

# Sick

It seems like I have been getting sick a lot lately. Last Friday, I felt terrible after working all day. I had to call and let my leaders know that I wasn't going to be at my first Bible study lesson! I didn't feel any better by Saturday, but I was not going to miss a seven hour work day either, not when we need that money. I didn't stay the entire time. I left two hours early, after I got sick from my lunch. Sunday, I stayed home and did nothing, just so I could be well enough to go to work on Monday. By Monday, I was fine. I was up and about, nothing wrong at all. HA! Now I have no voice and a cough that keeps my voice from coming back. Well, that and having to try and talk at work. That's always fun to do. I have had no voice since Tuesday night and it's now Saturday. Thankfully, that is the only thing wrong and isn't keeping me from work.

Tony is also sick, though he doesn't want to admit it. He insisted on going to work yesterday after waking up with a fever. I am pretty sure he will go to work tonight also. True, his fever had gone down by the time he had to go to work, but it came back. I could feel it. I guess he's just stubborn, not that I'm not. ☐ We are very stubborn people. One of the many reasons I love him.

Hopefully, Amie doesn't get sick from us. She can't get miss any work any any more than Tony and I can. We have a house full of poor people who need to work and need insurance. Though Amie will be able to get that soon enough from her work. If I'm lucky, I'll be able to get it from Goodwill when I am working more with my head cashier position, which I start training for today! Pray that everything goes well.

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# I Know Who To Blame For This Economy

**WAL-MART!** I can find many ways to blame Wal-Mart for the way the economy is tanking. Time for my latest beef about the place. We went over there Friday morning because my husband didn't have to work until after lunch, and we need an oil change. So we thought we'd get the oil change done together this time, which made me really happy because normally it's just me and my two children (ages 2 and 7 mos.) who have to kill around 2 hours there every 3 months (or sometimes even more frequently). If you're thinking that spending 2 hours at Wal-Mart with 2 little kids while trying not to spend a lot of money is both exhausting and frustrating, you aren't very far off the mark. So anyway, Friday I thought I had company for the oil change, but even so, who wants to spend hours at Wal-Mart? When we pulled up, I was pleasantly surprised to see that there weren't any cars waiting, so I thought we might actually be out of there in under an hour – WRONG! The wait time they quoted us was an hour and a half! But we needed the oil change and were kind of trying to kill time until the area restaurants would start serving lunch, so we decided to go for it, especially since they've opened an H & R Block in the Wal-Mart for tax season. Taxes and an oil change – kill two birds with one stone, or so we thought... We get to the other side of the store where the makeshift H & R Block is, and we find out it's not open until 1pm. So we went back to the Automotive Department to sign in our car anyway, and that's when we discover that an oil change at Wal-Mart is now \$30! That is a \$7.50 increase in price over the last 3 months! So no taxes to get done + expensive oil change + long wait = forget it! And I will add the fact that Wal-Mart sucks at oil changes. Almost every time I'd come home with the car, it would act funny or something else would be wrong with it. Once they forgot to put the air filter back in, several times they

didn't replace the wiper fluid when it was checked off on the to-do list, and a few times I had to go back and have them re-vacuum the interior of the car because they said they did it but clearly had not. Those were the days when oil changes were still so reasonable in price that we got the full monty of services, including the vacuuming and the refilling of fluids – not anymore!

We called other places around town, and we found that Wal-Mart is now the most expensive AND takes the longest. But at the other places you needed an appointment, so we'll have to wait until next week – no problem if I don't have to go back to Wal-Mart! Plus I'd rather support the little guy anyway (ever hear the country music song "Little Man" by Alan Jackson? It's a good one and I highly recommend listening to it if you're frustrated about Wal-Mart's world take-over). And that brings me to why I'm blaming Wal-Mart for the awful economy...

They're putting all the little guys out of business, so there go the jobs and the competition in the retail world that was keeping product and services prices reasonable. Wal-Mart sets the pricing trends, unfortunately. Mark my words, as soon as the little guys in town get wind that Wal-Mart upped their oil change prices, they will follow suit and you won't be able to touch an oil change for under \$30. And worse yet, I read in the newspaper just yesterday that Wal-Mart is the only retail place that posted profits for January. In fact, they're doing even better than Wall Street predicted for them, which in this economy, makes them stand alone in that respect.

The state of our economy is so bad right now that I suppose it's not logical to blame just one entity. But moaning about Walmart is a good venting tool, and they p\*ss me off!

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# Last Post of 2008!

Because I barely have time to fit in the writing of this current blog post, I can safely say that with 4 kids running around (Christmas break = parental nightmare) this will be my last blog post of 2008! What better way to go out then but to experiment with the new polling feature of tangents.org and make a New Year's themed poll? Enjoy, and have a very happy and safe New Year's celebration! Here's wishing you the best of luck in 2009! Check all that apply:

[poll id="3"]

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## Hauntings down for the count...

It is official, the Haunted Theater is officially canceled. The hard work and planning that went into this fund raiser is all for naught. I can't see why people would want to throw away a fund raiser. Even if it only raised \$100, it would be \$100 that they didn't have prior to the event.

I won't say more other than this may affect my future involvement in the theater. I'm not sure at the present time. They want money, but I guess there are only one or two ways to get it. This wasn't one of them. Too bad, the other ways aren't working, as far as I can tell.

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# Burn After Reading

I'm not a huge Coen brothers fan, but I do find their movies interesting. Like many of the Coen's movies, [Burn After Reading](#) is about normal people who come across an illegal way to make lots of money, become obsessed with it, and consequently watch their lives unravel. [Frances McDormand](#), a Coen brothers movie regular (and I found out why – she's married to one of them), was great in this movie. She plays a woman named Linda Litzke, a gym employee who is obsessed with reinventing herself via plastic surgery. She, along with a gym co-worker played by [Brad Pitt](#), come across a CIA agent's (played by [John Malkovich](#)) disk at their gym and bumble through a scheme to use it as blackmail. They are truly a couple of idiots, and Brad Pitt's performance as the big doofus Chad is hilarious – might have been my favorite part of the movie, and this is not coming from a Brad Pitt fan or anything like that. Not that this movie is a comedy, don't get me wrong. I suppose it could be classified as a dark comedy, but I would say it's more of a suspense film with some comedic moments. As with any Coen brothers movie, there are numerous twists and turns, so I'm going to cut my synopsis short for fear of revealing any spoilers. Go see it, watch how the events unfold, and you'll be entertained. Besides Brad Pitt's character, my favorite part of the movie was how they told the story – as a case file being discussed by a couple of FBI agents. If you're a Coen brothers fan already, then I'm sure you'll love it – it is everything Coen: money, foiled scheme, setting – the Coens are famous for making the setting of their movies very integral in the plots, and this one is no exception. Washington, DC and the surrounding area of Virginia is the locale of choice for this one, and it's all very important to the relation of the events and how they unfold. This movie features a few Coen movie regulars like Frances McDormand, [George Clooney](#), and Richard Jenkins (who also gives a great performance as the forlorn gym manager, by

the way – they really make you feel sorry for his character). Better than [No Country for Old Men](#), [The Ladykillers](#), and [O Brother, Where Art Thou?](#), [Burn After Reading](#) is second only to [Fargo](#) when comparing it to other Coen brothers movies in my opinion. An entertaining 96 minutes at the movies – this one goes by fast. And make sure you pay attention; if you miss something, I could see where it would be difficult to catch up – a lot happens in those 96 minutes!

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## Kid Rock, Really?

I just might have to start calling myself a Kid Rock fan... ok, no not really, that's going **way** too far.

It all started when I was able to catch a few minutes of country music radio – a rare treat for me because when I'm doing errands in my car every day, I'm usually forced to listen to Kidsongs, VeggieTales, or the like while the kids are watching the car dvd player. But lately, I've been able to catch a few songs on country music radio... I guess it's because my youngest daughter has been refusing to nap at home during the day, therefore she can't help herself from napping once we get in the car, giving me control of the car stereo, even if it is temporarily. But anyway, country radio has been constantly playing a song that I really like – I heard it again the other day while my husband was getting a haircut, and that's when I decided I needed to look it up, find out what it is and who sings it so I can get it for my own enjoyment. Well, I looked it up, and what I found is that my new favorite "country" song is Kid Rock's latest single called "All Summer Long". For those of you who don't know, Kid Rock is not a country artist – not in my book, anyway... Seems he's been trying to cross over to country for a couple

of years now however. His duet with Sheryl Crow called "Picture" hit the top of the country charts a few years ago when it came out. But Kid Rock is most famous for various tabloid fodder; including his relationship with Pamela Anderson and the public brawls he's engaged in. But I think Kid Rock's normal style of music is hard-core. There is a song called "Warrior" by him that is played before movies in the theater, and that song is very reminiscent of 80s heavy metal – I think that's a taste of his usual musical style.

So why the switchover into country? I have one guess – money. It's no secret that country music is the most popular music genre in the United States today. Kid Rock's new song doesn't quite have that country sound, however, but I wouldn't know how else to classify it. It reminds me of late 70's or early 80's classic rock, ala Lynyrd Skynyrd – there is even a tribute to the song "Sweet Home Alabama" in "All Summer Long" – it mentions the song and even replicates its famous guitar lick. But nowadays, I don't know where a song such as this should be categorized, and apparently the music industry felt the same way, so they stuck it in the country genre. It's a really great, feel-good, care-free, summery kind of song... don't know why they didn't rush to get it released at the beginning of the summer. But it's here now, and I'm enjoying it, even if it is sung by Kid Rock. I just wish he'd make up his mind about where he wants to be musically. Being a country music fan, I despise "posers" and "crossovers" who try to take advantage of country music fans just because they're seen as loyal and dumb. The bait and switch didn't work with me this time – I like the song, but knowing it's Kid Rock did take a little out of it for me. I have a big problem with crossovers – I don't like accepting them into the country music family. I feel that country music is something you either love or you hate, and if these crossovers weren't already involved in country music, chances are they've hated it in the past and should not be allowed to crossover when the time or price is right. You are either a country artist or

you're not. Which is why it is to my dismay that this new Kid Rock song is so good.

But all things aside, check out "All Summer Long", it's worth a listen, and let's hope Kid Rock doesn't steal too much thunder away from the real country acts come time for the Country Music Awards that will be airing in November. Judging solely by how much air time he's getting on the radio, I think he has a shot to win some awards for this one – he'll at least get a live performance. I just hope he can behave himself. Surprisingly, given the red-neck reputation of country music's fan base, the annual Country Music Awards is not a place where there is usually scandalous behavior such as fighting or swearing, and let's hope these fly-by-night country crossovers don't ever bring it to that.

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## Happy Mother's Day!

I had a wonderful Mother's Day weekend. We decided to celebrate Saturday in order to avoid the crowds at all the restaurants and other establishments; also it worked out well because my kids often need all of Sunday as a rest day to recuperate from the previous week and the weekend before returning to school on Monday. So, I slept in Saturday until I was awakened by the idyllic crow of a rooster... wait a minute... we do live in a rural area, but that was no rooster – it was a screaming parrot and it wasn't the least bit idyllic, just horribly annoying and not a fun way to get woken up. But, it was nearing 10 am, and I figured I had left poor dad with the kids long enough.

I was making myself some oatmeal for breakfast when I was greeted in the kitchen by cute little girl #1. "Happy

Mother's Day Mom!", she said, and gave me a stuffed animal she had found in her room. I find the re-gifting really cute; it's her way of sharing what she has and also displays her thoughtfulness in wanting to get me something but being too little to go out shopping on her own. She also gave me the most adorable essay she wrote in school – I will share, though it's much cuter to see it in 8-year-old handwriting:

*Happy Mother's Day! I love my mommy for many different reasons. One reason is that sometimes she gives me what I want at the store. Another reason is that she helps me do stuff around the house like make soft crunchy cookies. The last reason is she lets me have fun a lot like at the park! I think that my mommy is triffic, wonder ful, and vary funny.*  
*by Taylor*

Daughter #2 was next, and she handed me a singing gorilla from her room. "Happy Val-tine's Day, Mom!", she said, hugging my leg. She is almost 4 and apparently forgot the name of the day, only remembering that she was supposed to give me something and be well-behaved, but that's all that mattered to me! Don't be fooled, however... they are not perfect angels ALL of the time – my kids' Mother's Day sweetness was promptly followed by a HUGE knock-down, drag-out, screaming at the top of their lungs fight... The first of many throughout the weekend. We still had a great time though – my husband always does a great job of keeping his cool which is more than I can say for myself... but there was something going on with my oldest this weekend, and it showed!

Next, we decided to go to a neighboring city to go swimming in a hotel – my husband can get GREAT hotel rates online for most places, and the overnight getaway was exciting for the kids and around the same price as driving somewhere far away (**insert gas price gripe here**) and spending \$ for other entertainment. Besides, being in the water felt WONDERFUL for my aching pregnant body... I would love to have access to a pool during a whole pregnancy sometime; it's amazing how the

sensations of all the aches, pains, and extra weight just melt away when under the water. The kids had a great time, and we all got some exercise also, plus when we got home on Sunday, they all took at least a 2 hour nap – can't put a price on that! My husband of course, catered to their needs all day too, so really I got a whole Mother's Day weekend out of it – 2 days when I was supposed to get 1! I only hope I feel up to it enough to give my husband as great a Father's Day as I got a Mother's Day. But since I'll be even more pregnant by then, we might have to reschedule... ever heard of Father's Day in August? ☐

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## Big Money Splits

...is the title of an AP article I read the other day about the price of celebrity divorces, inspired by, of course, the McCartney-Mills divorce that's been dominating the headlines lately. I took note of this article because I was surprised that the McCartney-Mills settlement was not in the top 5 most expensive divorce settlements. In fact, the top 5 were surprising to me; just people I would not have guessed that would have had that much money or who would have not been able to protect themselves and their assets any better. Actually, the McCartney-Mills divorce settlement at \$48.6 million equaled a little over half of # 5 on the list. Here it is:

1. Michael and Juanita Jordan – possibly more than \$150 million settlement pending, 2006.
2. Neil Diamond and Marcia Murphey – \$150 million, 1994.
3. Steven Spielberg and Amy Irving – \$100 million, 1989.
4. Harrison Ford and Melissa Mathison – \$85 million, 2004.

5. Kevin Costner and Cindy Silva – \$80 million, 1994.

I wonder what some of these amounts would be if adjusted for inflation also. This article would have been a little more interesting if they had included the wedding date or how long the couple was together before the divorce. I am often amused when I look in the local newspaper and see divorces between couples who were only married a few years, some only a few months! My dear friends are wedding photographers, and they've shared at least one story of a couple who was no longer together by the time their wedding photos were ready to be picked up! It's amusing, yet sad at the same time, especially of course any time there are children involved. I wish people would think a little bit harder about the commitment and sacrifice involved in marriage, and I wish that more people would treat marriage like the institution it was meant to be.