are you living for?" I realized that I keep trying to grab the pen away from God and write my own story. I keep inviting God to be a part of *my* story. The fact is, Christianity is about God inviting me into HIS story. I saw myself for what I am today, pathetic. I realized more than ever with such clarity that if I am truly honest with myself, I *like* the story being about me. 😞 Furthermore, I LIKE tangible results and I like them NOW! How sad is that? Sad. God, here is your pen back. Write away. One of my all-time favorite verses now has more meaning than ever to me. Hebrews 11:1 "*Faith is being sure of what we hope for, and certain of what we cannot see.*"

BTW, if you would like to listen to the sermon online, or subscribe to it in itunes just visit: [Southside Fellowship Weekly Sermons](#)

Posted on on February 23rd, 2009 in [Homeschooling](#) | [No Comments](#) »

[The Berthume Funnies](#)

After a long blogging hiatus, I am back! I have been spending all my "writing" time working on my novel, hence the absence of posts here lately. But, you will be rewarded in the end (if you read it) as my book is going to be AWESOME! That said, I figure the time has come to touch base and update my blog lest you think I've left the planet or something.

Today, I want to share with you some **Berthume Funnies**. Let me start with my almost 13 year old (his birthday is on Valentine's Day) - my "love" child - J.Jay. He had to write some sentences for his grammar today using various, specific helping verbs. The first part (bolded) was given and he was to complete it. I absolutely cracked up at one of the sentences he wrote, and I quote,

"I should write my aunt, because she is my aunt and if I don't write to her I'll get an F in composition and fail school and not get a job when I'm 18 and I'll be roaming the streets broke and my life will be a waste."

First of all, that is one long run-on sentence! But I thought it was absolutely hilarious. All of them were witty, but that was by far the wittiest. He's a trip. Okay, here was his second wittiest sentence of the day:

"I was writing my aunt when suddenly lightning struck my right hand and it became paralyzed and I can't write with my left hand and my mom can't do it for me cause that would be cheating.

Okay, I know there's some bad grammar there. (Tense switching mid-sentence; "cause" should be "because", I could go on... but I won't.) The point is, what a great imagination and sense of humor that boy has! I enjoy him. (He doesn't enjoy me quite as much as I enjoy him... especially around algebra time!)

Now for my 7 year old, Elijah. His AWANA/SPARKS leader told him over the phone last week that he could be her "helper" to help the other kids remember the rules and behave better. Tonight was his first night back since this glorious news. When we got home he plopped down on the sofa utterly exhausted and said, "Being a leader is harder than I thought! John* and Joe* kept talking and I had to separate them!"

"Wow!" I said. "Did anything else happen?"

"Yeah! John was crying because he couldn't say his sections so I went to Mrs. Kim and said *What do I do now? He's having a fit!* So we got someone to help him with his sections and he finally shut up."

*I changed the names to protect the innocent... er guilty! Even though he was so worn out, he insisted that it was worth all the work. He can't wait to go back next week, since he's a "leader" now. (His words, not mine!) After filling Dad in about his exhausting evening and showing him his Sparky pin and certificate from winning "Sparky of the Month" for January, he was so tired that he went straight to bed without even having a snack! His heart has been set on growing up to become a movie director for almost 2 years now, but if you ask me he should go into acting. He's so good at it! (BTW, he wants to be a zookeeper too! Part-time, of course since he'll be so busy producing and directing movies. Again - his words!)

I would put in a funny about Brittney, my 17 year old - but she might not appreciate that, with her being so cool and all. She might just kill me. Oh, okay... get up off your knees. Your begging worked. Her latest funny was, "Wow, Mom you are looking so skinny today! <pause for all of 2 seconds> Can I have 10 bucks?" Put it this way, all of her compliments are followed a question beginning with those two little words, "Can" and "I"!

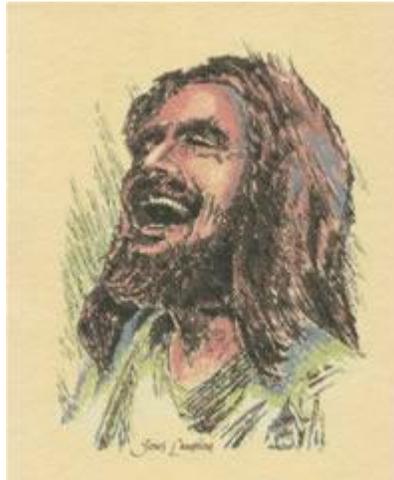
As for my oldest son... sorry, you are out of luck. I can't put in a funny about him or he really WILL kill me! He's got a reputation to maintain, you know?!?! Actually, he spent yesterday at the hospital, which is NOT funny, and it is weighing heavy on my heart lately. So... I won't push it by telling you one of his many funnies.

As for me... I am just about the funniest person I know! So what if nobody else gets it? Just today, when Greg told me to stop worrying I said, "But that's my job! And I am so good at it!" What? That's not funny enough for you? How about this... Earlier today I crossed my eyes while trying to teach J.Jay algebra. Now, THAT was funny! It made him laugh. Geez, you are still not

convinced? Just trust me. I am funny!

Oh and Greg, my sweet hubby... he's not funny. (I'm just kidding, see how funny I am?)

Speaking of funny, I was raised with a "wrath of God" view of Jesus and over ten years ago I saw a picture called "Jesus Laughing" that changed my views and instantly became a favorite of mine. To this day I have a copy of it hanging on my mirror and it cheers me up every time I look at it. I love it! So, as a special bonus for reading my blog I will share it with you.



Isn't that great?!?! Gotta love it. Alrighty then... this funny woman is off to bed. Nighty night!

Posted on on January 29th, 2009 in [Homeschooling](#) | [No Comments](#) »

Chillaxin

Hi all! Greetings from the Berthume home which seems to be in a constant no worries, no hurries, chillaxin state of being this past week. We had been bombarded with HOMESCHOOLOPOLY game orders (and my book orders too, but mostly the game) since late November. This is a VERY good thing, don't get me wrong. But since Christmas Eve the orders are only trickling in, giving us some time to slow down and well... chillax. Our calm state of being (or at least mine) is not going to end anytime soon either as we aren't resuming our homeschooling endeavors until January 5th! YIPPEE! Mommy's on break!

We have had a great holiday. I am still listening, (if you read my last blog entry) and keep hearing "write, WRITE" and so that's what I am doing a whole lot of... writing, but not my next homeschool book. I have totally ceased all writing on the book I have been working on for some time, *The Perfect Homeschool Mom Does Not Exist*, as it's just not working for me. Maybe because it's too **real** for me right now? Don't know. . . my heart is just not in it. So, I have decided to put it on hold and follow my heart and write what I really WANT to write - my novel. I have had this entire story in my head (and lots of it outlined) for over a year now, so I started writing. Now, I can't stop and am already on Chapter 4! I love writing, it's so much fun! Curious? All I will tell you is that it's nothing you would expect from me. :0 It's a suspense novel with a bit of an unusual storyline. That's all I will tell! Oh yea, and the title is *Euroditio*. Is that cool or what?!?! What does that mean? That's for me to know and you to find out! Ok, now THAT'S all I will tell. :| Anyway, I am writing lately every chance I get, and making time to write even when I don't have the time! I am so into this story that writing is a blast and for me it's a

wonderful state of relaxation. I only wish I could write full-time, but alas - hubby and kiddos come first, then house, then our business, then.... well, you get the picture. It's a complex story though and going to be a long book, so my goal is to finish it no later than this summer.

My biggest and best news of late was my very special, way cool Christmas surprise... Robby! On Thursday, December 18th, I was in the classroom working with J.Jay on diagramming sentences when I walked my daughter, Brittney, home earlier than expected. "What are you doing here?" I asked. Before she could answer Robby stepped into the room and said, "Hi, Mom!" To say I was in shock would be an understatement. IT FREAKED ME OUT! I was so surprised to see him at home, all the way here from California that I started crying! My son has come home! (Well, for a few days anyway.) Then he went upstairs and freaked out his dad. (No, Greg didn't cry - he took it like a man!) What an AWESOME Christmas gift! Turns out he had Brittney pick him up from the airport, unbeknownst to us, to surprise us. I have never EVER been more surprised in my life! He left on the Tuesday before Christmas so I got to have all four of my kiddos under one roof for five whole days! How cool is that? For me - way cool. 😊

So, as you can see, I am one very blessed woman! As long as I don't get confused by the things of this world (money, stuff, looks, vanity, blah, blah, blah) and measure life by the things that truly matter; Life in the Berthume home is good... Very good.

One great year about to come to an end, another one about to begin. It's all good! Happy 2009!

Posted on on December 29th, 2008 in [Homeschooling](#) | [No Comments](#) »

The Christmas I remember the most

It was about 14 years ago, maybe 13. Robby was only 8 or 9 years old and although I don't remember exactly which year it was, I certainly remember that Christmas as, by far, the best Christmas in my lifetime. I have no idea what I got for Christmas, nor what we got for the kids (we only had two at the time), nor do I remember hardly any other details of what was going on in "my" life during that Christmas season, but I remember her face, like it was yesterday. Who is she? Somehow we had met a woman who was homeless. She lived in a motel with her son, who was about Robby's age at the time. She also had an older child, whom we never had the privilege of actually meeting. She looked the part, scraggly hair, worn clothes that just hung off of her tiny frame as if they were two sizes too big, and a raspy voice and skin that made her look much older than her years. Her son, I remember the first time I saw him. My heart broke. He looked sad... very sad.

God stepped into our hearts that year and for once, we actually listened to Him. He told us to do something. Anything, just do SOMETHING. Well we did. We knew that they did not have much food, had no presents to put under the tree... well, they didn't even HAVE a Christmas tree! We also knew that the boy really wanted a bike for Christmas, and the mom was very sad, knowing that their basic needs were barely being met, there was certainly no possibility of him getting his "Christmas wish."

We didn't have much money ourselves, so Greg shared their story with his co-workers at the time who donated money for the family. We didn't just buy some stuff to drop off at their doorstep. We visited them, at their motel on more than one occasion in the days leading up to Christmas. We gave them Christmas presents, brought them bags of groceries, presented them with some basic necessities, and the most fun was when we took them a real live Christmas tree, along with

some lights and decorations! They were so overwhelmed. We were so overjoyed!

Then something happened a mom will never forget. Neither me, nor her. My son, Robby, decided to give his very own bike to her son. Not only did I not suggest this, I even tried to talk him out of it! I told him we could not afford to get him another bike anytime soon. He was adamant. In his mind, and in his heart it was the "right" thing to do. There was no swaying him. His mind was made up. I will never ever forget it when Robby and I stood there, in the parking lot of that motel, watching that little boy ride his "new" bike weaving in and out of the concrete curb things that were in the front of each parking space. Nor will I forget the look of pure joy and relief on his mom's face. But what I remember the most is the look of pride (well-deserved pride!) and confidence on my Robby's face. He KNEW he had done the right thing. And he felt so good about it! It seemed that he was just as happy, if not happier than the little boy riding his bike all through the parking lot.

Much to his delight and surprise, Robby himself ended up getting a brand new bike for Christmas that year. He truly deserved it. He gave his bike away expecting nothing in return, but he ended up getting a new, better bike than what he gave away. There's another lesson all wrapped up in that alone. God will always bless us when we step out and obey him. His blessings are better than what we can provide for ourselves, better even than what we can even think or imagine. Wow.

What are we going to do this year? I want another year like that. I am trying, so hard, to just listen. I want my younger kids, still living at home to have an experience like that. Fact is, we are so busy and caught up in our own lives, during this precious Christmas season which is supposed to be about Christ, God with us - coming here - to live among mere men, but we, those He came to with a desire to be with, are more often than not too busy with our own agenda ringing so loud in our ears, to even hear His still small voice. God is always in our lives, in our thoughts, prompting us and nudging us. That year, we actually listened. This year I want to slow down enough to hear His voice again. I want to stop the meaningless activity. I want to listen, again. Shhhh..... Do you hear something?

Posted on on December 14th, 2008 in [Homeschooling](#) | [No Comments](#) »

Thanksgiving - What an Understatement!

I am sitting in my cozy living room which we just decorated for Christmas. The Christmas music is playing, the candles burning, and the lights are twinkling. Thanksgiving is over for most, but I'm not sure it will ever be over for me. I must be honest, I love all the Christmas coziness I can see and feel right now, but Thanksgiving is my absolute favorite holiday. It has been my favorite holiday for years, but this year just seals the deal. I am so thankful... that sounds so trite, but it is true - a huge understatement, actually!

Our Thanksgiving this year was not ideal, two of my four kids were not home for Thanksgiving Day and we have had a couple of recent deaths in the family on my step-dad's side, which made for some sadness all around. Still, I couldn't help thinking on both Wednesday and on Thursday as I baked and cooked and worked all day long - 2 days in a row - just how thankful I am. Was I tired? Yes, exhausted! But, I did it! I am walking this year. It's so amazing! Every year we sit down at Thanksgiving and we think of and talk about all of the things we are thankful for. All of which are so important. But this year was so different for me. In a year when I should be down,

nothing could get me down. I had some sad moments, I missed my kids, but for the most part I was just so thankful to be walking and working away in the kitchen. How awesome just to spend time with family with my little red scooter tucked away in the garage, never to be seen. I kept thinking about last year.... And all I could do was smile.

I looked back at my entry last year and I wrote, *"I am really longing for the "old" me to return already! I wake up every morning and subconsciously think this is the day I will walk again and everything will go back to normal. But, it doesn't happen. I am having fun driving, now - but oh how I miss walking."* Wow! Doesn't that just say it all? I remember it like it was yesterday. I had just gotten hand controls on my vehicle, so was able to drive with my hands and I was so thrilled, yet it was becoming a realization that I may very well never walk again. All I can say is... Just look at me now! Not only am I walking, but better than I have in about 5 years. I am walking without even using my cane or any aids 90% of the time! Wow! If you don't know if God works miracles anymore, I am here to tell you that He does! I am a "walking" miracle.

So, from my family to yours... Happy Thanksgiving! WHAT AN UNDERSTATEMENT!

Posted on on November 29th, 2008 in [Homeschooling](#) | [No Comments](#) »

Long overdue entry

I am going to have to pay a fine as this entry is so past due! It has been a month since my last entry. YIKES! I am somewhat still in survival mode. I am doing everything I have to do each day and letting a great deal of other things slide... until "tomorrow". It sometimes seems as though tomorrow will never come!

Still, I am still super duper thankful that I am doing as well as I am! My key word of the month is: perspective. We must put every aspect into our lives in the proper perspective in order to live a full and happy life. If I compare my days to someone else's I might get discouraged. If I compare my days to my prior days, I am very encouraged! It's all about perspective. 😊

All is well around here. We seem to have a very busy house lately, but it's all a good busy. Greg is working like the energizer bunny lately. Even though he works from home, it seems I hardly see him any more. Now, that may sound strange, but it's reality. We communicate more via IM (him upstairs and me down) than face-to-face! What a crazy world we live in, huh?!?!?

Brittney was accepted into Lander University. YEA!!!! She is very excited, and a tad bit nervous. I am thrilled, beyond words. We both fell in love with the college when we visited it and not only became her first choice, but THE college she wanted to go to. So I am thrilled that we were able to apply early and she got accepted quickly. Now we just have to work out all those details and apply for and hopefully get LOTS and LOTS of scholarship money and grant money! 😊

J. Jay is growing up so fast. He keeps calling himself 13 already, although his actual birthday is not for another 4 months. It dawned on me the other day that I am soon to have 2 teenagers living under the same roof! Hmmmm.... He has so many interests and hobbies his only dilemma is finding the time to do it all! He reads voraciously, does animation on his computer, plays piano & keyboard, and enjoys playing with Elijah, his little brother. He is never EVER at a lack of anything to do. I can't remember the last time I have heard the words "I'm bored" coming from his mouth. Usually I am pulling him away from one of his beloved activities to do school! It's odd as we have no cable or satellite TV (we do dvds and videos) yet he is never bored. Who'da

thunk?

Elijah, my little dude, is another one who is growing up too fast. He has been talking about his 7th birthday for over a month now and it's not until November 17th! We are having a party for him a week and a half early so it is not shared with Thanksgiving and we are having a LEGO party. He is a LEGO maniac. He also has several interests and is a very contented and busy young man lately. He can typically be found either playing with his LEGOs, playing with and taking excellent care of his snake (yes, shorty is still alive and doing awesome!), playing JumpStart 2nd Grade which is his favorite computer game (no he's not in 2nd grade yet, only 1st), or outside in the back yard "pretending" which means making up movies. He still wants to be a movie director when he grows up AND he wants to be a zookeeper too! He's a very happy, self-entertaining little guy. He is always saying "I love my life". How cool is that?

Me, I am good. My pain levels are higher than I would like to admit, and I am having middle heart racing, anxiety type attacks a few times every week so I am not sleeping well. But, all of that is chump change compared to having happy, thriving kids who love and appreciate their lives. So, overall I am one happy and thankful Momma!

So, as you go about your day, I would love for you to keep us in your prayers. I am still praying for total healing. He has healed me SO MUCH already and for that I am so thankful. I am praying that my healing will continue. :) I leave you with one of my favorite Bible passages, which I think of when I think of how many people out there care for and pray for me.

It's Phillipians 4:10-13 I am very happy in the Lord that you have shown your care for me again. You continued to care about me, but there was no way for you to show it. I am not telling you this because I need anything. I have learned to be satisfied with the things I have and with everything that happens. I know how to live when I am poor, and I know how to live when I have plenty. I have learned the secret of being happy at any time in everything that happens, when I have enough to eat and when I go hungry, when I have more than I need and when I do not have enough. I can do all things through Christ, because he gives me strength.

I don't have this mastered by any means, but I do feel as though I have learned through all this to be content. I can only say this as I truly am content. Circumstances change some days are good and some days are bad. But all in all, I am very VERY content. God is good!

Posted on October 29th, 2008 in [Homeschooling](#) | [No Comments](#) »

Wow! Everyone should see this movie!

I know I just wrote, but Greg and I saw Fireproof this weekend and all I can say is, "Wow"!!! By far right up there with one of the best movies I have ever seen, but honestly a movie I wish EVERYONE would see. When we walked out of the theatre Greg said, "You should blog about this. Everyone needs to see this movie!" So, I am just obeying my hubby! If you haven't already, GO SEE THIS MOVIE!

<http://www.fireproofthemovie.com>

Posted on September 29th, 2008 in [Homeschooling](#) | [No Comments](#) »

The Busy Berthumes

I have been way too busy lately. I know something has got to give, but I have absolutely no clue as to what! I feel like a "soccer mom" running my kids from place to place constantly lately. I think I am trying to "make up for lost time" since my kiddos didn't do any extra activities last year, but if I don't slow down I am going to end up back at square one! So... due to my crazy life as of late, I haven't written in a while. It's a bit odd as I am going so much that I feel like I am in a bad cycle and if I slow down I will crash, thus I am afraid to slow down! Makes no sense, I know.

What a way to start a blog, huh? Honestly, life is good lately when it comes to what matters most, but way WAY to busy. We are settling into our school year routines. As tiring as Fridays are, we are all loving our new homeschool co-op. Our other homeschool days (M-Th) are much longer than I'd like, but that is necessary at this point to get everything done - and we too often still don't get everything done! Unfortunately, with school and our business, I honestly have not had any time to do my writing, to read (which is my favorite thing to do), or honestly to do anything other than meals, school, and work for the past few weeks. Not good. Again, something's gotta give!

Oh well, enough whining... on to some new "news". Our biggest news lately is the newest addition to our family, a snake! Elijah has been wanting a snake or any kind of reptile for months. We said "maybe on your birthday" to see if this is a phase that will pass, and his desire has just been growing. Well, his birthday is not until November, but the other night we found a baby snake on the sidewalk. We were able to identify him (or her?!?) as being a "Northern Brown Snake" and set up a cage for him in a large see-through plastic container (at least temporarily). Elijah set up the "habitat" and is thrilled to no end. He has absolutely no fear, and carries his snake around constantly oohing and aahing about how "pretty" he is. He just loves him. I am praying that he will live as from what I have read snakes that were born in the wild generally do not do well in captivity. We are hoping that since he is a baby snake he will live and be healthy. Today Greg got some crickets at the pet store to feed him, (dead ones in a can - isn't that weird?!?!?) And thankfully, this type of snake remains relatively small and does not eat mice, but rather snails, slugs, crickets, and other small insects. I can handle that! I will post a picture of him holding the snake soon.

Elijah's other big love these days (in addition to anything and everything that moves) is legos. His love for legos was re-kindled when Robby bought him a new lego set his last visit a few weeks ago. He has an entire village set up in his room. It helps that he has legos collected from 2 older brothers over the years!! And it helps that J.Jay will build him anything he wants that he can't build himself!

Speaking of J.Jay. He is doing great as well. He is now reading the book "Brisingr" which is the 3rd in a series by Christopher Paolini. (Paolini was homeschooled too!!!). He has been looking forward to the third book FOREVER and it finally came out this month. So, he has his nose buried in a book anytime he is not doing school, playing the piano, doing physics, gymnastics, or the worship team. Whew... he LOVES all the stuff he's involved in now. (That is why I am so tired all the time!!)

Brittney is busy, but I don't think there is a possibility of "too busy" in her view of life. She seems to be gone most of the time, either at school, working, a school event, or doing something with her friends. Her basketball season is starting soon, and then life will get even busier. I can't

even fathom how we are going to handle that?!?! I still can't believe she is 17. Life is flying by!

Greg is always doing one of 4 things - developing software (ie. working like a dog), playing bball, working out at the gym, or watching a movie.

As always, when it comes to what matters most (not money!) it's all good.

Posted on on September 27th, 2008 in [Homeschooling](#) | [No Comments](#) »

What a great week!

I haven't written in so long... I've just been way too busy living life! :) Just kidding, but only slightly. Robby was here for almost a whole week!! Wow! I have had a great week and thoroughly enjoyed having all 4 of my kiddos home - even if for only a short time. (See the picture below of all 4 of them!) Ahh.... so sweet to spend time with family!

Well, around here there is nothing new under the sun! We have been in our house here in SC for over 3 years now, which is a record!!! 3 years to the day is the longest we have been in any single house since we were married 24 years ago! It's really cool to have such a stable life that I can say there is nothing new under the sun. How cool! My 1 year anniversary of becoming paralyzed, 8/29, came and went - honestly without me even thinking much about it! Another how cool! I can walk and walk well now. I feel like I am more stable, on the inside and outside, then I have been in such a long time! Years!!! I like it!

This homeschool year is busy and I am enjoying it immensely. We are doing a co-op on Fridays, I am doing a Bible study on Tuesday nights, and I am helping out with the middle school youth group on Wednesday nights (am doing that instead of helping with AWANA this year), J.Jay loves co-op, especially being on the worship team, and his second favorite class is his physics class which is also on Tuesday afternoons. He is also thrilled to be starting piano lessons back next week! Elijah loves co-op also, and he loves SPARKS (AWANA) which just started back last night. And he loves, loves, loves school! Yea! Homeschooling rocks!

Brittney is a senior this year and so far she is doing great! She likes her school and loves her work and is just a happy person in general. You can't say THAT about many 17 year old girls!

Greg is always doing one of two things - working like a madman, or playing basketball! He's working harder these days than he has worked during our entire marriage, and rarely complains. He has a potential long-term deal that we are praying goes through. If so, we will be able to get back on track financially once and for all. Pray that goes through!

So, I don't have much to say - but I've decided that that is a good thing. We are in the same house, I am walking, our homeschool is going great, Brittney loves school and work, Greg is on the brink of having a long-term project, we just got to spend time with Robby. Hey, I know I say this alot but what more can I say? It's all good

Here are the kiddos - l-r: Brittney, Robby, J.Jay, and Elijah down in front. :) Gotta love `em!



Posted on on September 11th, 2008 in [Homeschooling](#) | [No Comments](#) »

I am NOT staying HERE!

I feel like I have been in a bit of a tunnel for a very long time now. I don't know if you've noticed a difference even on my blogs, but things have been "not right" with me for a while and I have been in a funk that I have been unable to snap out of. Well... drumroll please, **I'm back!!!** It is almost as though I have just not been myself and now myself is back!!! What happened? You ask.... Well, grab a cup of tea (or coffee, whatever floats your boat) and let's sit for a bit and chat.

Tonight I went to a Bible Study at church. It was the first night of a new Beth Moore series we are doing (my favorite, I love Beth Moore's studies!!!) and it is like I just snapped out of it while there. We are focusing on the Psalms of Ascent (Psalms 120-134) and the fact that we are all on a pilgrimage "up" to God. What really hit me was at one point during her video Beth said, "Are you down right now?" To which I am thinking "That's an understatement!" She went on to say, "wherever you are right now... it will change. You are not staying there!" I thought, "I am on my way! I am NOT staying HERE!" Okay, sounds trite, maybe, I truly feel as though I have been in an exile of sorts for quite a while. There was something that occurred some time ago, I've mentioned this in earlier blogs, but this event, the details of which I cannot share, quite literally rocked my world down to the core. I was so deep into my exile that I was having a hard time remembering what feeling free really felt like. I knew I was free... but I sure didn't feel it! Guess what? I feel free again!!!

I have learned, the hard way, not to place my faith in humans. They will let you down. They HAVE let me down. For years I, in my self-righteous pious way, honestly could not understand how someone could have strong faith in Jesus for years and then seem to falter. Like a priest

who "loses his faith" or someone who has a major event (maybe a death or loss of a loved one) that causes them to question their faith. The Lord has done so many miracles in my life and has brought me personally through so much, so many times that I honestly couldn't relate to what I viewed as "weak" people. I just didn't get it. Until I had to live it!

Now, I never really questioned my faith.... All I know is that I have felt so uneasy with life that I have been unable to even pray with a clear head. And my precious Bible, which has always been like a best friend that I could hardly wait to spend time with, became more allusive to me, not like an enemy, but certainly not the best friend it has always been. Instead it seemed to turn into a silent book. And one that I dreaded reading at that!

Be careful how highly you think of yourself! I thought I was such a strong Christian! I thought I would NEVER falter in **my** faith. I should have learned by now to never say never!!! I thought I could handle anything that life could possibly throw my way. Looking back now I realize that it's one thing to "know" that you can handle whatever life throws at you, but it is quite another to get hit with a completely and totally life altering two by four and jump right up totally unscathed!

Well, tonight I am happy to be back home. Home in the word of God, home with my sweet Jesus (as my grandma would say) and knowing that He is not only enough, He is EVERYTHING! Just like my book title, "The Journey is the Reward" I am on a pilgrimage... journeying up to God. I am SO GLAD that I am not staying here! I do not know what tomorrow will bring. I DO know that the old happy go-lucky, I love the Lord with all my heart, all my soul, and all my strength, Pamela is BACK! And she is here to stay!!! Yippee.... I did NOT like the sad, confused me. Greg didn't like me much either, and frankly, neither did my kiddos! I missed myself! But honestly, I missed Jesus the most. Living without Him at the absolute center of my everything is well.... nothing! Unfulfilling, depressing, and boring! He's my best friend, my Savior, my everything. Nothing else compares. Nothing else satisfies. Nobody else, not even EVERYONE else - is enough. He is my all. I've been empty, and now I am FULL! So, I just want to shout it at the top of my lungs, "I'M BACK!!!" And guess what? It feels GREAT!"

Posted on on August 26th, 2008 in [Homeschooling](#) | [No Comments](#) »

[Life on the Edge](#)

Life on the Edge

Each day, each moment on the edge
Peering around from an impossible ledge

By day I feel like Abraham
with a knife and a torch, but no sight of a lamb

I don't know what will happen next
The more I think, the more I'm perplexed

Somehow I continue, day by day
Still not sure why I'm going this way

Each step is painful and doesn't feel right
But on I go, fighting the good fight

I try to smile and hold my head up high
But this knife and torch keeps me wondering why

At night I feel like Jacob it seems
I wrestle all night awake or in dreams

My physical body is in so much pain
My mind is always trying to explain

My spirit cries out for mercy please
My soul just knows He will appease

I wake up in the morning and the sun is bright
But I limp along, still fighting my fight.

That is when Paul, I relate to the most
Fighting the fight, trying never to boast

Knowing the race is worth every trial
Yet wondering why I spend my days in denial

As I look in my hands, at my torch and my knife
How much longer can I withstand this strife?

When Abraham was walking his uphill path
With no way out and internal wrath

He turned to his son with love and concern
And said Let's go worship God and then we'll return

So I take my next step and like Abraham
I know in the thicket, there will be a ram

By: Pamela S. Berthume

I wrote this poem this morning, wanted to share. Pain at my SCI spot in back, is back. Life has been hard lately, but I am waiting and will keep looking up!

Posted on on August 21st, 2008 in [Homeschooling](#) | [No Comments](#) »

I'm better now!

Hi everyone! I woke up this morning with no zingy pain in my back. YIPPEE!! Thanks so much for your prayers! Yesterday was a long day as well as the younger boys and I went up to Camp Buckhorn at Paris Mountain for our new homeschool co-op's Back-To-School party. Even after all that - 8 long hours of nonstop fun and kiddo watching (we didn't leave until after 9pm!) I woke up this morning with no pain in "that spot" in my back. Why? Because you prayed for me, of course!

I am spending the weekend chilling out with Elijah since Greg is taking J.Jay to visit Grandma up in NC and Brittney is working, and a typical busy 17 year old. Greg and J.Jay are going to go on a "serious" hike, so Elijah and I stayed home so as not to hold them back! Pray they don't get lost in the woods! They are crazy together. If you don't believe it... watch the youtube "piano bloopers" below.

Okay, Greg video's J.Jay playing piano more last night, dressed much better than the original. Those videos are below as well. Also, I posted a couple of "sillies" myself. One of Elijah when he was a baby, and another of my. They are all below. Well I gotta go now... I've got nowhere to go and a kiddo to play with! Life is good. 😊

Elijah (now 6) when he was a baby - We were all in the van, I think driving from California to Ohio. This is so cute!



Me at my sister, Patty's house - being silly!



This is J.Jay and Greg (Dad) goofing off. Greg says in the video, this is good "Aspie" video. They BOTH have Asperger's - can't you tell? ha ha ha That's what makes them both so fun!!! And yes, J.Jay DID give Greg permission to put this on YouTube after all. 😊



This is J.Jay playing my favorite piece that he composed. ***Hidden Forest***



This is J.Jay playing another piece he composed. ***Asian Minor***



Posted on on August 16th, 2008 in [Homeschooling](#) | [No Comments](#) »

[I am not paralyzed!](#)

Late yesterday afternoon and into last night I had a terrible episode and I was honestly quite afraid that I was becoming paralyzed... again. I posted a little about it, here on my blog, in the afternoon. But it got worse as the day progressed until my entire right leg was numb and not working properly. I sent out an email last night to my "prayer warriors" letting them (many of you!) know what was happening and to pray that I did NOT become paralyzed again. Well, within an hour I received emails from 23 of these prayer warriors saying that they were praying for me.

Wow! Did I feel loved or what? (That was sarcasm.... I felt majorly loved!!) Well, the prayers worked!!! This morning the SCI spot at T5 is still hurting, but... I can still move my legs!!! YIPPEE!!! Another good thing is although I still have numbness in my left leg and my left arm, they are both hurting terrible. This is actually very good. Think about it, compared to zero feeling and no ability to move - pain is good!

So, THANKS SO MUCH FOR YOUR PRAYERS!! Please keep it up, I don't want another flare-up as I have too many important things to do... like be a wife and mom and homeschool my kiddos! We are starting back on Tuesday and I want to be at my absolute best when we do - and for our entire school year for that matter! AND I WILL! 😊

BTW, If you haven't already, look at my previous entry below and watch my 12 yo, J.Jay play the piano! 😊

Posted on on August 9th, 2008 in [Homeschooling](#) | [No Comments](#) »

J.Jay Playing Piano - And Pray For Me!

Hi all!

Pray for me! I am having serious pain in my back (where my spinal cord injury at T5) every time I take a good breath. This is the exact same spot that started hurting like this right before I became paralyzed last year. YIKES! It continued to hurt for months afterwards, but has not hurt in at least 4 months. Now the same pain is back. As a result I can only take shallow breaths (or else I see stars!) Pray it is just temporary and I don't have any further complications.

Pray for Brittney also. She had to get her 4 wisdom teeth removed today and a root canal AND some other work. They put her "out" and it she was in surgery for over 3 hours! She is zonked (sleeping, that is) and has been since we got home, and they said she will probably sleep all day long. Pray all heals well and she is completely recovered by Sunday because Sunday is her birthday! She will be 17 and we have family coming over on Sunday to help us celebrate! 😊

Okay, now that we have this YouTube thing mastered, Greg uploaded an old video we took of J.Jay playing piano. This was done some time ago. He looks like an orphan (his clothes don't even match!) and he doesn't talk so we are going to do a new video of him playing soon. But, it's a good video and shows what a gift God gave him in music! He is playing a short piece he composed himself.



That's all for today, will check in again soon.

Posted on on August 8th, 2008 in [Homeschooling](#) | [No Comments »](#)

My first YouTube Video!!!

Hi everyone! I am feeling better today and my nephew Billy, came over and helped us do a YouTube video showing off HOMESCHOOLPOLY®! It was quite fun. You can watch it if you want! 😊

Yep, that's me. Okay, so I'm a bit quirky, what can I say? That is just the way I am! (Scary, I know!) Tell me what you think...



Posted on on August 5th, 2008 in [Homeschooling](#) | [No Comments](#) »

I had a bad day...

I wanted to write today, on a bad day, for a change. I am tired, in more pain than any human being should have to be in, and am stressed for other reasons. So, the reason I don't write much on bad days is.... I can't think straight! That said, I'm outta here. I will write more on a GOOD day! See ya!

Posted on on August 3rd, 2008 in [Homeschooling](#) | [No Comments](#) »

Summer Memories & Homeschool Planning

Hi all! I have been having way too much fun to write lately, but I finally decided to sit down and do this "blog" thing once and for all since I KNOW how much you all miss it and grieve when I don't write! (Yea, RIGHT!)

First of all, my biggest news... we got a wonderful FREE vacation!!! My mother-in-law, whom I love so much, has a summer place up in the mountains of NC. They left to go out west for a few weeks and invited us to use their NC place while they were gone. I took the boys up two weeks ago today (Tuesday) and we were there for a week and two days. During our stay Brittney & my nephew, Billy, came up for 2 nights and then on the weekend my hubby, Greg came up. We had a great, relaxing, fun, nature-filled time! I hiked with the boys up to Linville Falls which was 1½ miles round trip! Wow! It was such an awesome thing as having a vacation this summer was not a possibility for us. Thanks to Mom, we all, especially the boys, got a summer vacation they will remember forever. Thanks, Mom!

We would have stayed longer, but J.Jay had his youth group missions trip to go to. We got back this past Thursday and they left on Sunday. Brittney works every day and Greg is always working

like a doggie, so Elijah and I have some rare one-on-one time this week. He is also doing VBS this week in the evenings which gives me, even rarer still, some alone time every night. Pretty cool.

It has turned out to be a great summer - I am just trying to get into the homeschool planning mode. I am so busy with work, house, and other things that I still have not started my homeschool planning and I really wanted to start school on August 18th. I may wait until the 25th if I must. I still don't have all of our school books, am praying to be able to get them later this week. Speaking of homeschool, guess what I did!?!?! I turned our sunroom into our new classroom. I worked on it all day Saturday and put the kids desks in there and turned our armoire into a great place to house our school supplies, books, etc. and it looks AWESOME! Plus, it is very functional. I have the couch in there to use as a reading couch and it's a great place for me to rest as I need to while teaching the kiddos. Also, our ottoman in that room can also serve as seating and has wheels. So I can be seated and "roll" right up to each boys' desk! Very cool! I am very excited. For some reason, I did not think that space would work well for our homeschool classroom, but I did NOT want it in our master bedroom again this year. I was SO WRONG that is the perfect space for the classroom. And one wall of the room is all windows so we get tons of natural light coming in. I am SO EXCITED to start back homeschooling... now I just gotta plan... 😊

Last thing - I have good news and bad news...

Good news - I played some very light racquetball with Brittney on Sunday night. Wow! This is first time I've played racquetball in over 8 years (since we lived in El Dorado Hills, CA!) and certainly since P-Day. I had a blast! I played very softly and calmly and of course, it hurt - but who cares? It was a BLAST!!

Bad news - I seemed to have damaged my right arm... playing racquetball. At this point I can't move it at all, not due to paralyzation - due to pain! If I move it I practically scream out in agony. Bummer, I want to play more racquetball! I need to let it heal. Pain shoots down from my elbow to my fingers if I move my arm, and I can not pick up or grasp anything. Typing this is painful, but I am doing it slowly moving my right fingers. They don't hurt when I move them, only if I put pressure on them. Odd. I don't know if it is muscle or nerve damage - but I am sure it is just temporary damage - so... no biggie. Pray it heals quickly so I can go play more racquetball!!! 😊

Elijah is begging me to take him to the pool (which we haven't been to in a while) so I am off making more summer memories. See ya!

Posted on on July 29th, 2008 in [Homeschooling](#) | [No Comments](#) »

[Bring the Rain](#)

Aren't you wondering why I didn't write last night as usual? I was actually asleep! Yea!!! I am off all those nasty medicines now and basically back to normal - just a bit more pain. Thanks to my hubby's great advice (yes, I actually listened to him for once!) I am taking Melatonin at night to help me sleep. And it is working! I did wake up very early this morning at 4:53am due to a major post-menopausal hot flash and I got up to turn the air down. (Okay, WAY down!) On my way back to the bed I didn't turn on the light so as not to wake Greg and smart me... I tripped over my favorite Golden Retriever, Lassen. (Yes, he's my favorite which is why he is still alive today!) I took a nice little fall and then was hurting so much (right side/leg and back) that I

could not get back to sleep. Bummer!!! On the bright side, we were not late for church!

I used those beautiful early morning hours to get some work done, watch the sun rise (a rarity that I am up early enough to do that!) and to spend some one-on-one time with Elijah. Elijah is the only somewhat morning person in this house, so he was pleasantly surprised to see me awake and on the couch when he woke up.

Speaking of pain, the sermon this morning was **JUST FOR ME!** It is amazing as it seems every week the sermon is about what I am specifically dealing with! You can listen to it online (or download it to your ipod, I would if I had an ipod!!) at: <http://www.southsidefellowship.org/weekly/sermons.aspx>. We are studying Jacob and I recommend starting at Week 1 and listening to all of them through today's sermon. As they are all excellent and life-changing in and of themselves. "What does this have to do with pain?" You ask. Listen to the sermon and you will understand! At the end was a favorite song of mine by Mercy Me, which is also my life theme song for some time now. I can't send you the actual tune, but it's the words that are so profound. It is as if the writer stepped into my mind and my heart and wrote the song from my perspective. Here are the lyrics:

Bring The Rain

I can count a million times
People asking me how I
Can praise You with all that I've gone through
The question just amazes me
Can circumstances possibly
Change who I forever am in You
Maybe since my life was changed
Long before these rainy days
It's never really ever crossed my mind
To turn my back on you, oh Lord
My only shelter from the storm
But instead I draw closer through these times
So I pray

Bring me joy, bring me peace
Bring the chance to be free
Bring me anything that brings You glory
And I know there'll be days
When this life brings me pain
But if that's what it takes to praise You
Jesus, bring the rain

I am Yours regardless of
The dark clouds that may loom above
Because You are much greater than my pain
You who made a way for me
By suffering Your destiny
So tell me what's a little rain
So I pray

Holy, holy, holy
Is the Lord God Almighty

What is amazing is that I have people who have asked me that and people who continue to ask me all the times. "How can you still be happy?" "Don't you ever wonder about God's love when you go through so much?" and my personal favorite, "Don't you ever doubt or lose your faith?" My answer is in the lyrics above. It has never even crossed my mind to doubt His love. I KNOW it, I can FEEL it every day. I feel like shouting at the top of my lungs when asked such questions, "I WAS PARALYZED AND NOW I AM WALKING!!! HELLO!" But honestly, even if I were still paralyzed I would probably be wanting to shout something else like, "LOOK AT THIS PEACE THAT PASSES UNDERSTANDING THAT HE GIVES ME EVERY DAY IN THE MIDST!!!" Which is still as true as it was back then. Wow! I'm amazed.

Okay, I FINALLY got Greg to upload some pictures for me.

The first two were taken on July 4th at the Heritage Park Amphitheatre. We had a blast!!!



J.Jay (age 12) listening to his favorite type of music. (See the Greenville Symphony Orchestra in the background?)



Elijah (age 6) and Greg. A couple of good looking men!

All the pictures with Brittney in it that night she is facing the stage, so here's a picture taken earlier the same day:



She is almost 17. My little girl, All grown up and saving China (Mulan)

As you can see life around here is very good. Jesus, bring the rain!

Clarification/Afterthought: Greg read my blog (above) and said, "You act like you just walk around as happy as a lark all the time. That's not true!" So, I said, "Anyone who reads my blog probably has read enough to know what I mean!" But since he is usually always right and just in case you think I am flittering around like Tinkerbell, let me make it a bit more clear. Happiness is not sheer smiling stupidity. Happiness to me is contentedness. It's when at the end of the day

you can smile and say "It's all good" regardless of the circumstances or troubles that day brought. Get it? Got it? GOOD! Yea.... It's ALL good!

Posted on on July 13th, 2008 in [Homeschooling](#) | [No Comments](#) »

More Ramblings of an Insomniac

My last post was in the wee hours of Sunday morning exactly one week ago. Well, here I am again! It's almost 2:00am, 7 days later, and no sandman for me! I figure I can at least make some good use of this sleepless night by writing, so here I am. Hopefully this will be short but sweet as I will get so tired that I will be falling asleep as I write. NOT!

Okay, update time!

1. I started on the Atkins diet today.... again. I did it years ago (like 9 years ago!) and lost just over 30 lbs. and I felt great while on it. Although it will be harder now as I am GF and low-carb, I must do it and stick with it! Pray for my willpower to make it through the hardest part - which is the first 2 weeks.
2. I had a really nice birthday. It started out not so good, because my expectations are always too high which only brings about self-induced disappointment. But Greg gave me the entire afternoon to go shopping all by myself and spend some of my birthday money on some much needed clothes. Shopping by myself, with no kiddos... what a concept! Then my daughter got me a beautiful necklace, but the best thing about it was the beautiful silver box it came in, on which she had engraved, "*Mommy, I love you! You are everything to me, my strength when I am weak. Love, Brittney*" Awww... I cried when I read it. How sweet is that? It is so amazing the power that words have on me. (My love language is "words of affirmation"). I got lots of phone calls and cards. My wonderful mother-in-law (who in 24 years of being married to her son I have never heard her sing) even sang Happy Birthday to me! So it was a very good birthday. I feel old, but loved. :)
3. We also had a super fun 4th of July. We went to the amphitheatre in Heritage Park where the Greenville Symphony Orchestra played prior to and during the fireworks show. It ranked way up there as being one of the best July 4th celebrations ever. Very cool. The first song they played was the Indiana Jones theme song and Elijah FLIPPED! He loves Indiana Jones! Then they did lots of great classics and of course patriotic songs. It was excellent and a very fun way to celebrate America's independence. J. Jay loves the orchestra, so he enjoyed the music as much if not more than any of us. Brittney brought a friend along as well and at one point I was sitting in the lawn chair just watching all the kids on blankets in front of us and I just sighed with contentment. There is absolutely nothing more rewarding in life than sitting beside your hubby and together enjoying the very presence of your kiddos. I am so blessed to be a mom and that I get to enjoy my kids. Robby is grown and has been away from home for almost 5 years now and Brittney only has 1 more year at home left. I am glad Elijah is only 6!!! More often than not I just want to close my eyes and imprint the moment as I want to soak in and enjoy my mommy days while they last. I know all too well how quickly childhood turns into adulthood!
4. I am feeling way, WAY better and still off my prescription medicines. YEA!!! Other than some weird isolated (and quite scary) panic attacks during which my BP spikes and my heart races, and a general yucky, intolerant, snippy disposition (which is NOT very becoming, I might add) the worst of the withdrawal nightmare is over. I will be VERY glad when all of the withdrawal symptoms are history. I am sure that Greg and the kiddos will be even more

glad to get their nicer, calmer and a great deal more patient version of me back as well!

They are not used to me being so snippety (is that even a word?!?!?) and neither am I! I pray that I am in the final stretch...

5. Now I just need to sleep already!!!

I just want to share a verse that I can not get out of my mind. Having some difficult times causes one to pause quite a bit and just ponder it all. It seems like every time I pause lately, this verse just pops into my mind:

For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?

Matthew 16:26 (New King James Version)

[New King James Version \(NKJV\)](#) Copyright © 1982 by [Thomas Nelson, Inc.](#)



It really puts everything into perspective for me. It doesn't matter how tough life may seem, it is well with my soul - and that's a really great feeling! *All else is meaningless.* (I threw in a little Ecclesiastes for good measure!)

That's all for now, folks. See ya!!!

Posted on on July 6th, 2008 in [Homeschooling](#) | [No Comments](#) »

Ramblings of an Insomniac

Since my last post, I have been going through one of the roughest, toughest weeks in my life. And if you know anything about me, you know that I have had some rough times - so that is saying a lot! The day I took my bike riding picture was also the first day of zero prescription medications since I left the hospital last September. Due to several reasons, the biggest being finances, I have been weaning myself gradually off of all of my prescription medications for months now. Well, June 21st was the first day ***totally medication free***. Greg (my hubby) and I had done our research and we knew that I would have a rough week at least, probably a few rough weeks after going off this last medication until my body adjusted, so we prepared for that and for me to take it easy as much as possible during this time. Unfortunately, neither of us had a clue as to the events totally beyond our control that would occur during this same crucial time.

We have had two major events occur, neither of which I can share the details of as they are just too personal. Either one these events alone would have threatened to make me feel like a total failure. Both of them occurred almost simultaneously and together have shaken my faith just a bit. Not my faith in God mind you, only my faith in people. The awesome realization though is as major and close to my heart as these events have been, neither have even put a teeny, tiny, itty, bitty dent in my faith in Jesus. I think (I hope?) I have finally gone through enough "***stuff***" that my faith in Him is as solid as a rock. Frankly, He is as real to me as my eyes are brown. If that

makes any sense. So, even though I am at a loss to even begin to understand either of the two mysterious events (mysterious to you that is!!), I have an unexplainable peace that keeps me going strong.

I am so glad there is nothing I can do to make Jesus love me any less, because lately I feel like a total failure. If I thought for even one moment that His love for me was based on my actions - well, I would be in total despair. But I am not!!! I am confused, sad, heartbroken even, but still full of hope because I know, that I know, that I know - that He will work everything out for good. So how's that for preachy?!?!?

Please do continue to pray for our family. My pain levels have been way up and my activity level has plummeted. It is very important for me to get through this time without my younger boys, especially Elijah, becoming afraid that I will end up back in the hospital. So I am really trying hard to act as "normal" as possible around them, and it is NOT easy. Frankly, I really need to get through this summer WITHOUT ending up back in the hospital period! Please pray for my strength, wisdom, and tolerance to pain - and a great attitude through it all. (Pray especially hard for the attitude part!) That said, I am totally thrilled that I met my bike-riding goal 12 days early and have the picture to prove it, as I have no idea when I will be able to ride it again. And I am okay with that. I am more optimistic for the future than ever. Once my body adjusts to the higher levels of pain a bit and gets over the withdrawals of the awful medications that I have been on, I will once again increase my activity levels. I can't wait as I have a feeling that I will feel better than ever, mentally and physically when I have all the medication totally out of my system and no more withdrawal side affects. Then I will have nothing "synthetic" to mess up my mental clarity or add to my fatigue levels!

Now, sit down... you may not be ready for this... My next goal is to play racquetball - by this Christmas!!! Don't worry - I'll take a picture and post it. 😊

As I look back these past 8 days, I choose to focus the rest of my blog on just a few of the **great** things that have happened:

- Brittney, my almost 17 yr old daughter, and I had a terrific time visiting another prospective college campus this week. We both were impressed and left feeling strongly that this is the college for her. It is her first choice now. She wants to major in Special Education and she is finally beginning to take school and preparing for college in general, more seriously. Yea!!! I truly hope she keeps her focus during her senior year and I am optimistic that she will.
- J.Jay, my 12 yr old son, tested for his 4th belt in Tae Kwon Do this past week and of course, he got it. He is now a green belt. I am so proud of him!
- Elijah, my 6 yr old son, has completely stopped sucking his thumb. We also put his treasured blanket away for safe-keeping so he's not relying on it anymore. YEA!!! We are going to the dentist on Monday to get his picture and name put on the "Thumb-Free" wall. Also, his vocabulary of late simply blows my mind. Every day it seems he says something that shows what an excellent grasp of the English language he has! Today he picked up a bag of gluten containing cereal that someone put in our gluten-free area and said, "Momma, we have a situation here!" He is so fun to be around. He is serious and insightful one minute, cracking witty jokes the next. He has a wonderful and unique sense of humor as well that is coming out more and more as he gets older.
- I am feeling closer to Robby, my all grown up son, lately as well. I am telling you what, I just absolutely love all of my kiddos! I am fully convinced that all in all, I have got the most

- unique, interesting, and downright coolest offspring on the planet!
- Our neighbors had mulch leftover, apparently they had purchased too much, and they GAVE it to us! Yes, for FREE!!! It is beautiful dark black mulch. Greg spent last night and today spreading it around and it was enough for all the areas, trees and bushes in our entire front yard with the only exception of our one row of bushes on the right edge of our front yard. Wow! Our yard was looking pretty sad, and now it looks pretty great! (except for the browning grass due to drought, but hey - fresh mulch makes it all look good!!) Thank you, Neighbor!!!
 - Greg and I are getting along better than ever lately. He seems more contented in general and we seem to be laughing more than we have in years, often for no reason at all! How cool to be married for over 24 years to someone who is so fun to be around. He is becoming more and more my 'soulmate' as we grow older together. I like it.
 - I just starting going to a women's Bible study at the YMCA that I really enjoy. I haven't been involved in a small group Bible study in a while and I didn't realize how much I missed it! It's way more fun then just studying the Bible alone. Very cool!

Although I have been more emotional and "on edge" without my drugs, er, I mean medicines; and even in the midst of two major what I would call bad and sad events - I am STILL happy and thankful for all things. How cool is that? It's amazing how much my perspective has changed over the past year, but I can honestly say that regardless of circumstances I am a happy, contented woman. Not many people can say that and mean it! Don't get me wrong - I get angry, sad, confused, frustrated, and more - usually every day... but through it all, I am honestly thankful for everything. I now have what I consider the privilege of a tiny glimpse of life through God's eyes instead of my own. And from that perspective - things always look **very good!** I would never want to go back to the way I viewed God before I became paralyzed. I had Him in a box of my own making. The more life I live the more I can see Him clearly, for who He really is. And the better I get to know Him I more I trust Him. For the first time in my life I don't feel like I have to understand everything for myself - what I can't see I don't feel as though I **have** to see because I know that He sees it all. You see?!?!?

So, I may be in lots of pain, but hey, I am thrilled that I can FEEL pain! I can move! I can walk! Too bad I can't sleep! It is 3:11am and this insomniac is going to try, *again*, to get to some sleep. I need to get up for church in just a few hours! YIKES!!!

`nighty `night!

Posted on on June 29th, 2008 in [Homeschooling](#) | [No Comments](#) »

[A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words](#)



Look at that picture and what do you see?? I see one happy (a bit pudgy, but very happy) NON-PARALYZED Mama riding a bicycle! YIPPEE!!! If you look back to my previous blog entries you will see that some time ago I announced that my goal was to ride my bicycle by my next birthday, July 3rd. Well... I am as impatient as usual and I met my goal 12 days early! The above picture was taken TODAY! Yep, that's me!

Today has been a great day! First, J.Jay had his Tae Kwon Do testing in which I stayed to watch. He tested for his 4th belt - green. That was a fun, albeit it a five hour long event. Then I worked out at the gym, but at the last minute something told me that today was THE day to ride my real bike. So I cut my "stationary bike" workout short and came home to ride the real thing!

Greg was not too thrilled at first, to say the least. Okay, he was anxious almost to the point of being opposed - but he let me try. You should have seen the look on his face when I was riding. It was somewhere between terror and pride. Ha ha ha. J. Jay's face on the other hand, showed sheer pride. He popped onto his bike to track me down when he heard what I was doing. He was beaming from ear to ear. Then there is Elijah... just to see the smile on his little six year old face was priceless. He can't remember ever having seen Mama ride a bike before. Wow!

When I got off I started crying, I mean downright bawling! It was coming from deep inside of me - out of sheer happiness, shock, realization of what I can do now and how far I've come, love for God, Awe of God, and thankfulness that I can now ride a bike with my kiddos. I never thought I would be able to be such a "normal" mom again. I mean, I knew I would, but I didn't really know. You know?!?!?! Wow! I have never experienced such a flood of happy tears in my life. I cried, sometimes loudly sobbing for almost an entire hour. I can't even explain it. I told my hubby that I don't think anyone could possibly understand the depth of the happiness and emotion I felt unless they had been paralyzed and then come this far "back" to being able to ride their bike. This means so much more to me than just the ability to ride my bike though. It is being able to be an active bike-riding Mom to my younger kiddos like I was to my older kiddos! It means family time all riding our bikes together. I can't put it into words, it sounds so silly. BUT IT'S NOT! 😊

Another BIG accomplishment today.... Today is day #1 of no prescription medications for me. I

mean absolutely none, zero, zilch! It has taken me a long time (weaning off them one at a time), but I am officially off all of my prescriptions. Wow! I have some that I may take on an "as needed" basis, but knowing me, probably not. 😊 So my pain levels are up, yet my activity is up too! Wow!

Everyone keeps asking me how I do it. I really want to make sure that everyone who reads this and everyone who knows me realizes that **I** am not doing **anything**. I cannot even make it through one day on my own as I am not that strong of a person. My pain is too great and I am too weak. But in my weakness, He is stronger. That's not just a cute Bible verse (or a nice song), it is my daily reality. It's one thing to hear it or to read it, it's another thing entirely to actually live it! The fact of the matter is that I have only gotten this far because God has given me the gumption and He continues to give it to me every single day (usually minute by minute) of my life. **God Given Gumption**. Triple Geez! I am so grateful He loves me this much. It's not me, it's Him!

Some other cool things taking place in the Berthume household:

- J.Jay is so focused with his Tae Kwon Do. I am very proud of how far he's come in such a short time!
- Greg (I didn't have the heart to do it!) took Elijah's blanket away earlier in the week as he (Elijah) was starting to carry it around with him and was getting way too attached to it. After a couple of fitful night's sleep, Elijah is "over it" and doing great with no blanket!
- After such success with the blanket I started putting the nasty tasting stuff on his thumbnail. He wanted to stop sucking his thumb almost as bad as we wanted him to stop. Well... this is the third day in a row of no thumb sucking. He is going to sleep like a baby, no problem. Wow! Who'da thunk? My little baby is not a little baby anymore.
- The boys (Greg, J.Jay and Elijah) caught a "Fowler's Toad" tonight while looking for fireflies. Elijah is a bug, insect, reptile, amphibian maniac so he insisted on catching it and "keeping" it. Greg made a temporary habitat for it so Elijah can study it for a couple of days before releasing him. Very cool.
- Brittney is hanging out with her girlfriends more and really seems to be enjoying her summer. Also very cool.
- Greg and I are reading the book "The Shack". To say we highly recommend it is an understatement. EVERYONE should read this book. I am almost finished with it and it is by far the best book I have ever read. (With the exception of the Bible, of course!) I haven't even finished it and I already want to read it again!
- Our HOMESCHOOLPOLY® buy one get one free sale is going well, so we are continuing it for a little bit longer.
- Tomorrow is Sunday, my favorite day of the week.

Not to beat a dead horse (I love horses, so I would never do that!) but in 8 days it will be 10 months from "P-Day" (day I became paralyzed from waist down). But who cares about that anymore because today is "B-Day" (the day I rode my bike for the first time, not only since P-Day, but for the first time in over 4 years!!!) So, *Happy B-Day* to me!!!

Finally, thanks so much for all your prayers of late, I can feel them! Life is good.

Posted on on June 21st, 2008 in [Homeschooling](#) | [No Comments](#) »

[Life ain't so tough!](#)

Hi all! Ok, bad grammar in my title, I know. But that is just the way it is! No circumstances have improved for us, YET. (And I emphasize the **yet!**) But, I am as happy as a dog with two tails today! "Why?" You ask... Well, let me tell you!

First, Greg and I celebrated our 24th Anniversary on Sunday. Actually, we celebrated it on Saturday so we could celebrate Father's Day on Sunday. We went for a drive up to the mountains on Saturday, just the two of us. Absolutely nothing went "as planned" but we had a better time than we could have planned anyway! We even ran across an awesome horse farm on the way home where we got out and I got some bonding time with the horses. I LOVE HORSES!!! Greg started being silly Saturday night and we were laughing so hard I felt like I was going to pass out. We just couldn't stop laughing and ended up laughing so hard and loud that we woke up the kids! YIKES! We STILL couldn't stop laughing! We have not laughed that much in a long time and it felt great. We rang in our Anniversary (after midnight) with laughter and I have a feeling we are going to be smiling and laughing together for many, many more years to come. What a great feeling.

Speaking of horses and laughing, I miss my Goldie (a Palomino Quarterhorse I had in Ohio) and I deeply miss being around horses in general. That is me with her in the picture above. I have started on my own "bucketlist" of sorts and have decided that when I grow up someday and have the money to spend I am going to buy some acreage and have a horse farm for boarding and riding. That way I can manage it, smell the horses, hay, and manure on a daily basis. Oh, and of course snuggle up to all of the horses and feed them starburst mints with abandon. And of course, I will hire someone (or two) to do all the hard work so I can just enjoy the sights and smells. I don't even need to "ride" a horse again, I just love to be around them. So... that's one of the things on my list.

Also I have put aside the non-fiction book I have been trying to finish for some time called, The Perfect Homeschool Mom... Does Not Exist! I have come to the realization that I am simply not enjoying writing it right now. I WILL finish it at some point but I have decided to instead follow my heart and do another thing on my bucketlist which is to write a novel. I actually have 4 novels roaming around in my head!! But one that I just can't get out of my head! That is the one I am writing first. Well, I wrote quite a bit yesterday and even more today and I have the entire story to tell, it's just a matter of getting it down before it leaves me! Seriously, I am having more fun writing this fiction novel than I have had in a very long time. Since I created HOMESCHOOLPOLY two years ago, to be exact! My creative juices are flowing and I feel like it's energizing me head to toe!

That said, I am off to write some more before I call it a night. With the kids and the business and the planning and the meals and all the other stuff, I don't have time to write. But I am MAKING time!

Keep us in your prayers - still have some very pressing unspoken needs. Thanks a bunch!

Posted on on June 16th, 2008 in [Homeschooling](#) | [No Comments](#) »

Life is tough but God is tougher!

Hi all! We have a great deal going on around here and I've wanted to write lately, but have been at a loss of what to say. The things we are dealing with right now are some personal private issues that I cannot share. So many things that I simply do not understand. A future that in so

many ways I can't imagine playing out in a positive way. But, as always, God has shown me that He is in control. I listened to Focus on the Family's daily broadcasts yesterday and today which is a two part series of Josh McDowell sharing his testimony. Wow! I recommend everybody listen to these broadcasts! The link is <http://www.focusonthefamily.com/> just go there and click on the right hand side where it says "Listen to Daily Broadcast". Then listen to *Overcoming the Father Wound 1* & *Overcoming the Father Wound 2* (in that order, of course). Nothing in my circumstances have changed, nothing that is except the reassurance and reality that God really does work all things out for good. Even when it seems impossible.

That said, please pray for my family. Several unspoken prayer needs, and also my pain levels are up quite a bit (probably due to reducing medications - going off last one now!, increasing heat, and increased stress as of late) so if you have a moment, please also pray for my attitude and countenance to be positive and happy regardless of my pain levels.

Last but not least... we are having a first ever **HOMESCHOOLPOLY® "buy one get one free"** sale! (Also could be called, "We really need some money to pay our bills" sale!) As many of you know, Greg and I created this homeschool board game in 2006 after God told us to. Not only is it the only homeschool board game on the planet, but it is super fun if I do say so myself! The perfect game for these long, hot, summer days. **PLEASE HELP ME SPREAD THE WORD BY TELLING ALL OF YOUR HOMESCHOOL FRIENDS!!!** Every game also comes with over \$600 worth of coupons and freebies as well, so it's an awesome deal. To check it out visit: www.homeschoolopoly.com

God is bigger than the boogie man! (Veggie Tales)

Posted on June 13th, 2008 in [Homeschooling](#) | [No Comments](#) »

Tough times & no teeth

These past two days have been like a roller coaster ride in so many ways. More than I wish to even think about, much less talk about! So... instead of ranting I decided to post a picture I just took today of Elijah - my toothless 6 year old. It's hard to look at this picture and not smile.



Lately I feel like I am drowning, so do you know what to do when you feel like you are drowning? Just keep swimming, just keep swimming, just keep swimming, swimming, swimming. What do you do? You swim, swim!

(fyi: you'd have to know me, but I am a movie line maniac! And that is from the movie... Finding Nemo! (aka, Chico, Fabio, Elmo, Harpo, and Bingo. Did I miss any?)

Swim Away!!!

Posted on on June 7th, 2008 in [Homeschooling](#) | [No Comments](#) »

We're not in Kansas anymore!

I just couldn't resist saying that! I got home from the Kansas homeschool convention late Sunday evening and am still recuperating, but it was a great trip! Thanks for praying for me (if you did pray for me, that is). The trip itself was actually a bit harder on me physically than I expected. But I would do it over many times in a heartbeat. It was so worth it! My workshops all went great, and the conference as a whole was one of my favorites yet. I especially enjoyed my worker for the weekend, Kyle. He was SO MUCH help and he hung out with me at my booth the entire time. He handled everything (sales, taking orders, etc.) while I was doing my workshops and often while I was there, gabbing. He was a Godsend (literally), not to mention great company! I SO love homeschooled teens!

Also, I can now understand why people stay in Kansas despite the tornadoes. All the people I met were so nice, and "real", and down to earth. I have met people from all over and at this point I believe I favor Kansans (I looked it up, that's what they are called!) best of all. They treated me wonderfully as well... like a queen! I hope to go back next year, just for the fun of it!

I feel like I have gone a tiny bit backwards, health-wise, as I had to use my scooter pretty much for my entire trip. But, tonight I went to the gym (even though I didn't feel like it!) and I worked

out anyway. So, hopefully my body will understand that I am not going to LET it get worse! Only better! It's all good.

Okay, here's the rundown on the family:

- Greg (hubby) is as busy as a cat on a hot tin roof
- Robby is as silent as a lamb (I miss him!!)
- Brittney is as tricky as a box of monkeys
- J. Jay is as happy as a rat with a gold tooth
- Elijah is as proud as a dog with two tails! ('cause he can swim like a fish!)
- Oh yea - and what about me? Well, I am as snug as a bug in a rug. 😊

We are just a bunch of animals around here!

While I was away this weekend, Greg took the boys camping. They had a great time from what I heard. J. Jay jumped off the twenty foot high dive! Wow! Then Elijah jumped off a pool diving board today! Elijah can swim under water and above water now also. I guess that means it is officially summer!!! YIPPEE!!!

Enough said. I have more work to do than there are hours in the day AND night. I am trying to learn to balance everything WITHOUT getting stressed out, but it's much easier said than done. That said (not done) I need to go return a zillion and one emails, pay bills (which is really hard without money!), work on my column, work on my book, yada yada yada. But I MUST get it done, or it'll be there waiting for me tomorrow. YIKES! As sure as death and taxes!

Over and out, Toto!

Posted on on June 3rd, 2008 in [Homeschooling](#) | [No Comments](#) »

First Flight since....

Hi all!

I am out the door to the airport. Taking my first "solo" flight since P-Day (paralyzed day). Am actually a bit nervous, which is a strange and unusual feeling for me as I don't usually GET nervous!! Am taking my scooter and have a layover at O'Hare. I am familiar with O'Hare airport, but never in a scooter! :0

Anyway, on the way to Kansas to do 4 workshops for their homeschool conventions and sell my books and of course, HOMESCHOOLPOLY!! Pray all goes well.

Life has been crazier than usual this week and we had an awful day today, so that means Satan is not wanting me to go. That's a GREAT SIGN! Whenever he tries to mess things up, you KNOW you are on the right track. 😊

So... I'm off!

TTFN!

God Bless!!
Pamela

I am a "walking" miracle!

Since I wrote last, I have accomplished the following:

- Walked around the entire Charleston Southern University campus with my daughter on a campus visit and tour.
- Walked onto the beach!!! YEA!! This was the coolest. I grew up on the beach and when I was paralyzed I often thought with sadness that I would most likely never be able to feel the sand between my toes again. Well, my toesies where loving it! We even walked up a down the beach a short distance. Wow!
- Was able to help out with doing dishes at my mom's house on Mother's Day instead of just "sitting in my chair" as before.
- Walked around the mall with my daughter!
- Walked around the next block in my neighborhood (over two blocks instead of just one).
- Took both of my golden retrievers for a short walk (one at a time) with my 6 year old.
- Helped my 6 year old find a lost turtle (Eastern Box Turtle) and went with him to return it to the creek behind our house.
- Have done 30-40 mins of cardio every other day for the past two weeks!!! (Using the Elliptical so my arms can help work my legs; and the high back stationary bicycle.)
- We had a garage sale last weekend, so I was up and walking and bending and everything with that.
- Drove my hubby's stick shift cooper! (Did you get that, I can drive a stick shift now on my good days!!!!)
- Also doing strength training with weight equipment (high back technogym equipment so I can lift weights without straining my back or neck) And am doing exercises to help my balance issues.
- Stopped taking yet another one of my medications.
- LOST 5 POUNDS! YIPPEE!!!

I could go on. There is so much to tell. I am just in total awe at the power of God. Everything "I" have accomplished, has only been by the grace of God, and His answering the prayers of the righteous. He has accomplished so much in little ole me. I just can't get over how much I have improved! There is no stopping me now! I feel like telling everyone I meet what God has done in my life to make sure He gets ALL the glory! It's hard to relate unless you've lived through it I am sure, but I pinch myself several times a day. Every step thrills me. I once was lame, but now I WALK! (And even "work-out" at the gym!) Wow. Wow. Wow. Wow. Wow.

Thank you all you prayer warriors out there! Don't stop now... I have some unspoken prayer requests and your powerful prayers are always appreciated.

I need to go and get a good night's sleep for tomorrow should be yet another wonderful, walking day!

From Paralyzed to Exercised!

Okay, are you sitting down? I am walking unaided! No, wait there's more. I am EXERCISING! I have begun to work my muscles and my balance in particular this past week and it is making a difference. I am so thrilled. I haven't used my scooter since 1 week ago today (last Wednesday). Tonight I went to gym with J.Jay (12yo) and I did 5 mins. on the bike, 20 mins. on the elliptical machine, which I can use my arms to compensate for my legs when I need to. AND 15 mins. on another stationary bike. That's 40 mins of cardio exercise. CAN YOU BELIEVE IT?!?! J. Jay couldn't. He was freaking out and could hardly keep up with me. :) It hurt like crazy, but hey - no pain no gain.

Also, the trainer there showed me some weight training and floor exercises I can do to help strengthen my core and my weak arm and leg muscles and to help my balance. I did those yesterday and am going to do every other day. It is amazing, I can't believe my own self. I mean, who'da thunk? YEA!!!! I honestly feel like this is a miracle. I am so pumped up and excited I just want to run around the block... which I can't do yet, but if God keeps this up, I will!) Speaking of the block, yesterday I walked around my neighborhood block with my kiddos and hubby - WITH NO CANE OR ANYTHING. Is that good, or what?!? As I see it, I am right on track to reach my goal of riding my bike by my birthday, which is July 3rd. Self, I said, "You go girl!"

Tonight was our ceremony night for AWANA and Elijah completed his first SPARKS book AND the review also. I even walked up onto the stage to stand with "my" AWANA girls while they were getting their awards. I couldn't do that even a week ago. I feel so brave lately and.... normal (whatever that is!). YIPPEE!! This summer while AWANA is taking a break I am going to help out with the middle school youth group, leading a group of girls. I am very excited as I have a real heart for middle schoolers. That is such a difficult time in life for them and the time they typically decide who they are/what they believe and really begin to separate from their parents. I hope to be able to be a good influence on them.

Britt and I are going to Charleston this weekend to visit Charleston Southern University, which is one of the top 4 colleges she is interested in attending. This is our first official college visit, so we are both excited.

Other than that, all is good in the Berthume home. I am gonna walk away now. (Get it? Walk away! Yes, I can do that!) Oh yea.... OK, I will try to calm down - but it's not easy. GOD IS SO GOOD!!! Keep the prayers coming - miracles are taking place.

From paralyzed to exercised - over and out!

Posted on on May 7th, 2008 in [Homeschooling](#) | [No Comments](#) »

Terribly Terrific!

It's only been one week since my last blog and here I am blogging again. I don't know about you, but I am very impressed with my 'own-self'! Okay, enough bragging already - do I even have something to say? YES!

This has been a weird week! Terrible in some ways and terrific in others. Painful yet promising. Old problems resurfaced, but so did some new opportunities! All week, close one door - open another. Seems like a door is slammed in my face and the next day there's an automatic door which starts opening before I even get there! I can't even keep up with myself!

Elijah (6yo) finished his AWANA Sparks book and review. YIPPEE! He actually said **18 sections** (mostly 1 verse each, some more!) on Wednesday night and then another **17 sections** to his leader today after church. Today's sections included him reciting all the books of the New Testament. I am such a proud Mama! His AWANA leader is so terrific. Their end of year party is next year and once again (she did this with their Christmas party) she is making sure that everything brought is gluten free so it's safe for Elijah, since he has Celiac Disease. She has gone so far beyond anything we could imagine in helping keep Elijah gluten free. She left "the call of duty" in the dust and went straight to "the heart of love" with Elijah from the moment he entered her class. She even has a special box of chocolate and candy treats (rewards) just for him that only contains gluten-free stuff! At the end of every class, he gets to pick a treat (or two) from his special box! If someone brings something to the door with wheat or any other form of gluten in it, she won't even allow it in the room! Thank you, Kim!

J.Jay (12yo) is thoroughly enjoying his sketching classes and seems to have quite a talent for it. (Is there anything he can't do?!?!?) He also found out this week that one of his friends from Tae Kwon Do who also homeschools lives right here in our neighborhood! They hung out together yesterday and this afternoon as well. They seem to get along great. I also got along well with his mom, so another friend potential for me too. I LOVE FRIENDS!!!

Brittney (16yo) we are trying to help her get focused more on college and the future. She applied for two colleges this week (ones that had rolling applications) so that is very exciting. We are studying for and practicing for her upcoming SAT test and have had to set some limits on her activities so she can keep her grades up. Parenting can be so hard! (Okay, so THAT is a major understatement!) But it's all worth it. We are visiting our first college soon, and I think I am more excited than she is!

Robby, our adult son and Kathryn, his wife seem so happy living in California. I can hear it in his voice every time I talk with him. I still miss him daily but lately I feel more and more at peace like I am "accepting" him not being my little boy anymore. (He's been gone for over 4 years, but it takes a mom a while to get used to these things!!) They are doing terrific, and really seem to love and respect each other deeply. They also love the new area they are living in and Kathryn loves her new job — it all seems like a perfect fit for them. What more could a Mom want?

Last, but greatest - Greg (hubby) is doing terribly terrific. Which means he is either doing terrible or terrific depending upon the moment. He loves the weather and being outdoors and the awesome nature preserve behind our house. Yet he is majorly suffering from "cabin fever" as he works from home with me and the kiddos here making noise all the time. (And did I mention that we are all loud around here?!?!?) He has worked from the home off and on for 12 years, but has been in his office at our house exclusively since we built the house almost 3 years ago. The longest we have ever lived in ANY single house before is 3 years - so we are coming up soon on a record. The last time he was very feverish for a "change" and that's what started our major moving fest. We all love it here and plan on staying here for many, MANY years to come. So we are not going to change houses by any means, but his dream is to have an external office. I am praying for God to miraculously provide a very close outside office for him at a super low - or better yet zero cost! How big of a prayer is that? But, hey I love a BIG God, so if it's His will - He will do it! Ask and ye shall receive! I'll let you know...

I have had a teeny bit of a setback (too personal to blog about!) maybe due to my hammock fall, but am not letting that get me down. We signed up for the SportsClub as it is just opening and is very close to our house. Turns out they actually have quite a bit of equipment I can use

(stationary bicycles that are powered with high-back seats, etc.) and they have water classes for people with disabilities. The monthly membership fee is only slightly more than **one** physical therapy visit and I haven't been able to afford physical therapy since 3 weeks after P-Day (paralyzed day) which was almost 8 months ago. I need to push my body more, so I am very excited about this opportunity to do it. They also have a program that doesn't cost extra for a personal trainer to tailor a "workout plan" for me.

My goal is STILL to ride my bike by my birthday in July. (No, I am NOT kidding!) I can now walk with much pain, but for quite a distance - in my opinion! I have come so far and am ready to do what it takes to try to get my muscles back in shape from atrophy. I can deal with pain, so that doesn't bother me - but I have balance issues. I found out that they also have "tai chi" classes for extreme beginners (I can sit even as needed on my cane seat) that are focused to help balance. I am going to try that out too! I AM SO EXCITED!!! (Can you tell?!?!?) I want to shed these extra pounds and get my body back into shape. I don't know how "realistic" I am being, but I don't really care because I DO know that I can ALL THINGS through Christ - as He is my strength. SO THERE!

Finally, I am looking forward to summer! Our community pool opens on May 1st - which is only this coming week!!!! I don't know how easy I will be able to get into and out of the pool (hey, I never thought of that until just now - same goes for pool classes at the SportsClub); but I am sure I will figure it out.

Our homeschooling is winding down on the number of days we school, but going strong on the days we DO do school! 😊 We are down to doing school about three-four days a week instead of five at this point. I always take my full summers off, but I am praying about this year doing school at least one if not two days a week. We'll see!!

Super important prayer request: Pray for Greg's mom, she had some surgery and we are awaiting the pathology reports. Pray that they do not find ANY trace of cancer. She should get results by next week. Of less importance, I have quite a few unspoken prayer requests so next time you talk to God, remember me and my family!

Jesus + Anything = SLAVERY
Jesus + Nothing = FREEDOM!!!

Posted on on April 27th, 2008 in [Homeschooling](#) | [No Comments](#) »

[Prom, New Neighbors, and Hammocks](#)

Hi! We seemed to have lived about 3 weeks in the past 1 week (get it?!) as it's been busy and eventful in many ways.

First of all, we had wonderful company last weekend that resulted in a family reunion of sorts. My 'brother' as he says who spent a great deal of time with my family when I was younger (when I was about 6-11 yrs old) came to visit with his wife and kiddos. My sisters are all older than me and he was their age. Anyway, they came to visit and my mom and two of my sister's came over, one with her family also. We had a cookout, played cranium, everyone hit it off great and I personally had an absolutely WONDERFUL time! They even were able to stay over on Saturday night! I only wished they lived closer as even our kiddos got along great with each other and his wife and I hit it off great as well. The night before their arrival I had an AWANA party (an

overnight, but I left a bit after 10pm) so I was wiped, but going on ADHD juice!

Then, this week we have had something every single day!!! I am totally wiped out, but praising God... Here's the gist of it, totally out of order, but hey that's just the way my mind doesn't work:

1. Brittney had her first prom on Friday night and she had a blast. She looked like a princess out of a movie!! After I took pictures and drove away I suddenly burst out crying. My little girl is growing up. She looked like a beautiful young woman and I was happy and sad all at the same time!
2. The Hammock broke on Thursday evening while Elijah (6 yr old) and I were lying on it. Elijah jumped out just in time, but I landed square on my back. The great news is that except for being more sore than usual I did not suffer any kind of a flare-up and can still walk, etc. YEA!!! God is good!
3. We have new neighbors just down the street from us and she is a stay at home mom. I spoke with her early in the week and then she came over this afternoon with her 6 year old son so he could play with Elijah. We have been praying for a close friend for Elijah and her son may just be the answer to that prayer! Although the mom is much younger than I, we seem to have a lot in common and got along very well also. She visited for about an hour this afternoon while the boys played over at my house. She is from Florida (as am I) and we have some other similarities as well. They just moved here so pray I can help them feel welcome and get settled in quickly. I invited them to church and am praying they will come as I really think they would love our church.
4. Elijah broke his glasses - again!!! Arghhh.....
5. We found a terrific (and very inexpensive) sketching class for homeschoolers age 12 and up that J.Jay started yesterday, Friday. He absolutely loved it. Art is one of his obsessions of late. Anyway, the other students and the art teacher seem to all be a very good fit for him. She assigned them homework (one sketch a day and something else I can't remember) and he already did his sketch today - and did a very nice job I might add! 😊
6. Greg took J.Jay on a dad/son date to the art festival downtown this afternoon. With J.Jay being very into art and Greg being very into everything - they both had an Aspie great time! (Greg fell into the river downtown up to his neck, scratched up his leg and got his phone wet - so they MUST have had fun!) Greg's phone is in rice right now, pray that there is no permanent water damage!

That's about it - I'm off to watch a movie with my dear hubby before we go nighty night. TTFN! (ie. Ta Ta For Now!) - Pamela

Jesus + anything = nothing
Jesus + nothing = EVERYTHING!

Posted on on April 19th, 2008 in [Homeschooling](#) | [No Comments](#) »

[No Social Security | Yes Autism Awareness!](#)

I found out today that I was denied SS disability - again. I really need insurance and it doesn't look like I will ever have insurance. That thought alone is daunting. I am actually very sad about this. I feel as though I am just one big major financial burden to my family. I already don't go to doctors and will not ever again unless I end up in hospital - which I am vowing not to happen.

Please pray I continue to get better and have a full and complete miraculous recovery! :)

I wrote the above paragraph a few hours earlier. My hubby and I talked about it and decided that the Lord knows I don't have insurance and He knows my health so either I won't need it, or he will take me on to heaven. Both of which is good - so no worries here! Anyway, we are so used to living "on the edge" financially that we probably wouldn't know what to do if we were financially secure. We ARE faithfully secure, which is much better. God has and always will take care of us.

Changing the subject - Tuesday, April 2nd is the inaugural (meaning the FIRST EVER) **World Autism Awareness Day**!! This is so awesome! I highly recommend everyone who reads this to check out an organization that has helped me out with it's resources www.autismspeaks.org and also check out the major coverage that CNN is giving to Autism both on TV and at www.cnn.com.

As many of you know, my son, J.Jay (12) has Asperger's Syndrome which is in the spectrum of Autism - but not what is typically thought of when you think of Autism. He was formally diagnosed at age ten. My hubby has it as well - he was diagnosed by me! (His insurance doesn't cover diagnosis and there are no meds to treat it - so no reason for "formal" diagnosis.) He has even more of the characteristics than J.Jay does and it helped me to better understand why he is so eccentric and thinks so differently and why it's so hard for us to "connect" emotionally. Now I don't take it personally. 😊 Bill Gates is said to have it, and it is strongly believed that Einstein and Newton had it as well! They are both (my hubby and son) geniuses who can easily be described as eccentric. (Especially my hubby!!) Anyway - Pamela's contribution for World Autism Awareness Day is to explain a wee bit about Asperger's Syndrome as I researched it. This information was extrapolated and then condensed from various autism websites, but primarily from the UK website www.aspergia.com

What is Asperger's Syndrome?

Asperger's Syndrome is on the autistic range, usually referred as a form of "high functioning autism" (HFA). Individuals with Asperger's Syndrome tend to have an IQ that ranges average to genius. There is much speculation that Albert Einstein and many other philosophers, scientists and genius musicians had Asperger's. Individuals with Asperger's Syndrome tend to develop excellent speech and language capabilities, but they do differ from the "normal" in various other ways.

The main characteristics of a person with Asperger's are often a deep focus on a specialist subject or area (or consecutive areas), a difficulty in understanding human interactions and human social codes (almost like being an alien trying to understand a strange species) and thus also a difficulty with changing environments which need to be learned and adjusted to. People with Asperger's Syndrome tend to have a normal to high intelligence, often coupled with a special skill or ability (e.g. extraordinary mathematical, musical, or linguistic abilities). In addition they are sometimes hypersensitive to various stimuli such as light, noise and pain, and their motor skills may be less developed than the norm but not always. Some of them are partially face-blind (have a problem remembering faces). They have to invest a lot of energy in understanding interactions, and would often need to consciously plan their social behaviour in advance. That intuition - the innate ability to translate human body-language and non-verbal cues is simply not there for them. People with Asperger's Syndrome often describe their experience as that of "being on the wrong planet". They have to learn how humans interact and simulate it. It isn't a natural trait for them as it is for everyone else.

There are many talented people who have Asperger's Syndrome and have contributed to society in

the fields of science, research, the arts and many others. Although they face a lot of challenges functioning in "normal" society, they often excel and surpass what is normative, and prove that special skills can enhance the contribution of those who are "outside of the norm".

Also, some interesting info which really hits the nail on the head with my personal experience of Asperger's with my son and hubby is from the most renowned Asperger's expert and author, Tony Attwood - "Clinical experience indicates that parents, especially mothers of children and adolescents with Asperger's syndrome, often have to provide verbal reminders and advice regarding self-help and daily living skills. This can range from problems with dexterity affecting activities such as learning to tie shoelaces to reminders regarding personal hygiene, dress sense and time management. Clinicians have also recognised significant problems with adaptive behaviour, especially with regard to anger management, anxiety and mood. (Attwood 2002).

Wow! The more I read about this the better I understand my hubby and my son. J.Jay explains that he thinks using all his senses. He just told me. "If I smell a smell it may remind me of Butterfly World, which reminds me of Grandma, which reminds me of her trips to Europe, which reminds me of Freddie Highmore (sp? - an actor), and then I think of some of the movies that he's played in, which makes me think of August Rush and that movie (about music), which makes me think of the piano and then my piano lessons, which reminds me of my piano teacher Morgan who is having health problems and has been in the hospital. So then I will ask you about Morgan. Meanwhile, this all happened in my brain in just a couple of seconds." Get it? Whew....

Okay, go do some research and learn more about Autism right now!! Here is a bonus - Because I took so long to write this that by the time I am posting this blog it is just after midnight so it IS the first ever **World Autism Awareness Day**!! Cool!

Now you know more about me than anyone should - and I know nothing about you! That's not fair! Oh well, all's fair in love and war. (Not war actually - but I am not getting into politics now - it's simply too late. I'll save that for another blog!

God Bless!!!

Posted on on April 1st, 2008 in [Homeschooling](#) | [No Comments](#) »

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• About



Pamela Berthume Child of God... Wife of Greg... Mom of 4... Creator of HOMESCHOOLPOLY® Board Game | Speaker | Author of Homeschooling the Journey is the Reward. My husband, Greg, and I have been happily married for 24½ years and we have homeschooled our kiddos since 1993. I have Multiple Sclerosis, 2 spinal cord injuries, Celiac Disease, ADHD, and more). In addition, three of my four children have major health issues including Celiac Disease, Asperger's Syndrome, ADHD, and Scoliosis. My hubby has Asperger's as well. My grown son is a homeschool and college graduate so we only have 3 kiddos left at home. We are still in the trenches with our 17 year old daughter, our 13 year old son, and our baby (who is not a baby anymore!) our 7 year old son. My hearts desire is

to encourage and minister to homeschool moms. My secondary ministry is to encourage, respect, and help lead kiddos and teenagers to Jesus Christ. I was paralyzed from the waist down in August of 2007 and by the grace of God am recovering wonderfully and can now walk again!! Miracles always abound in our family and God has shown Himself to be amazing and awesome. I use this blog to share from my experiences while trying to always be open and "real" as I deal with life's difficulties on a daily basis all while still homeschooling, learning, writing, and very much enjoying life! God is my strength and my comfort. Whom shall I fear? Life is good.

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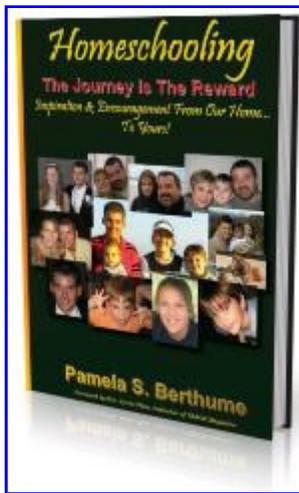
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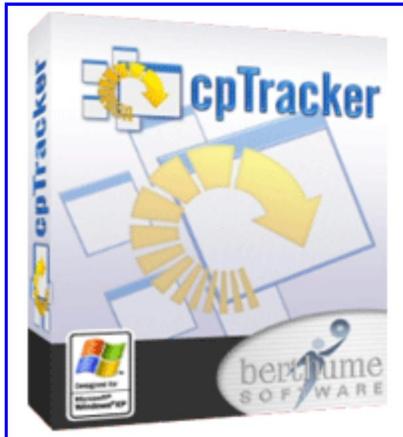
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