

One Foot Out The Door...

Changes abound! So many things happening that I can't keep up writing about them on my blog. It seems like every time I sit down to relax, I'm doing something with the kids – playing board games, homeschooling, doing puzzles, cuddling while we watch home videos together... Mommy and kid time is so much more important than blogging, of course, so I'm not losing sleep over it... but I do miss blogging, and I know I will miss having a chronicle of these days for future reading. I was just looking back at my blogs from the past; looking to see how I felt after my cesarean 3 years ago, hoping to maybe find some tips for recovery this time around. It was so nice to read about what was going on in our lives at that point, the challenges we were enduring, how the kids were growing, what they were doing, that kind of thing. But these days, if I have a kid in my lap, there is NO extra room to have a laptop nearby! As of Friday September 16, I am 36 weeks pregnant – home stretch for sure! While my belly is not bulging nearly as much as it did with my previous 4 pregnancies (I've actually LOST weight since July, but dr said baby is growing fine and that's what matters), I am looming large these days, and the seemingly most mundane of tasks is an effort on my part and seems to take me forever. I am blessed with an awesome Hubby who has really stepped up around the house to keep us running despite the craziness and challenges that a 4-kid household brings. Very Honorable Mention goes to my oldest daughter who has also been amazing lately with her willingness to help. She has gone above and beyond, not only doing everything that is asked of her but also coming up with her own ideas to pamper pregnant mom, following through with these ideas, and also excelling in our newly designed homeschooling program. A few weeks ago, Taylor surprised me with a manicure/pedicure, and she even kept going outside to check on the little ones while Mom's nails were drying. The other day, she came up with the idea and made me breakfast in

bed. Her emotional and spiritual growth lately has been amazing to see, and hopefully I will have the time to blog about the lesson in forgiveness that she taught our whole family.

So how is the homeschooling going for us? If you remember, we began homeschooling our two eldest this year – 6th and 2nd grades. Many people have asked how it's going, so it's time for a formal update on the blog... It's going GREAT! Thanks for asking! We began with a very planned out schedule, but we've found it necessary to be more flexible. We've also tweaked our planned curriculum here and there and attended our first homeschooling book sale and picked up some things to supplement our curriculum. All normal and necessary parts of the process, and we've seen the kids become closer with each other and us their parents, all while getting to watch them learn new things up close. I can't wait to jump in as a full time homeschool teacher, but my patience is being tested since I have to wait until I recover from my planned cesarean in October.

Now for the big news: a few blog posts ago, I wrote about many doors opening for our family. We were still determining at that time which paths to explore, and our prayers have been answered; the paths whittled down to an almost definite road. Loonngg story made very short is this: my husband was offered a job as a pastor at a local church, and he accepted. This means that we will be, in effect, switching churches. Talk about something that came out of the blue! There is nothing about our current church that I don't like, and I had planned on going there for years to come and raising our kids among our church community. But, as we all too often learn, God has plans for us. And who am I to argue? I KNOW His plans are so much better than any road map I could have drafted for myself and my family. So now comes the transition to the new church. It's a much smaller church, so among my husband's and my first duties will be to acclimate ourselves into the new

church environment and create a children's ministry. It will be challenging but also extremely exciting. My husband has one final meeting with the regional governing board of the church to finish out the interview process, but everything we've been told by the elders of the church is that this is just procedure. So, last Tuesday, I sadly gave my notice to my friend and mentor that oversees my 2nd/3rd grade girls Sunday school class. Oh, how I will miss those kids! I've known them and watched them grow for a year and a half now, ever since I had them as 1st grade students last year. But as I said, who am I to challenge God's plan? While this all happened so suddenly in our lives, the chain of events and circumstances that led up to my husband being chosen to lead this church was so obviously orchestrated by God that there is no need to doubt whether it was meant to be, nor is there need to go into detail about exactly how it happened. I will just say how much we KNOW that it was meant to happen, and that will guide me in the future if I ever begin to have fears or doubts in my own abilities to fulfill His work for me.

October 7 is when I am scheduled to have the baby, and 2 days later (while I'm still in the hospital) is when my husband is to spend his first Sunday at our new church. As soon as I feel up to it, I will join him there, and our kids will follow as soon as we set up our children's ministry. That leaves me 2 Sundays to teach my current Sunday school students, or possibly just one if I decide to go and meet more of the congregation at the new church before I go into the hospital. I may have one foot out the door, but I'm walking into a whole new world. Because it is the world that God has designed for me at this point in my life, I could not be more excited!!!

In General...

Here we are in the middle of August already, how did that happen? I know how July flew by for me since most of it was spent traveling, but where the heck has the beginning of August gone?

I am 30 weeks + a few days pregnant. I talked to the doctor yesterday and am most likely going to have the baby at 39 weeks (planned cesarean), so there is not too much time left of this pregnancy – for that, I am mostly glad! I cannot wait to meet little Luke! Plus I'm sick of the soreness, the nausea, the moodiness, and all that good stuff. I just hope that I turn back into a normal person again because right now it seems like an impossibility. I can't remember my life before I was pregnant – did I really have enough energy to function every day? Sure don't now, but most days, I can fake it but that is exhausting in itself.

I wrote a few posts ago about making important decisions and about doors of opportunity opening for us. For certain things, we are still praying, being patient, and waiting to see what God's plan is for us right now. In the meantime, we did reach one decision about a lifestyle change for our family, and we are very excited to get started. Close family already knows what this is about, but do I want to reveal it to others for the first time in a blog? I'm not sure... But either way, we are very excited about it, and it's been a lot of fun already to begin this journey. Just another thing to look forward to this fall!

Tonight is the last night of our Wednesday night Bible study, and it's been great to make new friends and to get to know these families. I am looking forward to having 3 (THREE!!) free Wednesday nights for our family once the class is over and before youth group starts again. And how is this for irony? I wrote the preceding paragraphs, saved it as a draft,

then did lunch with the kids before coming back to it. During lunch, I checked the mail and I found postcards notifying us of youth group leader training meetings on TWO of my THREE free Wednesdays. Sigh. I need to be happy with that one free evening, but my human nature disappoints me because I almost had 3 free Wednesdays instead of one... oh well, such is life. Wednesday nights are fun anyway; I just wish I had more energy to enjoy them.

My Monday morning Bible study is drawing to a close also – that one I will really miss. I've become close with the other ladies in my class, and it's been so great to get to know them and learn about the similarities and the differences in our lives and journeys in our relationships with Christ. I will even miss the 5 hours a week of homework – it was SO incredibly valuable and eye-opening for me to spend this time with God's word. If I weren't taking on so much this fall, I would definitely sign up for another one. Maybe in the spring or next summer...

Seen some movies lately, as usual – I think it's probably mine and Hubby's favorite thing to do together, snuggle and watch movies after long days of work and tending the kids. I had heard that the new Planet of the Apes movie was supposed to be good, so we saw that, but I was disappointed. It was okay, but I was hoping for less ape, more planet – meaning, the movie ended just as the apes were about to take over. I would have liked to see their rise to power as they actually take over the planet. Maybe that's going to be saved for the next movie? The movie was entertaining, but there was a little too much animal cruelty and not enough payoff – seeing the apes take over the planet – for having to watch all that animal cruelty. Of course the creatures were CGI so you know none of them were hurt during filming and it was just a movie, but that doesn't mean in my spare time I want to sit and watch that and think about what goes on in animal testing labs.

We haven't visited the Redbox in a while, mostly because we

had seen many of the movies they had (we watch a lot of movies!). But Hubby ventured out last night and picked out Cedar Rapids, a fun (a bit more vulgar than I usually like, but interesting just the same) movie about insurance salesmen starring Ed Helms (Andy Bernard from The Office; he's also in the Hangover movies). It was a different kind of movie, and we both enjoyed it.

That's about it for now... I just had the opportunity to sit and blog for awhile – I MADE the opportunity, actually – because I just HAD to today. I've had this awful headache that's been lodged behind my left eye for a few days now, and running around chasing kids again was just too much for today. And I do need to sit more. For someone in my condition, I really think I should be resting more, but the nature of the busyness in our household makes it an impossibility. I'm finding it quite a challenge to take good care of myself, finding time to eat right to take care of my anemia and gestational diabetes and all that stuff. It's just too hard to put myself first when I have 4 little ones to take care of and Hubby has his own full plate with work as well. I hate to complain about physical stuff, but I really need to feel better soon.

I'm Thinking... I'm Thinking...

Some comic relief in the title of this post to distract me from quite an overwhelming day today:

Received some devastating news (for us, but don't worry – it's great news for some friends of ours) prayed about it, and examined the possibilities that may arise from it. There's also been several intriguing and exciting doors being revealed to us lately, and we are praying on, thinking about, and waiting to see which ones will open and where they might lead. We've been contemplating a huge decision in the past few months regarding our family, and it's time to finalize that decision. We spent some time with friends today gathering information and establishing a support system for this possible lifestyle change. I'm excited but for the lack of sleep wearing me down and making me feel overwhelmed – it's all a lot to process. I will write more in a bit – as you can see, I have a new keyboard. I have a whole July manifest half-written that's kept me busy – I want the kids to be able to read about our family's stellar July 2011 on my blog someday, so I'd better get around to it. Same thing with my chronicle of the Florida trip we took in January that still has the last part missing 6 months later – oops. I don't know what my problem is – the only thing that distracts me from blogging is doing homework for my Bible study class – and the fact that I found my Zoo Tycoon game; that's really distracting from productivity. And oh yeah – the 4 kids running around the house because it's been too hot to play outside; that can make blogging a bit difficult.

I WAS Gonna Blog More This Summer, But...

I am enjoying some of the freedom that the summer affords me: no youth group on Wednesday nights, no teaching Sunday school, no having to drop the kids off or pick them up at school –

well, the kids will be out of school in 2 days, so I haven't had a taste of that yet, but I'm looking forward to trying for my afternoon nap without time constraints – if only Terrible-Two-Dude will stop yelling my name during these nap attempts.

Don't get me wrong, I enjoy all of these activities, but there is something liberating about not being tied down to them for an entire summer. As much as I absolutely loved teaching 1st graders on Sunday mornings, it was really great last Sunday to not have to get up at 8am and get 4 crabby kids ready for what amounted to a double church service for them – one while Mom and Dad teach and one while Mom and Dad go to worship. Our family rolled out of bed by 10, got ready, and left the house around 10:40, getting to church in time to relax with friends before the service with plenty of time to spare. I enjoyed Wednesday nights with my 6th grade girls, but there was a lot of emotionally exhausting drama there at the end, and I so needed a break. Besides, it's nice to have Wednesdays free. But wait, I don't have Wednesdays free! Hubby and I signed up to organize and facilitate a class at church called Changing Hearts, Changing Lives – a personal ministry class that utilizes a DVD series by Paul Tripp and small group discussion to lead Christians to be able to effectively counsel others in a God-loving and caring way. We've had two weeks of this class so far, and it's going great! So I can't really say that I miss my free Wednesday nights. I never got a taste of a free Wednesday night anyway; what's that like?

I also signed up for a women's Bible study series (Beth Moore for those of you that know her work) that meets on Monday mornings. I hesitated with this one because it meets ALL summer – beginning today before school is out and going right through to August after the kids go back to school. But there is child care there, so if my 4 kids haven't killed each other by the time Mondays roll around, this will get us out of the house once a week. Also, my oldest daughter gets to help with the child care with other 'big kids' her age, so that will be

good for her too. I enjoyed my first class today, but I have to note the intensity of this class – 5 nights of homework per week! Pre-Christian Taylhis 1.0 would have panicked and said ‘I don’t have time for this!!’, but Taylhis 2.0 feels pretty good about it. I’m excited to immerse myself more fully in God’s word, and the structure of the class will have me getting to know better other women at my church. I can find time for my homework; after all, isn’t more butt-time for the pregnant lady just what the doctor ordered? I’m not sure about that, but it’s definitely on MY want-list because these days my feet (legs, thighs, etc) are killing me, and I have a lot more growing to do!! Problem is, I’m going to spend that butt-time in front of my Bible and my class workbook rather than my blog, so there goes my plan of blogging more... oh well, who said blogging more was a good plan for me anyway?



Trying to write more

Here I am watching Julie and Julia and I decided that I needed to do something to keep me blogging everyday. I am thinking about blogging on the movies that I watch, but if anyone else has any other ideas, I would like to hear them. Maybe if I had multiple things to write about, I would be able to keep up with this. I don’t do a lot of interesting things in my life to write about everyday.

So hopefully I will be able to figure out something. Hope to hear some suggestions soon!

Creativity With Spam

If you're looking for recipes for that gross canned meat, you've come to the wrong place... This post is about the internet spam variety since the blogs here have been getting a ton of spam comments recently. I just mark them as spam and delete them, but some are so amusing that they deserve recognition.

Come on people. Some of these are so obviously written by someone who doesn't even speak English – am I really supposed to believe that they read my English blog and understood enough to appreciate it? Some are just general comments, and I'm not (that) stupid, so they're obviously such generic comments that they barely apply to the blog post for which they are written. Some just don't make sense at all as you'll see below; I've dug up the best 5... and I wonder how much spam I will get on this spam post?

– The following is a response I got to a post I wrote about local murders:

Me and my brother eat with a fork too, but that doesnt' change or mean anything, does it?

What?

– I received the following comment on a blog post I wrote about a man and his eagle:

Definitely trust that which you stated. Your explanation was certainly the easiest to recognise. I tell you, I usually get irked when folks discuss problems that they plainly have no idea about. You managed to hit the nail at the head and explained out everything without complication. Maybe, people usually takes a signal. Will likely return to obtain more. Thanks.

Mhmm...

– Here is a comment on a blog I wrote about everyday life:

Martin you beed to sort out the awful display after this weekend. Too many tired wasters.

Makes no sense whatsoever.

– Another one from the same everyday life post:

Intimately, the post is really the best on this precious topic. I concur with your conclusions and will eagerly look forward to your coming updates. Just saying thanks will not just be sufficient, for the exceptional lucidity in your writing. I will instantly grab your rss feed to stay abreast of any updates. Gratifying work and much success in your business endeavors!

Wonderful use of the English language there. Get a thesaurus for your birthday, didja?

– And finally, this one had Europe (or Australia as it turned out to be) written all over it – my first clue was the use of the word ‘keen’. One thing I’d like to know is, why are these spambots so enthusiastic about telling their brother?

Yes, I was very keen on that. So was my brother. He said he will check it out tomorrow. We will be back before you know it.

Great. Is that a threat or a promise?

Fool Me Once, Strike One

My kids have been totally crazy lately. End of school year I guess? Great, let’s take a look at the irony in that... end of school year makes kids act crazy, which makes me dread the end of the school year when I will have 4 crazy, bored, unstimulated kids 24/7. Nice irony, that. But anyway, today

it's been one thing after another. So much so, that I've decided to use my spare minute to blog it instead of doing one of the other many and more productive things that I had planned for today.

I guess it began when my son pooped and smeared it all over the bathtub. He somehow managed this while his sister was watching him so I could run to the kitchen for a minute to stir lunch which was on the stove. I had to turn down the stove and delay lunch while I cleaned up the mess. Don't worry, I washed my hands (many times), but lunch was late, giving my daughter less time than usual to eat it before school. I took extra time today to make their favorite mac n' cheese, but no one ate anything. So that also cancels my make-your-own pizza sandwiches I was planning for dinner. Like I'm going to allow the extra mess and time it will take for the kids to make their pizza sandwiches when they wouldn't even eat lunch. Besides, I have my end-of-the-year MOPs meeting to get to, and I'm not taking 4 hungry kids into MOPs childcare if they don't have time or refuse to eat. Let's take bets on whether or not I will actually make it into the shower before my meeting... I could go now, but then I'd have the company of my 3-year-old, who's been wanting to take showers with me lately. It's nice to have a buddy, but my showers used to be my downtime, especially needed on a day like today... By the way, did anyone see the [nice article about MOPs](#) in the latest American Profile magazine? I enjoyed the few paragraphs I've had time to read...

Back to today – I finally got my 3-year-old to eat her lunch (had to drop what I was doing to chugga-chugga-choo-choo into her mouth), so she was rewarded with Cheetos. Next thing I know, she and her brother had stomped the entire bag into the floor.



While I was cleaning that up, they were playing in the bathroom sink and flooded the floor. In the words of Michael Scott from my favorite tv show The Office – “Fool me once, strike one. Fool me twice, strike three.” So rather than leave them unattended, even for just long enough to clean up yet another mess, I put the little guy down for his nap before I cleaned up the latest mess. Thought that little Office quote would make me smile, so at least I was right there ☐

And if you think that my 3 and 1-year-old kids were actually helping with the cleanup, you must not have kids because they only succeeded in spreading the Cheeto crumbs around further. But at least they thought they were helping, and they had fun while doing so. Plus, note my gorgeous Mother’s Day bouquet in the background of the one pic – It’s from the kids (yeah right). I ♥ Hubby!

I’m just extra stressed since I’m trying to keep the house nice since we’re having a birthday party this weekend. Don’t ask me why I’m trying to keep a nice house while waiting for 22 five-and-six-year-olds to run wild around my house celebrating my daughter’s birthday... that doesn’t make much sense, does it? Maybe I *have* finally lost it...

Hard to believe

It has been 2 years of blogging for this old man. Sure I like tech stuff, but writing about this or that was never something I thought I would do on a consistent basis. But 543 blog posts later, I guess I surprised myself.

I've rambled on about many things. Life, family, friends, movies, food, theater and the list could go on.

As the background of our little blogging world is changing (Not a bad look either), I'm wondering what direction to take my own blogging efforts in the next year. I'm sure I will continue to write about things I find important or interesting (I wouldn't do this otherwise), but I wondering about content. During the first 2 years I said very little about two subjects. Part of that is something I learned in my youth. "Every topic is fair game except Religion and Politics". These two subjects seem to bring out the best and the worst in some people. In like minded people, the discussions can be calm and rational. In other groups, the discussions tend not to be so rational. Provoking confrontation was not something I wanted in my blog. So I tend to avoid those two subjects. Is this good, bad or indifferent? I'm not sure, but since I usually avoid those subjects in real life, I guess it is me. So that is not a direction I will be taking.

What is left? More of the same? I'm not sure at the moment. I guess we will see.

I'm still working on it...

A semi-challenge was placed on this blog, for a movie quote blog. It is a little more difficult than I thought at first. Some of the first things that came to mind were quotes from shows I have been in. Then some TV shows that I like, and finally some movies.

So I was wondering how to handle that. I'm thinking I should keep it to movies only, but there go some good TV quotes. And then I have to make sure that the quotes I have from plays I've been in are actually in their movie counterpart. Tough to do. I will have to keep a list of all the movies that the quotes have been in. And no partial phrase quotes. The quotes should make up a complete sentence. And not a long 'blog' worthy quote from some movie. That would be cheating...

Can I do it?

Merry Christmas!

I haven't really felt up to blogging lately (one of those major life change things – NOT one of the good ones and NOT something I'm going to discuss on a blog right now), but I couldn't let the holidays go by without sending good wishes to everyone (anyone?) who still reads my on-hiatus blog. Bear with me, I'll probably be back soon. Here's to hoping 2010 is better than 2009!

Have a very merry Christmas and a Wonderful New Year!

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men. Luke 2:14