

Part II

Okay, long commercial break over. We are on Saturday now I believe:

7AM: Lights turned on outside in the hallway, I wake up for the last time with a little headache but much less exhausted since going to bed. I was exhausted because for three out of the four days prior I was up before 6AM looking for subbing jobs. I found them, but the toll it took was severe. So another sub-8 hour night, but I figured I would survive. So everyone got up and I let some kids head to the bathroom to change out of their night clothes (they were too modest to change in front of others even if we were all guys- just wait until middle school boys, when you'll be changing in the locker room in front of even more people). Myself, I just wore my day clothes to bed- I had showered and put on some fresh clothes just before coming to the retreat so I would be able to do this. 20 minutes later, we were in line for breakfast. The end of the line. Oh, well. Eggs, sausage, french toast sticks, fruit, and OJ. Well, I *think* they were sausages- didn't taste much like breakfast sausage.

8AM: Eyes are really bugging me. The clothes weren't the only things I left on overnight. The contacts I have are extended wear, so I figured at least once I could wear them overnight. I had successfully worn them during naps before so I figured I could get away with overnight just once. My eyes disagreed. I put drops in when I woke up and several times since, but no go. Eventually I just gave up and went back to my room to take them out and put on my glasses. Unfortunately the damage had been done and my eyes would be bugging me for most of the day. So, time for session 2 now. Each session started with a

video that was just pure entertainment. I came back at the end of this video to sit with my guys (the high school leader in my room was keeping watch while I changed into my glasses). Up front game again- this time it involved two from each team, a boy and a girl, one from my own cabin (you can figure out which one...). The boys had to wear shaving cream on their faces and the girls threw cheese puffs on them. Hilarious. At the end of the time the one with the most cheese puffs stuck to them would win. In the end I think one other team had more than us, but their boy made the mistake of moving before they could be counted, losing half a dozen puffs. We won. Come to think about it, I think we won Friday night too. Worship followed with another four songs like last night.

9AM: Worship continued, and then Dr. Brian came on the scene and taught from Jonah 3, when the story started over with a better response from Jonah and this time the Ninevites took the warning God gave them through Jonah seriously. According to the Bible, they all repented of their wicked ways and came to God, and He spared them. This has a fairly obvious (I hope) correlation to coming to Christ. We even ended the time with a prayer giving the kids an opportunity to repent themselves and accept Jesus. One of my guys raised his hand. Unfortunately for me I had to let my high school leader- did I mention he was my high school leader at camp just two summers ago?- take the pleasure in talking to him about it during small group time since we decided to split the group for today's small group times so we would each take five, and the boy who just accepted Christ was one of his five. Since my cabin was being used for piano lessons, we had to use the room across from us. We could have had both groups in there, but Eric decided to take his group elsewhere. We talked about listening to God and accepting Christ for the next half hour. My church being what it is, by fourth grade

it seems that 90% say they have already accepted Jesus at some point, so I decided to lead the discussion in who Jesus is to them to let them see if they truly understand what it means to accept Him.

10AM: At this time we were supposed to start cleaning up the cabin. Of course with piano lessons we had to wait so I let them exchange phone numbers with each other instead before we finally had to sneak in and grab our coats for game time downstairs. The game time was split in two this time with two teams playing each other in a game outside and in the gym. We were outside first. Has anyone ever played a game where a balloon is tied to your ankle and you have to try to pop everyone else's balloon before someone pops yours? This game was similar. A popsicle (still in its plastic!) was taped to the kids' arms and they had to try to rip them off of the other team. Once a child's popsicle was lost, he or she was out. Last one standing won. Well, at the end of the time the team with the most standing won, which was the other team. Oh well, can't win 'em all. No, the kids couldn't eat the popsicles during the game but they could at the end.

11AM: The teams switched. The second game was ice block relay. Only, one of the ice blocks broke so it became scooter relay instead, at least for the boys. I think next year they need to create extra blocks, several extras. Yes, this was the indoor game. One camper sitting on the block of ice, another camper had to push the other to the other end of the gym where they would switch places and come back. With one block broken, the boys were on scooters (the square variety that you sit on, not the sort that is long with a handlebar) the entire time while the girls got to play the game with the ice blocks. At this time I felt like I was coming down with something. I sat down most of the time against the gym

wall. At the end of this time we had won three games out of four, but since they had won the popsicle game it looked like they won overall. We went back to our cabins to take off our coats and head down for lunch. We weren't last this time. ☐

12 noon: I have to say I was very disappointed in this lunch. It was chicken nuggets and mac & cheese. Only, there was nothing to dip the nuggets in and the other dish was more macaroni than cheese. In fact, I couldn't taste any cheese at all. The economy is affecting everyone, and it certainly took a toll on the food here. One leader commented that he had eaten more junk over the last three meals than he had over the last six months. Hmm. Dessert was- not for me. I am one who doesn't like yogurt unless it's the frozen variety and this is what they served. Well, the lemonade was good. At the end of this meal I finally had to pull the pastor aside and inform him that I was running a fever and my eyes were **still** bugging me. Since I wasn't feeling nauseous he suggested I just stay and rest during the next session which followed lunch and see if I improved. After a short lunch, session 3 began. The game this time had something to do with singing familiar tunes, but I don't know exactly, nor who won. I was in the back of the room with my eyes shut trying to rest. The game leader I mentioned from Friday who stayed in our room because it was the one his boy was in kind of took over for me.

1PM: Session 3 continued. Worship, then the message by Dr. Steve on Jonah chapter 4 which I didn't hear, and then small groups. We had our small group time in our cabin (piano lessons were over) while Eric took his group back where they were earlier. Again, I didn't lead but sat while my stand-in took over. In the end he had everyone take turns praying, which I was willing to do at least, but he chimed in immediately after the last boy. No big deal. We got ready

for the final game.

2PM: Outside first again, the game this time was shooting popsicle sticks onto the church roof with really big slingshots. You read that right. They would have to pass a popsicle stick from camper to camper with their arms only and then the last one would run with the popsicle to the slingshot, set it in place, pull it back, and hope the popsicle made it to the upper roof for the greater point bonus. Then (s)he would run to the end of the line and start passing a popsicle all over again. Once all had the opportunity to shoot the popsicles, the game was over. Our team finished first if I recall correctly for both the boys and the girls (who were in separate lines), but I don't know who won for sure, only suspect from what place we finally came in for the entire day. The second game was inside the gym again, where we played human foosball. If you don't remember this game from the other times I've written about it, it's a game where the students are in four lines, hands held together, trying to kick really big balls into the other team's goal. The number of balls, and even the goals, changed over the course of the game. The other team toasted us, but that was only because of one leader they had at the end of the offensive line who kicked in a good 60+% of their goals. We had a leader at the end of our offensive line too, but he was smaller (a high-school freshman vs a leader in his 20s) and didn't score nearly as much. About this time I was on the upswing, feeling better overall.

3PM: Time for the group picture. Donning our coats once again, we headed back outside for the final time. The children's pastor, Steve, stood on the roof with someone else whose name escapes me and took a few pictures with his, I believe, video camera. Meaning in the retreat video there may

be more than just a couple of still pictures of this event. Afterward, they both grabbed all the popsicles from the slingshot game and tossed them onto the ground. A few of the more competitive kids grabbed the and... threw them back up! It was wild out there for a bit. After the popsicles were gone from the roof, they started throwing snowballs down at us. This was more acceptable to be thrown back as snow doesn't make as good a tasty treat as popsicles, so more joined in returning fire. Eventually this all ended and we headed back in to clean our cabin and bring everything down to the gym. After all, they would need the classrooms for church at 5:00. I made sure everything was picked up, and even had to look for the owner of a pair of socks. I found out when I got home that of course I left my own pair of socks from the night before (one article of clothing I *did* change). Hopefully whoever found them wasn't too disgusted as I had worn them for only a few hours.

4PM: All packs brought down and the room cleaned up, we started free time. This time wasn't really very free, but the kids were free to be in one of four places for the next hour and a half. In the gym they could play nuke 'em, another game returning from summer camp played on a volleyball court. They could watch a movie in another room- they showed Up!, a movie I recently watched in Blu-ray. In a third room they could play board games or, eventually, watch some of Wall-E. In the last room they could do crafts or play other games. I floated around this entire time, keeping track as best I could of my cabin. Most of my kids spent their time in the gym, so I did as well.

5PM: Free time continued until 5:30, afterwhich we had dinner. Dinner was better than lunch and consisted primarily of spaghetti. Not much to say here really.

6PM: Dinner wrapped up and we moved into the worship/lesson area and watched videos until church ended and the parents started coming in. Once everyone was there, the final up front game commenced. A father-son team was called up from the leaders who were there the entire time with their sons and they played the frozen t-shirt game, where wet t-shirts were folded up and frozen. The dads had to try to get them apart and on their sons. Our team won again, giving us at least three of the four up front games. After this, we sang one worship song, Steve talked about the retreat to the parents, and jokingly as an afterthought the winner was announced. Since we came in third place, I suspect we won none of the big games. Remember, while I was able to see who won some of the games, I did not know who won Friday night nor who won the popsicle slingshot game.

7PM: Parents were permitted to take their kids home and the gym rapidly emptied of parents, kids and their packs. I got to go home and enjoy my fever which, while I was feeling better Saturday afternoon, still persisted through the weekend and made a return Tuesday, keeping me home from work.

Well, that's it. I hope you enjoyed the read. I just spent the last hour and a half writing this second part, so please excuse me for not going back and proofreading it. ☐

Flashback!

In the last few days, my recovery from the emergency c-section has not been going well. I awoke from a nap Thursday night feeling awful, but luckily my medication kicked in, and I was able to enjoy the midnight showing of The Dark Knight – more on that later. Friday we met Grandma in South Bend Indiana which is halfway between Chicago where she lives and Ohio where we live to transfer my kids for a week's vacation with Grandma. I felt awful all day, and I started shivering in the restaurant. I knew there was something really wrong when I went outside into the 90° oven and actually *enjoyed* it – uh oh.

When I got back to Ohio, I had an appointment with my doctor for her to take out my staples (yes, they had to actually use *staples* to put me back together, yuck) and that actually went well. Hardly hurt at all, just a little pinch, and it didn't take long. I brought up my symptoms to my doctor and she said everything was normal, and I believed her because when I had my other babies, I would heal up right away, so I figured these were all just side effects from the cesarean. But I took another nap when I got home and when I woke up, I felt like I was dying – that's really the only way to describe it. We took my temperature and it was 102.7°, so of course I had chills, the sweats, headache, and pain. A quick look on the internet gave us the diagnosis: mastitis – a common infection often suffered by breast-feeding mothers. We called the doctor and they wouldn't prescribe any antibiotics over the phone, so we headed to the hospital for the 2nd time in a week...

The admissions people panicked when they saw us coming in with the baby, but we quickly explained it wasn't him, thank goodness. Anyway, after a quick look, the ER doctor confirmed our internet diagnosis and sent us home with a prescription. But since all the pharmacies were closed in our town, they

gave me some medicine right then and there. "Name and birthdate", they always ask at the hospital before they give you your meds, and I was like, FLASHBACK! I thought I was done with this for awhile! But for spending a Friday night in the ER, it wasn't so bad; we were actually in and out in an hour. If this had happened in suburban Chicago where I used to live, it would have taken 3-4 hours to wait our turn in the ER, and they would have wheeled a few body bags past us while we were waiting. So today, I feel much better comparatively, and since the girls are with grandma, I slept until 11:30, so I'm sure that also helped. The antibiotics seem to be working already, and it was nice to wake up and not feel like I was dying, something that hasn't happened for a few days. I also feel better that now I think my recovery from everything is headed in the right direction, whereas when I felt crappy and didn't know why, it was discouraging because I was thinking, will I ever feel better?

My husband is peeved at my OB-GYN for not checking me more thoroughly during my visit with her yesterday. I agree; I did mention my symptoms and she was too dismissive, but being a man (especially one who won't listen to doctor's orders – if the doctor tells him to do something or recommends some sort of exam or test and he doesn't want to do it, he just won't) I don't think he understands how important to me it is to have a woman OB-GYN, and she is the only one in town. Besides, I do like her, she is gentle and she has been through 3 c-sections herself, so she knew exactly what to tell me about what to expect. If we do have any more children, there will be some debate about which doctor we will use. Well, anyway... off to Walmart to get my *third* prescription this week!