

It's Not About Me...

It's not about me

A New Day

It is really amazing the perspective a new day can give you. Yesterday was "one of those days".

1. My 16 year old daughter and I got in a tiff - basically I am having a hard time letting go and she is having a hard time not having all the freedoms of an adult yet! "Sorry, sweet-pea - you are only 16." It seems as though the more freedoms we give her, instead of that satisfying her - it just makes her want MORE! YIKES
2. My amazing, brilliant 12 year old, who also has Asperger's is getting more and more needy of me instead of less as he ages. He is constantly moving and constantly talking. I usually am very good with him and we just "connect" but I have had a headache the last 2 days (can't take Excedrin it has gluten in it!) and frankly, he's been driving me crazy! Yesterday I kept saying to myself, "Self" I said, "How much longer can you homeschool with everything going on and give them an excellent education and not go insane?" I had no answer for myself.
3. Both boys had their blood taken yesterday to make sure they still have no gluten in their systems. I have been putting this off, but finally had to get it over with so off to the hospital we went. Elijah, 6, was so scared. Of course, J.Jay, the amazing, brilliant, 12 year old I referred to above, went first and didn't even flinch to "show" Elijah how easy and painless it was. "Just a little pinch." He said. Elijah was not to be convinced. He was not screaming or going crazy, just crying softly and begging me to take him home. "Mommy, I can't do this. " I sat next to him on the two seater blood taking seat they have at the hospital and he laid his head on me (facing the opposite direction) and just sobbed and sobbed while they took two huge tubes of blood. Even worse, they could not find his vein at first so they had the needle in and had to move it around a bit before they could find one. I have gone through so much of this medical stuff that none of it is a biggie to me, but it's so different when you go through stuff like this with your child. I literally felt so sick I felt like I was going to throw up - just from the stress of it all. I just so wanted to take my baby home.
4. I have been extra tired/fatigued the last couple of days and have had an ongoing headache - which I rarely get. This is not good living in my loud and needy house! (If you are a Mom, you understand what I mean by needy - everyone always "needs" Mom for something!)

Fast forward to this morning... It's an absolutely GORGEOUS day.

1. The weeping willow my wonderful hubby planted for me 2 years ago (one of 3 he planted as they are my FAVORITE trees!) that I can see right outside my bedroom window is all green and absolutely beautiful and there is a beautiful red cardinal who keeps coming and sitting on a branch. The contrast of the intense red of the cardinal and the beautiful green willow leaves is more beautiful than I can describe.

2. J.Jay and Elijah are out in our woods behind our house exploring - which is the perfect things for boys to do!
3. My hubby is upstairs working hard, as usual and seems to be in a loving and good mood today. 😊
4. My daughter is at work, so she's happy as she has a great job that she loves. (Watching kiddos!)
5. THE HOUSE IS PERFECTLY QUIET at least for the moment!
6. I can see my cat sitting on our fence, probably looking for prey.
7. My two Golden Retrievers, *Lassen* and *Shasta* are out back and Lassen (my buddy) keeps looking in my window to "check on me" which he always does.
8. It's just a "God" day. I don't know how else to put it.

"Self", I say, "How much longer can I..." And immediately realize my error. **I CAN'T!!!** I look back and realize that I haven't made it this far by myself, why do I suddenly feel overwhelmed as if I have to do the rest of my days by myself? I can't do it alone, but God can. Not only can He, but He has, He is, and He will continue! How cool is that?!

The boys just came back home and the house is full of chatter again as they tell me about all of their "adventures". Even with my headache, it sounds nice. It's a good day - it's a good life! Nothing has changed except my perception. God has a plan bigger than I can fathom and he loves me and HE is in control. HE CAN DO THIS!

J.Jay has a field trip this afternoon to the National Weather Service with other middle and high homeschoolers which he is very much looking forward to. After I drop him off I can spend some one-on-one time with Eljiah for a full hour and a half before I have to pick J.Jay back up. So, off I go! Oh, as I glanced over I see a beautiful bright yellow Golden Finch on my window birdfeeder. It's a sign. 😊

Have a Springy day!
 Jesus + Anything = NOTHING
 Jesus + Nothing = **EVERYTHING**

Posted on on March 25th, 2008 in [Homeschooling](#) | [No Comments](#) »

[How Great is Our God!](#)

I have put off updating my blog for so long that now it seems daunting as I have too much to say! I need to update once a week because the simple fact is that in the life of a Berthume a LOT can (and typically does happen) in one week - but 2-3 weeks is pretty much always life altering! Well it's been just over 2 weeks since I last blogged - so what does that tell you? Today we will go youngest to oldest, how's that for a change? That's how we do our morning prayers, so it works for me!

Elijah - My adorable little 6 year old with huge brown eyes finally had his visit to the pediatric eye specialist for his exotropia. (fyi: Exotropia is a form of strabismus where the eyes are deviated outward.) He was a wonderful doctor (a Christian and he goes to my church!!) He said Elijah not only has exotropia, but also has Amblyopia (which I had never heard of), astigmatisms, AND is a wee bit nearsighted as well! Amblyopia the doctor explained as being a neurological eye problem wherein the brain does not fully acknowledge the images his eyes see. Astigmatism is an irregularly shaped eye (could be the lens or the cornea - not sure which one his is.) I am familiar

with this as I have astigmatism in both of my eyes as well. So... he has to wear an eye patch for 2 hours a day on his "best" eye to help strengthen his weakest eye - that is to hopefully help the Amblyopia. Also, he has to wear glasses. Wahhh... Yes, my baby with the beautiful huge brown eyes is going to have to wear glasses. Of course, he is so adorable that the glasses we picked out look awesome on him, I just want to make sure I can always see those big brown eyes. There is a story behind those eyes - I'll share that someday - but they were a direct answer to prayer! The glasses will help his vision and astigmatism and the clarity may also help his exotropia. So that is Plan A. We go back in 3 months to see how it's working. Next step is surgery - so I'd rather go this route - the conservative route!

Elijah and J.Jay also went for their annual checkup last week. I will tell about J.Jay in a second, but Elijah is up to 15% on the percentile growth chart for his age, which is good. He has grown! He has been getting tired again a great deal lately and they are going to go ahead and redo his blood for Celiac and just make sure there is no gluten sneaking in. It's been 2 years and you are supposed to re-check regularly anyway just to make sure they are not getting any gluten and being poisoned and us not even realize it. He (and J.Jay too! - see below) has to go get that done at hospital either Tuesday or Wednesday and Elijah is freaking out. Pray he doesn't have a convulsion and is brave when they have to draw the blood. Frankly, I am NOT looking forward to it AT ALL!

J.Jay had his annual checkup as well. He is up to 10% on the percentile chart for a 12 year old. Hey, at least he's on the chart! He's grown also, but not as much as Elijah. He hasn't officially begun puberty yet though, and Dr. Stoeber said that is when a growth spurt should kick in. He also is having his blood drawn to check and see if his body is producing any gluten antibodies. His behavior has recently (just the past couple of months or so) gone backwards a bit to what it was pre-diagnosis (yes, 2 years ago!). He's having more Asperger melt-downs and hand-flapping and continual need for body motion and that kind of stuff. And, of course, especially with his growth and scoliosis issues it is best to test him again and be on the safe side. Don't want any mean old sneaky gluten getting it's way into my precious boys' bodies!!

For some good news **J.Jay** came in 4th place in the Homeschool Spelling Bee and was very pleased with himself. He knew the word he missed, he mouthed it to me as soon as he sat down, but still had a blast and took it all in stride. After the bee when he realized that the winner received this huge trophy he got very serious and said he will WIN next year and had no idea he would have gotten a TROPHY! Ha ha ha. He's a trip! J.Jay also just tested on Saturday in Tae Kwon Do for his 3rd belt - the yellow belt. He passed and the belt presentation is this Saturday. He also gets sparring gear now and gets to move up to the upper belts class with older kiddos and adults. He is thrilled beyond words. (Yea right, J.Jay is NEVER beyond words. The words continually flow out of him, even during his sleep!) Oh yea, and J.Jay dissected a shark on Friday. Very cool.

Brittney. We got the results of the MRI of her lower back and she does NOT have pars defect (YIPPEE), but she does have disc degeneration in her Lumbar spine (at L5) which is most likely what is causing her back pain. They gave her a lumbar back brace to wear (which she doesn't wear enough!) rx strength naproxen and she has to have physical therapy 3 times a week for 6 weeks. Then they will take it from there and see if she has improvement with the pain. This also helps the surgeon and us know we can be more conservative removing her back tumors (she now is up to 8 - at least) since we now can be quite confident that the pain is not coming from the tumors but rather from the degenerated disc. They also said she has very slight scoliosis, but nothing to worry about - especially since she is most likely finished growing. (She's 5'6") She still

hasn't seen the pediatric neurologist, couldn't get that appointment until April. So.... she's doing better and all's well for now! Pray that her disc does not degenerate any further and that this is not "disc degeneration disease" as it is referred to as being by everything I've read!

Brittney and I are now smack dab in the middle of "preparing for college" mode and trying to find the "right" college for her. She wants to go to a Christian college that is not too strict. Ideally, one that is Christian in academics, but does not treat them like children. (I am against legalism - one of my workshops is entitled, Legalism is Lethal so that should tell you something!). Not just a "Bible" school though, it must be a college or university that offers a broad array of undergraduate majors, AND is not too far from home. She wants to be able to drive home in at least 5 hours or less. Preferably less. That's a tall order, so pray we/she finds the right school - that's cheap (or that we can get mega amounts of grants!!!) God knows what school He has in mind for her, we are just researching and waiting for him to clue us in!

Our oldest **Robby** is moving to CALIFORNIA! So far away... I took my first trip since "P-Day" this past week and drove my car (with my handy-dandy hand controls) and took only Elijah with me to visit them one last time in Virginia before they left. I did great during the drive and it wasn't nearly as hard on me as I had anticipated it being. He is going to CA lean and gave us some cool "parting gifts" too! We got a TV (our main TV is almost 20 years old, so we are oohing and awwing over the great picture this one has!) as well as these great paper lamps they got a while back from IKEA that I fell in love with the first time I saw them. Also, since Greg loves ships they gave him a beautiful framed picture of a ship that we hung over our piano after I returned. We also brought back some keepsakes and other stuff for safe-keeping. They are caravanning across the country with their two other friends both of whom work for him. I remember the days. It's so fun to explore the country and be free to have such adventures. I am sad they will be so far away and I am not thrilled with the environment or politics of Southern California right now, but mostly I am just very happy that they are embarking on this new fun adventure and since we've "been there done that" with many moves and adventures (the California one was by far the most fun!) I am really thrilled for them. Life is meant to be LIVED to the fullest! Please pray for their travelling safety. Oh yea, and of course They are going to open another office for Robby's business Epsilon Concepts when they get there. (www.epsilonconcepts.com)

Greg has been going back and forth the past couple of weeks between working like a dog, and enjoying the beautiful sunny outdoors. He seems pulled in two. What a conundrum! He is so good with the boys and they have really made some progress on the trails and such in the nature preserve behind our house. They have a reading bench down there, a small bridge over the creek, and more. But with our financial situation being that as it is, he is having to work many long hours. He dreams of having an office away from home where he can leave the work there. It seems that he if he is home in the house, he's working. But we are glad to have him here at home with us. Especially the boys. He's been working from home for the most part for over 12 years now. What a privilege. It's hard for him I know, but it also provides him the rare opportunity to be a very present and hands-on dad. Sometimes it's hard to appreciate the "perks" when you are right in the midst of a stressful life and you can't see the forest for the trees. But he's surrounded by some trees who love him very much and we are all glad he is here with us every day. My prayer for Greg lately has been for him to have more peace. All these health issues and ups and downs financially are hard on him to deal with and raising a strong-willed 16 year old daughter makes for an emotional household a bit too often. Please pray for peace that passes ALL understanding for Greg and wisdom for both of us to be strong, firm, loving, calm, and consistent raising all of our kiddos, but especially Brittney during these last few precious yet turmultuous years she will be at home with us.

As for me? **Pamela** is doing awesome as always. 😊 My adrenaline from the trip to Virginia and other events of this past weekend (J.Jay's Tae Kwon Do testing for next belt, Nephew Steven's birthday party at our house, etc.) didn't leave me until late Saturday night at which time I crashed, but that was to be expected. I spent Sunday and most of today (Monday) in the bed recuperating, but still homeschooling, working, and living life in the process - just horizontally. :) I am sure there's lots more to say, but I've said enough for now! I will honestly, fervently, seriously try to update my blog every week again from here on out. I promise! I promise I *will try* at least! "Talk" to you super soon!

FINALLY, I watched something recently that has had a majorly profound impact on my life and my view of God. I BEG you to watch it! I saw it on DVD, but I found it online at youtube.com. There is a series of 15 short videos, so just watch 1 of 15, then 2 of 15, then 3 of 15, you catching on yet? Watch it all the way to the end (15 of 15!) because the end is what REALLY blew me away! Visit: http://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=louie+giglio+how+great+is+our+god&search_type= and see if that works. If not just go to www.youtube.com and type in **louie giglio how great is our god** into the search bar. Make sure you watch all of them and let me know what you think! Okay, NOW I really do have to go. Nightie, night!

God Bless,
Pamela

Posted on on March 17th, 2008 in [Homeschooling](#) | [No Comments](#) »

[6 Month Anniversary](#)

It has been over 2 weeks since I last updated my blog! What is up with that?!?! Well, I will tell you exactly what is up with THAT as soon as I tell you what a major event today is in my life. Today is exactly **6 months to the day** since "P-Day" (no, not that kind of pee, gross! P as in Paralyzed!). P-Day was August 29, 2007 and that is the day I became totally paralyzed from the waist down. Today, six months later, I don't consider myself paralyzed at all. I am "partially paralyzed" technically according to the charts, etc. - but to me paralyzed means unable to move and/or feel and I can do both! SO THERE! :) Me no P! (Get it?!?!). Anyway, a good reminder for me. I have had an incredibly rough couple of weeks and have been going through some serious denial and even anger over what I can't do anymore (or at least not yet!). But to think what I CAN do 6 months after I could not do anything at all - well that's quite a wake up call.

So, what is up with THAT? I haven't written because my life has been in constant turmoil (oh, of course I mean that in a good way) as my wonderful hubby, Greg, went out of town (state, actually!) for 10 days!!! He went to South Florida to be with his mom during some outpatient surgery she was having AND he was able to spend the weekend with his long-lost sister, Jennifer on the way down and had another brief visit with her again on the way back home. He had not seen or spoken with her in 17 years, so this was an awesome reunion for him. After feeling "siblingless" (his only brother died in a car accident when he was only 18 years old) he is glad to have his sisters (two of them actually, Jennifer and Mary) back in his life. 17 years leaves a lot of catching up to do! I am so happy for him and can't wait to meet them both myself. We've been married 23½ years, but I have never met either of them.

This is the first time he has gone out of town since "P-Day" and let's just say I had no idea how much he was holding this house together until he was gone! I tried to "do it all" and just about

killed myself in the process. Haven't recovered yet! While he was gone I fell twice, once so bad I believe I broke one of my toes (can't go to doctor - still no insurance!) and jammed all my toenails into my nail-beds. (Does that make sense?) Thankfully, the kiddos didn't see me fall. Whew.... I tried to keep it form them, but they saw the aftereffects. Apparently my right drop foot is back! Oh yea, and now my left foot drops too - that was the other fall which didn't cause nearly as much damage to my left foot. :)

Wait a minute - I forgot I still have M.S.! My problem is my extreme and wonderful optimism (which I am beginning to learn may **not** always be a good thing, although I am still glad I have such a serious case of *optimitis*!) I keep thinking I am normal and then I try to act and walk like I am normal. Unfortunately, my body just doesn't respond. It's so weird. Hard to explain actually. This blog is a wonderful catharsis for me as I do not talk about this to anyone, except on occasion to Greg and his simple answer is, "Slow down!" Unfortunately, that does not compute with me at all! Anyway, in my brain and in my heart I am just as whole and able-bodied as the next gal. My legs, arms, back, and neck though are on the wrong page. They don't seem to have a clue how able-bodied I am. I want to EXERCISE, walk back in the nature preserve with the boys, go hiking, yada yada! All of you healthy people out there - or even semi-healthy. Get off your derriere and exercise! I sure would if I could.

I had my biggest breakdown yet (internally the biggest anyway) on Monday evening. Greg had recently returned so my adrenaline suddenly went "poof" and ran away - thus I was ripe for a fall. (figuratively, not literally) Anyway, I went to take J.Jay to the Y for his Tae Kwon Do and I was talking to the lady at the front desk as the payment was due. The Y was SUPER DUPER crowded and this ladies class had just gotten out and there were all these ladies, young and old, in workout clothes, all sweaty and smiling after a good workout. There were literally people everywhere and they all looked healthy and fit and I started crying. RIGHT THERE AT THE FRONT DESK! Oh no, not good. I am not the bawling in public type. I had to scoot out of there fast (literally, I had my red scooter). Then, I couldn't load my scooter into the car and J.Jay was in his class and would not get out for 2 hours! Finally, after sitting in the car and pulling myself together as best as I could I saw this young 20 something year old man and I asked him if he could do me a favor. He was so friendly, he said, "Sure! You name it!" He proceeded to take my chair apart and put it in the back of the car for me. Thank you, God! I finally got back into the car - and lost it AGAIN! Umphh.... I drove home and was crying at home and poor Elijah couldn't figure out what was going on. I tried to explain to Greg and then just went to bed and cried and cried. The good news is, I woke up the next morning and the sun was shining and my boys needed to be homeschooled and life was good! I do miss a lot of things, I just need to keep reminding myself of the blessing I have. Do pray that I can figure out how to get some exercise and lose weight! This inactivity has cause me to gain and being a female, the weight gain and how it affects my appearance is just as hard as anything! I know, vain, vain, vain - but too true. 😞

Brittney went to the back specialist on Monday and they took an x-ray. They now have her scheduled for an MRI of her lower back tomorrow (Friday) so they can check out some things they want to verify from the x-ray (to make sure she doesn't have pars defect) and then we will go from there. He took her off all strength training and weight lifting for 4 weeks until we can get some answers. She is having backaches in her lower back and headaches daily now. Pray all goes well. Surgeon is waiting to hear final results of back specialist. So, that's the deal with her. Please keep her in your prayers!!! Of course, she keeps herself busy and is handling everything like a trooper. Thankfully, she's a tough female and not much of a complainer. (Unless she wants something, of course!)

Elijah did the typical 6 year old stunt and decided he'd cut a lop off of his beautiful blonde hair. He cut a big lock right out of his front bangs. Wahhhh.... My oldest son, Robby, did the exact same thing in the exact same place when he was six! Which is kinda funny as Elijah is like a little Robby not only in looks, but his mannerisms and personality is just like Robby's was at that age. Anyway, yesterday I had to buzz Elijah's hair. It was quite the ordeal as he did not want it cut and squirmed (and even screamed a bit) during the entire process. He also hates having hair on him - he has sensitive skin and it really freaks him out. I ended up not even being able to use the buzzer much, but had to scissor cut his hair super short. It was very painful and hard on my physically, buy hey, I am the mom! Anyway, an hour later and he now looks even cuter somehow with a cute little cut and I put some water wax (new type of gel) in the top for it to stick up a bit. End result, he looks absolutely adorable and after that ordeal he vows that he will NEVER try to cut his own hair again.

J.Jay is doing good and really focusing on his Tae Kwon Do. He's an orange belt now and will be testing for his next belt (yellow) on March 12th. He has done the math and said if he gets every belt when he is able to test for it, which he totally plans on doing - he will become a black belt just after he turns 14. Knowing him, I have no doubt that will happen. We made a game out of learning the state capitals and he's now mastered every single one - COLD! Now we are focusing on spelling words - studying for the upcoming homeschool spelling bee, which is in early March! He's my little man.

Greg, thank God, literally, he is back home again. I love him, I love him, I love him, I love him! He may be a bit sour on the outside, but he's as sweet as can be on the inside. :) One thing he continues to make obvious to me verbally and with his actions is that he doesn't value me any less. Even though, I feel like I don't do enough and wish I would do more. He seems genuinely impressed by all that I do and wishes I would do less! What a gem. Yep, he's a keeper!

Well, gotta go. My "keeper" wants to watch Extreme Home Makeover on my computer. (They have the show on abc.com so we can watch it! It's my favorite show and since we can watch it online I don't miss having TV at all!) 😊

See ya!!!

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

[Lots of news](#)

Hi!!

I have been sick (got the yucky crud thing that everyone seems to be getting) since early last week. No biggie. I had the pneumonia shot when I was in the hospital, so I wasn't too worried - but it's taken me a long time to recover. Today is the FIRST DAY that I feel like I am on the mend as opposed to getting worse! 😊

First of all, Brittney is doing well. We got her liver re-tests results back and her liver enzymes were in the normal ranges. YIPPEE!!!! She went to the surgeon and he said she had "quite a few" new tumors at least 3 of which were "quite large" already. He said most people that get these type of fatty tumors only get maybe 1-3 in their entire lifetime. There are rare cases though when someone get lots of these that continue to recur. He feels Brittney may be one of these rare cases. Especially since she has so many more already, and at the size they are, less than 4

months from having the previous 4 removed. They are sending her to a back specialist first to make sure the back pain she is incurring is not the result of something else. Since these are most likely benign as were the previous ones, they only need to be removed if causing problems or getting way too big and complicating other areas. She is experiencing lots of pain which she feels is due to the lumps (since the pain went away after her surgery for about 1½ months before it came back. But... we will see. My prayer is that the tumors and the pain will just go away and the Lord will heal her completely. 😊 She is also being sent to a pediatric neurologist as she has been having ongoing headaches for about 2 years now. The MRI was not conclusive due to her braces, so they want the pediatric neurologist to do a full work up on her. So, I am thrilled about the liver results being normal and feel positive about everything. Keep her in your prayers, please.

Yesterday, Valentine's Day - was also J.Jay's BIRTHDAY!! He turned 12 years old. Major, major! He is a very loving child and his birth was an amazing event as I had previously had a miscarriage on Valentine's Day, 1995. He was born on Valentine's Day, 1996! Talk about God's hand in all things — death and life. God is always on the throne. He wanted to go to the Biltmore House in NC for his birthday as he had never been there. His dad took him last week, just the two of them. J.Jay was free (all kids are free at Biltmore House for a special ongoing promotion) so they took a day trip and had a lot of fun. They are both the type to take forever reading every single word of every single sign on every single exhibit. So they REALLY enjoyed it! It wasn't too cold of a day either so they were able to take a nice hike and walk to the farm and pet horses. Finally, they went to the winery and were able to do the cellar tour and J.Jay learned about the fermentation process - which he enjoyed. We had a small family party at our house last weekend and then, of course, had a special day yesterday. We have a longstanding rule at our house that nobody does school on their birthday. Actually, no homeschooling takes place on anybody's birthday, so everyone gets a free day when it's someone's birthday. 😊 Hey, it works for me!

Today was a very fun day. We decided that since we didn't do school yesterday (J.Jay's birthday) we were going to go for a long fun weekend and not do "formal" school today, but rather do "play" school. We played several games, including Mancala and a History Trivia game. Elijah and I colored together. (We have a big board we put on my bed for games and coloring, it works great!) J.Jay and I worked on a puzzle for a bit. Then we watched an educational video about Bible Mysteries that turned out to be questioning and trying to prove Abraham's & Joseph's existence. J.Jay was getting so mad! He said, "Wouldn't you just give anything to have a chance to sit down and talk to that guy?" referring to a skeptic on the video. I just love his convictions! It turned out in the end that there was tremendous evidence to prove both of the Biblical stories and lives of Abraham and Joseph. So, it was interesting. Then, J.Jay's friend and my 2nd daughter, Neva came over for a while. I made dinner - homemade (gluten-free, of course) chicken Alfredo type stuff. (My own sauce, but greatly resembles Alfredo sauce.) Neva ate with us, as usual. 😊 We enjoy having her around.

Now, I am so tired I feel like I could go to sleep RIGHT NOW and sleep for days. But, no chance of that happening! The kids are cleaning up the house and then will have some free play time before bed. I, on the other hand, have quite a bit of work to do which I get the privilege of doing from my comfy bed with my notebook computer. What a luxurious life we have here in America compared to most. On that note, read some of these statistics I just found- it really shows how privileged we, or at least I am. Sometimes we think of ourselves as "so broke" or "so badly in need of something" and yet... in all reality we live like kings and queens compared to most of the people on this earth. We are just a speck in the whole vast scheme of things. And a privileged, spoiled, speck at that!

Some cold hard facts are below as well as some of my musings and opinions. If you have a moment, just read these statistics¹ and I hope they touch your heart as much as they have pierced mine.

- Half the world — nearly three billion people — live on less than two dollars a day.
- 20% of the population in the developed nations, consume 86% of the world's goods.
- In 1960, the 20% of the world's people in the richest countries had 30 times the income of the poorest 20% — in 1997, 74 times as much.
- A few hundred millionaires now own as much wealth as the world's poorest 2.5 billion people.
- "Approximately 790 million people in the developing world are still chronically undernourished, almost two-thirds of whom reside in Asia and the Pacific."
- According to UNICEF, 30,000 children die each day due to poverty. And they "die quietly in some of the poorest villages on earth, far removed from the scrutiny and the conscience of the world. Being meek and weak in life makes these dying multitudes even more invisible in death." That is about 210,000 children each week, or just under 11 million children under five years of age, each year.

Water problems affect half of humanity:

- Some 1.1 billion people in developing countries have inadequate access to water, and 2.6 billion lack basic sanitation.
 - Almost two in three people lacking access to clean water survive on less than \$2 a day, with one in three living on less than \$1 a day.
 - More than 660 million people without sanitation live on less than \$2 a day, and more than 385 million on less than \$1 a day.
 - Access to piped water into the household averages about 85% for the wealthiest 20% of the population, compared with 25% for the poorest 20%.
 - 1.8 billion people who have access to a water source within 1 kilometre, but not in their house or yard, consume around 20 litres per day. In the United Kingdom the average person uses more than 50 litres of water a day flushing toilets (where average daily water usage is about 150 liters a day. The highest average water use in the world is in the US, at 600 liters day.)
 - Some 1.8 million child deaths each year as a result of diarrhea
 - The loss of 443 million school days each year from water-related illness.
 - Close to half of all people in developing countries suffering at any given time from a health problem caused by water and sanitation deficits.
 - Millions of women spending several hours a day collecting water.
- And get this - a mere 12 percent of the world's population uses 85 percent of its water, and these 12 percent do not live in the Third World!

Children

- Number of children in the world - 2.2 billion
- Number in poverty - 1 billion (every second child)
- Shelter, safe water and health for the 1.9 billion children from the developing world, there are:
 - 640 million without adequate shelter (1 in 3)
 - 400 million with no access to safe water (1 in 5)
 - 270 million with no access to health services (1 in 7)
- Survival for children - Worldwide:
 - 10.6 million died in 2003 before they reached the age of 5 (same as children population in France, Germany, Greece and Italy)

- 1.4 million die each year from lack of access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation
- Health of children - Worldwide:
- 2.2 million children die each year because they are not immunized
- 15 million children orphaned due to HIV/AIDS (similar to the total children population in Germany or United Kingdom)

Okay, I'll stop now. But you see my point. We are a privileged people. As part of the lyrics to one of my favorite Chris Rice songs, *The Face of Christ* says, "See you had no choice which day you would be born | Or the color of your skin, or what planet you'd be on. Would your mind be strong, would your eyes be blue or brown | Whether daddy would be rich, or if momma stuck around at all." (Lyrics to full song is below.)

Anyway, think about it. We are ***SO BLESSED!***

The Face of Christ

He shares a room outside with a dozen other guys
 And the only roof he knows is that sometimes starry sky
 A tattered sleeping bag on a concrete slab is his bed
 And it's too cold to talk tonight
 So I just sit with him instead and think

How did I find myself in a better place
 I can't look down on the frown on the other guy's face
 `Cause when I stoop down low, look him square in the eye
 I get a funny feeling, I just might be dealing
 With the face of Christ

After sixteen years in a cold, gray prison yard
 Somehow his heart is soft, but keeping simple faith is hard
 He lays his Bible open on the table next to me
 And as I hear his humble prayer
 I feel his longing to be free someday

How did I find myself in a better place
 I can't look down on the frown on the other guy's face
 `Cause when I stoop down low, look him square in the eye
 I get a funny feeling, I just might be dealing
 With the face of Christ

See you had no choice which day you would be born
 Or the color of your skin, or what planet you'd be on
 Would your mind be strong, would your eyes be blue or brown
 Whether daddy would be rich, or if momma stuck around at all
 So if you find yourself in a better place

You can't look down on the frown on the other guy's face
 You gotta stoop down low, look him square in the eye
 And get a funny feeling, `cause you might be dealing ...

How did I find myself in a better place
I can't look down on the frown on the other guy's face
'Cause when I stoop down low, look him square in the eye
I get a funny feeling, I just might be dealing
With the face of Christ

¹These and more statistics found at: www.globalissues.org/TradeRelated/Facts.asp

Posted on on February 15th, 2008 in [Homeschooling](#) | [No Comments](#) »

Hi From the Yard!!!

Yes, I said the yard! I am actually not in the yard right now . . . but I was! Guess what I was doing? You will never believe it . . . I did some yardwork!!! We have one bush that was badly in need of some TLC. The high was in the lower 70's today so I actually got the rake and did some cleaning up of the bush with Elijah's help. It felt GREAT! I kept thinking, boy if everyone could see me now!

I am sorry I haven't written all week, but I've been too busy having fun and doing "stuff" and organizing the house and blah, blah, blah. Blah to you maybe, but not blah to me. I feel like a walking miracle. I am walking a great deal now. We left my scooter in the back of the car for two days and never even brought it into the house! What does that tell you?!? Also, I can regularly go to the store now and walk into the store using my cane only, and then just use their motorized wheelchair! (Like Publix, or Home Depot, etc.) SO COOL!!!! I prefer my scooter though - it's so zippy!

On Saturday, I went to Wal-mart for some necessities and groceries. I called them as soon as I was parked to see if they had any motorized wheelchairs available, which is not likely at Wal-mart on a Saturday. Of course, they said they were all being used. I looked around and saw a bag-boy who was bringing in carts (or buggies - depending on where you are from!). I waved at him and asked if he would help me. Of course, he was as sweet as could be and he came over and put it all together for me. His name tag said Anthony, so I said, "Thank you so much, Anthony" and he said something like, "No problem. That's really cool how it goes together like that. Just let me know when you are done and I will take it apart for you." Then I zipped into Wal-mart. I was trying to drag their big cart behind me, which was very difficult and uncomfortable so I immediately headed to hardware and got a two pack of red (to match my scooter, of course!) bungee cords. I opened one side but left packaging mostly intact so I could pay for it and I pulled out one of the bungee cords. Then I bungeed the cart to the back of my scooter and WALAHHH (is that how you spell it?) I was like a double UPS trailer zipping through Wal-mart and tossing things over my shoulder into my cart. It was SO FUN! At least ten people stopped me and said something like, "What a great idea!" Or "You should patent that!". One lady said, "Now, that's the way to do it, my feet are killing me!" ha ha ha. It was the most fun I have had shopping to date and I didn't even buy that much! And guess who "just so happened" to come out to the parking lot right when I needed someone to take it apart for me? Anthony, of course! God is so nice.

So, enough about me. As you can tell I am improving every day and in my opinion I am doing WONDERFUL! Who'da thunk? ME!

Last Monday (not yesterday) the boys had dissection classes. It was a blast. Elijah did his first dissection of an owl pellet. He got enough bones out of the pellet to recreate an entire vole (mouse like little dude) on paper by gluing the bones in the correct places. He even got a skull, two mandibles (jaw bones) and so much more. He learned so much and had a blast. We are still working off an on at gluing the little ribs on! He said "God made owl's SO AWESOME!"

J.Jay dissected a cow's eyeball. I actually got in there and helped! Well, not J.Jay he was doing just fine on his own, but I put on gloves and scooted around helping some of the others who were having trouble cutting the huge cow's eyeball in half. I cut the squishy thing in half for those who couldn't or didn't want to. I never thought I'd say this, but HOW COOL! We all learned a lot and even Elijah as he watched. J. Jay was amazed at the sheer number of rods and cones in each of our eyeballs. We still have the eyeball (in pieces!) in a baggie. I am trying to figure out what to do with it now!?!?!

We had a very fun week last week. It seems as we are getting more "back to normal" every day. Wednesday was our AWANA Olympics, and then Friday we went to homeschool roller skating (as we do every Friday, now) and had a blast there. And of course Saturday, I did the Wal-mart thing! Then on Super Bowl Sunday we went to my sister and brother in law's house (Patty & Bill) to eat lots of food and watch the game. Too fun! Go Giants!!!

I had purchased some "oops" paint from Home Depot for \$5 a gallon so my 16 year old could paint her room, which she's been wanting to do for a long time. I showed her everything and even helped her Sunday after church to do spackling to cover up holes and we began preparing her room. Well, why we began on a Sunday afternoon I have no idea. That was not very well thought out. She wanted to stay home from Super Bowl party and do her room herself. Greg, my hubby, was not too keen on the idea, but I thought it was a great idea. I mean after all, she is 16 and this is a project she should be able to do by herself and feel proud about. Well... once again I should have listened to my hubby. By the time we got home there was paint all over the carpet in her room. 😞 My husband ended up finishing the job on Monday himself. The good news, it looks good now! Needs one more coat on one wall, but that can wait. She's happy, that's what matters. We got most of the paint out of the carpet and she has a green rug she can put over it also, so... it's all good!

Now, both the boys want to paint their rooms. YIKES!!! I've always been the room painter/handyman around the house and I can't do all that stuff anymore. I have always painted, bordered, wallpapered, or done something special with almost every room they have ever had! (And with all of our moves - that's a LOT of rooms!) The house we moved from in Chicago I had painted one entire wall in J.Jay's room as the United States Flag!!! Thankfully, Greg had fun painting Britt's room and he is as excited as I am about doing something cool for each of the boys' rooms. So... we will be on a continual search for "oops" paint now in cool colors!

Well, that's it. I have to go cook dinner as it's past 6:30pm and I haven't even started anything yet, YIKES!!! In all honestly, I am thrilled just to be "able" to make dinner at all. It's amazing what little things that some take for granted that I am SO thankful for. God is a God of miracles.

Pray for Brittney, her doctor appointment is tomorrow (Wednesday) for more bloodwork and hopefully we will get results of her MRI. So pray all goes well. Also the new tumors are really getting big and starting to hurt on her back. Pray for God to give us wisdom about what to do.

Finally, my daddy died exactly 22 years ago today. When he died I was pregnant with Robby. I still miss him very much, but will see him again when I get to heaven! He's having a blast up there I am sure! Chow! (we are still learning German)

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

Answer to Prayer - AGAIN!!

Lots to tell, but first of all and most important - God has answered all of our prayers and Igor has a family! YIPPEE!!! Praise the Lord!

George of International Guardian Angel Adoption called me back yesterday and said that just a couple of weeks ago all of a sudden calls started flowing in and they were able to even be selective and found the best match for Igor's situation. YEA!! Prayer is powerful and effective... AND as always, God is faithful. 😊

I had written a long post about our adventures on Monday - BUT when I went to post it my computer gave me an error message. Arghhh....

So... I don't have time right now - will try to post later tonight. Meanwhile know that God answered all of our prayers about Igor. YEAAAA!! I am so thrilled! Thanks for praying and calling, as I know some of you did.

Have a great day!!!

Crazy week, crazy life!

Hola People!

I haven't updated my blog in so long, I think I've forgotten how! NOT! I don't write on bad days and it seems I've had too many bad days lately. But that's all in the past and today is good day. So here I am!

We have had a crazy week with Brittney this past week. She had an MRI done, due to ongoing headaches for almost two years. With our family, it's probably just stress. 😞 But her doctor really wanted to do an MRI to make sure there is nothing going on. I don't believe there is so I am not too worried about it. Also, they had done some routine blood work done on her and I got a call from them on Thursday that both of her liver enzyme tests (AST & ALT) came back elevated. They want to see her on Feb. 6th to redo the blood work and do other blood work as well as go over the results of her MRI. In addition she has five tumors on her back again and one of them is obviously quite large. We don't think they are related, but all these little things just make me wonder. So pray that there is nothing wrong, or at least nothing serious. Will let you know!

I have a sound mind (I think) that's getting a bit frustrated being stuck with such an unsound body! I was telling my mom earlier today that I lie in bed at night and make all my goals and dreams. I am praying fervently for complete healing and one of my goals is to be able to ride my bike by my birthday - July 3rd. Then the next morning I wake up convinced that TODAY will be different. Today is the day my body will cooperate, not hurt as much. Today I will be able to walk normal, not just barely sludge along in total pain. This is the day!!! Then my foot hits the floor and it's hard to describe the sinking feeling. I am getting to where I have to talk to myself out loud to make THE CHOICE to be in a good mood today and work through it all and push myself physically as hard as I possibly can.

You know everything in life truly based upon perception - how you handle things depends totally on your point of view. By everyone else's perception I am doing AWESOME. Just think - just under five months ago I was TOTALLY PARALYZED from the waist down. Today, I can feel everything (too much, actually! ha) and I can stand up and even walk (albeit with pain and effort.) Unfortunately MY perception is that I am not doing well at all. My brain thinks all is well and wants to get up and GO! But my body just doesn't seem to be catching on! Also, I am so exhausted all the time - I just get want to be healed already and get on with life. I understand how a total physical healing for me may not be God's will. Look at Paul who lived with his painful affliction and was never healed, not before he reached heaven anyway. It just doesn't make any sense to me. How can I/we make a difference in this world if I can't even walk? How can I go to Africa someday and be a missionary (which I really want to do!) if I can't walk through the jungles?!?! How can I step up to the plate and adopt someone like Igor, when he so needs a family when I can barely take care of my own kids, and we are barely making ends meet due to my medical bills!! Ughhhh... I feel like I can do so much more for Jesus if I had my health. This is one of those time when God just doesn't make sense. But, I love him anyway. 😊

Speaking of Igor, I have left two messages and at this point do not know if a family has "stepped up to the plate" or not. I think about him and pray for him every day. I have no idea why he is on my heart so much. But he is. I will let you know what I find out. I am praying that I am not

hearing back from them because everything has been worked out! But I can't rest until I know for sure.

Elijah, my 6 year old, was sick (just a cold) a couple of weeks ago and just can't seem to get his energy back. He went to AWANA Olympics practice this morning and ended up lying down on the gym floor during the entire practice time. So, he said he is too tired to do AWANA Olympics this year. Bummer. Pray he bounces back soon as I am trying to keep him away from the doctor. Doctor's offices are FILLED WITH germs!

J.Jay is doing a little better with his brace, but it's still very painful for him to wear. He is doing great in his school and as I think I've said before I am enjoying homeschooling in general more this year than I ever have before. I feel like we are all having a lot of fun in the process and I personally just really look forward to each school day. We are more flexible than ever, having more fun than ever, and seem to be learning more than ever. Isn't that weird!! We are especially enjoying J.Jay's math as we are doing Systematic Mathematics this year. J.Jay and I watch the video together and we really have fun with it!

Elijah loves phonics (he's starting to read randomly other than just assigned stuff now!) and seems to be especially interested in Geography. He insists for some time now that he wants to go to Africa. So we studied Africa and got a documentary video about Kenya. That just sealed it. Now he is 100% convinced that he wants to go to Africa!! Me too!!

Robby seems to be doing terrifically. It still feels so odd to have my son, a part of me, that is really no longer a part of my daily life. I still miss him every day as if he just left yesterday. But then again, it feels like he's been gone forever! He and Kathryn, his wife, are talking about wanting to move to California at some point. I can't even deal with the possibility so I am trying to put it out of my head. But, here I am writing all about it, so I guess it's not out of my head after all. What's up with that?!?!

Greg is sick, so pray for him. Just a cold, but he is also very tired and lethargic. Pray he gets better soon!!

Over and out as my nephew-son, Billy (nephew whom I wish was my son), Brittney, Greg, and J.Jay are waiting for me to play the game "Scene-it" Which Robby and Kathryn gave us. We are way into games in this family and laughing is the best medicine for everything that ails anyone!!! So - ha ha ha and a see you later!

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

[My heart is heavy - Please help!](#)

I just heard a very sad and almost unbelievable story. I made a phone call and found out it's very true - and very sad.

Before I go any farther, I am including an excerpt from a letter recently written about this boy, whose picture I can't get out of my mind and whose name I can't get out of my heart. Read this...

"Today, I am prayerfully asking for your help with another orphan. He is a fine young 13 year old boy as you can see in the attached picture. Igor came to the US in January 1007 for surgery. The family that committed to adopt him had decided that they are not able to make a lifetime commitment but go as far as saying their decision has nothing to do

with Igor. To say that we are heartbroken for him is an understatement. Igor was left on the steps of the orphanage a newborn and now is facing another rejection by the family he loves and has called his own since May. If we do not find an adoptive family he will be returned to the orphanage. God knows that is not what we should do. Lord would not have brought him here if that was his plan for Igor.

We have known this boy for several years while working with all the children in the orphanage. After 12 years in the orphanage my first impression was that he was very much a survivor and his own authority. We spent some time with him while he was in the hospital and the other boy after their amputations. We watched him react to kindness and love, begin to smile and accept that people cared about him. We through out ministry bring these children for both physical and spiritual healing and Igor responded beautifully to both. Igor's understanding of people and his gratitude for the opportunity to be in the

US demonstrated a maturity beyond his years. He is large in every aspect of his life- he is extremely intelligent, wickedly funny and very athletic. He is "all boy" in every sense of the word.

Igor Kosuta age 13 was chosen as part of the Hope Program Phase 3 to come to Greenville, SC for surgery and prosthetics. Igor has bilateral PFFD (Proximal Femoral Focal Deficiency)-which causes the thighbones to not form and grow properly. This condition has caused Igor to have a short stature. His left foot was too deformed to be straightened surgically and has been amputated. He has been fitted with a left Syme prosthesis and a right shoe lift to balance his limbs. Igor is able to ambulate without any assistive devices. If there is anything that we can do for this boy to help him find family that will love him and call him as their own. I ask your prayers most of all and if you know of some family that is willing to take him, please let me know. This is urgent matter, his visa will expire in January. Thanks and blessings, George and Alexandra.

International Guardian Angel Adoption (richxing@verizon.net)
(972) 669-3669 (888) 809-3669 817-379-4747
For adoption info about Igor Call Alexandra (contact info above)"

The first thing I did was think, "This can't be true!" I immediately called the number above and spoke with George. He said he personally flew Igor over here from Russia a year ago and it was almost a year ago today that he had his surgery. There are a couple of families that have called about him and expressed a slight interest, but none who have made any commitments or gone any farther. At this point, if a family does not step up to the plate (my words, not his) and make a serious commitment to adopt him then he will be sent back to Russia the end of this month. I am so heartbroken over this. Of course, I want to adopt him - now! But Greg said no, and he's right. With my health issues right now it's not possible, they wouldn't even let us - not to mention our financial situation. George did say that there has been a fund set up for him to make adopting him less of a financial burden.

Please, please pray for Igor!! And more then that - tell everyone you know! There are so many wonderful families out there that I know would love to adopt him if they only knew the story. If you have money, donate to his cause (I don't know how, just call one of the numbers above) which will help make adoption easier for families who may not be able to afford the expense of adoption, yet would love to adopt him.

He has been here for an entire year. Going BACK to a Russian orphanage and then ultimately end up a castoff on the streets would be worse, in my opinion, then if he had never come to America in the first place! Also, I can't imagine how heartbroken he must be - having been with what he thought was his family - finally! Hope, love, a family - and then to have it all end suddenly and be returned to a Russian orphanage! I can't imagine. God loves Igor. Please join me in loving Igor and praying for him. If God is leading you to adopt him - DO IT! Otherwise, at least do something. Prayer is powerful. Plus TELL EVERYONE YOU KNOW! Let's find the family

that God has in store for Igor.

As for me and my house... we are doing terrific. :) Homeschooling, now the boys are going to homeschool P.E. twice a week, which they love, and just living life. I am so thrilled to be able to cook now, and run errands, and well... just be a mom. God has blessed this family so much. I wouldn't trade my life for a gazillion dollars! Thanks for your prayers - they hold me up.

I will write more soon!

God Bless!
Pamela

FYI:

These are two pieces Michael Cogdill from Channel 4 ran on HOPE

The link: <http://www.wyff4.com/seenon4/14944147/detail.html?taf=gs>

The link: <http://www.wyff4.com/seenon4/14944147/detail.html?taf=gs>

Posted on January 15th, 2008 in [Homeschooling](#) | [No Comments](#) »

BIG MILESTONES & itty bitty setbacks

I know it's been a while since I've written and I am sorry! I just spent over an hour and wrote a nice long blog entry and when I went to save it, my computer gave me an error message! I didn't copy to clipboard as I usually do either. I almost got upset but then I knew without a doubt that it was not what God wanted me to post. So, I'm okay with it. Hopefully, if I can restrain myself I am going to do a short post as I am having some new problems with my left side.

Before I explain that, #1 - Happy Birthday, Billy!! He's my wonderful nephew who turned 18 years old today. I don't think he even reads my blogs, but I want to acknowledge his birthday anyway! I love him to death and he is now officially an adult! Wow! These kids - they grow up overnight it seems.

Hold them tight while you still can. Greg and I marvel at the fact that our oldest kiddo, Robby has been gone for four years! He's married, graduated college, and lives about seven hours away. And, Brittney, our only daughter is 16! I am telling you I feel like I was just sixteen yesterday!!

I have to be honest with you. Last year I was at homeschool burnout big-time. My health had been spiraling downhill consistently for 3+ years by then and I was just tired and downright burnt out! After all that has happened to me since "that day" you'd think I'd be over the top by now! BTW, as an aside I am still trying to come up with a name for "that day" August 29, 2007 - the day I became totally paralyzed from the waist down. Like "the day my legs ran away" or since it was more than my legs (organs and such - I won't go into detail) but more like half my body maybe I should call it "the day I was cut in two," but that sounds kinda gross. Or "I've fallen and I can't get up! Day" that is quite accurate - but too long. Oh well... I'll keep thinking. I think I am thinking too much about it and that's why my true natural hilarious wit just isn't working with this one!?!?

Anyway, back to the topic at hand - homeschool burnout. What's ironic is that now that we are FINALLY back into the swing of homeschooling, I am LOVING IT! I am more motivated and simply having more fun than I have in years. My perception of life has changed. I recognized this culture I live in as shallow and unrealistic for the most part. My reality has changed. Material things mean nothing to me, but my husband and my kids mean everything to me. So I count it all joy that God has given me the awesome privilege of homeschooling my kiddos for this long and that I get

to keep doing it for years to come since Elijah is only six! It's gone from too often being a chore, to being fun and something I am so thankful for - in the moment. (Not just after I think about the big picture.)

Physically I am doing SO MUCH better! I have had several milestones just in the past week. But I realized that once again I am pushing myself too hard as I had a setback last night. Milestones: Thursday - I was at home the entire day and I walked from room to room (sitting down as soon as I got there) with support of the walls, etc. - but without using my scooter! MAJOR, MAJOR! I just decided I didn't want to use it that day, so I pushed myself through it and although it hurt - IT FELT GOOD! I literally did not use my scooter then entire day. It is the first time since "Hey, where'd I go?" day (no, I don't like that name either) that I went even more than an hour or so not using a wheelchair, much less the ENTIRE DAY!! YIPPEE!!! Another milestone - I am so sick of sitting down in my shower chair while showering so Friday morning and Saturday morning, I took my chair out of the shower and took a shower STANDING UP! Ok, they were quick showers - but it was great! I felt like a real person! I'm back to sitting down for showers for now as they take too much out of me, but I have a feeling my sitting showers will some day be a memory. 😊

Most likely due to all this pushing of myself, I have had a couple of little "itty bitty" setbacks. I have been having ongoing headaches for several days straight now. I typically do not get headaches very often and if I do, they never last more than one day. Minor irritation in comparison to all else, but it definitely makes "all else" harder to cope with and keep a good attitude! I also had a little tiny setback last night - but am already improving from that. My entire left side went numb, paralyzed - yet zinging. (ie. electrical shock-like pains shooting through my leg and my arm and the left side of my back.) It was scary and painful! This morning my leg is not zinging much at all anymore and I CAN bear some weight on it. And my back is only zinging about once an hour or so. So, that's a major improvement. (YEA), but my left arm is still very numb and zinging constantly. Which is why this blog is taking me forever to write! I am trying to write mostly with my right hand and not moving my left arm, but of course, that just doesn't work! Anyway, the kids were there last night when my left side decided to "check-out" so today I am really trying to give the impression to all that I am doing fine. They don't know how bad my arm still is. Frankly, they are back to a nice healthy stability when it comes to my health now and I don't want there to be any setbacks in the stability department!

Well, I have to go as we are learning German (Rosetta Stone) and I have to do another lesson tonight before the boys do theirs tomorrow as I am trying to keep one step ahead of them! We have German neighbors and friends, so we want to know what they are REALLY saying when they are yelling at their kids and each other! ha ha ha

Personal prayer requests - we are still having some very extreme difficulties in other ways - please keep these unspoken prayers on your list if you would like. As always, I so covet your prayers. THEY are so effective. I always know when people are praying for me as I can "feel" it. Thanks! Pray for my peace in general (which has been amazing in itself) will continue and that my guilt will vanish! Pray for peace for Greg as well. BTW, my New Year's Resolution is to treat Greg better and give him more of the love and respect he deserves. He's a Godsend and I've been very convicted that I need to treat him as such - every day! I have been taking him too much for granted. No more! Thanks for your ongoing prayers.

Peaceful Pamela - Over and Out!

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

[Thank You All Who Prayed and Gave to the Berthume Fundraiser!!](#)



Here are some pictures of what your contributions enabled me to get! Above is me showing off my super cool hand controls. The bar thingie on the left is how I work the gas and the brake. Push down for gas and forward to brake! The round knob on the steering wheel is a spinner knob. Since my left hand is always busy (think about it, you always have to have your foot on the gas or the brake unless you put it in park. That's why my left hand is always working. In light of that, I use that spinner with my right hand to make turns with one hand! Cool, huh?!?!?!)

Okay, next one is of my "GoGo" scooter...



Yes, my favorite color is RED! It's super fast (goes 4½ MPH!) and feels like I'm driving a go-cart around. My kids' get jealous. 😊

Below you can see how it all comes apart. It breaks apart easily (even my 11 year old can take it apart or put it together in well under 2 mins - not my 6 year old though!). Also, the heaviest piece only weighs 24½ lbs. so my trusty dependable 11 year old can (and does) put it in the back of the station wagon for me and get it out at our destination and put it back together again. Sweet! (I can't do it by myself as I am not allowed to lift over 2 lbs. and I couldn't do it even if I could lift more at this point - but this is certainly the next best thing to total independence!) So - what do you think? This ain't your grandma's wheelchair - that's for sure!



We are doing well. I have overdone, and paid for it this week. I was unintentionally gluttened on Monday night, AND during that same occasion (a homeschool mom's get together) I walked the farthest ever (to the bathroom and back) two times! Well, I am downright paying for it. I am over the gluttened part now, but my feet and ankles are really mad at me, if you know what I mean. It feels like I broke my left ankle and sprained my right one! I am sure I didn't - but that is what it feels like. So... I've take a step backwards a bit (no pun intended) but, hey - at least I had fun Monday night, right!?!?!

I've decided that everybody is too busy. We are all ready to celebrate Jesus' birthday and would love to have some friends over tonight to relax with us by the tree and the fireplace and maybe play some games and enjoy some hot chocolate or hot apple cider, but all my family and friends are too busy! I've decided we need to make more friends here locally as well. Seems like most of my come over and hang out friends live all over the US, not many around here.

After being here 2½ years (3 years will be a record for us - having moved 26 times in 23 years of marriage) just this morning Greg said, "I love it here, I don't ever want to move again." Let me just say, that is music to my ears! Maybe I can let my defenses down a bit and start making stronger bonds with my local friends. I think I have been subconsciously feeling as though we'll probably just move again, so why get to close anyway. Well, I am feeling more and more like maybe this really will be our home until we truly go home. Ahhhh.....

Well, gonna go sip some hot cider. I just really wanted to say "Thank You" to all of the many homeschoolers and others who participated in the Berthume fundraiser. And to Lorrie of TEACH Magazine who thought of and did that for us. Without you, we had no idea how we would ever be able to dig out of the hole that my health was burying us in. We still have many medical bills and expenses left, but, thanks to so many of you, we can see the light at the end of the tunnel. My family loves you all!

God Bless and Merry **CHRIST**mas

It's All GREAT!

Hi people! What's up??? *ME!*

People must be still praying for me out there as I really am returning back to my good mood and attitude this week! YEA! I love being happy and smiling, and I don't like being around myself when I am feeling as pitiful as I was when I wrote my last entry! This morning I was singing in the shower when I stopped and thought, "Hey, my happy self is back!" and I made my decision to be happy today. We can only live one day at a time anyway - so we might as well make it a good day!

It's so funny (as in comical) how my life is now. It really is humorous - especially if one just considers it as from the outside looking in.

- Saturday I did too much so Sunday I could do nothing (yes, that was my last entry).
- Monday I was pretty well still dead physically.
- Tuesday, I woke up with energy and dying to go shopping in real life (this online shopping isn't nearly as much fun as "real" shopping!) I couldn't get anyone to meet me at Sam's (everyone's lives are so busy) to go in and get me an electric wheelchair and I got so frustrated. Now that I have hand-controls I can drive, but unless I have someone with me... well what do I do when I get there? I didn't want to take the boys or Brittney - I just wanted to go by myself and get Christmas presents for the kids!! I ended up praying about it and leaving for Sam's by myself!! I knew God would work it out for me. Either I can get a Sam's employee to bring me out a chair, or ask a stranger to - it's not like I'm shy! When I got there I called Sam's and this wonderful lady immediately drove out a wonderful new power wheelchair to me (with a huge cart on the front!!) and I shopped as slow and strolled, okay make it *rolled* around the store as if I had all the time in the world. Which I did because my wonderful hubby, Greg, said when I left, you just take all the time you want and enjoy yourself. He is such a sweetheart!! I literally went up and down every single aisle - at least once. Very fun. I didn't buy a whole lot yet I had a wonderful time!
- Wednesday - AWANA night! I was DEAD that day. We had our AWANA party so I had to go (I go to AWANA always, dead or alive, as I just LOVE my girls!) They were having a party in Elijah's SPARKS room also and his SPARKS leader wanted everything brought to be gluten free so that Elijah could eat anything there with no worries. She is such a wonderful leader! I made taco dip and sugar cookies and brought stuff for the kids to decorate them. I was SO EXHAUSTED I couldn't imagine how I was going to get through the night. Well, God gave me my second wind as soon as we arrived at church and I got my first of many hugs from one of my girls (Brittney drove me, I didn't even trust myself to drive with hand-controls!!)
- Thursday (yesterday) and guess what?!?! You'd never guess! I was dead again! ha ha ha ha I literally spent the entire day in bed. No biggie though - I wrapped presents all day long (with frequent breaks in between) with Christmas music on so I was happy and made good use of my time. It was another good day!
- Today, Friday - after our school (limited school today) we went to homeschooler roller skating and I had a blast. Elijah skated on the wood floor (as opposed to just staying on the carpet) for the first time. BIG ACCOMPLISHMENT!! J.Jay got the cones from the staff and organized races. He bought the winner of the final race a drink with the money he made from packing HOMESCHOOLPOLY Homeschool Resource Guide packets. (That is his ongoing job and he's very good at it!) He is such a leader and so full of self-confidence.

Brittney worked all day, so she couldn't go skating with us. :(Also, today I made both lunch AND dinner and that's a BIG ACCOMPLISHMENT for me! Then we had some family time watching a DVD with the fireplace going tonight. It's been a GREAT DAY!

What a funny life. I am so glad it's mine. I love my hubby, I love my kids, I love my house, I love my hand-controls, and I love my speedy little red scooter! Regardless of the money in our bank account (or in our case, the lack thereof!) I feel very, very rich. Nothing has changed from my last entry to this one, except my perception and attitude. Circumstances are just that - happiness though, is a choice. Pray I can make the right choice again tomorrow. And the next day, and the next, and the next - well you get the picture. And I urge YOU to make that choice too! It's so much more fun when you do! Tonight for me, It's not just "all good", it's all GREAT! 'nighty night!

Merry *CHRIST*mas!

Pamela

Posted on on December 14th, 2007 in [Homeschooling](#) | [No Comments](#) »

Reflections

Hi all,

I keep waiting until I have the time to write and something good to say... but it's been a bit of a rough time. I am not liking my new normal very much lately. This is the first time in my life I truly do not feel like I "fit in" anywhere. Since my last post it seems as though my days have been alternating between good and bad. With the good days being "okay" and not really that good.

We have so much going on in this household and I am so very tired. I still have not found the stone to my ring (which is not to say I have not looked like crazy!!). Sonya in her comment suggested I called our homeowners policy, which I had not thought of, so I did. Turns out it's not covered since it was not stolen. We needed to have a special rider to cover jewelry from loss, which we don't have. No need to get it now. My wedding ring is the only "real" jewelry I own. Also, pray that I can get the ring off my finger without having to get it cut off. I have tried and tried, but as of yet to no avail. The prongs are sharp and I have cut myself, my sheets, and a couple of shirts because of it. Very frustrating.

It's odd, kind of like a reminder that all is not well with my world. And yet, a reminder that this life is not about material things anyway. If you think about it I've lost one of the only two important material things to me, and yet - nothing has really changed. In reality it's just a material thing. This life and every material thing in it, is really pointless. As I live more and more life I am beginning to understand the words of Solomon. The same words that have always confused me, "Everything is meaningless" from Ecclesiastes. I believe what he means is that in comparison to Jesus alone, everything really is very meaningless. We spend our days and our efforts on stupid, worthless things!

Which brings me to my further frustration. I know God has a plan for me and my life, but I simply no longer feel I truly "fit in" anywhere lately. My new normal is so limited. What has always been the most important things to me - relationships with my kids, and my husband have suffered as well as relationships with friends. I have found that strangers are more often better true friends to me than my "true" friends. Quite the conundrum. (SP?)

Also, homeschooling - a very important thing to me, has become so difficult. And Brittney, simply does not want to homeschool anymore at all. She wants to go to school the second semester of this year. And as badly as I want to homeschool her, it takes more than I've got in me to continue as she requires so much one on one and so much time being a Junior. The two younger boys also require a great deal of my individual time, but they appreciate it. It's so much harder to give and commit so much time to one who so clearly doesn't appreciate it and doesn't even want to be homeschooling in the first place. Who'da thunk? This type of stuff isn't supposed to happen to me! Or so I thought! Wrong again...

Okay, I'm babbling. I went to a homeschool mom's Christmas party the other night and had a very good time. The odd thing is, I came home feeling so different from everyone else. Back to the fitting in thing - I think. I've never really cared if I fit in or not, yet I've always felt very much a part of everything - wherever I was and whomever I was with. Why is that so different now? Maybe my self-esteem is not what I thought it was. Which is good. We are not to be proud anyway. Since pride goeth before a fall, maybe the problem is that I was prideful and now I've fallen. (and can't get up! ha ha ha) Seriously, so it's all for good I know. Just a painful process.

Bootcamp. That's what I refer to this life as. I think my entire family is working on one of the more difficult obstacle courses lately and we need some more teamwork to get past it. I am so thankful that we will get through it. God promises to not give us more than we can handle.

Here are long overdue updates on us all from youngest to oldest:

Elijah - my little guy is six years old! I know I've said that so many times, but I just can't get over it. He is a happy albeit messy young man. Our biggest point of contention with him is getting him to keep his room clean. With his lack of ability and my lack of energy to stay on top of it, it's becoming an ongoing frustration. I know all the plans and chore cards, and charts, but it all takes consistency by mom - which is where we are lacking. Please pray for me to be a better more energetic mom, or figure out how to be a better low-energy mom! Also, Elijah has exotropia (his eyes will go out to the outside) and used to only show up when he was very tired. It is starting to happen now on a daily basis, so we are going to have to take him to an eye doctor. When he was younger they said if it wasn't cleared up by the time he was 5 or 6 he would require surgery. Pray there are alternatives or that he can learn how to control the muscles himself - if that is possible.

J.Jay - He is having quite a hard time with his new back brace for his scoliosis. After our Shriner's hospital stay - he only lasted about a week with his new brace. It causes him extreme pain and we ended up one week later have to return to the hospital for them to check it out again. They adjusted one of the push pads a wee bit, but basically said "it's going to hurt!" They just don't want to damage his bones/ribs in the process. He was so sore he was ordered a 3-4 day respite from the brace to allow his ribs and bones to heal and then we were to start back as if from day one, working him up gradually to 12 hours daily (including his sleeping in it). So, last night was night one of second go around and he wore it for an hour. Tonight after many tears and a great deal of pain for him I let him take it off after only an hour and fifteen minutes. It is so hard to see my son in so much pain. How did God endure His son on the cross?? It's too much to fathom. Anyway, our goal is to add an hour per night until he is up to 12 hours. It seems unsurmountable right now, but he is a tough young man and realizes how necessary it is. I just wish it could be easier. I feel deep inside responsible since it was my bad genes (I have scoliosis and had to have surgery, etc.) that resulted in him having scoliosis! J.Jay is the one though who is famous for saying to me, "What doesn't kill you will make you stronger." So, he is already strong and is going to be one very strong man when he grows up!

Brittney - Is very much a handful lately. I remember writing in my first book how teenagers do not automatically rebel. Well, she seems to be convinced that they do. She wants everything, yet wants to give nothing. It's difficult regardless of anyone's circumstances - but when you've invested so much in time (homeschooling) and money - it just seems more personal. Also, again my lack of health, vigor and energy mixed with Greg's lack of patience (he just wasn't wired patient!) just makes everything all the more difficult. We know this is just a phase, a short span in each of our lives and that she will go on to live the life the Lord has planned for her (and hopefully have a little girl who is just like her!) We love her to death. We just want to listen to the Lord and do the right thing for her future in all ways. Right now, we aren't even sure what that is! Pray for wisdom.

Robby - Will graduate from Liberty with his bachelor's degree on Friday, Dec. 15th. I am SO PROUD!! He and Kathryn are happily married. I talk to him at least once a week. I'll say it again - I am a proud Mom.

Greg - Needs a vacation! Deserves more than I can give him right now. I cry if I think on it too much. He's a great man and has a very loving and giving heart. He just doesn't always know how to deal with all these unexpected events and none of this fits into his "plan" or vision he had for his future. My biggest prayer for him right now is for peace and contentment. He seems so unsettled ever since this happened in August and as it sinks in he seems to be less and less content. Pray for peace and understanding. DO NOT PRAY FOR PATIENCE. (We all know patience comes through trials, we've had enough of that for right now!)

Me - Physically I am doing better as far as standing and walking more. I am wanting to find me an inexpensive pedometer so I can track how many steps I take each day. I aim to take at least one more step each day than I did the day before. I am still dealing with major fatigue. The more I do, the more I pay. I am still having a hard time trying to figure out where my boundaries are. My mom instinct kicks in and now that I "can" walk (with much pain and effort) when something happens with one of the kids, or they need me, I "do" walk. Period. Friday night I went to the homeschool party, Saturday I went to my mom's and we visited an Uncle we haven't seen in 11 years and his new wife. I did so much walking (and looking back now I think I was mostly trying to prove to everybody how much I can do - ie. showing off my ability to walk!) That I was so bad today I couldn't even go to church! Where are my priorities? I am also having breathing and choking problems again, which is scary to me - and not good for the kids to see. So... it's like one step forward (literally) and a half a step back. I do feel like I am making progress. I have cut out a great deal of my meds - too much I know. Still trying to find the right balance. Emotionally, I seem to be breaking down a lot lately - which is not at all like me. I take everything so very personally. Greg and I have been so busy individually that we hardly feel like a couple anymore and I certainly don't feel like much of a wife. It's all me - I know. Probably one of the "stages" blah, blah blah. I just pray this stage ends soon and I get back to my old emotionally strong and resilient self. 😊

Final topic of discussion - Christmas and Jesus. I am more disappointed than usual this Christmas at the lack of Jesus and the abundance of santa when it comes to the Christmas season. I am sick of the term "X-MAS" and the fact that so many kids today (I've spoken with several personally) have absolutely NO IDEA that Christmas is actually to celebrate the birth of Christ! I so wanted to find a reasonable nativity set to put out in our own yard as every house has beautiful decorations and there are such an abundance of santas and snowmen and reindeer, but only two houses I have been able to find in our neighborhood of over 400 homes with a nativity scene. I was driving around the other day all through Greenville and instead of my usual Ohhing and Ahhing over the

beauty of all the Christmas lights I was trying desperately to find an indication of Jesus. It was one of the rare times that I was by myself (running some bank drive-through only errands with my wonderful hand-controls!!) I was talking to Jesus out loud and kept saying, Jesus - where are you this Christmas? This is the Bible belt - doesn't everybody know that Christmas is for YOU? I couldn't find any indication of him anywhere and literally started crying. I had to pull into a parking lot and suck it up before I could go back home. Then I went on a nativity search figuring the least we could do is put a nativity scene of some sort in our yard - and I couldn't find one! I called every store in town. I will step down from this discussion as I am not trying to be judgmental or preachy or offend anyone. I love the great old cartoons about Santa and Rudolph and Frosty just as much as the next person. But in our family, they are just that. Fantasy, fun cartoons with no basis in reality. It seems for so much of the world today they are the meaning of Christmas! Jesus is not a fantasy. He is very real and He is what Christmas - or should I say CHRIST-mas is all about. This world seems to be changing so much in my generation, literally before my very eyes. It makes me sad, and sometimes angry. But mostly sad. With all that said - I refuse to change along with the world. So I leave you with the challenge to tell everyone you see - especially the next generation we have coming up after us - what Christmas is really all about. And celebrate the birth of Christ in your home with fervor!

I apologize if this blog seems "down". My intent is not to bring anyone down ever! I am just being honest and in a very reflective mood of late. God is growing me, growth is painful - but necessary. I pray I am like putty in his hands, I fear I am not. But, I want to be - so.... in that respect "It's all good!"

Merry **CHRIST**mas!!

Pamela

P.S. Not to get political on you, but getting political = Check out www.ronpaul.org. I am voting for him and urge everyone to at least learn more about him and consider him as a potential candidate! Ok, me step down now!

Posted on on December 10th, 2007 in [Homeschooling](#) | [No Comments](#) »

Please pray for me and my family

Hi all.

We had an especially difficult day today and it ended tonight with the realization that at some point today the diamond fell out of my wedding ring. I am not a materialistic person. There are only two material things on this earth that I value and that is my Bible (my special one I've had for over 12 years; and my wedding ring.

Please pray we can find the diamond and get it reset. We cannot afford a replacement diamond. I am distraught, to say the least.

Thanks for your prayers.

Pamela

Posted on on December 1st, 2007 in [Homeschooling](#) | [No Comments](#) »

So much to say... so little time!

We had a great Thanksgiving with Robby and Kathryn (my oldest and his wife) who came down to visit as well. It was truly a terrific fun time. Someday I am going to figure out how to upload pictures into here. For right now, I will put into homeschoolersconnecting.com. Anyway, yesterday I was feeling bad all day (long story - was gluttened on Friday morning due to my assumption that something that I thought was gf was not!) Anyway, today I am getting back to normal but I feel like Madame Blueberry. (Veggie Tales) "I'm so blue - ue - ue - ue, blue - ue - ue - ue, blue - ue - ue - ue, blue! I'm so blue I don't know what to do."

Tomorrow J.Jay and I get up early to go to Shriner's Hospital and he has to stay overnight. Probably just one night. I, of course, and going to stay with him. So maybe that's what is getting to me, I don't know. I feel so sadly pathetic even feeling blue as 80% of the population is in such dire circumstances and yet I find myself lately feeling sorry for myself. And this is not a good thing! 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. How I miss my independence. Lately, I don't feel like a good anything! I am getting used to the new "normal" but in all honestly, I just don't like it. I have gained weight, I am exhausted 24/7, I am snippier then ever with my hubby and the kids. I just feel like a fat, useless, frump. And me, being me - sees that there is a solution! I must get up and get exercise and do something about it! But that is were my true dilemma begins. I can't do anything that I know of to change anything. My attitude for all intense and purposes is good, but inside I feel like I am crying more often than not. Please pray for me and pray for me to find a way to lose weight. Adding weight is the worst thing for my back. I honestly don't know what I weigh as I can't stand on the scale, but I look fatter in the face and I feel like a cow!

Also, please pray for Greg to have some contentment & happiness. He's having a tough time dealing with all this as well though things are beginning to settle down, almost 3 months have passed and I am still partially paralyzed and very limited as to what I can do. It is very hard on him. Both of us are starting to feel like life is tough, beyond words and we are tired. It's like, "Were do we go from here?" so we just keep trying to trust in God and put one foot in front of the other. Yet, we are both still in a mental state of confusion and exhaustion more often than not.

Pray also for all this to bring the kiddos up rather than bringing them down. They all seem to be doing well now and are adjusting well. Better than Greg and I!

I pray each and every one of you have a great Christmas season and my prayer for our family this year is to focus on the true meaning of Christmas - **Jesus**. He is all we need. I know that is what He is teaching us. I just want to live it out alot more gracefully and without this self-pity.

Now you all know that I am not perfect and life is not always what we think, expect, or even hope it should be. But, I cling to what I know. God is never surprised and life is exactly what He knows it should be for each one of us. That's enough for me to get up tomorrow and keep on keeping on!

Merry **Christmas!**
Pamela

Wow - What a Week!!!!

Hi all!

It's been a super fun, busy, hectic, painful, up and down sorta week. But before I tell you about THAT, let me share the most important thing - today is Elijah's 6th birthday! We had a Spiderman party for him here at home and he and his friends had a blast. He said it was his "best birthday ever!!" What more does a Mom need to hear but that? After everyone left I crashed in the bed and he brought some stuff in here and him and I played for hours. I also installed a new computer game he got for his birthday (JumpStart World) on my computer and we played that together for quite a while. What a long - fun day!!!! I can't believe that my **baby** is six years old! I've kept him five up until yesterday, but today there was no denying it any longer. They grow up so fast!

Now, about the rest of my week. As many of you know, Lorrie Flem the publisher of TEACH Magazine and a good personal friend of mine who has a super enormous heart was concerned about our financial needs and she took it upon herself to do something about it. She contacted other homeschool companies and various other friends of ours and put together this whole berthumefundraiser.com for us. Due to her tireless efforts and continuing hard work, AND DUE TO ALL YOU OUT THERE (*you know who you are!!*) Who donated stuff and/or participated in the fundraiser by donating money, this week has resulted in much, much blessing for me - and Greg!!! Because of the fundraiser this week we were able to get hand-controls installed on my car!! Can you believe that?!?!? I haven't blogged because I've been too busy DRIVING!! vroom, vroom.... Greg dropped off the car on Tuesday and we picked it up on Wednesday with the hand-controls. And I DROVE IT HOME MYSELF!!! How amazing is technology that we can have our car converted so people can drive without even using legs!?!?! I honestly didn't even realize such a thing existed until all his happened to me. Okay, so here is the deal. There is a handle thingie on the left hand side of my steering wheel, just below the blinker thing. I push in (towards the front of the car) to brake; and down to accelerate. Also, since my arms are weak and I have to use my left arm/hand solely and continuously to work the brake and gas - there is a spinner thingie on my actual steering wheel. This allows me to steer (and turn, etc.) solely with my right arm/hand. Can you believe that?!?! What technology we have these days!!

But wait, there's more! We learned on Monday that we would be unable to get a lift installed on my car for my Jazzy wheelchair (which is very heavy) because my car does not have a steel frame but rather a unibody. Lifts are only safe if steel frame as is the case on a mini-van or larger van. Well, we can NOT go out and get a van so I was taken aback - but prayed and knew there had to be another solution. Well, God led the way and I began researching what they call "travel scooters". After much research, I found the one I thought would work best and it "just so happened" that they had one at a mobility store right here in our town - on the floor!! It's called a "GoGo Elite" and it breaks apart into 5 pieces and the heaviest piece is only 25 lbs.! So J.Jay, our 11 year old, can take it apart, put it in the back of our station wagon and then when we get to our destination he just puts it all back together again! So again, due solely to the fundraiser we were able to purchase it on Tuesday and J.Jay is already an "old pro" at whipping it out and putting it together and then loading it back up again! I timed him the day before yesterday (unbeknownst to him as I didn't want him to feel pressure!) and he put it together in 1 min. 24 seconds! What a cool (and loving and compassionate) 11 year old son I have! It's an awesome, stable scooter and the seat even spins (not while I am driving it of course, only when I pull the lever!) so I can easily

get in and out of it. And, it came with several color shrouds, but I keep it red - which is my FAVORITE COLOR!

Do you know what this means??! This means that this week I have exhausted myself and the boys doing our grocery shopping, and taking them out of the house, just me and the boys. Wow!! I feel so free and so blessed to have such amazing friends who love me this much. This week has been, drive somewhere to get something accomplished, come home and crash and recuperate, and then drive somewhere else!! ha ha ha ha I can't go anywhere by myself (not if I want to get out of the car, that is) but who cares. I am just happy to be able to be a more normal mom again! Ok, I know - I have never been and never will be even remotely close to normal. But who wants to be normal anyway â€” how boring!

I am honored and feel privileged to have gotten this opportunity to learn and continue to learn about the completely different world out there for us in wheelchairs. I am sad and sometimes disgusted at myself for how small my world was and how little I *really* knew about people in wheelchairs until this happened to ME. Even though I have used a wheelchair (manual) and walker off and on for the past 3 and a half years, it's not anything close to being the same as HAVING to use it. If there was an obstacle, I'd just get up and deal with it easily. That's not an option anymore! There are still lots of barriers and things that can be done to make life easier for those of us in wheelchairs (another thing I am starting to learn firsthand), but I am amazed at how much has already been done! (Like hand-controls for instance!)

So, I have had an amazing week of firsts. First time driving with hand controls, first scooter, first birthday party pulled off from my wheelchair. And I've also had some lasts - last time I'll do a party for a six year old as my last baby is no longer a baby! Last time I will have to drive with my feet (ha ha ha) and I can't think of any more as it's late and I'm tired. But I am happy. Very, very happy. I have learned so much. I have learned who my true friends really are, and just how many friends I really have. Never again will I feel lonely. I've also learned (yet again) that Jesus is truly my best friend who has never left me even for one second during all this. He is right by myself through my good, my bad, and my way too often - downright UGLY!

So, Happy Thanksgiving! I am so thankful for so many things. Of course, my family and my friends, and yes, my health too! It may not be "ideal" but I have decided that's good. It's keeping me out of my comfort zone and a comfort zone is no place for a Christian to be anyway! I am also very thankful this year for lots of new things: I live in a free country with paved roads, and cars with hand-controls, and take apart scooters, and I am able to legally attend our wonderful church that has handicapped parking spaces and ramps and always a smiling face to open every door for me before I even get there. Oh yea, and one happy six year old who's now smiling in his sleep. Yep, I am a happy and blessed woman!! HAPPY THANKSGIVING!

Thanksgiving Blessings!
Pamela

Posted on on November 17th, 2007 in [Homeschooling](#) | [No Comments](#) »

[Chicken `n Dumplings](#)

Hi All!

There is a chill in the air, beautiful fall colors all throughout the nature preserve AND I have

chicken 'n dumplings (gluten-free dumplings of course!) in the crockpot. Today is a super day! Earlier we were outside and I was sitting in my chair chatting with Greg while he was doing yard work, Elijah was playing outside as well and Brittney was washing my car. Greg said out of the blue, "Things are looking up. I feel like we are getting back to normal." That means a whole lot coming from him. He has suffered the brunt of the work and stress from all this. So it was such a great thing for me to hear him say.

One of the biggest changes we have is that we are receiving enough money from the Berthume Fundraiser that Lorrie Flem did this coming week that I will be able to get hand-controls installed on my car as well as getting a lift installed on the back. That in itself is a major answer to prayer. I have seen a smaller scooter online at Walgreens for \$500 which is very inexpensive for a scooter (they are typically well more than \$1000) which might be easier for me to get around the house (without continuing to do major damage to the walls!) and it looks like I may be able to get the lift at enough of a discount to pay for the scooter also! 😊 So, soon I will be able to DRIVE! I can't wait.

I am getting to the point that I can stand with my little walker I bought (with no wheels) long enough to put stuff in crockpot, maybe cut some veggies, to get into the shower, to put my pants on, etc. My problem remains not doing what I can do just because I can do it and finding my limits. I have to be very careful to not stand or take too many steps though as it is very painful and I will dearly pay for it, not only right then, but what's even worse for the entire next day. The day after I "do too much" my body refuses to wake up in the morning and I am in extreme pain and have fatigue beyond my control. Honestly fatigue is now my biggest enemy, even more so than the pain. I can deal with pain, I am used to it (you don't get used to pain - but you learn how to just deal with it and continue on!) But fatigue like I have been experiencing is beyond my ability to deal with! After doing quite a bit on Thursday (cooking dinner in crockpot - YEA!, standing a few times, taking a couple steps a couple of different times) come Friday. I was absolutely worthless. I was literally bedridden the entire day. My family doesn't deserve that! I am trying to find a balance to know just how far I can push myself so that I can work my muscles, and retrain my brain, without doing myself in for the following day. It's a delicate balance but one I am sure I will figure out soon. I am also on a lot of medicines and I am trying to cut back even more this next week to see if that will reduce my fatigue a bit. It seems like "fatigue" is a side affect of every single medication I am on!

I have totally finished doing the HOMESCHOOLPOLY *Homeschool Resource Guide* and it is at the printers so I am glad to take a bit of a break for the holidays and spend some time figuring out a good balance. So, this is fun. My life is never boring, that's for sure!

J.Jay went to Shriner's early this week to have his brace fitted. It was way, way more of an ordeal than either he or I expected! They put him in traction and had doctors pushing hard on his back and sides while the casts dried so the brace would make his back as straight as possible. We also found out that he will need to be in the hospital for at least a day and maybe more when he gets his new brace so they can monitor him and tweak it as necessary, etc. That will be the Monday after Thanksgiving. He is not the least bit nervous, if anything he seems excited about it! Go figure . . . kids! I am glad though. I'd rather him be excited than nervous. Speaking of excited - he is being baptized tomorrow! We are all so excited about that!!

Brittney is doing terrifically. I drove with her today in hubby's stick shift car so she can drive that instead of my car. (Since I plan on driving my car myself VERY SOON!) and she did great. She drove his stick to work tonight. It's the first time she's driven it (other than around the

neighborhood) without Greg or me with her. I am so proud! How many 16 year olds can drive a stick? Not many!

Elijah was sick, sick, sick - but is now all better. 😊 I think I mentioned last week that we all got glutened. His fever finally broke Monday morning and we never did have to take him in or put him on antibiotics. I am so thankful - as weak as his immune system is, I didn't want to weaken it further by him being on antibiotics more than is absolutely necessary! It's so cool how God gives us our Mom's intuition. Sometimes when he gets sick, I just KNOW I need to take him in. This time, I just felt at total peace about waiting it out a bit. And he got better without doctors' care! God is so amazing. It never ceases to amaze me!

Finally, Robby, my oldest, and his wife, Kathryn are coming from Virginia for Thanksgiving. I am so excited! I will have my whole family together for a couple days anyway. How cool is that?!?! Way cool!

Well, I've gotta go eat some hopefully yummy Chicken 'n Dumplings. So... over and out. Adios, and a see ya later - alligator!

Posted on on November 10th, 2007 in [Homeschooling](#) | [No Comments](#) »

I love Fall!!

Hi all!

I don't know how it is where you live, but here in South Carolina the weather is AMAZING! The leaves in our nature preserve behind us are all turning gold and red - just beautiful. Fall is my FAVORITE SEASON!

I am so sorry for taking so long to write. Everyone is calling me giving me a hard time as they don't know what's going on with us and I haven't updated my blog in so long. I have been so busy, but that is no excuse - I know!

First, thanks to all your prayers. Brittney is doing wonderfully now. She got her stitches out on Wednesday - 52 stitches on her back that she had to have removed! Can you believe that?!?! Being three layers of stitches for each incision so 3 x 52 means approximately 156 stitches she had in all in her body. The pathology reports came back as all benign lipomas. YEA!!! She went back to work and is super glad to have all that behind her. Thanks for all your prayers for her during this time. This was her first ever surgery and I think she did awesome. God made females so tough! (They have to be to give birth to children!!)

She also got her restricted license on Tuesday, and since she works sometimes after dark she was able to get her extended restricted. She can now drive by herself between the hours of 6am and midnight. This helps a ton as she can drive herself back and forth to work, as well as help out with some of the errands.

The boys and I got "glutened" (we have Celiac disease) from some organic veggie chips last week. J.Jay just gets moody and emotional, I get sick to my stomach and my neurological pain increases, but Elijah gets hit very hard. His white blood cells drop and he tends to catch something. He's had pneumonia twice, croup, a middle ear infection, and more. He hasn't been sick though in several months. Well, he's been running a very high temp (102-103) since Thursday night and has

had a runny nose. He looks pathetic, his little eyes are all swollen and so are his lips! He is just miserable. We have been holding off taking him to the doctor praying that whatever it is will run it's course as I don't want him to have any more antibiotics unless absolutely necessary! This morning his temp is down to a low-grade and he is still very sick, but seems to be improving.

This morning we were lying in bed for about an hour just enjoying watching the birds. He is getting very good at identifying the different types of birds we have in the many bird feeders that Greg put outside my window. He was saying "Look, Mom. It's a Carolina Chickadee!" and "There are four American Goldfinches on that one house, they really like that!" And of course, he loves the Cardinals. We have two males and two females and two that are either females or young males - we are still unsure. Anyway, we had the most relaxing morning ever just watching the birds and chit chatting, just the two of us. Brittney was at work and Dad & J.Jay were at Jay's Tae Kwon Do.

Speaking of Tae Kwon Do, this morning was J.Jay's 3rd class and he earned his white belt. We are blessed to have been able to get him in the class at the YMCA. He goes twice a week now. That will help him in several ways. For his size, (he's 11½ yet is only 4'5" so about the size of a 9 year old), to help him learn better self-control, and hopefully to help him release some of his extra energy! The teacher is a wonderful Christian man who is a 3rd degree black belt. J.Jay really enjoys the class.

Greg is still a bit frustrated with all he is doing around the house and not being able to focus on his work and able to get enough income coming in this house. As soon as I can get the car converted so I can drive the boys places, and get me and them out of the house more, run errands, take them on field trips, etc. that will solve 90% of his frustration. I am NOT a homebody by any stretch of the imagination and love getting out and going places with the boys. So... we pray we will be able to do that soon. God is teaching me patience, and I am trying hard to learn so He'll allow us to get the car converted NOW! ha ha ha.

As for me, I am doing about the same. I am getting more comfortable with my new normal. I am starting to accept the fact that this is going to be a slow and painful process. Please don't pray for patience for me - that comes through trials and we are at our limit! Pray for peace in the midst of the storms. 😊 And pray that I can truly get back to my independent self and be the "mom" I want to be, whether that's sitting or standing!

As far as my progress, the past couple of weeks have been super busy with putting together the HOMESCHOOLPOLY Homeschool Resource Guide. This is a very important to me as the only companies we allow in the guide are either Christian or neutral (no evolution) and we strongly encourage them all to offer terrific deals or freebies to our HOMESCHOOLPOLY buyers. That way homeschoolers that buy our game are spending their money wisely and will get much more back than they paid for it. We know how sacrificial financially it is to many of us who homeschoolers so this is something I've felt strongly about since the beginning. Anyway, I am finishing that up this weekend and then I can focus more on the kids and I can focus on getting more rest! I'm back to staying up until 1:30-2am and my body can't heal this way!

I kind of feel like I'm one step forward, two steps back (pardon the pun) with my "Plan Marathon". I feel stable, meaning I don't feel like I am going to end up back in the hospital or anything. So, that's good! I just don't feel like I'm making much progress. Again, patience is not one of my strong points. (AGAIN, DON'T TAKE THAT AS A REQUEST TO PRAY FOR PATIENCE FOR ME - PLEASE DON'T!) Last night I had the hardest time sleeping and woke up at least 5 times with such

pain in my ankles and knees and legs in general that I feel like I am standing too often. I am just too hyper and impatient (DON'T EVEN THINK ABOUT IT!) to not stand when I realize that I CAN stand as long as I hold on, etc. Plus, Elijah's face just lights up SO MUCH every time he sees me stand. It makes me feel like it's worth all the pain in the world. I am just afraid of rolling my ankle or injuring myself in some way. But as I said to my oldest, Robby, yesterday. What's the worse that can happen - I end up confined to my wheelchair - right where I started anyway! So... pray for wisdom for me to know where to draw the line and to NOT damage my body during the pain process. 😊 And to toughen up more so that neither Greg nor the kids can tell that I'm in pain, so it doesn't negatively affect them. More than anything, I don't want this to be the way that Elijah especially remembers me, since he's so young! But, God is on the throne and He certainly knows what He is doing. So - it's all good.

Oh yeah - last but not least; Elijah is turning 6 on November 17th. Pray that I can figure out what to do for his birthday that will be extra special for him. Okay, back to working on the HSRG for me! See ya!

Posted on on November 3rd, 2007 in [Homeschooling](#) | [No Comments](#) »

Lots of Miracles Today - Keep Praying!!

Okay all you out there praying for me... you know who you are. THANKS!!! It's working. God is doing a major work. But... before I tell you more let me report on Brittney, she is doing much better. Still not fully recovered. But much better. She is lying here in my bed next to right next to me reading with an ice pack on her back. 😊

Everyone else is doing well also. No more nightmares for Elijah. J.Jay and Elijah have had several opportunities to hang out with friends this week - as a matter of fact J.Jay is out with the homeschoolers youth group, they went to a Judgement House and now they are having ice cream. My dear friend, Natalie, who took him let her sweetheart, cutie-pie of a 5 year old son stay and play with Elijah. So, all things are looking up.

I have much to tell about God's working on me! Today I went to get into the shower and the shower head was too high. I used the bar to stand up and I turned around (all while holding on to bar & shower chair) and lowered the shower head. Now, I have not done this before. I turned back around and before sitting realized that the pain levels in my feet while standing was not nearly as bad as usual. Still painful, but not excruciating. So, I let go of the bar. AND I STOOD BY MYSELF FOR SEVERAL SECONDS!! I was so happy that it got me going. So, of course, me - being me - I thought to myself, "Self, why stop at that? I've got all these people praying for me. God is obviously answering some prayers!" So, I asked Greg if he would let me try driving. We still haven't been able to get hand controls or anything so my biggest frustration is not being able to drive. So... before I tried driving with a cane (before becoming paralyzed that is - just due to pain in my feet.) so I was going to try that, but Greg had a better idea. He pulled out a level from the garage. It was two feet long and a nice heavy duty sturdy rectangle. We left kids at home (for their safety!!) and I drove around the neighborhood using the level to brake with. (There is no way I can brake with my foot as I can't lift my foot up onto the brake, much less apply that much pressure - believe me, I tried!!) Then I used my knee to push my right foot forward on the gas. It was painful - BUT IT WAS GREAT! I felt so alive. It's amazing how much we take such little everyday things, like driving, for granted. I still need the hand controls as this is obviously not very safe (and probably not legal!) but it's great to know I CAN drive right now if I have to! 😊 YIPPEE!

When we got home from our drive I was feeling downright overconfident. In pain, but with an "I can do anything now" attitude! We still had some errands to run, but we were going to go in Greg's car so I asked J.Jay to bring my walker to me (which is still in the garage as I have been afraid to try it because it has wheels). I put the brakes on the walker and took about three steps. These are totally coming from the hip, it's like my feet just don't know what to do or how to lift up too much - and they were SO PAINFUL but SO WONDERFUL!! Then I knew I had reached my limit so I said, bring my wheelchair here - quick!!

You think I'm done - NOT! Tonight, as I had mentioned J.Jay was picked up and Elijah's new little friend was left here to play. Which is awesome for Elijah. But, Elijah's room was a major mess. My sister, Patty, said something to me the other day when she was with me during Brittney's surgery. She was talking about when she was over recently and sitting on the floor of Elijah's room with Elijah and we were both thinking that was something I could not do now.

I drove my wheelchair to the door of his room and thought, why not? I can scoot, probably! So, I slowly got down on the floor (I used the door frame and Brittney stood there for support). I was in his room (cleaning and organizing it while playing with the boys) for at least an hour! What fun. Again, it was super painful, but I had a big smile on my face the whole time. Elijah freaked out and the first thing he said was "Mom, how'd you get on my floor? You can do that?!?!?" He was so excited. The whole time I kept thinking this is worth every bit of pain, and then some!

So, it's been an AWESOME day of firsts! I feel like I am in real training for my "Plan Marathon" and actually making some progress. More than anything, I so appreciate all your prayers. When God's people pray, miracles happen. Well, there are obviously a LOT of God's people praying for me. DON'T STOP NOW. When you pray, remember to pray for all the others out there. Those you know and those that you don't know. Who may be in my situation or much worse, or much different. Especially those who have given up. Everyone needs to know that God is a God of miracles. He loves us and whether I walk a million steps in my lifetime or never walk another (which I will) God is STILL a God of miracles!

It's been a VERY good day. 😊

God Bless!
Pamela

Posted on on October 26th, 2007 in [Homeschooling](#) | [No Comments](#) »

Go for the Gold!

Wow... So much has happened since I last wrote. I let a week go by without "blogging" and in OUR family, let's just say a whole lot can (and usually does!) happen in one week!

First, let's start with Brittney, our 16 year old "only daughter". She had her surgery today. Four tumors removed from her back. Turns out this was a much bigger surgery than anticipated either by the surgeon or us. They thought they were 2-3 cm each. Turns out the biggest one was 7cm x 6cm! We measured an egg today and that is bigger than an egg! The other three were 5cm x 6cm; 4cm x 4cm; and 3.5cm x 4cm. She has three layers of stitches on each one. He said they were right against the bone - which is probably why they hurt her so badly. They believe they are lipomas, but are sending them away to the pathologist to get more info to see where we should go from here. She is in a great deal more pain then she or I anticipated since they were so deep.

Please pray for her to heal quickly. She has 4 incisions about 2 inches long each and she has to get these stitches removed on the 31st. She's on strong pain medicine and has been pretty out of it for most of the day. Her surgery was at 9am (we were there at 7:30am!) and it lasted a full two hours! She was supposed to be "fine" and in very little pain afterwards and able to go to work tomorrow as usual. But the doctor said since it was so much deeper and they had to cut through the "gristle" (sounds gross!) it will be a bit longer recovery process. No going back to work tomorrow. Wait until she is up to it. So we will take it one day at a time. Anyway, pray she heals quickly. And that all is well with the results of the pathology report.

J.Jay our 11 year old son is being baptized on Nov. 11th. He was already interviewed earlier in the week and they video tape their testimonies at our church. His was to be video-taped this afternoon. A very sweet lady from church came and picked him up and took him there and he ended up hanging out at the church for a bit after they video-taped him, which he thoroughly enjoyed.

Elijah our 5 year old son, has been having nightmares lately. Two in which, I stand up - fall, and die. 😞 The other he was kicking and crying and inconsolable, but we couldn't get him to wake up. Like night terrors. J.Jay used to have these every now and then years ago (night terrors). Very scary stuff as there is nothing you can do to snap them out of it but just try to get them to calm down and get back to a peaceful state of sleep. Anyway, he's obviously going through a lot in his little head and I have been trying to reassure him lately that I am NOT going to die. He's also just been acting very babyish and whinier in general ever since I was taken to the hospital. Pray for the Lord to give him peace in his little heart. I want to stand and walk more for him, then for any other reason.

Frankly, this all just makes me want to get up and stand and walk all the more... and NOW. I am quite at the frustrated stage being in this chair. I am not a patient person. I can stand a bit better. Still need much support and is excruciatingly painful, but I CAN do it. I just feel as though I must. Maybe I'm still in denial, but I don't want to be the type that just lies there (or sits there) and gives in to this. I absolutely refuse. I am very frustrated with still not being able to drive or get our car converted and all of the other "worldly" financial problems this is causing my family. I took a couple of very painful steps using bars the other day and it was hard to recover from that. I am starting to view my feet as tools and with the movement I have in my hips and knees I think it will help in the meantime if I use my feet more as tools than anything else. (If that makes any sense) Using them at all for any reason in my opinion, can only be a good thing. Just please pray I don't fall or damage anything further - as that could set me back big-time.

But, it's all for good I know. I just hope I can get a bit more settled in my spirit and move on to the next step! I really desire nothing more than to be a good wife and mother and lately I don't feel like much of either one. There is too much going on in this house and with me maintaining the homeschoolopoly business for any sense of normalcy or routine and this family needs a good dose of both. Pray that I meet all my deadlines and can move on to the next stage.

Oh, the lady we found and hired to help out with me and the house in general lasted only two afternoons. She said it was "too much" for her. Very frustrating, but must not have been the Lord's will. We can see the light at the end of the tunnel - as soon as we can get the car converted so I can drive (hand controls) at least I can take the boys places and get out more and relieve Greg of trying to be all things to all people. We also have a special "personal" prayer request that is of dire need right now. A real time issue. The Lord knows - pray it all comes together in time.

And super important, please lift up a special prayer for Greg. I can't imagine how hard this must be for him and yet he is trying so hard to be all things to all people. Tonight he made a terrific dinner for us all. He's such a trooper, and yet he gets so frustrated at times as well. This whole family really needs a little bit of a break - a relief. But, it doesn't seem likely that will occur for a while - so at this point we just need an extra heaping full dose of God's grace and wisdom. I have always said that you can't learn or grow when you are all snuggled up in your comfort zone and now it's time for me to live up to these words! We are so far from our comfort zones, it's not even funny! So, we must be on the right track!

Finally, pray for our oldest son, Robby as he is leaving for Serbia tomorrow on a business trip and will be gone for 6 days. Please pray for his safety in traveling and while there. That is not exactly a stable area. Also pray for Kathryn, his wife, while he's gone to have peace and not worry about him too much. Also, pray for them both in general. I feel so far apart from him lately, but that's what happens when they grow up. Even though he's been gone for 4 years and is a grown man; in my mind he's still my little boy. It's hard to be so far apart especially during difficult times as these. But - as I say in one of my workshops - we are not raising them up to be children, rather we are raising them up to be adults! Again, if only I can practice what I preach! It's all easier said than lived! I do try!

So, much praise for continued improvement on my part. I have cut some of my meds down and found a good dosage that helps with the pain somewhat and yet doesn't zap all my energy and personality. (Still zaps more than I'd prefer). And praise that Brittney's surgery is over with no complications and she's on the mend. And praise that J.Jay will be fitted soon for a BRAND NEW brace from Shriner's which will help his scoliosis. AND praise that even though he's been saved since seven, he's now decided he wants to become baptized and is doing so. And praise that I have a wonderful husband who is always there for me, even in his frustrated moments. AND praise that we can continue to homeschool (which is quite haphazard these days to say the least) and spend this time bonding and growing closer as a family and learning that this life is not about "us". It's all about Him. Boot Camp 101. (For us it seems more like an AP, honors, 401 class - but boot camp nonetheless.)

This is NOT our home. This is NOT my "real" body. I DO want it to function better though - and IT WILL! Thanks so much to all of you who have prayed for me and my family throughout this and have helped in so many other ways (the fundraiser Lorrie Flem is doing, etc.) We are so thankful that will help with some of the worldly "money" issues and current needs. Your prayers are so, so effective and powerful. I just never cease to be amazed at the true power of prayer. Please don't stop praying! I will continue to pray for all those I have spoken with and gotten emails from who are going through so many of their own difficulties in life. Just remember, #1 - Prayer is Powerful, #2 - God is STILL on the throne, and #3, if it were easy it wouldn't be as rewarding in the end! Let us continue to "Fight the Good Fight - we have already been declared the winners. Might as well **Go for the Gold** and not just settle for getting in by our fingernails.

God Bless!!!
Pamela

Posted on on October 24th, 2007 in [Homeschooling](#) | [No Comments](#) »

[God's Directing My Steps!](#)

Well, a few days ago I told you about my "Plan Marathon" and as I said in my previous blog the Bible says man (or woman in my case) makes HER plans, but God directs HER path. Well, so far my plan has been very slow going at best. I related it this way to a couple of people earlier today. You know how it is when you have a 6 month old baby and you "stand" them up and it seems as if they might actually be able to stand. But if you let go, they just fall right on their bottom! Well, that's basically my story right now. I can only stand if I use all of my body strength holding onto my bars (in my bathroom) or my wheelchair handles and I am "on my feet" for only a second or two as it's really my arms doing all the work. Or so it seems, as my ankles are swelling so I fear I may be doing some damage to them in the process. So, I've not given up on my plan, just realized that my steps need to be babier steps than what I was thinking. I need to work on using my feet as tools more first, then work up to trying to bear weight on them. So, God is directing me by teaching me about "baby" steps.

It's really wild as I realize how many of us (like me!) too often relate the value of our lives on what we can get "accomplished" on any given day. It's like we feel that "what we can do" is more important than "who we are". Actually, I think it's deeper than that. It's more like in our own minds often it's "what we do" that defines "who we are"! Being a constant "doer" I have this problem, big-time. Even though I am still doing a lot from bed (way too much actually), I too often feel useless and keep pushing myself even farther to stay up later and get even more done. It's like I am trying to make up for all of the things I can NOT get accomplished. I know this is wrong, but it is something I really struggle with daily. Just the feeling of not being "useful" enough to warrant my existence. Sad, and I know in my heart that it is incorrect thinking, but sometimes - especially during my "timed" pity parties that's where I find my mind going. My fears are what kind of a mom am I like this? My kids deserve more!! My husband does not need or deserve the stress of taking care of me. I am much too young. This is like he's married to an old woman! I wish I could just pop up and make dinner (or breakfast, or lunch). The problem is, my energy levels are so low and I end up staying up too late working which certainly doesn't help my body heal nor does it help my energy increase!

Fact is, I already read to Elijah just a few minutes ago and studied his SPARKS verses with him. Right now, I can hear my kids cracking up in the next room while their Dad reads a story to them (with his usual sound affects). Brittney just got home from youth group and is now in her room working on her school. And I am working only until J.Jay comes in here as he wants to read some more of what we read earlier in his Bible as we are in Exodus right now. And, I got to talk on the phone with my oldest son, Robby, this morning for about 15 minutes. So all in all, it's been a very good day!

Sometimes especially lately, I feel forgotten by the rest of the world. But God is so amazing as it seems that every single time that thought even begins to creep up I get a phone call or an email within minutes! Like today, I got a call from someone I'd never even met, but who is now a forever friend who has gone through and continues to go through similar circumstances as myself. God's perfect timing only because someone listened to God's nudging them to call me, and they did! Always remember to be listening for and to obey his still small voice. It may be a tiny thing to you, but it is probably a huge thing to someone else. Her phone call and our prayer session really turned around my day! Thanks, Jill!

Finally, my hubby did a very nice super sweet thing for me today. His love language is "acts of service" and that's how he shows his love to others as well. Well, I am forever needing something that is just out of my reach. He built a little shelf right by my bed for my printer and he built two more shelves against the wall behind our bed so I can put all the things I need to reach regularly!

Wasn't that sweet?!?!? I just love that guy! 😊

Ok, J.Jay is in here now patiently waiting for me to finish typing already! So, I gotta go! Mama duties call. 😊

My only words of wisdom tonight is the same words I try so hard to live by - sometimes it's easy, sometimes it's hard. But, always it's true. Happiness is not a pursuit - it's a CHOICE! Make it! 😊

God Bless!
Pamela

P.S. Am I still pursuing "Plan Marathon"? The answer is "YES"

Posted on on October 16th, 2007 in [Homeschooling](#) | [No Comments](#) »

[I've Made My Plans](#)

After a fitful night's sleep and quite frankly, a pathetic self-indulgent week of feeling sorry for myself more often than not. I have woken up this morning to a brand new day. I have made a decision. I have now been paralyzed (upgraded to partially paralyzed) for exactly 45 days as of today. I think I've gone through most of the "stages" they all talk about (disbelief, anger, denial, mourning, blah blah blah). Well, my most recent (this past week) has been mourning. At any quiet moment I have been mourning over what I have "lost".

Last night we had the "most normal, wonderful family day and night since August 29th, which I refer to as (para-day).

It started out good, went a bit sour, then I gave up and gave it all over and it went great from there. Here's a run-down on our day before I even get to my new plans...

Yesterday was Friday, the day of our HS skating which has taken me months of my time to get back established. (I had it set up for year before last, but last year they wouldn't do it - I had been working for months to get it back going to this year. I even called them once from the hospital!!) Anyway, this is something that's always been important to me as P.E. and simple fun time for the kids without having their every minute organized, so it's always something I've had or started practically everywhere we've lived. I rushed the kids through as much school as we could get in (not nearly enough) - started getting ready 2 hours early to make sure I'd have enough time. Took shower all by myself, got myself dressed with some minor complications along the way - but did it all. I was downright excited to go skating and be able to talk to other homeschool moms while the kids skated. (My hubby thinks this is more for me than for the kids, he's probably right!!) Anyway, I had a friend coming to pick me up for skating and all arrangements had been made. Skating starts at 3pm, kids and I were all ready to go in driveway since about 20 minutes til 3 until 3pm. I didn't have this friend's number (new friend) and Greg went to my computer to research my emails to find out I had made yet another "blunder" and our conversations about a ride was actually referring to something totally different on another day! Immediately I am right there in front of my husband and kiddos reduced to feeling like I have really lost it. This can not be happening! How could I get that wrong?? My dear sweet hubby (looked at me and said - "It was very clear in the email what she was referring to!") Having worked all morning cleaning and cooking (yes, doing **my** jobs, He was very intent on using this time that we were gone skating and that he didn't have to take me himself to get some quality work time in!

What do I do? I said, "Can you *please* take us? I knew as I said it how selfish I was being. But, I really wanted to go and the kids were all dressed and ready and so was I. I remember saying to myself about myself "All dressed up and no place to go." Frankly, the thought of not getting to go skating or anywhere again for another day was more crushing to me than the thought of messing up my hubby's plans (very selfish and sinful I know - I am just being brutally honest here!) So, of course, grumbling a bit during the process he agreed. This is the time he said something to the point of "I think you want to go skating more for yourself than for the kids!" (Yep, he was dead-on right on that one - but the kids DO enjoy it!!)

Well, we drove up to skating only 20 minutes late. It was 3:20pm to be exact and there was not a sign of a single homeschooler in the parking lot. I had my sunglasses on and it was a good thing cause I was going headlong into one of my pity-parties. I am fully waiting for Greg to get out and get my wheelchair out and let me go in. He clearly thought I had lost it by now. "There are no homeschoolers here!" I even had him go inside just to check! Then he said, okay - why don't we go to the park? It's a beautiful day out and there's a path all around the Heritage Park you can get out and wheel around. How does that sound? The kids said, "YEA!!" I am still feeling pathetic thinking, "But, I wanted to go to the skating rink and talk to my friends! (Ummm, Hello, Pamela, - they are not here!!! - That's my mind talking back to me!) Then Greg said, it's a beautiful day, of course nobody is here. Who would want to be indoors on a day like this?

I looked around and it was a beautiful, no make that gorgeous day, nice cool fallish day outside. Suddenly the park sounded downright exciting! So off we went. After an unsuccessful attempt to try to pick up our 3 yr old nephew so he could enjoy the park too (which I won't go into - but a major request for that little boy - He has gone through way too much for a 3 year old and is terrified to leave his Grandma who is raising him. Not a good situation - his name is Stephen - add HIM to your prayer list!) Anyway, he wouldn't come with us and his grandma wouldn't bring him, so off we went to the park. I wheeled right around the path and right into the bark! There were two little girls playing with my 5 year old Elijah and she wouldn't get too close to me and was looking at me in my chair on the bark right up there by the play equipment with clearly a bit of confusion which was bordering on fear in her eyes. Now, I LOVE kiddos, so I didn't want her to be afraid. I said, "Hi! Do you know what this is?" pointing to my wheelchair. She nodded and said, "A wheelchair." I said, "Yep! It's pretty cool too, look I've got this joystick thingie and I can get around almost anywhere with this thing!" She came a wee bit closer and said, "Why do you have it?" To which I replied, "My legs don't work very well so this is how I get around." She came up to me real close and said, "Oh! Can you show me how it works?" So I did and let's just say we had a close friendship (she literally followed me around the whole time we were there talking away and racing me in my chair and then coming back to stay with me.) She even invited me to come with them to the other park, which of course, we did! I met her Mom briefly, but mostly stayed neared the kiddos as they were playing.

Then we came home and Greg decided it was a perfect night for a bon-fire. We invited some family over last minute (who couldn't come) which normally would have upset me, but I was in a great mood and determined to keep it that way. This day was going great. Brittney had to work the whole day, so I was bummed she was missing out, but determined to not let this family fun end. Greg started the bonfire and I wheeled out there right up close to it. He then brought out *Robinson Crusoe* and started reading it out loud (and this is Greg, so adding major sound affects as he read (for the storm, the pirates, you name it!) The kids and I were cracking up through the entire story. He read 5 chapters before we came inside. Then received a phone call from an amazing friend of mine, Lorrie Flem, (more about that below!) He then read one more chapter. He read one more chapter during which I fell during a bathroom break. So, we wrapped up the

reading for the night in the family room and moved into our bedroom and all watched a DVD from our king-sized bed. 😊 Ahh.... what a great night.

I went to bed happy and peaceful. When I awoke this morning at my usual 8:30 (lately have been unable to sleep much later regardless of how much or how little sleep I got during the night due to my pain and my brain! Anyway, this morning my heart took over both the pain and the brain and I made a decision. One of the verses I refer to often in life is "man makes his plans, but God directs his path." That's my paraphrase. The Bible actually states in the NKJV Proverbs 16:9 "*A man's heart plans his way, But the LORD directs his steps.*". I always have said that this verse very much implies that a man's heart should be planning his way! It's what I compare to inertia. It is much easier for the Lord to guide us our steps as we are walking along his path, then if we are just doing nothing with our feet firmly embedded in our way and we just live life day by day making no plans at all! So.... here are my plans.

I plan on walking. I plan on doing this smartly (for once, I'm an all or nothing person so this is a big step for me to say this!) and literally setting daily goals to increase each day. Greg is going to the warehouse today to get my walker so I can practice standing using that as my support. Then after I can stand for a few seconds, I will I will take one step. Then the next day two steps, and so on. I also plan on continuing my physical therapy myself three times a day to increase my endurance and I am going to gradually build up my muscle strength and pray the Lord will re-route my neurological signals (since He created them in the first place) so that I can get as much as possible. My true plans are to walk in some type of a marathon without even using my walker! How's that for a lofty goal!?!?

There are many out there that are going to think I am crazy, but I know this much. I am much happier when I am doing something, ANYTHING out doors and around people (including my own kiddos!!) even being in pain - then I am if I am lying in this bed or just sitting here in this wheelchair feeling lonely. So... today is Day #1 towards my goal. Please pray for me as my ankles are already swollen from the few times I've tried to stand, so I need to pace myself and do this gradually. Anyone who knows me knows that me pacing myself is, well - just not something I've ever been able to actually do! But I am excited. I can already feel the road beneath my feet! 😊 So pray for "Plan Marathon" and I like using that name because it is not going to be a sprint to get there, just getting there will be a marathon in itself which is a long drawn out process. But one I am 100% dedicated too.

Finally, my awesome, unbelievable friend, Lorrie Flem who is the Publisher of TEACH Magazine has put together something amazing for me. I am so blown away. They said it's during difficult times that you come to realize who your "true" friends are and this has been very true in our case! Lorrie and so many others who were involved in this have shown that they are such true God-given friends. Their love and the love of others has been so overwhelming to me it is one of the big things that has helped me make my plan! I think I shall call it "Plan Marathon". I like to use the work plan as it keeps me grounded that He will direct my steps. I need his direction cause this is too big of an undertaking for me to do on my own! Anyway, back to Lorrie & my friends... She has set up this entire website dedicated to our family to help us out. If you haven't seen it already here is the link: www.TEACHmagazine.com/BerthumeFundraiser My point in sharing this is not for you to feel you need to donate or do anything, but to show you that more people love YOU than you realize. There are so many of you reading this regularly who are going through big things, many much bigger than what we are going through. God loves you and He is always in control - even when it seems like life is out of our control. The fact is - it's okay, because He is in complete control. And that's better anyway!

I'm off.....
Pamela

Posted on on October 13th, 2007 in [Homeschooling](#) | [No Comments](#) »

Lots of News Today!

What a day! We have news from all fronts to share tonight. I am going to try to make this short and sweet (which is not easy for me to do!) as I spent a total of 9 hours in the wheelchair today with about a one hour and fifteen minute break in the middle. That is the longest time I've spent out of the bed and in the wheelchair in one day since coming home from the hospital and let's just say I am suffering for it now big-time. But it was all very necessary "Mommy" stuff that I had to do and am glad I did!! (My body just isn't quite so glad! - Oh well, this old body of mine is just going to have to deal with it!)

The morning started with J.Jay's Shriner's appointment for his 6 month check-up to see how his Scoliosis is doing. We got a ride with "Medshore" - very impressive to say the least. They picked us up and rode me and him (hooked my wheelchair all up - was a first experience for me and quite cool actually!) anyway they gave us a ride to his hospital appointment. We were there from 9am (his appt time) until after 2pm. Whew... Turns out that his Scoliosis has worsened back to where he was a year ago. (FYI, at his last 6 month's visit it had improved considerably!) Also, he has outgrown his brace and they need to make him a new one (which apparently will be quite a fun process in itself, requiring traction even while they are molding the cast for it. I will tell more after that occurs 4 weeks from now). It will be a better brace made at Shriner's whereas his current brace is 2 years old and was made by a different orthotics practice before his ortho moved to Shriners). In the meantime he sliced his current brace down the middle and added an extension piece to it! Imagine that!?!? He looks like something out of Star Wars in it. He still only has to wear it at night, but for 12 full hours. So, it will require two more visits, but he should be well set up by the time we are finished. He is quite excited about being able to get a new brace. His current one is in pretty rough shape. And the new one will be bigger and they said may require a bit of "getting used to" as it covers more and it another level up, but it should help him more. So... although it's a bummer his curvature did get worse again, I am so thrilled that we are privileged enough to have "just so happened" to have his previous doctor move to Shriner's so we got accepted automatically and for the awesome (and all free!) care he gets from there. God has been working this out for us for 2 years, pretty cool, huh!?!?!?

Now to Brittney. We STILL haven't gotten her ultrasound results back yet, but she saw the general surgeon today about the 4 lumps (or tumors as they call them, but I like the word lumps better - sound tamer!) on her back and they have decided to remove them. They are very painful for her. They feel they are most likely lipomas but there are also some lipomas called angiolipomas which cause pain and these are causing her pain big-time. She wants to get them out! Her surgery is set for 10/23 and her pre-op will be the week before. It will be outpatient, but she will have to have general anesthesia. They will send the lumps away to the pathologist as well, of course - so pray all goes well with that and that they are just lipomas with benign results. Pray for Brittney as well, she has been having a tough time again. And is just not a happy young woman in general anymore. And she has always been my happy-go-lucky girl! Pray for the Lord to use all these things to bring her closer to Him. It is seeming that the opposite is happening and we are praying against pathetic satan trying to use this to bring her further away from God. God will be the winner I know, I just pray that it's sooner rather than later!!

Greg is still hanging in there, getting more stressed by the day - but still a trooper all in all. I can't wait until I can get some more independence somehow and take some of this burden off him.

Me - I have my pity parties (okay, honestly at least once a day lately) but I don't let them last long. I am generally a very happy upbeat woman who can cry at the drop of a bucket. Now that makes zero sense, I know - but that is the reality of my days! I appreciate all that I have and can do, but it only takes such a tiny thing to kick me into pity party mode. (Seeing a picture of a Mom pushing a child on a swing or taking her kiddo for a walk is all it takes to send me to a party fast, but I "set my timer" and try to get over it quick.) There are so many things I CAN DO and it could be so much worse! I am just happy to be able to enjoy my kiddos every day. What more does a mom really need.

Frankly, what I am most missing is just my independence and lack of being able to drive or have any independence whatsoever. I feel so trapped and helpless. I can't even take my kids to homeschool skating or a field trip or anything. That is the MOST frustrating thing for me. I am a very independent person, so this is the hardest thing. I want to do my own grocery shopping and yet I don't even have the energy to cook a single meal without practically bursting into tears due to the pain and fatigue. Waahhhh.... Oh well, I'm over it (for now!) I am improving each day and I need to be thankful for that.

Right now, I need to go as I need to rest up tomorrow BIG TIME as I have AWANA tomorrow night (I love my 4th grade girls!) and I must be ready to go - it's not optional - my happiness depends on it! 😊

So, it's been a long day, a painful day, a productive day, and yet a good day. When all is said and done we have SO MUCH to be thankful for. We are just now lying down in our big ole king-sized bed getting ready to watch a family DVD, so life is good. 😊

God Bless!
Pamela

Posted on on October 9th, 2007 in [Homeschooling](#) | [No Comments](#) »

Pray for Brittney!

Pray for Brittney!

I mentioned in an earlier blog to pray for Brittney as she has 4 lumps on her back. Well, my mom (Grandma!) took her to the doctor on Tuesday. She has to have an Ultrasound done this Monday morning. And they are referring her to a general surgeon to either biopsy them or remove them. So, pray all goes well. I have total peace about it all and Brittney seems to as well. Pray that they are benign - whatever they are!

As for me, I am doing terrific as always! ha ha ha. Seriously, I was doing great yesterday. My pain levels were about down to a 6 (on scale of 1-10) which is very low for me and I actually made dinner for the first time! (Okay, I threw some frozen stuff into the oven - but hey that counts!!) Then I went to AWANA last night (I'm a leader so I must go!). Unfortunately I had a difficult time at one point and had a very painful (physically) episode. But, I love my AWANA girls so it's all worth it. Today, I am paying for it as it just took a whole lot out of me, and due to my painful episode (which I won't go into for reasons of privacy!!) My pain is up to about an 8.5 to a 9 for

most of the day. Oh well - I'll be better tomorrow!

As I settle into this "new normal" one of the things that strikes me the most is just how many little details we overlook in life and take for granted that I just can't do anymore. It seems I am learning more new things that I can no longer do every day! It's just sort of odd. I mean, I'm okay with it all and I need to learn new ways of doing these things - but it seems there are just so many things I can't do, that I didn't even realize. It's good that God never gives us more than we can handle. If I had known all I know now on day #1 of being paralyzed I probably would have gone into a major depression! Now, I'm cool with it all. 😊 He seems to be giving me exactly what I need, exactly when I need it, to get me through this with a relatively good attitude. (God's AMAZING Grace!!)

My final thoughts for today - Our circumstances should not determine our attitude. Attitude and happiness is a choice - it has absolutely nothing to do with our circumstances. It's simply a choice. Not a simple choice, but it's the only way to live! 😊 As Paul says, be content in all things. And as I consider all things I can truly say there are times I am frustrated, but in general - I am a happy woman! 😊 That's a "God Thing"!!

Prayer Requests:

#1 - Pray for Brittney!!!!

#2 - Pray for my energy levels to increase. It seems that every time I get into my wheelchair for any length of time, I feel afterwards (for about 24 hours afterwards!) as if I have been in a car accident. It's like I just want to get better and at least be able to wheel around and try out my "new normal" but my pain levels and energy levels are simply not cooperating! They need to live up to their end of the deal! So pray for that.

#3 - Pray we can find someone to hire for some help. Still haven't found anyone and Greg is doing more than any single person should ever have to! He needs to be able to work and focus more, but still doing all the errand running, cooking, cleaning, and I could go on and on and on. Pray for him!

#5 - Pray for our homeschool - we are having a hard time getting our schoolwork done every day and they boys are thrilled with it, but I am not. Brittney is also having a hard time. We are going to have to make some changes in her curriculum (Chemistry, Geometry, and English) which will require even more work and teaching from me. So, pray about that as well.

#4 - Pray we get some help from the hospital with our hospital bills (I have no insurance) we are getting some huge bills in and it's all still an unknown if they will be able to help us at all.

As usual though, It's all good!

God Bless!!!

Posted on on October 4th, 2007 in [Homeschooling](#) | [No Comments](#) »

[Today is One Month Anniversary of Being Paralyzed!](#)

Hi all!

I am so sorry I haven't written in so long. My boys are back, we are back in the full swing of homeschool (a new swing - but a full swing nonetheless!) and this week I have been working on putting together the HOMESCHOOLPOLY® Homeschool Resource Guide and other business stuff and this week has flown by!

I became totally paralyzed from the waist down on 8/29/07. So today is my one month anniversary. The great news is that I am no longer totally paralyzed but partially paralyzed from the waist down and I found out after, some partial paralyzation in my arms as well. I can't walk - but I am improving (can move my knees and now my ankles even a tiny bit) and am starting to feel much pain in my legs and have been in my feet (not good, but at least there are signals getting down there!!) More good news, the pain on the bottom of my feet has improved (not as severe) since my neurologist adjusted my medications - in general anyway. They are back up to high levels the past few days - but read ahead about that. So, all-in-all. It's a good day! One month and I am still a happy woman! 😊

I have a **very important prayer request**. My daughter, Brittney has 4 lumps on her back. She had one a few months ago - we took her to pediatrician and they said it's probably just a "muscle spasm" type thing and to apply heat and massage and it should go away. Well, it didn't go away and now she has 4 distinct lumps, and some others that I think may be lumps, but can't tell for sure. She has a doctor's appointment on Wednesday (they cancelled her appt for yesterday, Friday at the very last minute) so please pray that they figure out exactly what this is and that it is not a big deal. Her back has been hurting her badly. Was only hurting when she was lying down (trying to sleep) on her back, now hurts all the time. Please pray. She is also concerned about having bad genes (I'm having deja vue (sp?) did I write this already????) due to all my medical issues, so that doesn't help matters either. Please pray for her to have a more positive attitude and for God to take away her fears.

Ok, I am not doing good physically today - my pain levels are about a 9 if you can believe that - BUT it's my own fault and it's ok. I am mentally, emotionally, and spiritually doing awesome so that overrides the physical part. 😊 I finally got our local homeschool skating rink finalized (which I have been working on since May!) so we can skate every single Friday afternoon! It wasn't finalized until Thursday afternoon, and I was so happy and yet so sad because I really wanted to go! I want this to be something we do every Friday for the kids weekly P.E. and to be able to build relationships with other homeschoolers in an activity that is non-academic and their every minute is not planned out for them. Well, Greg saw the look on my face and asked what was wrong. I told him and he said, "If you are up to it, I'll take you!" He is such a great hubby!! So, yesterday he took me with my feet all propped up in wheelchair to skating rink.

There were very few homeschoolers there (being that I didn't even get an email out until after 5pm on the day before!!) but I had a chance to sit there the whole time and have terrific and inspirational (to me anyway) conversations with one old friend, Natalie, and one new friend, Rose, all while the kiddos were skating. I felt so normal! (a new and much more painful normal, but normal nonetheless!) I thoroughly enjoyed myself.

The other thing I did three days ago which was very stupid of me and is my own fault has not helped matters. I was trying to transfer from the wheelchair back into bed. Which is not easy to do as our bed is kind of high as it is and it's almost a foot higher than the seat of my wheelchair. Well, I was by myself and having a difficult time. And I got very VERY frustrated. Greg was upstairs and I didn't want to call him to help me, yet again. My bedside potty chair was

right in front of my wheelchair and next to the bed. So I thought "if only I could stand - this is ridiculous! If I can stand I can just easily sit back down on the bed!" So, what did I do! I tried to stand up. Well, it didn't work. I couldn't feel my legs at all - they were like jello - zero support, yet the pain on the bottom of my feet, especially my right one, was excruciating beyond explanation. Well that was a HUGE and stupid mistake. What was I thinking? Not only did I fall (thankfully back down onto the wheelchair as I really had nowhere else to fall anyway as I was pinned between my wheelchair and potty seat. But both of my feet have been hurting again - now all the time - ever since and my right ankle (I think it may have bent also in the process) feels like it's broken. Which doesn't make any sense - if I am paralyzed I shouldn't have to feel pain - wahhhh!. I am not complaining though - it's really my own fault. Someday maybe I will learn. So far, that is a major weakness of mine. I have no fear, so I don't think of the ramifications enough.

I am just downright determined to be able to stand again at the very least. I am praying to be able to walk again. The limited mobility I had before 1 month ago today would be awesome at this point! But, I am happy with whatever God has for me. He knows best. I just need to learn to listen to his small voice more and not push myself beyond my limits!

So! today I am paying the price for my stupidity three days ago (which I do regret) and my choice to GET OUT OF THIS HOUSE and enjoy life yesterday (which I DO NOT regret!) I just need to improve because, of course, I am going to church tomorrow! 😊 "Pray for a quick recovery for me, Pray for God's mercy on me despite my stupidity. That how great of a God we have, he loves us regardless of our mistakes or our righteousness. As my pastor recently said in one of his sermons, "There is nothing we can do to make Him love us any more and nothing we can do to make Him love us any less!" Wow, think on THAT! Very profound. When we mess up, as I do way too often. He still loves us just as much, like a Daddy who only wants the best for us! So cool! And when we think we are "all that" and so on track with God, He doesn't love us anymore either! Like it says in the beginning of Isaiah verse 64:6 "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags". To Him, compared to perfection that he requires (which we only get through His son Jesus!) it's all bad, but He loves us more than we can comprehend regardless. Wow!! So! that's why to me, "It's all good!" Okay, I'm done preaching for today. I get a bit carried away sometimes!

It's a beautiful day here and the boys after doing much silly playing inside this morning are now playing happily in the backyard and I can hear Greg doing the dishes and he's cooking me some scrambled eggs. Brittney's at work, she's already called me three times this morning (she has to check up on my often!) As for me, I am have total peace and contentment despite the physical pain. There is only one way I can think of to express it and it is: **"It is well with my soul."**

Have a great weekend!!!
God Bless,
Pamela

Posted on on September 29th, 2007 in [Homeschooling](#) | [No Comments](#) »

[My Boys Are Back Home!!!!!!!!!!](#)

Howdy Ho!

My little guys are back home and I just couldn't be happier. They got home late Saturday night and Elijah walked around the house all night and most of the next day saying, "I'm so happy to be home!" It was so cute. We did school (okay, a bit modified version of school, but school nonetheless!) today and it went well. Between my P.T. (medical lingo for Physical Therapist) coming in and my business calls, and my paying bills and my pain we did school off and on until 7pm tonight! YIKES. They were having fun the whole time though and quite enjoying their many "breaks". Elijah said several times today, "I love school!" So as I am known to say, "It's all good!" It actually went much smoother than I thought.

Speaking of "boys" today is my oldest son, Robby's, Birthday! So, Robby - if you read this, 'HAPPY BIRTHDAY'. I miss and love him SO MUCH!!! I can't believe he's been gone from home (off to college) for 4 years and has been married for 2 years. Wow! I feel so old, and yet time seems to have slowed down a bit since he left. It feels like he's been gone from home for even longer than that! But that's the goal. As I always say, we are not raising them to be children, rather we are raising them to be adults! So... on that note - he's done good. 😊

I am actually feeling much better today. With the new medication dosages my pain levels were down this morning to about a 6 on a scale of 1-10. Wow! That's the lowest it's been since I became paralyzed. After my P.T. they went back up a bit, but are still manageable!

I had a fun visit to the E.R. on Saturday. Greg was leaving to pick up the boys and I had blood in my urine. Which shouldn't be as I had a hysterectomy in 2004! After calling the home health nurse and them analyzing the situation they said I needed to go to E.R. I couldn't imagine waiting in the waiting room of an E.R. and ours is not been known to be fast, by any means. Greg had gone and Brittney can't drive a stick (our other car) not to mention that car has a flat that hasn't been fixed yet! So... Brittney made a single phone call and Boom - there was a Honda Odyssey Van sitting in our driveway for our use. Boy, does that girl have connections! It was actually a lady in our neighborhood, Lori, that she babysits for often and she was thrilled to be able to help. My regular comfy wheelchair wouldn't fit in the back though, and I was a bit (okay make that VERY) apprehensive about trying to spend any amount of time in our manual wheelchair that's not very padded, that Brittney has to push me in. Well, it was a trip that really should go into the Guinness Book of World Records. They must have taken one look at me and known I was in bad shape, as they took me in IMMEDIATELY! Such a "God Thing". We were literally in and out of the E.R. in less than an hour. Probably closer to 45 minutes! I am NOT LYING! See.. it's a record I am sure! Anyway, turns out I have a severe bladder infection and since I have no feeling I couldn't feel the symptoms, so by the time there was blood, it was as the nurse stated it was "very yucky". So, they gave me a prescription for antibiotics and sent me home. We got the antibiotics filled for FREE at Publix (Do you all know they fill common antibiotics now for Free? My sister, Patty, told me.) Very cool. Probably a ploy to get you to come into their store, but hey - I was thrilled!

Brittney was amazing through the whole thing. She took right over, she had to lift me into and out of the van twice! She drove me there, wheeled me in, joked with me and kept me entertained while we were waiting in the room! On the way home even took my prescription into Public and filled it for me! Wow! That's an "in control" 16 year old, for sure. I was very impressed, and grateful.

Speaking of Brittney, please keep her in your prayers. She noticed some months ago that she had a lump in her back. They said it was probably just a muscle spasm and would go away. Well, now she has at least 4 lumps that I can easily feel, and it hurts her to even lie on her back. She is quite worried about it (I think she feels that because of all I have she must have some "bad

genes") So we are trying to get her an appointment as soon as possible. Pray that we can, and pray that they figure out what the lumps are and that they are nothing to worry about. Also, pray that there is something they can do for her for the pain she is experiencing. And here she is lifting me into and out of a van on top of all this. Now I have guilt! (Toy Story)

Greg made yet another nice dinner tonight of grilled salmon (he bought them frozen at Sam's and they were amazingly good.) which he cooked on the grill. Salmon is one of the healthiest foods you can eat, you know! And baked potato. Much to our delight, even Elijah liked the Salmon and ate quite a bit. 😊

Today is the 2nd day in a row I have not choked at all so hopefully that is getting under control as well. I am now taking a medication called "Reglan" 30 minutes before each meal. So it seems that may be helping. YEA!

Oh... and I WENT TO CHURCH ON SUNDAY!! Yippee... It wasn't very comfortable, I didn't take any pillows - big mistake. But, it was so worth it. I am always saying this about our sermons, but it was the best sermon yet! You can listen to it by clicking here: [Sermons](#) So... as you can see, all in all - the Berthume Family is doing good. Learning a "new" normal - but a good normal.

Keep praying for someone we can hire super inexpensively to be an awesome CNA/Personal Assistant to me. Greg needs much more of his time freed up to work and with the boys back his time is even more stretched. He's handling it like a trooper though. God picked me a good hubby when he gave me Greg! I love him so much!

Okay, that's all for now folks! See ya!

God Bless!
Pamela

Posted on on September 24th, 2007 in [Homeschooling](#) | [No Comments](#) »

[My "Big" Neuro Appt & My Poem](#)

First of all, I want to change the color of my blog and I don't know how! I don't like blue - I am not a blue person. I am a RED person. Arghh.... I'll add that to my "to-do" list. Someday....

Okay, now that I've got off my mind. I went to my neurologist for the "big" follow-up appointment yesterday, which I was dreading and I am not going to write too much about it as there is not much to say! It was a big disappointment. They didn't even have all the spinal tap results, he said "Oh, the hospital must not have sent them all over, I'll have to send for them" and the only test they DID have back of the spinal taps was the one that showed whether or not I had the "O" bands and I don't. Arghh.... The "he" I referred to was not even the neurologist, but rather I got to see the Nurse Practitioner. So... he will get results, go through my entire medical history and records from hospital and yada yada yada and write me a letter with an official diagnosis. But he's "very busy and probably won't be able to get to it until net week." I need that letter to appeal SS and try AGAIN to get some medicare insurance (turned down twice already!) When I asked him point blank, "Will I be able to walk again." He said, "I have no idea." Beautiful answer. To me, it's a "YES!" His bedside manner was lacking, but he was truly a nice guy as he doubled all my MS meds to hopefully help decrease my pain levels AND the one medicine I went off of about 3 months ago (since it was so expensive) he insists I go back on and gave me 7 weeks worth of

free samples!! (See, he's really a nice guy - just a bit too busy!!) Finally, he put me on a brand new medicine for "sleep disorders" which is supposed to be so powerful it will put me out into a practical coma (according to what I read on web after I got home.)

After my doctor appointment we had to get my prescriptions filled, and then we were already out and so close to her we decided to drop by and visit one of my nieces, Melissa, that we love SO MUCH (like a daughter to me!) and haven't seen in way too long and just couldn't wait to see her any longer. That was difficult for me (pain-wise) but so worth seeing her!

So... after finally getting home last night I so happily popped my gobs of medication (I hate taking meds, but I am beyond all that mentality right now - sheer to the point of desperation of finding what combination of meds is going to bring down my pain levels!!) and I super-excitedly popped that new sleeping medication thinking "Yea, tonight I will finally get a good night's sleep!!" Well, after some fitful sleep followed by several nightmares, and then a total awakening (not of the spiritual nature - I woke up and could NOT get back to sleep!) I gave up and started writing. I wrote this poem.

It's 5am and I can't sleep
Despite all the meds they've given me

My pain won't let my body rest
My brain doesn't either, *there's no off switch*

I lie in bed and look above
I KNOW that God's pouring out His love

But instead I focus on what I see
Like this "trapeze bar" hanging over me

My legs are propped up on a wedge
A potty seat sits by my bed

There's a baby monitor in here too
So everyone can hear me from another room

Next to the potty, A wheelchair's sit's close
To make sure I don't fall off the bed while I go!

But then I realize that each apparatus
Should NOT remind me of my medical status

But each one came from God above
Each given to me to show His love

My mom bought the bar hanging over my bed
Who took one look and then she said,

"How much is that? THAT'S what she needs!
Can you deliver it today & set it up for her, please?"

My dear sweet hubby bought me the wedge
"This will help, it's perfect to keep comfy in bed!"

And the blue baby monitor let us not forget
My mother-in-law, whom I call "Mom" was so adamant!

She had to find the perfect thing
Cause my voice is weak and I can't scream

She researched it for days and made it her mission
And now they can hear me if they are in the office or the kitchen.

And the wheelchair! You'd better brace yourself for this!
This is one miracle story you DO NOT want to miss.

"There's a wheelchair in Terry's garage, it's a power one too.
You never know that just might work out for you."

"Let me call him right now and see what's the deal."
And that day in my house was a new set of wheels!

It looks like brand new, it's barely been used
It's called a "Jazzy" and the name fits it too!

It has a joystick controller and my hands are weak
What's this? It came with the original receipt!

\$5,830 it read - And we got it for FREE
"What a "God Thing", I said.

It's been in his garage for a couple of years
It looks like brand new, God's reduced me to tears

He loves me so much, He's been saving this for me?
Then I think of my children and it helps me to see.

He loves us EACH ONE, I call him my "Daddy"
'Cause I am his daughter, and He LOVES seeing my happy!

He knows exactly what I need.
He knows just how He's using me.

His love is WAY more than I can fathom
It makes me just want to jump up and serve Him!

I don't need to jump up, I can serve him right here!
From my bed, and soon from my fancy new chair!

Do YOU know Jesus, My God, My Daddy?
Oh, all I want to do is to tell EVERYBODY!

"That's awful. Your paralyzed!" Why am I not so sad?
'Cause I'm all snuggled up in the arms of my Dad.

There's no other place that I'd rather be.

My Daddy is loving and carrying me.

Copyright Pamela S. Berthume, September 21, 2007

Posted on on September 21st, 2007 in [Homeschooling](#) | [No Comments](#) »

I almost missed my deadline!

It's 1:47am and I promised to write AT LEAST every other day, so I had to write before I could go to bed! 😊 So I have to write something NOW as i am an hour and 47 mins past my deadline for keeping my promise!

This will be a quick update, as I am pooped! But I have had a lot going on the past couple of days, so knowing me it's going to be hard to keep this short! YIKES!

#1 - I miss my boys! They are coming back from VA (staying with our oldest son and his wife) this weekend and I can hardly wait. This house is just WAY too quiet and I am not used to being without them. I am at my limit! They are having a great time though, so that makes it easier. It's a rare treat for them to get so much quality time with their brother and sister-in-law! This is a great time for them that they will never forget.

Good News - Greg made me an awesome dinner tonight - pork chops, onions, baked potato & spinach. After practically crashing out of the house (we have a make shift ramp) in my wheelchair (a bit painful, but hey - I made it outside in the wheelchair) - my second time outdoors since coming back from hospital! YEA!! We ate dinner together on outside on our picnic table. (Took some doing to get my wheelchair close enough - but he jerry-rigged it so it would work using pillows and all sorts of stuff. BTW, is that a real word - jerry-rigged? I will have to research it someday. When I've got the time, ha ha ha ha!!!!)

My P.T. (That's this new medical lingo I'm learning, stands for Physical Therapist) came out yesterday. This was my female P.T. and first time them exercising my muscles etc. Anyway, I found out some totally new news, which kind of threw me for a loopy. (Another reason why I haven't written in a couple days - dealing with this new info.) Anyway, turns out I have some partial paralyzation in my upper body (arms) as well which is total news to me. Below I will give more details, but probably tmi for most of you (tmi is my sister, Patty's lingo for "too much information" for most of your - so I'll just put it at the bottom so you can stop reading when I get to that part to avoid total boredom! Ha!

I am so sore today! That P.T. work (hey, I am really getting the hang of this lingo) amazingly made me sore, even though I didn't seem to do anything, they did it all. Weird! But I am glad to have enough feeling to be sore - hey that's cool!

My feetsies (okay it's late so I'm a bit on the overly-medicated giddy side - not much new for me even when it's not late!!) Are hurting less today when they touch things. More good news! So, all in all it's been a good day.

One problem - I have a red basket of "stuff I gotta get done" bills to try to deal with, phone calls to make, forms to fill out, blah blah blah. That is my project this week to get this stuff done and dealt with before the boys come home. IT'S NOT WORKING! The pile just keeps growing and tomorrow is Thursday and the boys come home this weekend and we are starting homeschool

back on Monday!! Pray that I can get this stuff DONE! 😊 Your prayers are so obviously powerful as I can feel them encouraging me and holding me up all day every day so please don't stop the praying!

Greg got me into the power wheelchair again today (I mentioned that earlier about dinner) and I was able to get into Brittney's room and grade her Switched on Schoolhouse (that's her homeschool curriculum) and get her all set up on her new computer she got from her older brother with SafeEyes and she feels more organized now and back in business. So that's good. I think it was good for her too to have me in her room so she realizes that I am not going to be lying in this bed for the rest of my life. (I don't plan on lying in this bed much longer at all - I just gotta get this pain under control and then I am ready to roll!!)

Anyway, it's all good. I feel like I am getting the hang of this paralyzation thing. And it's really not a big deal at all. The pain is a bigger issue for me.

HUGE PRAYER REQUEST: Tomorrow is the big appointment - my follow up appoint with the neurologist. I am not even that nervous about it anymore, so some of you must have been praying for me about it. I was flaking a bit and I thought my appoint was in the morning, but it turns out it's at 4:10 in the afternoon! Greg is taking me and this will be my first trip out of house since I got home from hospital. Pray it goes smoothly (the trip itself) and that the o-whatever bands show up so I can get a definitive (as opposed to "probable") MS diagnosis once and for all which will really help me in a lot of areas (mostly programs I can qualify for, etc.) I may even be able to get on a program to get the disease modifying shots FOR FREE if I can get that diagnosis. (They cost \$1,500-2,000 per month and with me not being insured, it hasn't even been an option for me.) That could help slow down the progression. We'll see.

I am really in a great mood today and enjoyed sitting outside in my new fancy-wancy wheelchair (that was GIVEN to me by God!) And watching the birds fly around and enjoying my weeping willow tree. (My favorite!) So, it's been a very good day!

So... I'll wrap it up to say the same thing I said to someone (I can't remember who!) On the phone today - it seems for every bad thing God has provided at least one and often two good things in exchange. So - I am a happy woman!

OH YEA - and it turns out I am going to get the privilege of speaking at the
**South Carolina Expo: SCHEA Homeschool Expo
in the Upstate
Saturday, October 13, 2007, 8:30am-5:00pm
at Marathon Community Church, Powdersville**

That's only a few weeks away and I am very excited to be able to use some of this new material the Lord has blessed me with. Maybe if you live close to the area you can come out and see me. If so, make sure you say "Hi" and introduce yourself! I will not be there the whole day, but Greg will. He is going to man our HOMESCHOOLPOLY booth for the entire Expo. I am going to just find someone to drive me there (probably my daughter!) to do my workshop and then just drive me back home. Unless I am doing so wonderful I want to stay a bit. 😊 It's super close to where we live there, so it's no biggie and I am so excited! I am doing my **"Okay God, Now What?"** workshop (when life just doesn't go quite as you planned) and I just feel so strongly that the Lord is going to use this. So pray for me and that I improve and can pull this off, but more important than that - pray that the Lord can use me as His tool in

my workshop to encourage other homeschoolers. That makes it worth it all! God is good!

Okay for most of you out there I am about to get into the TMI section so you will probably get bored right about now so you might as well say adios! Soâ€” bye!

For the rest of you (mostly family) - here is the new info I got from my P.T. that really threw me. I havenâ€™t even had the time to look this up on internet yet to see what these numbers really mean, but I asked her if they had any kind of a scale of paralyzation, like 80% or whatever and she said they have a paralyzation scale from 1-5. 1 being totally paralyzed and 5 being not paralyzed at all (normal). 2-4 is various degrees of partial paralyzation. So of course, me - being me, and having to know ALL THE FACTS said, â€œwell, what am I then?â€ Here are the results. The leg results didnâ€™t throw me at all, were a bit better than I thought in my knees actually - the arm results really threw me though... Here goes - TMI!

Below knees 1

Knees 2

Hips 2.5

Forearms and hands 3 (YIKES!)

Biceps 3.5 (Thanks, Mom - she said that was probably from using my quad bar thingie over my bed That my dear sweet Mommy bought me! She feels using that has been â€œbuilding upâ€ my biceps. 😊

So I have a ton of exercises I must do to help strengthen everything so I can hopefully up these numbers. What am I saying? â€œHopefullyâ€ how pathetic. Let me re-phrase that. I have a ton of exercises to do as I PLAN ON UPPING THOSE NUMBERS - CONSIDERABLY! Hey, all things are possible with God, RIGHT!

I also asked her opinion on the likelihood of my walking again. Now she is NOT the neurologist, she is a P.T. (And you are now medically up to speed and know what that means!) But she said they are hoping to get me where I can stand enough to easily transfer myself from my bed to my wheelchair, or wheelchair to shower, etc. without having to use a transfer board. (Which by the way I donâ€™t have a transfer board and am told I need one. If any of you have one hanging out in your closet or garage somewhere let me know, Iâ€™d love to find one used that we can get a good deal on!) Anyway, I am way cool with that. That would give me a ton more mobility then I currently have and with this snazzy â€œJazzyâ€ wheelchair that God gave me, I should be totally back in business once I can do that. So.... Itâ€™s all good.

Better get to bed - itâ€™s 2:38 and I am not even going to check this thing for typos as that will take me another hour so I hope it all makes sense. (If not, just consider it your daily homeschool foreign language class and give yourself some extra credit - itâ€™s on me!)

God Bless You All!!!

Pamela

Posted on on September 20th, 2007 in [Homeschooling](#) | [No Comments](#) »

Busy Day

It's been a super busy day today, yet I have not left the bed. How could that be?!?! Today is the first full day I have put in working (HOMESCHOOLPOLY & my book) and I am in total pain but

just can't seem to stop now that I've started! I am a bit behind and there are a zillion things to do it seems.

My spirits are good today, so therefore - it's ALL good. Today was my first day with NO VISITORS. Wahhh.... I am a people person, so I like visitors! My physical therapist comes tomorrow - so at least I can talk HER ear off! 😊

Thanks for the prayers for Brittney. She seems better today, calmer in general. She made me some soup for dinner and came in and laid down next to me so we could look through a magazine to pick out a new hairstyle for her. 😊 That was the highlight of my day. Prayers are so awesomely effective. Keep Praying!!!!

My boys are coming home this weekend. I AM SO EXCITED. Pray that I can get all caught up on all my paperwork and phone calls and get all settled and into some sort of good routine by the time they get here. Believe me - this is a huge prayer request in itself.

I found out today that hospital is still working on my sponsorship/hardship whatever you call it thingie. They verified that they received all paperwork but said it could take 3-6 weeks for a decision to be made. They recorded it received as of 9/10 so 3 weeks is 10/1 so I am praying for a decision on or before then! 😊

Medicaid basically said there is no way they can do anything for me until SS approves my disability. I still am not done with appeal forms - that I will have to finish tomorrow. Pray that SS makes an unbelievably fast decision and I can get some insurance finally. I know I will, I can just feel it in my bones. God is so good!

Keep my swallowing/choking problems in your prayers please. Today I was so afraid to eat. I ate some scrambled eggs Greg made me and did perfectly fine with them. No choking, no problems. Then later in day I decided to have an Atkins shake as I hadn't eaten in 6 hours (I have no appetite and am afraid to eat, afraid I'll choke!) Well, guess what - I choked after I drank the shake and ended up having another episode - couldn't breath - yada yada. Ending up throwing up entire atkins shake. Arghh.... I can't seem to find a rhyme or reason to it. I've done some reading and swallowing problems are apparently a classic MS symptom. Hopefully the neurologist on Thursday will give us some solutions to this. It's very scary, feeling like you cannot breathe. But, it's ok - I think it's just my throat muscles not working properly, I don't think I am going to choke to death or anything. I just need to figure out if there is anything that I can do about this.

Latest news... Greg has finally convinced me that we need to hire a CNA or someone to provide ongoing help for me. I've been fighting it saying we can't afford - but his point is he is self-employed and must bill hours. If he can't get any work done, he can't bill any hours! If we hire someone to help take care of me p/t on the day's Brittney works and after I am done homeschooling boys - we are thinking M, W, & Th from 12n to 5pm would work well. That is not a lot of hours, yet it would make a huge difference in being able to free him up more to focus and get work done without worrying about me. Greg was able to work all day today and is still upstairs working hard. So today has been a good productive day for him too... I think!

Also, I really think it will help my stress levels to have someone here so I don't have to worry about the boys being fed properly, or errands being run when necessary, etc. As far as the help, I am praying for the Lord to send me a wonderful, Christian, super sweet, lady who is a CNA so has full medical ability to take care of my needs and is trained and strong enough to lift me if/when needed, yet who can also serve to make lunch and dinners on the days she is here, run errands

and even help me a little business-wise would be cool. (like a personal assistant!) I also am praying for someone who is familiar with Celiac Disease! Oh yea, and she has to be very affordable. I don't want much, do I???? 😊 Doesn't really matter what I want. God already knows what I need and who she is. Just pray He sends her quick! I would love to find her before the boys return.

Also, today I got the privilege of talking to an old friend "my sister" as we call each other as we are so alike! Deanna lives in CA (one of the many places we have lived over the years) and I miss her terribly. We had a great long conversation this morning so I take back what I said above. I DID get a visitor today after all - and a very special visitor at that. Just on the phone instead of in person! 😊

It's all good.

God Bless!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! (And I may say that all the time - but I really mean it - I really want God to truly and richly bless every single person who reads this blog as He has so blessed us! It's not just "a saying" to me!!! His blessings are so cool!)

Pamela

P.S. I just re-read my blog (to try to fix my zillion typos) and counted 5 smiley faces!!! I think I am happier than even I realize! Goodnight!

Posted on on September 17th, 2007 in [Homeschooling](#) | [No Comments](#) »

[Please Pray for My Daughter](#)

Hi all,

Well - I didn't make it to church today. Man makes his plans, but God directs his steps. It was another rough day, not as good yesterday - but hey - MUCH BETTER than the day before. My sister Patty and my nephew, Billy (who I love like a son!) Came visited me today and Greg got me out and we sat out back (in my wheelchair) in the beautiful cool air for a while. It was TRULY the highlight of my day.

Please pray for my daughter, Brittney. She is having a very difficult time with all of this - to say the least. She tells everyone how much she loves me and to please pray for me, but when she is around me she doesn't even seem to know how to act. She goes from being sweet to me to being downright mean to me. Please pray for her. Here is a poem she wrote 4 days ago. She just showed it to me.

look at my life
whats it become
striving for perfection
just like a great sum

i cant do this alone
its just to hard
i dont like seeing her lie there
i didnt want to pick this card

ive got to stand tall
maybe it wont last forever
ill just have to give it my all
and not just say whatever

i hope she'll be able to walk again
with all the future technologies
but for now she'll settle for a wheelchair
and she wont take any apologies

it really hurts her bad
just to give me a simple hug
it really hurts me too
but then again, shes the one liying there like a rug

i need to let it out
i cant keep it all bottled up
but i really have no one
who can help me spill my cup

if you have advice for me
then please let me know
cause i need someone there
i think ive lost my teenage glow.

she cant walk
she cant move
i feel ive lost my mother

but then i think of how she must feel
and i feel selfish and ashamed
but i really cant help it
i hope you can pertain

im gonna end this now
because my mind is blank
just keep me in your prayers
and i will try to be a tank.

Please keep her in your prayers. Pray for God to be victorious and for satan to just get lost!

God Bless!
Pamela

Posted on on September 16th, 2007 in [Homeschooling](#) | [No Comments »](#)

Party's Over!

Hi all!

I figured I'd write earlier rather than later today. I woke up early in lots of pain (back pain) and

couldn't sleep. I tried to be as quiet as possible so Greg could sleep as long as possible (he is so exhausted!). My purse was on floor by my bed, so I managed to get it and guess what I did????!?! I put on my makeup! Yippee! I feel SO MUCH BETTER already. It's amazing what a little makeup can do for a woman! I don't think a man could ever really understand. We don't wear makeup for them - it's for us! At least that's the way it is with me anyway. That's why I don't care what anyone else "thinks" I look like in general. But I very much care about what **I** think I look like.

So, if you are a man, reading this blog - there's a bit of female insight for you! It's a freebie!

Pain wise I am about the same, actually a wee bit worse this morning - but mornings are hard (I think from sleeping and not controlling the positions I am in while sleeping?!?!?) and the pain actually lessens as the day progresses and medicines increase! 😊 But emotionally and mentally I am doing WONDERFUL today. So that's all that really matters! I was trying to be quiet and not turn on my computer so I spent extra time this morning reading my Bible and reading my latest Joni Eareckson Tada's latest devotional book 1 (I am so NOT into celebrities and just don't "get it". There is no one in my mind that is more important or valuable than any other human being. The whole celebrity thing to me is shallow and shows how fake our culture is and how warped the things and people we value are. That said, Joni is the the only "human" in this world I would consider of special status in that she - next to Jesus Christ himself, is my biggest inspiration.)

Anyway, I was reading the day after tomorrow's devotion (I can't seem to stop at just one day!!) and it "just so happened" to be about "a middle-aged woman with multiple sclerosis who lives in a nursing home". Sound familiar? NO - I may be a middle-aged woman with multiple sclerosis, but living in a nursing home? I just can't imagine. Turns out this woman she is speaking of, due to her MS has no husband and her children are grown. She is very lonely. Joni says many women, especially with MS or other disabilities that leave them unable to care for themselves quoting Joni, they "find themselves without a husband, and their children gone. They think, *My life in God doesn't mean a thing. Nobody notices me. Nobody cares.*" Joni though goes on to point out the reality of who is really watching everybody - not just God - but as she puts it "the entire spiritual world of angels and demons" She refers to Luke 15:10 with her understanding from God's Word that "spiritual beings are intensely interested in our response to suffering." Wow! She also points out that Ephesians 3:10 reminds us that "God actually uses the life examples of his children to teach angels and demons about how wise and powerful he is." DOUBLE WOW!! I am awestruck. I don't know what is more exciting, being able to have the privilege to teaching angels and demons just how awesome and powerful God is through what He is doing and continues to do for me, or just how much I love being called - and being "his child". 😊

Well, I gotta wrap this up and for very good reason. About an hour ago or so I told Greg flat out, "My potty chair is going to be delivered today!" He said to me, "You can't make such blanket statements like that. You don't know that." I said all excited, "It just popped out of my mouth before I even thought about what I was saying, that came straight from God, not me. You just wait and see!!" Well, we got a call about 5 mins ago from our wonderful church - Southside Fellowship (we love our church - check it out at southsidefellowship.org - you can even hear hear the great sermons online!!) Anyway, we got a call that they wanted directions to our house as someone is bringing us a potty chair. 😊 I TOLD YOU SO!!

The man from the church just left, he brought us a BRAND NEW bedside potty chair. He said he had called the guy this morning and asked how he could get a hold of one, especially since it's a Saturday and the man told him that he wasn't usually there on Saturday's, but "it just so happens" that he was at the store so he could go ahead and come get it right then. I only have one thing to

say, **Jesus loves me, this I KNOW!**

God Bless!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Pamela

P.S. I really, really REALLY want to go to church tomorrow. Please pray that we can somehow pull it off! Thanks!

[Pearls of Great Price](#) (Zondervan, 2006) September 17 "Somebody's Watching".

Posted on on September 15th, 2007 in [Homeschooling](#) | [No Comments](#) »

Pity Party - Ends at Midnight (I Hope!)

Today has been a bad day. What a bad day we had. (I've read too much Dr. Seuss in my lifetime.) My philosophy about life is that we are always entitled to a pity party every now and then. I have one every morning, set the timer, feel sorry for myself all I want, and then 10 mins later get over it and get on with enjoying life. Well, today it just didn't work!

I have been on a pity party roller coaster for most (okay ALL) of the day! I'll hit the party highlights:

â— My sister had outpatient surgery done today and I could not go to the hospital and be there with her and for her.

â— Started crying.

â— My hubby gave me a shower - this was a first - first shower I've had in days! It was an hour long ordeal that is beyond explanation. It was painful, and humiliating, yet wonderful and exhilarating - depending upon the moment! ha ha ha. All in all - it was also very exhausting.

â— He's such a great hubby, he just doesn't deserve this. Can't seem to stop crying

â— Decided to take advice of so many to appeal medicare/medicaid denial so we can get insurance and so I called a lawyer who was recommended to me. Well, he acted very much like a well, "a lawyer" (forgive me to all those wonderful HSLDA and other lawyers out there who do not act like "lawyers" in the sense of which I am referring.) and this conversation was not a good experience. I got frustrated and very sad to the point of being angry. Decided, we don't need a lawyer. I can handle this!

â— Tried to start filling out appeal forms on my own so I can do this myself and get the appeals process rolling. Couldn't get a hold of anyone at hospital business office, wasn't sure how to answer some of the questions. Got frustrated.

â— Started crying = again!

â— Didn't get the forms even 10% completed. Decided today was "not the day" to deal with this.

â— Hubby had gotten me some nice soft pajamas to put on, I got all comfy. All is well. We can do this!

â— Hubby has been dealing with me and my "needs" all day long. Yet another day of him getting nothing accomplished that he needed to work-wise. I feel so awful for him. He is so committed to taking care of me and is doing it all with such love and care. Yet, he has to work for money to come into the house. I am so frustrated.

â— Greg's Uncle died 2 days ago from cancer. Today is the funeral. Greg so wanted to go to Michigan to be there at the funeral. If it wasn't for me he would have gone. Greg hasn't said much about it, but I know that he is hurting inside and wished he could be there at the funeral today.

â— More crying.

â—☒ Had a wonderful friend, Audrey call and offer to come over and visit and do some housecleaning for me. I was such a basketcase I had to call her and tell her now's not a good time. I broke down on the phone with her. Ok, now it's out. I AM NOT PERFECT AFTER ALL! I can't deal with this. I just want to crawl into a shell and die.

â—☒ More crying.

â—☒ Called Audrey back again later, "I'm fine" I tell her. Sorry I lost it. She's so sweet and understanding. I can do this!

â—☒ Got some BEAUTIFUL tulips from some great friends and clients of Gregs. I feel so loved. 😊

â—☒ My hubby made me a nice gluten free dinner. I am having a problem with chewing and swallowing lately and out of the blue I started choking and ended up throwing up. Fun Fun. Especially for hubby. (Dealing with puke is NOT one of his (or anybody's?) strong points.) So much for that "nice dinner". 😞

â—☒ Started shaking so took my BP which is usually very low - was actually 96/47 when they released me from hospital (kinda scary low, eh?) anyway - just wanted to make sure all was ok. My BP was 159/110. NOT GOOD!

â—☒ Still no bedside potty so hubby had to take me back to potty for zillionth time today (very hard on his back and painful for me as our setup is not a good one at this point). Well, can't control my little self - no fun.

â—☒ Can't stop crying!

â—☒ My son J.Jay called, turns out tonight was his middle school youth fun all night limosine way-cool party thingie - which he just realized he is missing as he's in Virginia with my oldest son. He was fine and handled it all very maturely. "No biggie, Mom. There will be other stuff. Can you get your money back?" Such a trooper he is! I feel so guilty and bad for him.

â—☒ I end phone conversation with him with a smile and all seems well. As soon as I hang up I lose it. More crying.

â—☒ I decide to write in my blog. A "get real" blog tonight. So this is it. At the moment - you guessed it. I am crying! But's it's okay. I have decided this pity party has GOT TO END AT MIDNIGHT. Tomorrow WILL BE a better day.

Today I have come to realize that sometimes it's okay to admit that life is hard and not everything is perfect, pretty, nor even manageable. There are times when there are no answers to life's complicated questions. And days when no quick fixes, actually days when there seems to be no fixes at all! Yes, God loves me. Yes, I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. But Yes, I have had a very hard day. So has Greg. I am determined for the party to end at least by midnight so that by tomorrow I can smile more and cry less. Pray for that. I don't want to have to smash any party-timers tomorrow - if you know what I mean! For today - I'll just keep crying for a bit longer. Tomorrow I pray that I will be a new creation - all things made new. Tonight, I just need to do a bit more crying and try to break out of my denial mode of thinking and living. I need to get it all out of my system.

When all is said and done... God IS Good! 'night!

Posted on on September 14th, 2007 in [Homeschooling](#) | [No Comments](#) »

I'm Back In Business!

Hi all!

I FINALLY am able to get on this computer and give everyone an update! It is Thursday evening

and a let's just say a WHOLE LOT has happened since the last time I wrote in my blog!! First of all, let me clarify that I am currently on heavy duty meds, so if at any point during this blog you are clueless as to what I am trying to say all I can say is I'M SORRY!

Today is the first day in quite a long time I feel the tiniest sense of normalcy. I am actually writing on the computer, and wrapped up several business deals earlier. It feels great to be able to somewhat function again! Now, the word "function" has taken on all new meaning in my life. I guess I should bring you all up to speed and let you know "the latest"... so here goes.

I've never been a very private person and that fact has probably helped me to deal with all of this a bit better - or so I think. When you become paralyzed all privacy is out the window anyway! As it stands right now the consensus is that this is/was the result of an MS Flare-up. We don't know how much I may "get back" of what I've lost, but at this point I am still paralyzed from waist down and my upper body has suffered some loss/weakness as well. I do have some movement though as I can move both my knees and my hips! 😊 I do have some test results that I am still awaiting (spinal tap) and my follow up appointment with the neurologist is on 9/20. At this point, I am totally homebound/bed ridden.

I am on "home health care" and according to the wonderful Physical Therapist who assessed me (who, of course, "just so happens" to be a Christian 😊!) I am in a very "fragile" state. Now anyone who knows me knows that I am the farthest thing from fragile, so that is kind of a funny thought to me, but they will not even touch me yet physical therapy wise as they don't want to do any more damage. So... here is the deal:

My lower body (waist down) is not functioning at all and my upper body (waist up) is in pain 24/7 (especially at my spinal cord injury site) and has suffered some loss as well. Other than that I am doing awesome!!! They have me on some pretty heavy duty pain killers, but as of tonight I am not going to take any of those and am going to try to figure out better ways to get my pain to a somewhat manageable level. I am also suffering what they call "phantom" pain in my feet (the bottom of my feet actually) off and on and honestly my prayer request is for that to GO AWAY COMPLETELY! This particular part of it all has been tough to deal with because if my foot hits or touches anything it sends me through the roof! (Figuratively speaking, of course!) Hey, if I am going to be paralyzed I'd rather do without the pain!

I have lots of great stories I really want to share, but it has taken me so much energy just to type up to this point I am not sure I am going to be able to tell everything I want to tonight. So... I am going to write some a little and then try to just write a wee bit every day as we go along. God is amazing and He is taking care of us. Every step of the way He has shown us SO CLEARLY that He is right here handling every single detail. It's pretty cool to have a front row seat!

Our oldest son, Robby and his wife Kathryn drove down from Virginia to get our two younger boys (5 & 11). They took them back with them to VA with them to homeschool them and take care of them for a bit to give me some time to recuperate. Brittney is busy with school and her job. So, I have had some rare quiet time to allow my mind and body to some time to heal.

I have been amazed at the outpouring of love from friends and family throughout this whole thing. We still have lots of unanswered questions, and a lot of needs, but more than anything we have an overwhelming sense of peace and love. Pray that the Lord will show us His will each step of the way and pray that he keeps our spirits up and our minds and hearts focused on him throughout this. Pray specifically that we are somehow able to get some insurance for me and for some other

financial needs we have.

Praise BIG TIME for how close this has been bringing Greg and I together, as well as my extended family. Greg and I have laughed more together the past couple of days than we have in a long time. Laughter is good! I am slowly coming to realize that this life on earth is but a speck in comparison to all that God has in store for us. This is giving me a glimpse of just how cool and awesome His love is for each one of us. Even though my physical body may be "less" at this point than it was, I honestly feel like I am closer to being whole than I have ever been. That may not make any sense - but it does to me! 😊

I will try to keep updating my blog as often as I can. Meanwhile, please keep us in your prayers! God's no where close to being finished with me yet. 😊

God Bless!!
Pamela

Posted on on September 13th, 2007 in [Homeschooling](#) | [No Comments](#) »

[Paralyzed from Waist down - the time has come.](#)

Hi all.

For any of you out there who know me and/or who have read my book you know I have a host of health issues including 2 spinal cord injuries, Multiple Sclerosis, Celiac Disease which brings with it a host of digestive disorders, and more - mostly neurological in nature.

As of this past Wednesday I have become paralyzed from the waist down. We were "ready" for this , or at least practically speaking - one story house, open floor plan, blah blah blah - since I was told by my neurologist in November of 2005 that I had a precarious spinal cord injury that looked complete. He was surprised I was not paralyzed already and said I could become paralyzed at any moment). So considering that alone, coupled with the possibility always lingering of paralyzation when one has M.S. we did everything practical to prepare for the "if" this really does happen. We "prepared" by moving from a 3 story house (2 stories and a full basement) in freezing Chicago to a one story ranch with an open floor plan in SC near my family 2 years ago. We have since proceeded to live life as usual with good days and bad days - but no paralyzation. We thought we were prepared - we have learned since Wednesday that there is really no preparation for the "real deal".

I figured it was time for me to come out of the "shell" I've built around myself this past week since today is officially 7 days that I have been paralyzed since it's now after midnight! And- I am a big numbers person - AND - 7 is my favorite number!

So, first here's a quick rundown of the past 7 days and I am also going to add some prayer requests and praises at the end...

Wednesday, August 29th, 2007 - (a date now forever etched in my pee-sized brain). I decided to take the kids to check out the new Costco after finishing our homeschooling. I had not slept well the night before and was really too tired for such an expedition , but my hyperactivity (did I mention my ADHD?!?!?) mixed with my mule-like stubbornness (or at least that's what my hubby calls it) kicked in and I went anyway. Of course - I rode their nice BIG motorized wheelchairs

(which I loved by the way - much bigger baskets than those at Sam's Club!!) and we checked out the ENTIRE WAREHOUSE with both kids. By the time I got home, I was exhausted. I immediately went to the bed to lie down for a break. An hour or so later when I went to get up, my legs would not work. "Ok- Self" I said - well thought actually, "I have overdone it again!" This has happened before and has always been something that some heavy doses of medicine and a good night's sleep has always cured or at least improved significantly upon waking up the next morning. So, I told Greg, called my Mommy and asked her to pray, called my sister, Patty for same reason - took my strongest meds, and stayed in bed and before too long went sleep thinking all would be better in the morning. No need to panic.

Thursday, August 30, 2007 - I wake up and go to get out of bed and realize that my legs still don't work. PANIC TIME! Ok, this CANNOT be happening! I can do this - God is in control. It's all good. There's no way - this can NOT be happening. Ok, focus. This is not that big of a deal. First I call my doctor and am told that she will not be back in the office until 9/11 and if I am paralyzed I need to go to E.R. Yea right! They can't do anything for me AND we don't have insurance. I have been to E.R. before and I know what that costs - no way! I will probably be fine by 9/11 anyway. I made an appointment to see her on 9/11. My mom calls and I tell her the "bad" news and that I wish we could afford a power wheelchair - I cannot handle being "pushed around" in a wheel chair. I AM A CONTROL FREAK AFTER ALL! She then remembered that her hubby (my stepdad's) brother had a power wheelchair that he hasn't used for a couple of years since he went into nursing home and it was sitting in his son's garage. She would call and find out more about it and call us back. Long story short - by the end of that day I had a beautiful like brand new Jazzy 1113 joystick powered wheelchair sitting in my garage - FREE! All it needed was new batteries. The paperwork that came with the chair showed it originally cost \$5,830!!! (It was paid for my their medicare). Wow - I end the day on an amazing high - God is SO GOOD! I am at peace - after all God's hand is SO in this. This is obviously His will - who can question. (BTW, I still could feel pain in my feet so I thought that was a good sign too!)

Friday, August 31, 2007 - My hubby, Greg's, 41st Birthday. Not a fun one for him either. He spent the entire day getting batteries for my new wheelchair, then taking me in the manual chair to the medical supply store and buying all sorts of necessary stuff (hand rails, shower head thingie, potty rails, (all while we are living on the tightest budget of our lives due to all the money we've put into HOMESCHOOLPOLY the past year). And then he spent the evening removing doors, installing the hand rails, switching our shower door for a curtain so wheelchair could get in their, swapping shower head, blah blah blah. Not a fun birthday for poor hubby - to say the least! One a great note though - My mom came over first thing in the morning and we all (including me) rode together on our final errand to a fancy medical supply store. We were looking for a small bedside handle thing so I could get in and out of bed. She saw this over the bed rail thingie (with a triangular bar) to help me get myself into and out of bed from the wheelchair. It looked very big and expensive so we didn't even ask the price as we were looking at little bars to mount to the side of the bed or something. She immediately said, "Now, THAT is what you need!" and she proceeded to ask the nice lady - "How much does that cost?" My dear sweet (and by no means rich) mommy called her dear sweet (and by no means rich) hubby unbeknownst to us as we are looking at other paraphernalia (sp?) and asked him if they could buy it for us. He said, "Of course, get it NOW!) She then went right into her "garage sale" mode and asked if they would lower the price since I had no insurance! . They ended up giving her 15 percent off. She insisted on buying it for me! I was crying - well, bawling is more like it. Talk about being humbled and feeling so loved! Then my sweet, soft-spoken mom said to her "Can you please deliver that to her house and set it up TODAY!" (Did I mention it was almost 4pm by this time!) They looked at her with an initial bit of shock at first, then made a few phone calls and said, "Okay!" and didn't even charge her for

delivery or installation. WOW! My mom is an amazing woman who doesn't want her right hand to know what her left hand is doing. But, I am not her right hand, I am her daughter. And I want everyone to know - she is a loving and generous person who lives out what she believes! After we got home, she had to leave and the delivery van showed up a few minutes later and installed the new apparatus. Wow! Ok, I am happy now. Wheeling around the house with newfound freedom (I can get around in this Jazzy with much more speed than I've moved in years and with much less energy expended! - This is cool!) Oh yea - it's Greg's birthday and my sister's hubby had gotten tickets for us all to go see the Greenville Drives baseball game. After Greg trying to get out of it (he is exhausted by now from all this handicap installation stuff and manual labor off and on all day). He finally gave in to my stubborn self and we decided to go ahead and go. He figured out how to drive my Jazzy up into the back of our station wagon (ok the arms stick out of the back window which must be left open - not an ideal way to do things - but it worked!) and we took it to the game. It turned out to be a blast. I zipped all around in my Jazzy, there was a cool breeze in the air. Greg even had a smile on his face and enjoyed it. Maybe not so bad of a birthday after all?!?! I hope not! WE CAN DO THIS! Life is good.

Saturday, September 1, 2007 - Woke up in middle of night - won't say why as it's so very personal - but things in my body just aren't working correctly anymore. What an awful time. Next morning, still no feeling in legs - but no pain either. Hey, this is good - I'm sick of the pain anyway! I can do this. Lots more wheeling around today - Greg spent even more time installing stuff, including ramp for front door, etc. Money is running out. Okay, God - What's next?!?! My peace is starting to wane, but I'm ok. I CAN DO THIS! Greg is having a hard time and so are the kids - especially Brittney. I MUST BE STRONG. All day I go crying one minute to smiling and in awe of God's provision the next. Quite the roller coaster day.

Sunday, September 2, 2007 - Church - Greg manages to load up my Jazzy once again and off we go to church. We are both so glad we didn't bail (which we highly considered - giving the circumstances and all). What an awesome sermon - and so very applicable! After church I actually made us all lunch and then I took one of our Golden Retrievers, Lassen, for a walk with my Jazzy (first time I've been able to take him for a walk in our neighborhood!) I just strapped him up to the wheelchair and away we went with Elijah out in front on his bike (with training wheels and helmet, of course.) I feel "free"!!! I can take my dog for a walk like a normal person, wow!

strong>Monday, September 3, 2007 - Okay, reality is starting to kick in for Greg, who is exhausted and stressed and has much work to do which he can't focus on because of me. I am still in "I can do this" mode, although it's lower case now - not upper case. At least I am quite the independent woman at this point. I can go do pretty much everything in the house by Myself. "Frankly, more then before as my energy is not getting zapped so quickly and I can get around much easier and faster. Greg feels bummed about his birthday, just another day it seemed, and his =mother was supposed to come down and visit us this weekend for his Birthday but changed her mind at last minute. We decided it would be good for him to pop up there (just to NC - not that far at all) and visit his Mom and just stay one night for a quick getaway from the madness of this house. Later in the day, after he left I took BOTH of our Golden Retrievers (Lassen & Shasta) for walks simultaneously with my Jazzy. I figured I needed to teach them which "side was theirs". Lassen was hooked to the left side and Shasta to the right. They did awesome. Elijah went in his scooter. I ended up getting the great idea of taking them to pool in my wheelchair. I did! This isn't so bad! The boys have a nice swim while I sit there with dogs - secretly wishing I could get in the water. Oh well - no biggie. I'm all set - I can do this... I think?!?!

strong>Tuesday, September 4, 2007 - It's been a bad day! Reality is sinking in. The boys had their

first piano lessons of the year today and they had a blast - but then I had a zillion errands to run so Brittney drove us all around. I am not okay with this. Being in a wheelchair - no big deal. I could care less what anyone thinks about me and with this Jazzy I can get around just fine. But, I HAVE to be able to drive! I CAN'T DRIVE! Ok, this is not cool. I had Brittney take us all to American Rehab place which I was told about to find out how expensive it is to get my car converted to hand controls and get a ramp thingie for the back of my car. EXPENSIVE! We can't afford to trade this in on other vehicle and vehicles that are "handicapped friendly" that I could actually drive are expensive. What am I going to do? I HAVE TO DRIVE! Ok, I am starting to freak out. No driving means - no freedom and major implications for Brittney (she requires an adult with her to drive - what about getting her to work - I have to drive home and I can't drive! What about field trips. What about groceries, What about LIFE?!?! NOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO..... I MUST DRIVE! By the time Greg arrives home I am on a tangent. I must figure this out today. I must be able to drive.... He must work and can't work with me going into tangents like this. We decide he has got to get his contract work done. We are financially doing terrible and must have his software development income coming in in order to survive. He leaves to go to Robby's (our oldest son) and his wife's house in VA to be able to focus on getting work done. No work - no money. We need money now with my paralyzed state of being then ever to pay for all this stuff that we have no insurance for! So, Greg's off. Brittney got a ride to youth group (thank you, Lord!) so I decide to go wheel out to the backyard and let Elijah play out back while I lie on the hammock. Well it sounded like a good idea. Didn't work. I ended up on ground with a slightly sprained arm (according to my doctor friend, Kristina who had to come rescue me and get me back into my chair and ultimately into my bed) and an almost crushed spirit. (Almost = keyword). My dear friend Kristina, tended to my wounds, made dinner for my boys, and helped Elijah take his shower. (He's only five, he likes showers - but turning water on and off and getting temperature just right are not things he's mastered yet!) A few minutes after she left Brittney got home from Youth Group. God provided a ride for her there and back. She had a great time. I made a phone call and got a ride already for J.Jay to go to his youth group tomorrow night. God also provided Brittney with a ride to work tomorrow. Is He GOOD or what!?!)

strong>Wednesday, September 5, 2007 - So... it's now after 2am and as I lie (very uncomfortably at the moment) in my bed. My back is spasming, my right arm is hurting, my head is hurting (I hit it on something when I fell, got a little lump) and I am in quite a bit of pain from the waist up, yet feel nothing from the waist down. So weird. I can now move my knees somewhat at least - so that helps. I literally have mountains of "homeschoolopoly" work to do, bills to pay, phone calls to make, homeschooling to be done in just a few short hours, and I am feeling more overwhelmed and exhausted right now than I can possibly describe. YET, by the grace of God alone, way down deep - when it comes right down to it - I am still "ok" with it all. By the grace of God of God alone. He give us what we need when we need it. Not a moment too soon, but He's never been late either! God is doing yet another major work in me. I must needs lots of work, I've realized - I must be a stubborn old cookie but I pray I start learning some lessons - quick! Whatever - His will be done. I don't know if my paralysis will last for days, for weeks, or forever. I do not that God knows! I know He loves me and He is in control of ALL THINGS. So, no I can not do this. Not without him. But yet, HE CAN DO THIS!

To listen to our TERRIFIC sermon this past week visit: <http://www.southsidefellowship.org/weekly/sermons.aspx> and listen to September 2nd, sermon (listen to previous one also which is the first in the series we are now in!) Anyway - as usual this sermon was God's perfect timing for us.

PRAISES:

Free Awesome power wheelchair - we didn't even ask - yet we received! Wow!

Amazing trapeze type contraption so I can get into and out of bed fairly easily. THANKS, MOM!

My bathroom all set up so I can take my own showers, go to potty by myself, etc. I SO LIKE PRIVACY!

Great kiddos who never complain (at least not to my face!) and are awesome helpers.

More freedom to go around the house and in my kids' rooms more and even around neighborhood with new wheelchair!

My Mom & Stepdad - who have done more than I can write about!, my nephew Billy (who has come over to help after his school and even done some homeschooling with the boys! 0 Plus, just seeing him brightens my day and mood) my sister Kathy, who comes over whenever I need her, and my sister Patty, who can not help as much in person, due to her work schedule, but is always there for me helping in many ways over the phone, and has been the person I can be brutally honest with and she loves me anyway! And, for my friend, Kristina - thanks to her I don't have to sleep on the hammock, or the ground tonight! She is also always there when I need her.

PRAYER REQUESTS

Someone modifications to my vehicle or another vehicle to give me the means to drive myself. My youngest is only 5, I have many more years of stuff I want to do and place I want to take my kiddos!

At least some use of my legs back

Some kind of insurance (medicare, medicaid - something!)

I was denied disability (they said regardless of everything my brain works so I do not qualify).

Wisdom as to if I should appeal, etc.

Brittney - for her to have peace and LOTS OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH as a result of this

J.Jay - for him to not feel "used" but to use this to help develop him spiritually as well.

Our Homeschool to not just survive, but THRIVE this year.

Transportation issues. For kids to get where they need to be, when they need to be there! 😊

ABOVE ALL - GOD'S WILL IN ALL THINGS. If it's not His will, it's pointless!

My latest FAVORITE reality equation I heard from our pastor which I am clinging to -

GOD + ANYTHING = NOTHING

GOD + NOTHING = EVERYTHING!

God is sufficient. Nothing else is needed. Over and out - I heading to la la land. 😊

God Bless!

God Bless!

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• About



Pamela Berthume Child of God... Wife of Greg... Mom of 4... Creator of HOMESCHOOLOPOLY® 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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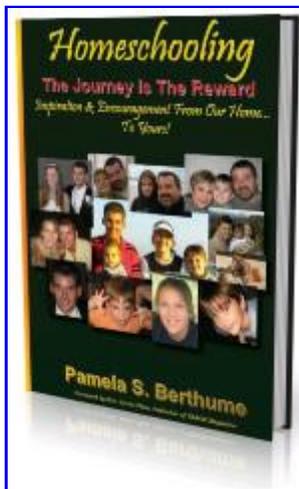
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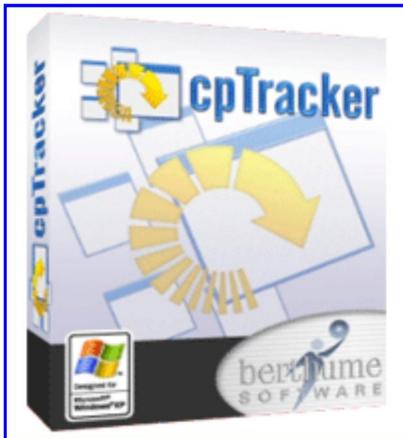




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