

# Truly Divine Intervention

The past few days have been a big ol' slap in the face, whack over the head, ice water thrown in your face. Monday morning, I got out of the shower and noticed that my left leg was swollen to twice the size of my right. I had a doctors appt made to see what he could tell me about my on-going aches. It is a good thing I did. Five minutes after arriving I was on my way to the hospital for an ultrasound. Shortly after, I was admitted with a "extensive blot clot that extended from my left groin to my foot." So much for a little nagging ache.

A few hours later, I underwent a CT scan which informed me that the clot had broken up and was now in both lungs so I was moved to ICU. I was indeed very fortunate. Someone was really looking out for me!

This is the first time I had been in the hospital since my tonsilectomy back in the 5th grade some 20+ years ago and that was pretty much in and out. I was home by Thursday but man... all that poking and prodding and not sleeping can take its toll. And more to continue... words like blood thinners and blood tests.... YUCK! But I am here and mean to reflect on that and ask HIM to take control and help me go forward in whatever ways HE deems necessary.

The doctor is convinced that the 2 hour plane trip to Florida a month ago was a major factor in the clot. I know I am not as old as I was in '92 when I flew to Hawaii, but WOW!

Thank you all for your thoughts and prayers and hopefully with His help, I will be back 1000% soon.

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## 4 Down...

My husband fell ill over the weekend, and he had to leave a show early that we went to see together on Sunday. By Monday night, my two littlest kids were throwing up, and Hubby and I stayed up late cleaning them up and comforting them. Monday night, I had a dream that we were on a trip, and we were scheduled to leave our vacation, but I was sick and worried about the 3-4 hour car ride. When I awoke, I was really sick – so this thing has struck down 4 of us, and my 2 oldest daughters remain unaffected as of yet.

We are busy people! I already rescheduled the dentist appointment we won't make, but I don't know what to do about our church's Kidstuf play Hubby and I are directing – rehearsal is tonight. I don't see how I'll be able to make it, but I also don't understand how to summon the energy to stay home with sick little ones when I'm feeling so incredibly lousy. Complicating things is the fact that my two oldest girls are also in Kidstuf, and they had to miss the first rehearsal because they were at their Grandma's. There is a waiting list for kids who want to be in Kidstuf, and so the kids who are chosen to be in it are not supposed to miss even one rehearsal. If my kids get sick, they will have to miss another rehearsal, and I'm so worried for them that they won't get to do the show!

So today, I have to find a way to navigate around the thumping in my head and the visits to the bathroom (sorry, but here we are) to care for my 4 kids so Hubby can work. And I have to do things in a way that won't spread this super-contagious illness (it says something when I get an illness – I don't usually get sick ever!) to the remaining healthy ones in my family.

Anyone want to babysit? ☐

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# God's Strong Love For Fools

I came across this article the other day by Janine Dorsey of the Tampa Tribune; it's called "Don't Laugh; It Could Happen To You: Common Reasons For Emergency Room Visits Are Common and Serious"

If that title alone doesn't intrigue you, then go ahead and skip this post. But I found the article to be both interesting and amusing, so I'll share some highlights:

*Federal regulators review a sample of those visits for signs a product might need to be recalled. Those records provide a view into the dramatic injuries of Americans who seem able to hurt themselves with almost any product made.*

*One woman fell from a galloping horse while texting. Another woman's bangs caught fire as she peered into a toaster.*

*More than 818 emergency room trips in the past four years involved "chicken" – dead and alive.*

*Boxes of cereal (cut fingers), cans of pork and beans (falling from a cupboard onto one's head), wood chippers (yes, people stick their hands in) and trombones. Hundreds of people suffer piercings gone wrong, thousands fall out of their mobile homes or have objects intractably lodged in orifices.*

*"Every day, people come in and you just think, 'You gotta be kidding me,'" said Brian Peckler, an ER doctor for 15 years, now at Tampa General. "I mean, what makes a guy think using a fish hook to clean out ear wax is a good idea?"*

Everyone knows by now that talking on the phone is distracting, and now that cell phones have become even cheaper than land lines in many cases, people are finding a variety of ways to hurt themselves while using the phone:

*A 19-year-old male, on the phone while lifting weights, drops a barbell on himself.*

*A 21-year-old male, riding his bike and texting, crashes, scrapes his face.*

*A 37-year-old male cutting chicken while on the phone slices his hand.*

*A 25-year-old male, texting, walks into a telephone pole's guide wire and tells emergency room workers "he might have gotten zapped."*

*Hundreds of injuries are blamed on the phone in its capacity as a weapon: They're used as missiles or as a bludgeon to beat people on the head.*

And then there is something that's become obvious to me ever since I had a son almost two years ago – men are more apt to hurt themselves than women. There are more women than men in this country, yet men account for 56% of the ER visits, according to federal data.

*Men suffer injury in 80 percent of pressure washer cases. Nine in 10 injuries involving "mobile home" and "alcohol" were suffered by men. And 96 percent of "nail gun" cases were men.*

*"Guys are definitely dumber than women in this regard," Peckler said.*

*One 37-year-old man tried cutting branches with a circular saw – on top of a running wood chipper. The saw cut off several fingers, which fell into the chipper.*

*Having a brother appears dangerous as well. Regardless of who was injured, ER records implicate the brother twice as often as the sister.*

And my personal favorite part of the article:

*“Demonstrate” appears in no small number of cases where less-than-skilled people tried to show off martial arts moves, wedding dances, pogo-stick skills and cheerleader routines.*

*Though many people consider themselves expert enough to demonstrate something, Robert Cano at University Community Hospital sees scores of cases that prove otherwise.*

*“Almost nothing good comes after someone says ‘Hey, watch this!’” Cano said.*

*Note the 52-year-old mother, demonstrating judo to her daughter by flipping her husband. Torn left knee.*

*Other cases: The 25-year-old man demonstrating to children how to climb on monkey bars when his shoulder “snapped.” Or the 16-year-old demonstrating a softball technique who stepped on a rake that smacked her in the forehead.*

*Or the 55-year-old woman showing her grandson how to use a pogo stick – she fell and smacked her head.*

And finally, the ER doc’s favorite story:

*Peckler at Tampa General marvels at accidents that should have been fatal but weren’t.*

*His favorite case: the man who was supposed to be watching his 3-year-old, but decided to change his car’s oil in the driveway. Seeking a safe holding area, Dad put the child in the car and crawled underneath to drain the oil.*

*The child knocked the gear shift from park to neutral, and*

*the car's tire rolled over the man's chest.*

*He suffered no major injuries, Peckler said. But how could anyone survive?*

*Peckler shrugged and said, "God's strong love for fools."*

Indeed. Just be careful next time you hear someone say, "Watch this." Maybe you should get the phone ready to dial 9-1-1. Then again, after reading how inclined some folks are to hurt themselves while using the phone, perhaps a better response to "Watch this." would be "No thanks."

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## **A BIG Scare, But Thankfully, Just a Scare**

Last week for date night, we saw Shutter Island – not much to say about that; it was disappointing. We then went out to eat, and my husband mentioned that his fingers were tingling. At the same time, I noticed that he was slurring his words – uh,oh. Although he is only in his mid-30's, I was sure that he had had a stroke; I know those are two of the warning signs. He did not want to go to the hospital, so I agreed that we would drive home, pick up the kids, and I would look up these symptoms on the internet to see if he should indeed get to the hospital. When I looked it up, the info was scarier than I originally thought. It said yes, these are indeed symptoms of a stroke, and a person needs only to exhibit ONE of them, not all. It also said that people who have strokes often refuse to get medical treatment, and their loved ones must INSIST that they seek medical treatment – so I made Hubby go to the ER while I put the kids to bed. Well,

before you panic, let me say that the stroke tests all came back negative. Turns out that his arm had gone numb during the movie because it was a long movie and he was giving me backrubs (AWW!), and his “lazy tongue” was a result of his visit to the dentist in the morning – he doesn’t like novacaine, so when the dentist re-did one of his fillings, he sprayed some kind of numbing spray which got into my husband’s bloodstream and caused him to feel it 9 hours later. PHEW!!! It was a wasted night at the ER, but I’m so glad that he went because otherwise I would STILL be wondering and panicking that he had had a stroke. And besides, it made for a really funny story to tell later... people really seem to like the irony of the directions on the internet: “Expect the person to protest – denial is common. Don’t take “no” for an answer. Insist on taking prompt action.” Well, insist I did, and as a result, poor Hubby spent the end of date night in the ER!

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## Double Doctor Duty

This morning was our appointment with the pediatrician. The “our” refers to my little 18-month-old boy and I. It seems strange for a 31-year-old to have an appointment with the pediatrician, but as I’ve said before, he is also our resident sleep expert. Since I never feel rested no matter how much sleep I get, I was trying to get to the bottom of it and even got a sleep study done.

First and most importantly, my little boy is growing exactly in accordance with the growth chart at the pediatrician’s office! There was an intern doctor he was training this morning, and he noted to her that it was very rare to have a baby grow so normally – so I will take that as a good thing. My little guy **hated** being poked and prodded, but at least he

got the A-ok! He weighs 24 lb 2 oz and is 32 7/8" long.

As for me... nothing doing, really. My heart was fine during the sleep study, so that's a good thing. But according to the doctor, I slept for 7 hours of the 7.6 hours I was being studied (could have fooled me). My oxygen levels went a little bit low, but nothing that needs any fixing, I guess. He said that because of my "structure" (I have one huge tonsil), I will have to get this sleep study done every few years to make sure that things don't get worse, but I disagree – that is not going to happen. All in all, it was a waste of time I would say. I'm a little frustrated because the sleep study was kind of an unpleasant experience, especially to have nothing to show for it. And for the past week, my sleepiness has gotten even worse – I feel like I've been bordering on narcoleptic! I've stopped sleeping with the tv on, something I've done and loved doing since I was about 6 years old. I've been going to bed earlier, as much as I hate missing out on 'me and Hubby' time – I even got a nap in on Sunday! But even after making all these efforts, I've still fallen asleep at the movies, at home while watching movies; and (I hate to admit it), but I was struggling at church and I also dozed during a class we're taking. And it's not like I'm bored – I love to learn, and I really like church and look forward to it! I was really disappointed that I missed some of last week's message! Why can't I stay awake?!? Back to square one, I guess... whatever that is. Time to stock up on coffee and energy drinks, I suppose, there seems to be no other hope for me.

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# Lab Rat

Mostly, it was worse than I thought it was going to be, but I survived. I spent the night at the hospital last night undergoing a sleep study. These are becoming increasingly common, and many people experience anxiety beforehand, so perhaps I can help by describing it to someone who doesn't know what to expect. Then again, maybe you shouldn't read this post if you're looking to be reassured...

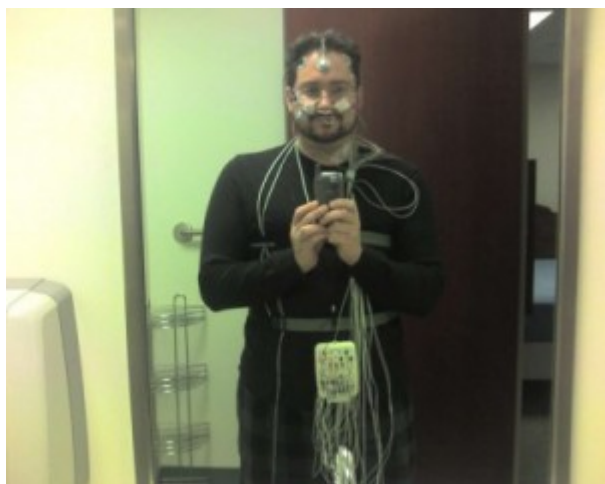
First, I got a prescription for a sleep study from my kids' pediatrician, who is also the local sleep expert doctor – I had mentioned to him that I never feel rested. So I arrived for my sleep study last night around 8 pm; usually they have you come earlier, but they wanted to mimic my bedtime schedule, and I rarely go to bed before midnight. That's funny – mimic my bedtime schedule, yet the 4 rowdy kids who usually keep me up past midnight were no where in sight, hmmm, not much mimicry there. So I waited in the lounge for a little bit for the nurse to do paperwork, which is more like a little living room that I luckily had to myself – didn't really feel like being social. Soon it was time to “hook me up” (which sounds better than it is, believe me) and we went into this little room off the lounge. I would not be exaggerating to say it was reminiscent of a clinical torture chamber. There was a simple chair bolted down in the middle of the small room, and various medical apparatuses and who-knows-what bolted to the walls, along with extra wires and electrical looking boxes and things – is this where they interrogated Saddam?

Not that I was nervous or anything because I really wasn't. I didn't like being away from my family, but I made the best of it by telling myself that I was going to enjoy the few hours away from the chaos; I had brought piles of old newspapers to catch up on and 3 hardcover books to read. And as far as the medical stuff goes, it didn't really seem like a big deal

after the 9 mos. of poking and prodding I've endured as a pregnant woman – times 4.

So I get all wired up, and after I sat in the lounge alternating between reading and watching tv (I had no idea what was even ON tv, which shows how little I watch it now), I decided that it was time for bed, and this is where things take a turn for the worse. As if the millions of electrodes the nurse had glued to various parts of my body weren't enough, she added two belts and also shoved something up my nose. That's right – they **glue** electrodes to you, disregarding your hair and everything. My kids today had fun playing with my stiff “glue hair”, but I quickly took a shower and washed it out before anyone got any ideas that “glue hair” is cool – that is one mess I don't need to clean up today or ever!

So I'm fully wired, and the nurse plugs me in, and then she leaves the room and comes over the intercom. She makes me do a series of silly actions – she said she wanted to “test the sensors”, but I was starting to think that her having me roll my eyes around in my head and demonstrate fake snoring might have just been cheap entertainment for the hospital's 3rd shift. When we were finished “testing the sensors”, the nurse turned off my light and I was expected to fall asleep, but I had lots of trouble. First of all, imagine trying to sleep while looking like this:



Not only that, but the bed was just awful, hard as a rock – I have a crick in my back today. And don't forget there is a camera and microphone on you at all times; it's a bit daunting to relax in this situation. And when they said that I could "bring my own pillow if I wish", I thought that was implying I should bring my pillow if I have some sort of special attachment to it. What they really meant was "You might wish to bring your own pillow because we only have little slabs of rubber we cover with pillowcases." Maybe they figured that if they put a pillowcase on it, they could call it a pillow, but after spending 8 hours with it, I strongly disagree.

So I had trouble falling asleep, big surprise. Not only was I so wired I felt like I could help E.T. phone home, but the bed and pillow were awful, there was a camera and a microphone on me, and the room was dark and quiet (that NEVER happens at home!). I was alone with my thoughts, and that's never a good thing ☐ It didn't help that I could occasionally hear the wind howling outside, and it reminded me of when the lights were on and the nurse was "checking" my fake snores – the lights had been flickering slightly. What if the power goes out, and there is a sudden electrical surge? Would I get shocked? Would I burst into flame? Would I disappear? Might I come away with some sort of obscure superpower? Hey, that might be kind of cool... I guess I finally drifted off, because the next thing I know, I'm waking up, even though it felt like I hadn't fallen asleep yet, and that's how I knew I still had hours left in my sleep study. Still uncomfortable, still cold, still not liking being both seen and heard while I'm asleep. And then I wake up again. Still uncomfortable, still cold... you get the picture. I must have woken up about 5 times during the night, tossing and turning each time, hoping for comfort until I passed out for good all tangled up in wires like a fly caught in a spider's web. Then I had a nightmare, and I wonder how that appeared on the charts? Finally, I hear a voice from above say "Lisa, the sleep study is over." Even though that was the best news I had heard in hours, it was a

bit unsettling to be woken up by an intercom saying my name.

Overall, it wasn't that bad, even though I was disappointed because I had been under the impression that I would be able to fall asleep easily, and that I would be in a comfy bed and stay asleep until the morning. Instead, I returned to real life very poorly rested early this morning with 3 kids to look after all day. But at least today, unlike yesterday, I can have all the coffee I can brew, and tonight I get to sleep in my own bed! Well, providing the coffee doesn't keep me up all night anyway!

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## Feeling Short And Old

I've been experiencing some sort of awful fatigue lately, so I begrudgingly went to the doctor to get it checked out. My husband had noticed me stop breathing in my sleep last week, so we suspect sleep apnea, but I have to undergo a sleep study to find out for sure. Good luck scheduling THAT during this Christmas season!

But the doctor also had a few interesting tidbits of advice, even though I felt extremely silly at the office since I actually saw my kids' pediatrician – he is also the resident sleep specialist. It didn't help any when I got measured by a Sponge Bob ruler and found out that I must be shrinking – I've always considered myself to be on the tall side, but this time, I didn't measure up – according to Sponge Bob, anyway. So not only am I shrinking, but somewhere along the line I've become a year-round allergy sufferer who also has mild asthma. And I just thought I was out of shape...

And to add insult to injury, I also got two new prescription medicines to add to my cabinet – just like any other senior

citizen would get at a doctor's visit □

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## That's IT!

I've **had** it with my sleep problems! I don't usually have trouble falling asleep, but that's probably because I don't even start trying until midnight or later. Sometimes I do have trouble falling asleep, and even if I can fall asleep easily, I usually do not stay asleep all night. Not that I remember any of the several or many times I wake up each night; I'm usually in a stupor where I'll say things that don't make sense or say not-so-nice things to the dog or anyone else who happens to be in my way. The main problem is that I wake up in the morning feeling terribly under-rested, never ready to start the day, and the problem has been getting steadily worse in recent weeks. I rarely get headaches, but because of the stress of my horrible week compounded by the not sleeping, my head has been throbbing all week (the extremely loud live band at youth group did NOT help!). I've tried going to bed earlier, I've tried limiting my food and drink intake at night, I've tried taking naps when time allows (which is rare), and I've tried taking melatonin (an herb found naturally in the body that helps promote sleep), but nothing is helping. I just can't take it anymore; it's impossible to make my long busy days of caring for 4 small children enjoyable when I feel so tired all the time. My husband stayed awake for a little bit and listened to me sleep last night, and he said that there were times when I stopped breathing, which is a symptom of sleep apnea. So, as much as I hate to do it and don't even really have the time for it, I've made an appointment with the local sleep specialist who just happens to be our childrens' pediatrician. We'll see what he says next week, but chances are that I'll get sent

over to the sleep center for a sleep study – YUCK. Just what I want to be: a lab rat; the subject of a study who has to find a way to fall asleep in a room with a bunch of people watching and while hooked up to all kinds of machines. This is just about one of the last things I want to do, but it shows how incredibly desperate I am to finally get a good night's rest. If they can actually help me, feeling well-rested is going to be an amazing yet totally foreign feeling! If it doesn't help me, I'm back where I started but with one less option AND having missed out on a fun night with my family ☹