

Getting Old... Er, Growing Up

Wednesday November 9 is the 2011 Country Music Awards – an event once so important to me that I would put my schedule on hold so I could enjoy watching this annual awards show on tv. For a few years now, I have committed my Wednesday nights to leading a small group for church's student ministries. The past 2 years, one of my kids happened to be sick on the same Wednesday nights as the awards show, so I volunteered to be the parent to stay home with the sick kid and I didn't have to miss the show nor play hooky from youth group – I had a legitimate reason for calling in sick. This year, there is again a virus circulating through our family, and I think I have a mild case... but things have changed. Even if one of my kids was ill tonight, I would be the one to go to youth group and let Hubby stay home with the sick kid(s). Luckily, I think we'll both be able to make it to youth group tonight, and I am so excited! The new series we started last week is about demons, and it gave me a great connecting point with my girls – we had a great group time last week! Now that I'm back from maternity leave and free from the distractions of pregnancy, I am stoked to build relationships with my youth group girls and help them build their spiritual relationships with Jesus Christ. I am so excited about youth group tonight that the country awards show hardly matters to me – I might try to set up a recording device so I can watch it later, but watching it live doesn't matter to me at all when once it was dire for my entertainment.

Maybe I'm getting old... no, I think I'm growing up! It's so cool to me that God is teaching me about prioritizing and also about using my free time and leading me toward hobbies that glorify Him. How amazing is it that I can be entertained, relaxed, refreshed, and feel fulfilled, not by doing something that only **I** enjoy but by doing something that affects others in a positive way as well?

The Wonder Of Childhood

I hate to disagree with Father's sermon this morning but I do not think ALL adults lose that sense of wonder and imagination that all children share. Some of us old'uns still possess some of those traits that create a magical feeling on Christmas morning and throughout the year. Many seem to choose to hide it under a "safe" facade. As usual, Father Art delivered a meaningful lesson with just the right amount of humor. In one tale, he related an episode involving a large delivery truck that had become stuck underneath a viaduct. A group of adults including big wigs of the delivery company and members of the highway patrol attempted to use their far superior intellect which they had obtained through experience and learning. However, all their formulas and brain power could not accomplish what an 8-10 year old child did. After numerous attempts to be heard, the youth finally convinced his elders to listen to his idea: To release just enough air from the tires to lower the truck enough and allow it to pass under.

I know that I have heard that story before but it does bear repeating. The young whippersnapper outsmarted his adult counterparts. Perhaps I do lose that wonder throughout the year, but as the Most Wonderful Time of the Year does approach, I for one always seem to become that 8-10 year old locked inside all of us. It seems to come earlier every year.

The CLASSIC, animated "Grinch" was on last night for the first time in what will probably be at least one showing a week from now until December 25 (I DVRed it so that I could have a Christmas classic -athon sometime in the next month or so).

Shopping complexes have already spruced up with trees and

decorations and the return of layaway where it had been discontinued a few years ago. While at Wally World the other day, I noticed Halloween clearance in front of Christmas decorations. I think Thanksgiving has become lost in the shuffle. I for one enjoy Turkey day. Not only can we stuff ourselves but also gather to share our wondrous blessings with those we love... of course, something we should do every day.

Towns have already hung their candy canes from light poles. I volunteered to assist at our county's Idol contest and sure enough, driving down SR 15, right as I turned into the hotel where the contest was held... there were the decorations hung,

Ok... enough of that (I hate to depress anyone with the number of days we have left ;)). After mass, the church had it's annual Fall Brunch. Father Art came over to our table mentioned how good the choir sounded today and asked how my brother was doing. He had only a short time before he had to venture out to his next mass. Quite a fellow who has made quite an impact on the entire community in the short time he has been serving as our priest. He takes all his meals at Rita's. He also enjoys sporting events (he congratulated our high school football team for making it to the playoffs for the second year in a row... the team lost in the first round 39-28).

The path that was taken

I've developed a sense of gratitude for facebook. I started using it just to make contact with my children, but I've noticed that there are times it puts me in a thoughtful mood.

Case in point, a question was brought up today: "If you could go back 20 years in your life, would you?"

I've asked myself that question, or one similar many times in my life. I always give it the same answer. I like who I am. I like where I am. My past made me who I am and took me to the where I am. I can't change the past without changing me. So, no thank you. I'll stick to the past that was.

Of course, this is all conjecture. There isn't a way to get to the past. And even if you got there could you be sure the changes you made would be better for you and all involved. I know that I couldn't be sure.

My life has been filled with joy and sadness. I've done some incredibly stupid things, and have had some flashes of brilliance. Without the sadness, the joy would be less intense. Without the mistakes, the good choices would be lost in history. Because of the differences, things stand out. They shine and become things to strive toward. They become part of the greater picture.

I have said that I am the product of my past. My past made me who I am. But the best thing of all is this: If I don't like who I am or where I'm at, I don't need to go back in time to change anything. I can start now and change the person I will be tomorrow.

How Hubby Saved Halloween

October is normally one of the busiest months for our family, and that was true before October 2011 – the month that saw us being blessed with a new baby, starting homeschooling, and Hubby starting a new job/career all at the same time. There are so many fun fall and Halloween events and activities that we like to do this time of year; we didn't even realize exactly how many until this year when we had to scale it back

a bit. We skipped the corn mazes, the pumpkin farms, and all the haunted attractions this year. We did take the kids to the mall for the trick-or-treating there, and it was lots of fun even if there were 50 times more people than last year – there was a line circling the perimeter of the entire mall! Not a problem, seeing as how we live near the smallest mall I've ever seen and the line was continuously moving – as I said, lots of fun!

I heard about a congressman on the news who wants to pass legislation to move Halloween to the 4th Saturday in October because it's safer for kids and easier to work around school if trick-or-treating is always on a Saturday and earlier in the day. Some lady they interviewed for her opinion on the street was against it; she said that would be like moving Christmas to make it more convenient. Umm, not even close in my opinion, but I won't go there. My point is that the area in which I live always schedules the Halloween stuff on Saturdays anyway – I guess we're ahead of our time here in rural Ohio, haha. This year we had 2 Halloween parties and our trick-or-treat on Saturday October 29. Except we found out during the mall trick or treat (which was on Tuesday night) that baby Luke is a homebody – he gets really fussy when we try to take him places, especially if it's outdoor places, and yes, we do bundle him up. Saturday was a very big day for all of us because Hubby's and my lack of sleep finally caught up to us. We began the day on a very grumpy note, and everything was very hectic as we tried to get our work done at the church and ready the kids for the Halloween festivities. We made it to the first party – the community Halloween party they have at the ice rink (no ice of course). We had tons of fun as usual, and we even got on the hayride before the rain came and before the line got too long. But Luke decided he was finished with the Halloween party before we were. No sticking this baby in a stroller and feeding him on the go like we did with the other 4 kids; he just won't have it and voices his complaints loudly. Luke is our fussiest baby; the

others were all very adaptable babies – in retrospect, I guess we were spoiled. We are a very busy family, so either us scaling things back for Luke or trying to get him to adapt to our busyness will be interesting. He can go from what I call ‘zero to screaming’ in a matter of seconds, but don’t get me wrong – he’s oh-so-incredibly cute and lovable. It’s just that his idea of a good time is being held and cuddled – constantly. Which also explains my lack of blogging lately – while I am feeling better after being sick most of the pregnancy and am recovering well after the surgery, I am not a very successful one-handed typist. There really isn’t a choice between cuddling a cute baby or blogging, now is there? So anyway, I took Luke to the car while Hubby finished up at the party with the other kids, and we decided to put off trick-or-treating until another day and do it in a nearby community that had scheduled it on Sunday. We also decided that Hubby would stay home with Luke that evening while I took the other kids to our other planned Halloween party. We went home and tossed a couple of frozen pizzas in the oven for a quick dinner, but wouldn’t you know by the way that Saturday was going – we burnt a pizza and only the kids got fed. At least our evening plan worked out – I went to the party with the 4 older kids, and we all had a blast. Luke actually let Hubby catch a nap while we were gone too!

Sunday we drove the 10 miles to the town where we were going to trick-or-treat, but we quickly became confused – no one was out; it was like a ghost town. Hubby stopped at a gas station and found out that the trick-or-treating was from 3:30-5. We had readied ourselves and arrived there ready to trick-or-treat from 5:30-7. Apparently my lack of sleep had impaired my ability to read the time correctly in the newspaper. I can’t believe I did that – I had checked the paper probably about FIVE times throughout the week to make sure I had the right time, day, and place. And I had misread the information each of those FIVE times. So my genius Hubby made us a plan. He stopped at Walmart and picked up 2 huge bags of candy – at

full price I might add, which was hard for him. He loves store clearances and sales, and it's a testament to how much he loves his family that he bought all that candy at full price knowing that it would be half off in just a day or two. But anyway, we got the candy and stopped at the dollar store and bought each kid a flashlight. We drove over to the park, and Hubby hid the candy all around the park and then we let the kids loose with their flashlights and trick-or-treat bags to find it. They loved it! They said they liked it even more than trick-or-treating, and we even got an unprompted handmade thank you card later that evening from 7-year-old Sammie – and I quote, "I love wat we did today". I should add how great the kids were in the car as we tried to figure out what was going on with the trick-or-treating. They were all in their costumes and ready to go, and then mom and dad starting driving around aimlessly. When they found out they wouldn't be trick-or-treating after all, there was not a tear, not even a protest. Just a few questions and much patience as they waited to see what we would do instead – they are AMAZING!

I think I have some video of the kids at the mall, but other than that, things were way too hectic during our Halloween celebrations to take many pictures or video. We have our wonderful memories though, and those of course are priceless.

Here's a picture of my kids dressed in their Halloween costumes on the day they arrived in the mail from Grammie. 11-year-old Taylor was a pirate, 7-year-old Sammie and 5-year-old Disney were princesses, and 3-year-old Christopher was Superman:



A Halloween Audience Of One

I have had a great Halloween thus far. I did decide to go to my voice lesson in costume (anyone who remembers my costume from last year... recycled but still worth it). It did give me an idea for a quick costume change for "Songs I Have Learned."

I felt like Sky Masterson or "Good Ol' Reliable" Nathan Detroit from the musical which an area high school will be performing in the spring.

I had a guest sitting in on the lesson this morning. Seems that K has a female intern working with her who just completed her senior year at Appalachian State and is now at Bluffton University continuing on her Music Therapy degree... my coach had to visit the loo so I became acquainted with my audience of one. I only made it through 3 of my songs but after today I feel almost PLEASED with the most difficult piece and EVEN MORE confident with another. "The phrasing and coloring at the end were perfect drawing the audience right in." I felt like I was on *American Idol* or *Broadway Star* (if such a thing existed). Definitely one of my top three out of the 12 and to receive such praise with 4 months to go.

However, the costume lent itself perfectly to another song that I chose not to focus on. Perhaps it was a sign that I should use some more "Friends" to fill a little space. We will see.

A Time For Catching Up

WOW! Have I been lax in posting, or what?! Think I will use this space to catch myself and all my faithful readers up on the past few weeks (that have seemed like months. My second oldest brother went back to the doctor on Friday last and now waits until November 17th to go to the surgeon to learn when he is going to go in for his gall bladder removal. Funny the time of this one! A few years ago, the night before Thanksgiving, I went to my oldest brother's house to sit with him following his own surgery... of which he had a photo taken (a nice mental picture for Halloween).

Speaking of tomorrow's holiday... I was not able to join in much of the frivolity this year. Last night was my Saturday to sing at mass and wouldn't ya know "tricks or treats" was at the same time. However, I did get to see some of the younguns in their ghastly get ups. Elizabeth was Ghostface from the ghastly *Scream* films and her new friend of the male persuasion came as Fred Flintstone. Noah was a Ninja. Alex was a banana who decided to go as Freddy Krugger (with Jason mask and hatchet) and Charlie Sheen. How he came up with Charlie Sheen is beyond me but he was "Winning" as he got a \$10 prize at the judging. Alyssa was a Ghoul Maid and Sydney looked like a young Glinda-like princess. I did not get to see Shelby in her Whoopie Cushion costume. Nor did I get to see the other three as Snow White, Wonder Woman, or the 2 week old as I Dream Of Jeannie. Hopefully, there will be pictures of those

three sometime soon. Kyndall did win the prize for the youngest.

I just might have to dress up for my voice lesson in the morning. Speaking of THAT... my final piece for my "Songs I Have Learned" Weekender arrived in the mail via Jeff's mailbox last week (don't you love the mail system?). Now to get the other four voices together or at least inform them...

I hope you all have (or had) a frightfully ghoulish Halloween. Now that the month is nearly complete, I pray that the final two months pass with a bit more good times because the last month seems to have had a bit more of the not so good. And watch out for those signed documents that peculiarly are not notarized or you may get a football pulled out from under you.
UUUUUGGGGHHHHH!



A haunting we will go.

For years I've enjoyed the simple thrill of various Halloween hauntings. I've been to many haunted houses, cemeteries, theaters, mansions or woods over the years. There was even a time when I was trying to help organize a haunted attraction. This year I've had the pleasure of being one of the haunts.

What can I say, it has been a lot of fun and I get to do it again next week. I will say it is much harder to scare people than I thought. It takes timing and the proper setting. Then there are some people who think it is fun to go through not being scared. It is almost impossible to please them.

I've been through so many haunts that it takes a lot to scare me, I will get startled, but scared takes a bit. But I've always enjoyed myself and recognized the work of the actors. I hope the people going through the haunted forest this year do the same.

Warning About Potty Training At Walmart

My little boy Christopher is 3 years old, and we've been working on potty training for a while now. He gets it, but he just doesn't remember to make it to the potty every time he

has to go. The other day we were in Walmart, and he wanted to use the potty. Because he was with mom, he had to go in the ladies' room, and because he is an independent little guy, he wanted to go into the stall by himself. Next thing I know, there was a huge CRASH!

It seems that Christopher had taken off his diaper and tried to throw it away in the little "garbage can" that they have in each stall of a ladies bathroom. The receptacle somehow fell off the wall, clattered to the floor, and now used tampon applicators were rolling everywhere. Beyond disgusting, right? How are those things not a bio-hazard? Being the considerate little boy that he is, Christopher tried to pick up the garbage, but thankfully I was right there and shouted NOOO just in time before he touched anything. After that happened, my sensitive little guy was trying to finish going potty with his hands on his ears. He wouldn't let go, not only because of the loud noise the "garbage can" made when it fell but also because the automatic flushing toilets really scare him too. After we got all that sorted out, he did pry his hands off his ears long enough to wash them, but then those darn automatic energy-saver hand dryers got the best of him – those things are loud! In the end, potty mission accomplished, but in the future, it might just be easier for us to stay home until we're done with this potty training business!



A Hug For The Hugs

Strange how the events of a few days can change the atmosphere around you. Just days after I was joyously welcoming the arrival of two special little ones, a life-long family of friends experienced not one, not, two, but three tragedies.

On Thursday, one of my dearest friends welcomed a new granddaughter. The moments Teresa got to spend with her son Cody, his girlfriend Carly and their baby Cori were very happy and will be remembered forever but very short-lived as she was taken home above only a few short hours after she was born.

Saturday morning after finishing shopping for my nephew and nieces' birthday, I found a message on Facebook asking if I had heard about Don. She had read on a family member's post that he had passed away. Before we confirmed it, we decided to find out for certain. A few moments later, I received a horrific phone call. I said a prayer to calm myself down before I called mom's cell phone.

Hours before Don's passing, the twin sister of Blake's (Jena's son) girlfriend was killed in a car accident.

Such great memories growing up with the Hug family:

- The family lived in this house until my parents bought it when I was about 6 months old. My poodle, Buffy was one of Digit's puppies and we took her out often so they could visit.
- I was always "Seah's" baby. Marilyn sat for the four of us quite often. In the summer, Teresa would take over. I even asked Don if I could marry her. On her wedding day, I went back before the ceremony to see her and she told me "Please, don't cry." I don't remember if I did

or not (my memory fails me). While she lived in Ft. Myers, we would write to each other ON PAPER! Does anyone do that anymore? ☐ I was surprised when I rode along with Marilyn and my mother to pick Teresa up from the airport for Jena's wedding. I believe the ruse was that they had to go do something with the wedding dresses.

- Sunday night caramel corn. I put this on Facebook and Chad confirmed it! I KNEW that I was not crazy.
- I believe that I am too young to remember but my oldest brother Jeff was with them at McDonalds. He wanted a cheeseburger his way (Just ketchup). He did not get it 'his way" and got sick. ALWAYS The picky eater ☐
- Like Teresa did with me, Jena took Christi under her wing and took her wherever she went whenever possible. My sister was the flower girl in Ron and Jena's wedding.

So many great memories and I'm sure that I have only scratched the surface. But what an indelible mark the Hug's have left on not only myself but on my entire family. God, please watch over Marilyn, Van, Teresa, Jena, and Tod and their families in these painful days. Lift up their spirits and let Don, Cori, and Mickae rest in peace. As Jena's daughter Cassondra once stated: "We are like family who rarely see each other but know they are there,

Love you all!

So How'd It Go?

Overall, so much better than my fears were telling me it would go. I had my second cesarean section on Friday, October 7.

Boy was I nervous beforehand! I figured I would write out the details, just in case we decide to do this again I can look back at it and know what to expect. So I warn you, if you're squeamish about medical procedures or just plain not interested, then skip the post. But if I can make just one person feel more at ease about their impending cesarean, even if it's future me, then it's worth writing this all out and sharing the details.

The day of my scheduled cesarean, the hospital told me to arrive at 5:30 AM. Hubby and I set the alarm for 4:30 and got there a little early so we could visit the hospital chapel and pray together. Thankfully, Grandma had arrived in town the night before and had our 4 kids at her hotel. The first nurse we asked did not know where the chapel was in the hospital, which I found strange, but then again, our local hospital is undergoing major expansion and renovation, so I guess that's the excuse I'll let them have for the fact that their chapel (when we finally found someone who knew where it was) was just an empty room. No matter because God listens where ever you are, so we prayed together and went back to the maternity ward where they began to prep me for my surgery. They put an IV in, which didn't go very well. Seems I have great veins in my arms for drawing blood (the blood techs always ooh and ahh over me and my veins, which makes them weird in my book), but in my hands, not so much. Getting IVs is always very painful for me, and it bruises up my whole hand. This day was no exception. It hurt a lot, and they had to give me 2 holes before they got it right. Then the nurse comes and tells me that because of the combination of it being my 5th baby and the fact that I had to have a blood transfusion last time that they were going to have to give me a back-up port in my other hand just in case. So they start doing that, and that one hurts even more. Next thing I know, I have a golf ball sized lump in my hand – "The vein blew" the nurse told me. I don't ever want to hear anyone tell me that something carrying blood throughout my body "blew", and I still haven't googled that

one to see what it is because it sounds so nasty. And at this point, I'm near tears thinking that if things are going wrong already, what will happen when they cut me open? But they finally got my second IV port in, and then after the insertion of the catheter (not a big deal and I will spare the details), I was ready to be wheeled off to the surgery room in a wheelchair.

Luckily I had taken the c-section class at the hospital, so the cold sterility of the operating room did not alarm me, and I also knew that my Hubby had to wait outside until certain preparations were made. On our way into the operating room, I saw the backup doctor, and he was talking to himself in the hallway in kind of a strange way. He is known for being a bit different, so it didn't really worry me, especially since I knew my regular doctor would be there also. Besides, Dr. Strange delivered my 3rd child, and she was the easiest delivery I had. I will spare details for what happened next; it's a bit personal – if you really need to know how they prep a patient for a c-section then take a class at your local hospital. Then the anesthesiologist came in, and my heart sank when I realized it was the same lady who gave me my epidural during the birth of baby #4 – the epidural that never worked. She gave me my spinal, and it pinched a little, but much less than an epidural, not really a big deal at all. My legs started to get tingly, and I was really starting to panic big time. I kept asking the anesthesiologist if everything I was feeling was normal, and she was so nice and reassuring. They had a blood pressure cuff on my arm which kept going off every few minutes, and they also gave me oxygen in my nose – I felt very well cared for. They let Hubby in, and he and the anesthesiologist (so tired of typing that word, think I'll just call her Dr. Drug from now on) sat by my head the whole time. Dr. Drug said that they would test me to make sure that I was numb before they did anything, but guess what – they didn't. I brought this up to someone after it was over, and they had a good point – they probably tested my numbness but

didn't even tell me about it. Since it was working, I didn't feel the test, so they proceeded. Duh. It's just that I was so nervous about the numbing not working after what happened with my epidural; you can't blame me for being concerned.

The next thing I remember is the tugging and pulling, which is also something for which the c-section class prepared me. But it was actually much less unpleasant than I had panicked it would be. It's just that it seemed to take forever. They said it would take about 1-2 minutes and according to Hubby, it took 4 minutes. If you ask me, I would say it took 15 minutes. The whole time I could hear the doctors talking and I kept asking Hubby what they were saying because I was panicking about the health of the baby and the fact that I was lying there sliced open on the table. He said they were just discussing their techniques. My Hubby kept looking down there, past the curtain, and I kept wondering how he could do that – if it were him lying on a table sliced open, I don't know that I could look. But then again, I don't think it was like surgery looks on tv – I was picturing a completely open body cavity, but that's a different kind of surgery. I guess that's why there was all that tugging and pulling. So anyway, finally Hubby says that the baby is out, but I don't hear crying, so I begin to panic even more (notice a trend here? I am a worrywart, in case you haven't noticed). But both people seated at my head tell me everything is fine, and then I hear the baby (Luke James) cry. I feel so relieved, and I can't believe it's over. Except it's not. They clean up the baby, and they hold him up in front of my face for about a millisecond, and then they take him out of the room along with my husband and probably about half the staff that was on hand. At some point, I don't remember when, but I'm pretty sure it was after the baby was born, Dr. Drug held up a little vial and says, "I'm going to give you this." She puts it in my IV, and I find out later that it was Duramorph, a form of morphine. I'm wondering now if this is something they give all their c-section patients (those who are not opposed to

medications), or if I got the “panicking patient” special. At any rate, after the morphine, my memory gets fuzzy, but I do remember lying there getting sewed up (still not feeling a thing below my chest). My complaint was that it seemed to take FOREVER because I had nothing to do but lie there, and all I could think about was seeing my baby. I even got envious of my poor husband, because here I had just gone through this surgery and now HE was getting to spend all this time with the baby and I hadn’t even barely gotten a look at him. They should really think about putting a tv in there or something... or would that distract the doctors? Best not to think about it, I guess. I had to keep talking myself out of looking at the ceiling because it was reflective, and I could see a little of me and a lot of red there – they ought to fix that too; I would bet that no one wants to see themselves getting surgery. But finally they were finished, and a few of the staff people worked together to lift my helpless body onto the gurney for the transport back to my room.

When I got there, there was Hubby with the baby, all excited to see me, and then I finally got to hold our new son. And he was (is) so incredibly beautiful. The rest of the day was wonderful. Slowly my legs began to work again, and I could not believe it that I had absolutely no pain! It did not resonate with me that I was on drugs. I did feel kind of loopy, but I didn’t really think much of it and enjoyed the euphoria of having a new healthy baby and the relief that the worst part was over. Weather-wise it ended up being a terrible weekend to be stuck in the hospital – it was 80 degrees out and sunny, and the grandmas took my kids to the zoo on Saturday, so I had to miss that, but at least they got to go. When I was released from the hospital on Monday, it was still very nice out for a few days, but I didn’t feel up to going outside and by the time I did, Northern Ohio fall weather was in full swing and I’ve been cold ever since. Oh well, such is life, and my Hubby had perfect advice when I was bummed about missing the beautiful fall colors (it was amazing

how different our neighborhood looked with all the leaves on the ground after just 3 days!). He said, "There will be plenty more color-changing seasons, but there are only so many baby seasons." What a wise, wonderful man!

Back to my recovery in the hospital, it went fairly smoothly, although I did have a lot of pain starting Saturday once the morphine wore off. The baby was up all night on Friday, but I didn't mind at all because I just wanted to be with him. I haven't watched tv in years, but over the weekend, I watched countless episodes of 3's Company, Roseanne (forgot about the one where Becky gets into the liquor cabinet, haha!), and Everybody Loves Raymond – you know, shows from when tv was actually good. I learned about the Prohibition era from PBS, and I also learned that there are conspiracy theorists who believe that there really isn't gold in Fort Knox – hmm, that's something to think about I guess. Luke slept a full 5 hours on Saturday night from 1:30-6:30, and so did I since no one came for my blood until 6:30. Last time I was in the hospital, I seem to remember them coming for blood every hour on the hour which made it really hard to sleep, but then again I had a lot of complications last time including the need for an emergency cesarean and a blood transfusion. Sunday night, little Luke decided he wasn't going to sleep again, and I woke up from my 45 minute nap that night feeling terrible – achy and lots of other pain, and chills because of a fever I was running. Not only that, but there was a mean nurse who informed me in a not-so-nice way that I was over my limit of acetaminophen, which meant I was not allowed any pain medicine. That really ticked me off; partly because of the way she said it, and partly because no one had given me any indication that this was a problem. Had they warned me that I was getting near the limit, I would have declined some of the meds offered to me to avoid this. Actually, all of the other nurses had been telling me that I should stay ahead of the pain. They specifically said not to wait until the pain was really bad to take the meds otherwise they wouldn't work. The

staff must have known I was upset because at 11pm Sunday night, my doctor called my bedside phone personally and reassured me. And my doctor is the one I credit with my smooth delivery and quick recovery – she has been 1000% better than my previous doctors in every way throughout this process, and for that, I am so thankful.

Since I've been home, I've been resting (probably not as much as I should have, but I have 5 kids now, who can rest with 5 kids in the house??). Hubby has been *amazing* at taking care of me AND things around the house, but he also started a new job 2 days after the baby was born, which leaves him with 2 jobs, taking care of the 4 kids and me AND waking with the new baby at night as he likes to do. My mother did a ton of laundry while she was here, and I'm just now starting to do laundry again a week and a half later, so that helped a lot too. People from church have been wonderful about sending meals for our family, and that has been incredible. Not only that, but we also have frozen meals that people sent and that my husband's mother made while she was visiting for when our meal delivery runs out. It's been crazy, but we are managing, and a week and half later, I've been out and about and back in the real world. I still have pain, but nothing extreme, and my 600mg ibuprofen works pretty well for that. There are 2 complications I had that I was not expecting; one is worthy of a blog post all its own and I'll get to it next time. The other is the return of my backaches. I've had a sore back since high school; I worked fast food and had to pop a Doan's before every shift to make it through. There are various things that I think caused it, but what does that matter now. The strange thing is that during my pregnancy, my backaches disappeared. Most women find new backaches during pregnancy, and mine disappeared. I didn't think much of it until I get home from the hospital and experience my back pain again. This is discouraging because I know the incision pain will go away with time, but the backaches seem to be getting worse, and I have no guarantee that my back will ever feel better. I

guess it's something to talk to my wonder doc about in my 6-week follow-up. I already had my 1 week follow-up with the doctor, and she said my incision looks really great and my body is healing well – for that I am thankful.

Baby's healthy, 4 big sisters and brother are healthy, I'm getting healthy, and Hubby is healthy (even if he needs much more sleep – praying for that to come soon) – what more can we ask for! Life is good; God is great!

And oh yeah... everywhere little Luke goes, he has a constant crowd of admirers. If it wasn't so sweet, it would be annoying because hey, when is it MY turn to hold the baby?!?

□

