

# FROM PAIN TO PURPOSE

THE INTRODUCTION OF OUR COMMITMENT TO EXPOSING THE EPIDEMIC OF BIZARRE AND "UNTREATABLE" ILLNESSES.

OUR FAMILY



TUESDAY, OCTOBER 5, 2010

## Hearing and Doing

I had an incredible "Mom Moment" yesterday. The word incredible may not even be sufficient enough. The mental challenge of helping Daniel to "welcome" Olivia into his heart as well as our life has been a monumental and agonizing process. For a child to be expected to understand the "whys" of life when as adults it is hard to reconcile such difficulties in our own mind's eye. I know there are days when I have taken extraordinary amounts of time and offered perspective that I know will help to shape him into the man he will one day become even though he has heard only half of what I have said and offered even less application. There have also been days when my "suggestions" have been less than empathetic. I have never questioned God about why I was chosen for this role, but I have wrestled with Him on more than one occasion as I have certainly grown weary under the various burdens within it. Mothers wear so many different hats as it is and raising kids on a good day...well I am just not sure there are ANY of those until our kids are standing on their own two feet and able to understand for themselves why some days we asked them to go to bed earlier than others.

FACEBOOK BADGE

Merily Duster Pompa

facebook



Name:  
Merily Duster  
Pompa

Email:  
merily@drpompa  
.com

Status:  
"Could a greater  
miracle take place  
than for us..."

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KIDS

I never wanted to be a mom that sung her children's praises in each and every area of growth and development, but at this particular juncture in my life, I cannot help but recognize the painful stretching my own challenges are having on every area of my own life as well as the obvious effect it is having on my kids and to see them thriving within it is something that brings me to my knees where I find a God that refocuses me on my objective: to grow through my calling as a mother of 5 incredible and uniquely gifted kids who never leave my mind without heartfelt emotion, a wife of a man destined by God Himself with a mission of healing for a hurting and foolishly arrogant world, as well as a woman with desires as well as ambition that seem to emerge and then become somewhat strangled under the weight of the various hats I have been called to wear.

This reality leaves me empowered as well as helpless at the same time. I am learning who I am in God's eyes, in the eyes of those who "used" to know me as well as those who God is bringing into my life to support the transition as the next phase of our life unfolds. I am humbled by the new, frustrated by the old and while I would like to say patiently waiting for more opportunities to thrive, I am imperfect as well as impatient.

I have also learned through the process that the more we are called to the more we have to prove. I am not referring to proving ourselves to God, although I am quite certain He allows the challenges for purposes we may not always understand nor do we need to. We are simply called to trust Him. I think the concept of proving is something that is allowed for our own benefit. It doesn't build self-confidence...quite the opposite...it builds God-confidence, and that is something that is not only severely lacking in our culture, but absolutely required for serving Him.

As I have put the time into Daniel and Olivia's relationship with little return, or so it seemed, yesterday was a day that proved something to me: our growth, while it is a part of our destiny, it may not always be a path that is pain-free or self-controlled. If we remember who we are within that process, who we trust, and who trusts us to demonstrate His character, we can rest assured He will guide us. And as hard as we may "try" to respond correctly when we are faced with difficulties, we always have room to grow. Yesterday, Daniel showed me he is growing.

I had been at a seminar with my husband over the weekend. I was picking Daniel up at the bus stop and when he got in the car, he began telling me about his weekend. He and Olivia had gone to "Rec Night" at their school. She had spent the weekend at a friend's house but they saw each other there. He told me he had danced twice...with 2 different girls! I needed straightened out since I was thinking that balls would be bouncing on the gym floor all evening (another blog, another day ;O). He said Olivia danced all night but not with any boys. I reminded him of something that is spoken of in our home and that is that Olivia is faithful! Faithful for God to bring the right person into her life when it is the right time and in the mean time she just will not compromise her trust in His goodness for her life. It is something that I respect her so much for. Daniel told me something else I already know and that is that Olivia is a great dancer! He went on to say: "Everyone really likes Olivia...the girls as well as ALL OF THE BOYS! We have the same friends and I actually have to admit I missed Olivia this weekend!"

(SILENCE.) (TEARS SLOWLY FALLING DOWN MY CHEEKS.) I looked at him and said, "Daniel, you have NO idea how happy that makes me. It makes ALL of our challenges completely worth it!" I have a feeling that God feels the same way when we grow in our understanding of our own challenges in life that He allows for our growth. Add to that statement all of the changes this family has recently (as well as



#### ME AND THE MAN ON THE MISSION

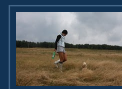


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#### ABOUT ME



MERILY POMPA

living life with a sense of purpose, instilling God's

standard into my children's life, encouraging them to raise their internal barometer to His level of achievement for each of them

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continually) been put through and it was a moment where God showed ME that He really is in control and really does care about my feelings of occasionally growing weary as if my faith is waning under the pressure of those many hats I am forced to wear.

I must have really been neglected as a child to have to learn all of these lessons as an adult! But I am thankful that God loves me enough to not have left me where I was! I am still ever-hopeful in the best that life has to offer, but I am far more focused on the best that God has to offer!

POSTED BY MERILY POMPA AT 10:41 AM 1 COMMENT

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TUESDAY, JULY 20, 2010

## Hanging By A Thread

What occurs in our hearts when we reach places in our lives that we aren't equipped to understand or know how to fix? What keeps us going? What inner strength and hope takes over? Against all odds...

I have found myself in my own perplexing circumstances in which the odds reflect one word: RUN but the voice that stabilizes me: HIS VOICE assures me it is under control and beyond my expectations of power and hope. In those moments where the challenge of maintaining order amidst the chaos seems a daunting task, God stands tall and mighty.

Next week is a big week for us. It will either give way to our singing praise to Him with ease or it will cause us to force a song when the gross distortions of the truth become an added paradigm to our existence for awhile longer.

I began this post on May 31 but I didn't publish it...nor did I finish it. Our appearance in court was June 9. We took our children and sat before an arbitrary process that was so foreign to our reality, yet with out the ability of our voice to be heard. We were there physically, perhaps even symbolically, as our presence hopefully gave each "player" in this game a deeper sense of conviction to realize that this is a family that is already being "tried" in life...without choice or escape. If those in their seat of power really desire to make decisions that are lawful, then they would go beyond the circumstantial evidence to the details of truth from those who we sought help from, who did offer advice and counsel, and even directed the processes that we are under scrutiny for.

Unfortunately, nothing was resolved that day. "More time" was needed. Needed for what was my initial thought? For prolonging our anticipation of freedom from half-truths and distortions that do not reflect the reality? And then I remembered what I know to be true: when every lesson learned from a process is painful and has achieved its goal, it will be resolved. When the ultimate goal of further deepening our faith is fortified and established, that chapter will be closed so that our next level of living can be established.

I read this fragmented post this morning and realized that I am grateful for a God that can be depended on when others fail us. When circumstances stretch our reality and offer nothing in return that brings peace, the only hope that can be found is in a God that has challenged us with circumstances that will exceed our comprehension and prove to be purposeful beyond our imagination.

Adversity is meant for maturing our faith. It enables God to reveal Himself in ways that prove not just His existence, but also His love for those that trust Him. It brings our purpose to light in a way nothing else can. We have each been called by Him, but not each

one of us answers His call. I remember my initial thought when faced with the reality of gaining 2 more children at an already difficult time in my life. What went through my head was a repeated phrase: "I do not need swallowed by the 'whale' (as Jonah was due to his running from God's call upon his life), this is big enough."

And now, almost 7 years later, and under an even greater challenge than that, I find myself thinking of Jacob when God said "you will not be called Jacob any longer. From now on your name will be Israel" (and God renamed him in Genesis 35:10. This past decade of our life has "renamed" us. It has taken so much from us, but it has given us so much more. The space we are in, as we hang in the balance between the call and the promise is one of uncertainty in our circumstances, but more importantly, one of His calling, which purposes it all.

I know we will look back on this chapter of our lives and realize how necessary it has been. The teaching is unlike any we could ever receive any other way. The emotional pain, while it seems unfair, is a reminder of the suffering that Jesus endured and He was without sin! There is no comparison but there is an analogy to be drawn. When we understand, like Jacob, in order to answer the call, we must leave our comfort zone and be "called out" of any and all complacency to become a useful tool for God, we do not walk by sight, but by faith. We maintain a posture of trust that doesn't always have words to define.

While we desire an end to the hardships of the process, we witness first hand the ability of God to provide for His children. There is a supernatural component that edifies the challenges within the struggle. And as we wish it away, we realize that it is priceless in its role.

And so we move forward and we know that "We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed."  
2 Corinthians 8-9

POSTED BY MERILY POMPA AT 12:57 PM 0 COMMENTS

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WEDNESDAY, MAY 26, 2010

## The Pompa Family - Dr. Daniel and Merily Pompa - Raising Healthy Kids i...

POSTED BY MERILY POMPA AT 5:58 PM 1 COMMENTS

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SUNDAY, MAY 16, 2010

## Between Revelation and Manifestation

It has been ten years since the inception of Danny's illness. A whole decade. The internal battle for an answer or an end was a long, painful process in which I needed to reconcile God allowing the challenge of this process with the additional purpose He called me to of raising a family. The emotional support of encouragement throughout his journey was the key ingredient to his sustenance. Thankfully, only one thing in particular was needed in which I was gifted in--encouragement.

Looking back I realize that was a gift I possessed. I did nothing to earn it. I just naturally did it. There were definitely many times throughout where my words felt empty...the ones spoken as well as the ones received. The times I was particularly discouraged in my role as his wife was when he would tell me, "You always say that and NOTHING has changed". The ONLY thing I had to offer was that God assured me through a deposit He made into my spirit that my husband would be healthy again, and a message of hope to a hurting

world would be his offering after his restoration.

When Danny and I had been dating for almost 5 years, without a lifetime commitment as part of our relationship plan, I began to feel insecure. How could I know in my heart that this was the one I could easily spend my life with without him speaking about our future with the same perspective? He would tell me that he was waiting for God to "show him" with absolute certainty that it was to be me. I wasn't sure what would have done it for him...fireworks going off over my head perhaps as I used to jokingly suggest. I had done enough reading and listening on the topic to know that there were certain elements that were undeniable: mutual respect, the same goals for life, philosophies that were congruent, and most importantly a faith that was built on Jesus Christ as the cornerstone of the blueprint for this life. We had all of those. In fact, early in our relationship, when Danny was challenged by a friend about his unsettled perspective of the meaning of life, through a process of scientific investigation (which initially revealed to me his mode of learning truth) the undeniable reality of Jesus as the son of God and therefore being who He said He was and that is the ONLY way to God became evident. As a result Danny hung his hat (as well as our physical relationship) on the hook until the appointed time of marriage. (We did not have sex again until 5 years later after we walked down the aisle.)

There was always one issue that weighed heavily on me in my dating relationships and that was whether or not those relationships that I was involved in were right. Were the men in my life truly valuing me as a person or was the relationship driven by the physical aspect of the man's desire for sex?

When Danny realized that he had no idea how he would be able to accomplish no sex before marriage when he was accustomed to that being a driving force in his pursuits, I simultaneously knew that it was ME that he valued. To have been sustained in the relationship for the "right" reasons left me an obvious conclusion of him being "the one for me". It was disturbing that his brain needed a different assurance. Perhaps that was the first obvious place to me that we were wired differently. I had to release feeling insecure and trust that God would bring him to the same conclusion that he had me but I had to respect that it would be through a different process. When I began putting the pressure on him near the end of chiropractic school and feeling undervalued with little effort (it seemed to me) of him searching for the solution as he did for meaning of life, it further added to my frustration. I began spending less time with him and more time with friends. I somewhat selfishly used it as an excuse to pursue my own ambitions without searching for God's purposes in them. Then I came to a crossroads. I saw Danny's faith grow in God's purpose for his life. There was an assurance about God's word--all of it--being true. It was the manuscript for life which wasn't open to interpretation; and the bible, in its entirety, was the infallible word of God.

I already knew this to be true but something happened to me when I saw the truth of this being applied to his life. Simply put: I didn't want to miss out on the life God blesses because of my own selfish desires. I told Danny this. I think it may have been the first time that he saw hope in me as becoming the woman for him to spend his life with; knowing that even though I did not necessarily know how to trust and allow God to mold me, I was willing to admit it was the only way to life a life that had purpose and meaning that would become an investment beyond my limited perspective.

Trust was a difficult concept for me. It is defined as having faith in another person or entity. Significant people in my life had let me down beginning with my biological father. Next my mother who was supposed to be there for me not just emotionally but also physically but never seemed to be. I understood her limitations but nonetheless I was impacted by the void that was created. As I encountered friendships from 1st through 12th grade I experienced many additional disappointments that further challenged the meaning of trust.

meaning of trust.

How then could I trust Danny to the point of feeling at peace with his character as the man I desired to surrender my heart to?

The only answer that fits is that in our relationship, this was the first gift God gave to me. I did nothing to earn it other than be myself. And this self was obviously the perfect one for him...handpicked by God Himself for the purpose he had for him. It didn't take long to own that perspective when he first began experiencing strange and scary symptoms that squashed the personality of the man I knew and loved and revealed a threatened and threatening character underneath.

I quickly jumped roles from the one being protected to the one protecting. I protected our children, I protected myself (the best I could) but mostly I protected him from himself. This untrusting woman, who trusted no one but my husband, became epitomized by the circumstances that I now found myself in.

As God called me to trust in His work in our marriage I remember wondering what role I would play once Danny was restored. I now understand that due to being disappointed so often as a child and adolescent I had a theme of apprehension that had woven itself into the fiber of my being.

Again I had another opportunity to be healed myself from this hole in my own soul. It may not have been a physical wound as my husband possessed but it had consequences that were equally devastating. God gave me another opportunity to trust. He brought Dylan and Olivia into my life. Ironically He did so when I was trudging through the emotional pain of having my husband not being able to "show up" for me. During this season of our lives, Danny was running from himself. He didn't like who he had become and he wasn't completely sure he would ever be himself again. His mind had only one way of searching for truth and this was the second time in my life with him I watched as this scientific process manifested itself once again in a most critical space in time. His relentless pursuit for answers did not disappoint him. Initially the process that led him to answers wasn't forthcoming as it led him down what seemed like empty pathways. Looking back, it was evident that God allowed that as well as it not only taught him to persevere with God in prayer but it also taught him about many different processes within the body that unless fully understood would only lead him to become a doctor that managed symptoms, even if naturally and without consequence, as opposed to the doctor he has become which is one that addresses the root cause and looks at the life of the body beginning and ending at its foundation: the cell.

The three years before he understood where in his body the breakdown occurred was the most difficult for both of us. For him, it was a trial of trust in God whom he had learned held the answers to life and death and controlled mankind's purpose if we trusted Him to do so regardless of where we started. For me I had to put my husband on a shelf and trust that the God who chose us for one another would return him to me in better condition than before. I also had to trust that my life as a mother to two children who weren't wired in the same way I was or what I had learned to adapt to were not only going to make me more effective in my purpose as a wife and a mother but were also going to bring me joy and completeness that I have never known within myself.

Luke 9:24 (a verse I had always feared) says, "For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it." I am now learning that embracing God's call, while the process of being stripped is brutal and at times even seemingly unfair, there is victory if we surrender to it. When we remember that once God declares something to us whether spoken aloud or in our heart...IT IS SO. Just as it was revealed to me about Danny's future being one with hope and tremendous purpose, I had to learn that fearing God's word, while a healthy perspective to our understanding, can lead us to doubt Him if we misconstrue His intended meaning.

I must admit it has taken me walking through adversity where there

was no where else to turn before I began understanding that trusting God is not something to be feared but embraced. He alone is the author and perfecter of our faith and therefore He knows our breaking points as well as our strengthening points as well as the delicate balance between the two. Just as a muscle needs to be torn down to grow so we need to be torn down to mature.

I have clung to the deposit of God in my spirit, expecting our future to be an offering of hope to others just as God has given us hope in the midst of our pain. However waiting is required between what we know and what He reveals. We must wait on God with a posture of expectancy until He manifests the destination of our calling. And as you wait, expect a spiritual battle unlike you have ever known! The more times you are attacked release those attacks to the power of God and remember that it is giving Him yet another opportunity to show up and show off on your behalf (see my previous blogs for how this occurred in our life).

Another extremely invaluable component to your trial is praying your blessing into existence. There is a powerful verse in the bible in Isaiah. Chapter 54:17 says, "No weapon formed against you shall prosper, and every tongue which rises against you in judgment God shall condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is from Me, says the Lord." If we take God in the literal sense that He intends for us, this is a verse that can offer tremendous hope. It indicates the spiritual reference of the battle you are going through and helps you remember that just before the release of your blessing as a resulting suffering and proven worthiness there is going to be an attack from the adversary unlike you have ever known. In fact, this is why it is so important to maintain this posture as we wait.

The final element that must be dealt with is the removal of sin from your life. These are events God ordains that prepares us to receive the blessing within our purpose.

And finally, remember, that when you are waiting in the space between your revelation and your manifestation, it typically will not happen quickly, but it will happen suddenly. What you have sown in tears you will reap in joy (Psalm 126:5). When we were faced with the legal investigation regarding our children's trust, I remember being in the attorney's office in utter disbelief. We had done all that we knew to be functioning within the laws of the trust document...so much so that we paid for the services of others to guide us through that process so we would never be where we were physically finding ourselves. (the complete story is in my blog titled How We Got Here...Where We Are...Where Are We?...Mother's Day 2010) Once again I had to remind myself of the original intent of God through our suffering and He was giving us another opportunity to grow, first within ourselves and also as a family and beyond. What kept coming into my head was God's reminder to me which was becoming a theme: "Do not look at your circumstances, just look to Me." This statement was running over and over in my head just as it had in my heart through first my husband's sickness and also through my challenges with integrating Dylan and Olivia into our family. I am grateful as God has returned my husband more whole than He allowed him when he was taken. I have experienced becoming more at peace with myself despite my too numerous to mention challenges as a mother with one child much less five. And again, as we wait, I have to trust Him.

A pervasive theme of trust. Trusting that while God doesn't always choose our method for our maturity in our faith and our purpose, He certainly does allow those challenges to make the best of us for Him. While we have had many opportunities to be sifted for His calling and having the requirement of trust as the prevailing element of our faith, in these past several months of legal turmoil God has shown up suddenly. While it certainly has not happened quickly, it is happening suddenly. Suddenly the phone rang the very same day we sat in the attorney's office at the beginning of this whole debacle and we were asked to meet with the owner of a direct marketing

company that we had been involved with as a result of our appreciation for the quality of their products. Their interest in us was for the possibility of our mission being infused into it as it sought to become more purpose-driven. The story of our life had become most intriguing to those that desired to make a difference. During that visit, the conversation also addressed the possibility of this company, Zylene International, manufacturing my husband's cellular detoxification product that would help so many that suffered without understanding, but through education on the scale of a successful direct marketing company, that we had the opportunity to become the voice for, we immediately saw the sudden move of the hand of God. While it was not something that occurred quickly, it certainly happened suddenly. While we were being shamed by the media, God was revealing yet another scripture that has shown up more than a few times as we have cried out to Him. Joel 2:23-27 says, "Be glad then, you children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God; For He has given you the former rain and faithfully, and He will cause the rain to come down for you...I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten, the crawling locust, the consuming locust and the chewing locust, My great army which I sent among you. You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied, And praise the name of the Lord your God, Who has dealt wondrously with you; and my people shall never be put to shame. Then you shall know that I am in the midst of Israel: I AM the Lord your God and there is no other. My people shall never be put to shame."

Is faith required to believe these words? You better believe it! Faith is a confident belief in the truth, value, or trustworthiness of a person, idea or thing. It is belief that does not rest on logical proof or material evidence. Trust is a synonym of faith. Is it any coincidence that God has given me faith while He challenged me with trust. How is that even possible? How can I further understand the dichotomy that exists between these two words that have such a powerful pervasive presence in my life and in the lives of so many Christians today? My mind is expanding as I type! The human condition is one of survival in times that are tough. We are faced with a challenge and we dig deep. It isn't until we have exhausted our natural resources that are within our reach that we are faced with being overtaken by our greatest nemesis that we are able to fully surrender and trust in our God through faith in Him alone. Unfortunately that typically does not happen until we are in dyer straits. In fact, when we finally release our greatest burden(s) to God we find our freedom and our peace. This cannot happen unless that process occurs fully. Ultimately. Finally. And with that release, we give God the carte blanche to act. Until that time, we are withholding His power. He will not be released in the spiritual realm and act on our behalf until we release Him to do so. Under His authority we have partnered with Him. We can now personify the principles of God by becoming the word of God in action. If God has a specific purpose for those who love Him, and He does, and He alone is the giver of the gift, and He is, then we must prove worthy of it. We also must demonstrate trust that He can do it and posture ourselves expectantly. Within the confines of this world there are many stagnant places that need His influence. It is time for the wounds that prevent trust from delivering might to be healed. It has come into my life through a process of great pain but it has left me more whole. Yet another dichotomy within the plans and purposes of God.

Do not run from the places of life that challenge you. Embrace them. Relinquish your control. Know that by losing your life you are gaining your purpose. The scripture that used to scare me now excites me as we are about to be released for His glory, not our own. I will leave you with this: "Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly (2 POWERFUL adjectives; not by accident is any word chosen by God himself for our internalization as we read His word), above all that we can ask or imagine, according to the power that works in us, to Him be the glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations,



forever and ever. Amen" (Ephesians 3:20) NOTHING is impossible for Him, but until we trust Him alone for it, we will not fully see the purpose for which He has called us. Lay your burdens at His feet. The process of being proven worthy is costly, but it is also a revelation of the closeness of God to the hurting soul as well as the power by which He desires to change the world.

POSTED BY MERILY POMPA AT 11:22 AM 0 COMMENTS

SUNDAY, MAY 9, 2010

## How We Got Here...Where We Are...Where Are We?...Mother's Day 2010

As our family came together: me as a young woman with many plans of my own: the most important one with ME at the center which is the only perspective I have ever known; while also having a heart to serve God as I intended to raise my family to trust Him, I soon realized that God not only gave me 3 children of my own and a challenging set of circumstances to go with it but He also called me to sacrificially become a mom to twins who tragically lost not only their parents but also their own foundational identity. If I was going to bring God into their lives in an authentic way I had to lose MY plan. It took me awhile to realize that it would be within the heart of God to teach me what I couldn't read about. I could not run from it and expect it to occur because the task is monumental...at least from my understanding of hard work and ONLY He could take credit for it as I believe with all my heart only He can; but He also handpicked this challenge for me alone. I could not talk about it as a future tense reality, but in order to honor Him in it, I had to experience the pain of being stripped of myself and my agenda and finding the glory that lay beneath the unearthed heart and soul that God planted within me. ME? How could it be that my insecurities would end up becoming places of strength that would see this family through the uniqueness of our pain and also our desires. All we wanted was to "feel" normal. To restore Dylan and Olivia while edifying our 5 year old son Daniel that their arrival and integration made our family better, not worse. Reminding him that God doesn't make mistakes and regardless of how challenging it seemed at the time it will improve. God created him and He made him perfectly suited to adapt to this particular family dynamic. I reassured him that God would be able to do something so amazing with his life as a result of the challenge He allowed so early in it. I told Dylan and Olivia as well that there is a difference between God's blessing and favor and we had his favor. Even though my own mom struggled greatly with my acceptance of my new role because of her concern for Daniel and also of her understanding of what would come against us with my aunt, I stayed focus on the sovereignty of God. He didn't choose this fate, but He did allow it with a greater understanding of His mercy and favor as a result.

Simultaneously , we were working on the restoration of Dylan on yet another level as well--which was from the damaging affects of vaccinations--specifically the MMR shot. My husband was too dealing with his own battle with neurotoxins that invaded and deprived him of a life that could be completely normal. The irony that there were two of them, one who learned as I watched and one who had to learn to trust as we watched, not only in the process of healing but also in the role we filled on many levels regarding his recovery if he could stay the course and hope for a brighter tomorrow. How could there be two boys, one I loved with everything I was and one I learned to love as God's faithfulness showed up, took over and gave us all hope? The road that took us closer toward the call was painful. It stretched us, it twisted us, it gave others reason to doubt our motives and it also gave us favor.

As much as the circumstances proved to be challenging and in addition to the above mentioned struggles, there was yet a 3 year old and a newborn that I needed to be mommy to. They had no

understanding of the difficulties and nor should they have. I tried with all my might to be all that God called me to be. I thanked Him for the amazing helper he gave me in a woman he gave me to model what a godly mother looked like--she had all the qualities I could identify with: she was funny and happy and adorable. She had one quality that I didn't: she LOVED to serve. She served us for almost 6 years. I refer to her as God's gift to me who came alongside an already underqualified woman and showed that despite my weaknesses He lavished His mercy upon me. Her name is Esther. I watched her spend endless hours and energy cooking and ironing and loving and praying for all of us. I watched her shoulder my burdens and my husband's and cry out to God on our behalf. She is no longer with us, but she still shoulders our burdens. She will never not be with us--forever in our heart and only a visit or a phone call away. She knows our heart and she knows our pain that is giving way to purpose. She knows our desire to raise our children that despite the odds, shows God's mercy and favor.

The first week after the death of Dylan and Olivia's parents proved to be a fast reconciling of reality. We quickly remembered that their mom (my cousin and best friend) Lisa had asked us a few years prior if anything ever happened would we take the kids. Without a second thought we answered yes. When Simon only 6 weeks old, my husband and my dad flew to Florida to bring them to their new home. It was the only way. As their legal guardians no one was authorized to escort them except for either my husband and/or myself. My aunt and uncle (Lisa's mom and dad) were there, staying in the house that their daughter was murdered in and making plans while Dylan and Olivia were in the arms of their next-door neighbors being comforted.

The first obvious plan occurred when my husband and my dad walked in and my aunt said "meeting out back". They walked out by the pool and as soon as they sat down she said, "Well, we decided to keep the house." My husband's response was, "Whoa...we are going to wait until we talk to people who know more about this type of thing than I do." She proceeded to try to sell him on the idea.

After the memorial services my husband flew home with the kids. My aunt and uncle were busy loading a UHaul truck with as many items with monetary value they could fit into it and left behind most of the kids' personal effects that required us to take a trip a month or so later to select items that were important to them to feel as if a piece of their home was coming to Pennsylvania with them. It was hard to conceive and the bank that handled the estate told us we should put a stop to her ridiculous behavior. We knew her irrational tendencies and decided to stay out of her way and if this was the way she grieved then we preferred to stay clear and give her room to do so.

I can remember as a child my mom called her demented as a result of her anger that lashed out at my mom for allowing me to use a toy (a lemon-twist) that my mom bought for Lisa's birthday present. I was only about 7 years old but I still remember how upset my mom was at my aunt's over-exaggeration to my trying a toy that she bought for her niece. It was a moment in time that for whatever reason is forever ingrained in my memory. It was at least a year that they didn't speak.

I am not sure if it was that incident or the fear that my aunt evoked as a result of watching how she treated her kids that scared me. We always seemed to be punished by her. I still have pictures of all of the cousins lined up on the couch as a result of her wrath. Whatever it was, it stuck.

My husband and dad arrived home New Year's Eve 2003 with Dylan and Olivia. We began 2004 with 2 new children and a life of challenge that we NEVER could have predicted--even after all of the things we had already been confronted with.

It was within a very short time that I realized my aunt's anger for Lisa's decision in choosing my husband and I for the task of raising her kids was more than she could swallow.

I didn't know at the time, but I think with me that the anger about

I didn't know until they were already with us that there was a trust that would help with their support. I was thankful for that but it wouldn't have changed our accepting of Lisa's decision regardless. Along the way I am glad I didn't initially know when others have tried to raise issue with why or how we took the kids. Honoring God is not enough for many people without expectation of a return. It was enough for me. I remember telling my husband when we were processing the magnitude of the task at hand that I didn't need to be swallowed by the whale as Jonah was. There were many places in my life that I struggled to honor God completely but this was one undeniable role and call that couldn't be dealt with half way.

My aunt threatened our decision becoming permanent by telling us that if we accepted this responsibility she would do everything within her power to "ruin" us. My response was as steadfast as the call. I told her to take it up with God. That He chose us for it, and that we had no choice but to honor Him in it. I empathized with how hard this must be for her to handle under the circumstances and that even her other daughter, Lisa's own sister, who was 6 years younger than I, wasn't chosen. I was not insensitive to their reality but I was unable to offer a solution that satisfied her. I tried to help her see the positive points as she now had the ability to see her grandchildren without the distance between them. I assured her I would do everything possible to support their relationship. I found this particularly challenging as she began working behind the scenes on the kids' emotional and psychological pain. I attempted to communicate with her about it while being sensitive to her pain while at the same time adamantly insisting that she not create more for them or us. Ultimately I feel as if she knew she wasn't up against me personally but my resolve and determination to step up was a result of my trust in His call upon my life and it seemed to incite her all the more.

It didn't take long to realize that the experiences they were having while in her presence were absolutely not of the standard that we lived by. There were little things that became known to us. She only wanted the kids for a whole weekend while there were times that 2 nights made plans we tried to make as a family difficult. I welcomed some of those times to "feel" like the family I had lost and the kids I was most comfortable with had some time to feel that ease with us...mostly being sensitive to how hard it was for Daniel. We did explain that going to church was something we did and it was important to us that they do that as well. She began going to church. What could we say except that having her under the influence of God would not only help them and us, but her as well. So there was a stretch of time that she saw them many weekends. It was hard to conceive why Olivia came home happy to be back and Dylan came home disconnected. In fact, he always came in the house well after Olivia and would walk the long way around the house to avoid walking through the family room where my husband and I typically spent Sunday evenings. They always came home at 8:30--never earlier--which was a time we requested as it was their bed time. The first 2 days of the week Dylan barely spoke at home. He seemed extremely hostile toward his environment and emotionally void of caring about the family. It was sad to watch a child that already was so compromised emotionally become void after a visit with his Grandmother that I had hoped would offer a place of solace and fill a void that I expected only she could. She was supposed to love him unlike anyone else on the planet and after what had happened I really trusted that my inherent fears of her would be put to rest as she found a newfound purpose that had a calling of love all over it. How could it then be that the opposite emotion was showing up after his time with her? And what about Olivia? She was fine. She was happy when she was with us...all the time. She didn't morph into an emotional recluse. I know Dylan always had certain challenges with his diagnosis of Sensory Integration but what was already an obvious part of his emotional status became exaggerated with his time with her.

He became obsessed with money that he claimed he had lots of. He

he became obsessed with money that he claimed he had lots of. He talked about it with Daniel in particular. I couldn't imagine that she had revealed to them aspects of their financial reality when I specifically asked her when I found out that I absolutely did not want to discuss that with them...or anyone else for that matter. I knew money not earned was the fastest way to ruin anyone. She assured me she would not. She attempted at first to get information from us about the financial matters but we told her that we had asked the bank, who managed the trust, to handle every detail and there were attorneys and counsellors in place and associated with that task so that we would never be criticized by anyone, not even the kids, who we soon realized were potentially under her spell. As time went on we realized that she was working against us on every level. She even discredited my husband's knowledge and understanding of how best to care for Dylan's process of recovery. She questioned it, shed doubt about it to the kids and occasionally sent "other" information that was partially what we were doing but without the fullness of our process. Anything other than what we were doing was still managing symptoms and we weren't interested in just managing his symptoms but restoring the whole child. For a long time I thought that perhaps what he ate when he was with her was causing his emotional separation for the first half of the week and this is what I told his teachers when we spoke about the potential cause. Occasionally the kids themselves would let their guard down and tell us that their uncle was watching things on his TV that were not what we would approve of. They graphically described certain scenes to give us examples as they wanted us to know as all kids want to be found out. It amazed me how much of the bad things a child's mind could retain after just one exposure but when it came to the positive teachings it seemed that the reinforcements were endless and the fruit was sparse. I quickly learned that is how evil infiltrates. Another customary and particularly disturbing occurrence after Dylan's time at his Grandmother's house was that he would have terrors in his sleep during the night--either on Sunday or Monday without exception. He would run through the house flailing his arms and screaming frantically: "Mommy! Mommy!" He would run to me every time. It was awful to see this already starving child for his mother's love behave from such a subconscious level of pain. And why only after visiting his Grandmother? This troubled us more than anything. What could we do? How could we possibly ask her about their visits? What did they talk about? How could we and expect her not to become completely hostile toward us (even though from what we could ascertain she was already)? Was it presumptuous to think that the woman who emotionally loved them most could also be intentionally harming them the most as well? We asked Dylan's counsellor what we should do. Without knowing the details, he felt that she was clearly keeping us from becoming a unified family. His advice was too hard to take. How could we possibly separate them from her? They had lost so much already. So had she. They would resent us for doing such a thing. It would surely cause another horrendously painful wound that no child should have to endure, especially after what these 2 children had already suffered through and were learning to live with. It was also hard to conceive and therefore there was doubt that she could really do such a thing. I always knew her to be angry and resentful...she would even get upset when Lisa would come home for an occasional visit and want to stay at my house instead of with her. She would put up such a fuss and Lisa wouldn't want to confront her further so she would stay with her mom and within a few days she would be regretting her decision but mostly her inability to confront her mother's desire for control. It was the very reason Lisa needed to leave Pennsylvania. Her control and her anger was stifling. There was a pervasive oppression associated with all of her relationships. Perhaps that is why the relationship with her Grandchildren was not capable of being normal. If she cannot control the significant people in her life, then she starts trouble. An example of this is that she has been divorced from my uncle for over a decade and my mom told me when she was

still alive, which has been about 3 years, that mail still goes to her house and she still writes his checks. Her son, who is a year older than me still lives in her home at the age of almost 44. It is a very sad reality. It also seems to be the men in her life that have been most affected by her control. But for me, I am caught in the middle of accepting a role that is supposed to be life-giving and being frustrated by a woman who is life-taking.

My husband and I have talked this through so many times without resolution. We finally agreed that as long as she didn't cross a line, we would not interfere with their relationship. We understood that while we were risking our better judgment for the sake of a relationship with their Grandmother, despite our experiences with her, perhaps we were just being overly paranoid. She, like us, had to be concerned with their final destination that was under her influence: that of adults. Or did she?

It was a year ago when I received a phone call from the school. My 3 oldest children, Dylan, Olivia (who we had at this point adopted 3 years earlier) and Daniel had been pulled out of class and questioned by Children and Youth Services! I didn't even know what CYS stood for before that day. The principal of the school didn't owe it to me to give me notice of what had occurred but he did. It spoke volumes to who he knew my husband and I to be and it also spoke of who he knew my kids to be. That very same day, my son Izik answered a knock on the door to find 2 police men standing there asking if everything was ok. He told Esther of them wanting to see her and she laughed it off as she walked to the door thinking he was joking with her. They questioned my kids about the food they ate, the way they were disciplined and the conditions in which they were living. Their conclusion was that they were living and eating better than they or anyone else they knew. Esther invited them to a Mexican dinner and/or stuffed chicken. With their apologies they were on their way.

I considered this to be the time when the line was crossed and our family was put in jeopardy. The kids felt the same way. I was thankful that we did not need to assert our authority and have them resent us for opting to keep their Grandmother out of their life. She did it. They saw her motives for what they had been all along and now we had no doubt about whether or not she was sabotaging our efforts of restoring these children. Right after that occurred the kids started sharing many disturbing emotional and psychological plots that allowed her to attempt to lure them in to a depraved emotionally unstable world filled with manipulation and paranoia. When CYS finally made a visit to our home to complete their report they told us that they would most likely be back again because they were told that she would keep calling UNTIL they found something on us.

I received an email that was most disturbing from her a month or so later and then another and another. The accusations were horrifying and even frightening. She accused me of being "responsible" for Lisa's death! She said I always wanted everything that Lisa had and now I think I have it! WHAT?! WHERE did that come from?! Could her mind have distorted my respect for Lisa as my cousin who was 4 years older than me and naturally someone I looked up to...to THIS?! I just couldn't wrap my head around the degree of torture to which she lived within her own mind! THANK GOD!

Needless to say as my uncle and her daughter who began making attempts to connect with the kids and were turned away...unless it was done on our terms and under our roof, the kids told us emphatically they wanted nothing to do with any of them. It was significantly noticeable how instantly at ease they became...especially Dylan.

In one of her emails to me she assured me if I did not allow her to see her Grandchildren then I could anticipate spending all of my time in court "instead of at the gym". It did not phase me. Within a few months of that email we were served papers in the state of Florida where the trust was initially held and because it had been moved to

Pennsylvania within the year, papers were served in the state of Pennsylvania and by the D.A.'s office. It was more than shocking since we had NEVER had "control" of the trust (or at least we thought not). We trusted and requested the attorneys and counsellors to guide us through that process anticipating needing to protect ourselves from her unstable and jealous tirades. We felt at some point she would attempt to turn the kids against us...we just didn't expect it so soon.

I cannot say for sure whether or not she actually planted seeds that began the investigation, but I do know for certain that she did call the newspapers and the media who dredged up the past and how the kids came into our lives in the first place. So my question of doubting but struggling with how she could not protect Dylan and Olivia after everything they had been through was answered definitively within an evening with 2 major news channels and 2 major newspapers report gross distortions and inaccurate information about our character. My husband, who had a successful practice was shamed in an instant. The man who would give the shirt off his back to protect another was suddenly being portrayed as a doctor who was "siphoning money out of orphans trust fund"!! We didn't get a new patient in our chiropractic office for more than 3 months. It was almost too much to bear and if it weren't for our faith in God who ordained our role I do not know how we would have handled the challenges of this legal process in addition to the pain that we suffered through finally getting to a place with them that revealed why it was so hard in the first place.

God does promise to work all things together for good for those who love him and are called according to his purpose. Romans 8:28-29. I have been speaking that verse over our family for the past decade and needless to say a few others have shown up to keep me hopeful in the midst of our circumstances. Psalm 91:14 says: "because he loves me, I will rescue him." I often wonder if our story will ever be "heard" in the court system. I have my doubts. I do hold on to the fact that God knows our heart, He knows everything we have done in order to honor Him and maintain a position of integrity. He alone knows that as we were instructed, we trusted. There is a saying in chiropractic that says "as the twig is bent, so grows the tree". The way we were bent was according to people in positions that have knowledge and expertise in their field. I would never admit to understanding the position I had been called to as a trustee as well as a guardian and therefore I requested the support of those professionals to always be in compliance with my role.

Again, I learned from this particular challenge, within this overarching position of restorer of hope, family and future that regardless of the amount of effort that is put into a job, even if it is well done and protected, evil can infiltrate without substance. It can devastate and disseminate every protective mechanism in place to avoid the very evil it creates.

When life is lived at the level of what lies beneath the surface of one's outer shell, I have found God uses certain trials to show even us what we are made of and who we ultimately trust in. When we are shaken what comes out? Who will we be found to be in our adversity? Are we worthy of the call? I have been challenged on yet another front and I can only pray I will not remain who I was when this all began. I desire to become a woman of influence to offer hope to a hurting world. How can I be able to offer it myself if I simply adopted 2 children I didn't choose and who didn't choose me but merely applied what I knew to date about mothering and neurotoxins? However my story has become enriched and I have become enriched with the depth of pain at a level we didn't earn, but have had to defend with every ounce of my fiber and still have nothing to show for it. How will this all turn out? I honestly do not know in the courts but I do know in light of our family: we will continue to be strengthened and prosper as we have since the last day they spoke to their Grandmother, our determination to seek God and trust in His redemptive power alone will see us through regardless of the

outcome. I will trust in God alone to restore what the enemy has stolen--in this case, our reputation and our children's security at a certain level. The more we are afflicted, the more we will multiply for a greater purpose than ourselves.

Our family has a gift of restoration. We have already been restored. With any gift there is a responsibility of earning its worthiness. Are we worthy of influencing others? When Jesus had to feed the multitudes He had to break the loaves of bread and put it in baskets and pass it around. It never ran out and there was plenty left over. How is that possible? It is the result of being broken that produces supplies that are unlimited in others times of need. If this family is going to feed the masses then we need to be broken, even in ways we didn't deserve so that our gifts can be shared to encourage others and offer hope.

POSTED BY MERILY POMPA AT 3:54 PM 2 COMMENTS

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MONDAY, APRIL 19, 2010

## Who Am I?

I never really thought about that question until I had a series of life-changing events occur with such intensity that I could not ignore who I was but was also forced to consider who I was to become. My life as a child could only be described as atypical for any kid's dreams. Time with other kids my age was not the norm as my mom and I lived with my grandparents in rural Pennsylvania and they were busy working themselves but with the flexibility that allowed me to be looked after while not able to be driven to a friends house with ease. I grew up with dogs and cats as my friends. In the country we had neighbors but they were distant and detached. My mom's full time job kept her away most of the week and I marked the passage of time with TV shows on PBS...Sesame Street, Mister Rogers and Zoom were the time slots of my day that brought my mom back to me. I never knew my dad as my mom divorced him when I was just a year old. I never realized that being without one was going to leave me incomplete or longing. My Papap was a fireball! He was always busy doing something--working in the garden, cutting the acres of grass we had on his tractor with me on his lap, reupholstering furniture in the garage, listening--and watching if possible a ball game in a small corner bedroom with Myron Cope announcing and me sitting with him on the side of his bed playing cards--Casino, Rummy and War were our favorites. Usually those times of solitude for him were quickly interrupted by my Grandma yelling at him for "escaping" with me. All fun and games for me but no time for her she would complain. I understood early on that my Papap was a kid at heart and enjoyed playing as much as possible but was obligated to the responsibilities of a man. The husband role was not an easy one for him as she was the provider and always had been. She worked every day for 26 years in a mushroom farm picking mushrooms. I remember the smocks she wore--they were a grayish blue with medium-sized translucent buttons down the front. Nothing about his plans for earning a living was secure. At one point an egg route was his source of income. I am sure she liked her job as she developed friendships that took her away from the drudgery and insecurity of their life. Add to the equation their youngest child, their only daughter, their pride and joy, unlucky at love and back at home with a child in tow--and one that they were more responsible for than she was, and it is understandable why they felt a squeeze that frustrated them with no one to complain to but each other and by indirectly doing so without me at the obvious center they could vent about that unfair role she had placed them in. Regardless of how it was done, it created insecurity in me that ended with a child who craved people and busyness--and what I could never get enough of...my mom. I always said I wanted 5 kids. That seemed like a good, uneven number that would allow for the hustle and bustle that was absent in my childhood and not allow for pairing as I felt coupling up would discourage unity as a whole. When I was 5 years old my Papap

discourage unity as a whole. When I was 5 years old my Papap decided I needed to be raised in church with the positive influences to be found within. It was only a short period of time before he came to faith in Jesus Christ. I gleaned what was offered and simply accepted that Jesus was the son of God. My Papap also had some other outspoken positions that I soon learned matched with intensity his love for God. They were as much a part of his fiber as they are mine. Politics was a topic that my Grandma would caution him on speaking about. He didn't know another way. He just threw it out there--much in the same way I do. And his passions were contagious for those who knew him best and agreed with him, but for those who didn't...well let's just say his reputation was not cherished by those. I know that much of my personality is much like his. He turned many toward truth but he repelled those that weren't ready. I realize it is much better to win with love, but the reality is that for many of us who have been rejected, love and trust are synonymous and trust is not able to be attained just because you know it is a virtue that draws people to feel accepted and secure. When love is lacking so is trust. When it is lacking in a child it takes YEARS of success within more than just a great marriage to gain.

My biological father rejected me and my mom was emotionally void of what it takes to validate a child's needs. She was also physically absent most days and so my greatest need for security and the only one available should have been found in her but wasn't.

As I grew, I filled much of my thoughts with dreams about my future. I didn't realize at that time that when you belong to God, regardless of what you desire for yourself, if it is not within His plan, not only will you not be happy, feel secure or function with the only sense of purpose that ultimately matters--His; but whatever ideas you seek unless they satisfy at the soul level and have purpose behind them, they are not worth the pursuit. Emptiness is still the byproduct. My mom always told me that whatever I wanted in life could be attained. It is that attitude that is pervasive among all others--with the exception of the desire for 5 children. I have often been criticized for being idealistic. It didn't change my thinking--if anything it fueled me to have lofty goals and exceptionally high standards for myself. It has taken 30 years of that mindset to be harnessed, knocked off course and redirected according to God's plan that has given me the most understanding of the most important lesson of all that I have learned: unless you can handle the responsibility of the gift, it can't be given.

When I was 12 years old my mom remarried. The life I lived with my grandparents vs the life I was now thrust into was almost traumatic itself other than the fact that one day things were not easy to come by and most things were bought only when necessary and oftentimes at a secondhand store and now they were plentiful with enough to share. Although because there wasn't enough to go around for most of my childhood, and I was an only child, I didn't like the concept of sharing--and I still do not.

I enjoy being generous, but I do not like to share. My husband says it this way: "I am fussy about my stuff". He's right--I am and I have stopped apologizing for it. That is one of those wounds that is not high on the list of priorities to correct--for some, perhaps yes, but in the scheme of my challenges and weaknesses to overcome, I am generous and I think that is a more important virtue. It is an act of the will to be generous rather than sharing which represented a source of pain inflicted through my childhood that had equated in a result of never having enough to be at peace. Not enough company, not enough love, not enough of my mom--and hating sharing her with anyone, and only my Papap could I lay claim to, but only accompanied by my Grandma's anger--so ultimately not enough of the one that I knew loved me unconditionally--the only one--other than God; but I didn't understand that at the time as I do now. Ironically my Grandma's emotional needs were not met because he was busy sharing himself with me.

My new life began in 8th grade. I was 13 years old and the newfound freedom that went with it was of no benefit looking back. Ironically,



my mom had a baby 9 months after her wedding day! My mom was now 36 years old and as much as she overprotected me as a result of her insecurities and inability to control many of her obstacles to a satisfied life, she stifled my sister at every level, except the one that matters the most with kids and that is setting boundaries that ultimately gives them freedom. Freedom to develop, freedom to thrive, freedom to make mistakes. Since her new course of life kept her home with my sister and cultivate homemaking skills, one more challenge was one too many. As a result I was able to do almost anything I wanted. I wanted to play with my friends. I now had some. The expectation of my parents was an easy one to meet: keep my room clean and do the dishes and in return I had spending money and freedom. My new dad was a busy man. He was only home briefly at noon, again for dinner and left after the news and typically not again until after 9:00. He was a funeral director and had a business that if I heard it once, I have heard it a million times "people were dying to get in". He is an honest man and he was fair and he served others exceptionally well. His only requirement of me was to be out the door on time each morning as he drove me to school and he was NEVER late. I failed him miserably. Other than that, if my mom was happy, he was happy. She seldom was. She was overwhelmed with her new life. The inability to run from her challenges and dump her responsibilities on her parents was over with her marriage and she never fully adjusted. Add to the fact that my sister was the one in control from the day she was born and it was a recipe for failure--for everyone. It was also justification for me to escape my further rejection by my mom who should have been more available to me now than ever with her new role as mom only.

When I look back I realize how hard it was for me to see that my mom had so much to be grateful for--I know I was-and yet still wasn't at peace with herself. I think to the degree that I pointed that out to her is equivalent to the degree with which I thank God for the provisions He has allowed in my own life. There is a responsibility with what we are gifted with: whether it is time, resources, knowledge, finances etc. the blessing is found in what is done with those gifts for their optimal benefit for serving others. I never understood how she managed to feel victimized by her life to the point where she wasn't making a positive impact in the most important group of all in any woman's life: her family.

Because my childhood was so lonely and isolating I didn't often go back to my grandparent's house in the country to visit once we moved. They came in to visit often enough and because of my developing social life I did not make their visits a priority. When I was 17 years old after a year decline in my Papap's health, he died of congestive heart failure. I remember that when he had his first heart attack and his strength noticeably diminished I had a hard time adjusting. He had NEVER even had a cold since I could remember and he also had the strength of an ox. It devastated me when he died and the one connection I had with true love and acceptance was now gone forever.

It wasn't until I was 22 years old that it really hit me. How I had failed him! The man that adored me had been rejected by me when he needed me the most. It still pains me to think about it. I also know that God used me as the catalyst to bring him to Himself. My purpose in my Papap's life is one that I am the only one on the planet can claim. I thank God for that role.

And after being blessed with a dad who has filled a role in my life that only God could gift me with after rejection by my biological father, I realize God always provides. It doesn't always come in ways we expect and there is often a fight for its maintenance but when challenges present themselves and many fail us God has shown me that there are a few key people in my life that have enriched me in ways that ONLY He could offer. I have my Papap, my dad (Rodney) and my husband. And each of them are polar opposites but share one common element: they each love me beyond what I could ever earn! They love me the way I had longed for my mom to love me. I am just

thankful that I never held that against her. I intuitively understood her limitations. I also clearly see how God gave me these 3 men to guide me through various stages of my life with a common goal: becoming my absolute best for where I was at those times.

I am still a dreamer. I still have an ideal in my heart that I cannot shake no matter what logic presents itself. Regardless of my circumstances I still focus on the best life has to offer. I understand that to be more than what money buys or continual ease. I tell my kids what my mom used to tell me: shoot for the stars, the moon isn't high enough!

Dreaming brings hope to trials. It brings order to chaos.

August 17, 2007 my mom died from cancer after a 2 year decline. When they told her there was nothing else they could do for her it was Mother's Day weekend. She literally went home and never left. I watched the pain of her life and the pain of her disease be replaced with a renewed faith in her God and in her suffering. She knew where she was going. My dad barely worked during those 3 months. He was by her side. I watched the chasm between them be filled. She let go of her anger and frustration for her disappointments in her life and I believe for the first time she realized that it wasn't someone else's job to fill those spaces. They were her own responsibility. She began to tough it out with God and He showed up. Did He ever! The hospice nurse said to me one evening, "You know your family is having a supernatural experience with death, don't you?!" I knew. I watched my mom be restored and redeemed through her dying body. What a testimony to the power of God and the truth of His word. She was His! She had not been trusting Him for many years and her bitterness was standing in the way of her peace. But she claimed Him as her savior and she knew salvation was only found in Him and He proved Himself to all who knew my mom and watched her transform--on her death bed.

To this day I have not shed a tear. I did that during the times I laid by her side and cried at the ugliness and torture of her disease. I also cried at the love I saw her able to express when she barely had an ounce of strength to do so. I cried when she told me how proud she was of the woman and the mother and the wife and the child of God I had become. I cried when she told me I was her hero. And I cried when she died and I could no longer see her face and smell her smell. Then I cried one last time when we closed her casket and I knew I would never see her physical body again. And then I rejoiced (her name was Joyce) that she was in heaven with two of my favorite people--my Papap and Lisa--my twins (first) mom.

I am blessed to have had God join me to a man who has continued to grow in his relationship to God and allow His purpose to be the one that remains his sole desire for his life. His sickness (which is in my blog titled Pain to Purpose) had been the tool that God has used to harvest a field of hope that grows with each seminar to those searching for answers to bizarre and unexplainable illnesses. My trust in him as a person with integrity and desire to satisfy me has been tested and for several years our roles were reversed. I grew during that time in ways I never would have imagined. When Dylan and Olivia came into our life I once again kicked into a new level of survival and after 6 years finally am finding the space to thrive. It is occurring as a result of some unforeseen and unfair realities that have caused us to hold fast to our faith in who we know ourselves to be and our God who has allowed it all. (I will write about that too--perhaps next) What I know above all else is this: when you are called to a life of purpose, one that makes a difference in the world and you pray and ask God to direct it, do not think for one second that the road to the destination will be easy. IT WILL BE THE HARDEST ONE YOU HAVE EVER WALKED! It must be earned. It is the responsibility of earning the gift. And God cannot release it to you until you have surrendered to His ways being higher than your ways. There is always purpose in the suffering. We are the human sacrifices He uses to accomplish His desires for a world He desperately loves. Once we prove ourselves worthy He will release us

and His blessing will be bestowed upon us. I am still earning the value He feels I have to offer even though I feel I have nothing left to give.

POSTED BY MERILY POMPA AT 9:52 AM 1 COMMENTS

SUNDAY, APRIL 18, 2010

## Missionary Man

Many of you already know my husband. He is everything and more that you have come to know him to be: purpose-driven, compassionate, off-the-charts intelligent and a man of integrity. He had more of these qualities than anyone I knew when I met him 20 years ago and since then the challenges that he faced brought these characteristics into a new level of existence. I decided that as there have been many mountains we have climbed as our marriage, our family and our mission have grown, that the best way to add yet another dimension to our call was to offer to those interested in joining our mission of "exposing the epidemic" the part of his story that is not one that can be focused on in his teaching and yet it is a part that we have learned a long the way to be invaluable to those suffering. It is the emotional aspect of neurotoxic conditions. Whether you are the one who is neurotoxic or the partner of the one who is sick, the burden is immense. The pain is real. Emotional needs are not met. There are many paths that are sought. There are few answers. Hope is difficult to find and doom seems to lurk and attack without warning. I know your pain. I know it because I have been there and at times still feel the threat of what I thought was overcome. We fear what we do not know and we fear more what we have already suffered through.

When Danny and I were married, we had already known each other for almost 6 years. When we had our first child, Daniel, it was 2 years later. 2 years after that came another baby boy, Izik and within 4 months, my husband began experiencing a cascade of events that began a quest and a crusade.

I remember he had a bout with the flu and the next month again and the next month yet again. We were perplexed by this occurrence as Danny was not one to get sick. EVER! He was an avid cyclist and spent a few hundred miles on his bike throughout the week. I used to feel frustrated by his intensity with the sport but after our marriage and a baby and gaining some leverage as a result, he attempted to spend more time supporting my needs and I quickly learned that was better accomplished AFTER he put some time in the saddle. We had a relationship that just worked. We knew each other so well when we got married and our love was based on a genuine respect for one another. Even the things that were on each of our "lists" we knew we would probably never see much success in changing and we were ok with that as even those idiosyncratic behaviors were not points of contention for either of us, as much as areas that would perfect our marriage. We both understood perfection was not attainable on this side of heaven and so we both were satisfied with who we were to one another and how we just seemed to fit together even though in some ways we were very different. .

When we looked back at the onset of his sickness, we recalled debilitating headaches that drove him off his bike. They lasted for well over the balance of the day and sometimes into the next day. He also had insomnia. It wasn't just sleeplessness. It was sleeplessness that forced him into another bed so that the baby and I could get "some" sleep and after a period of time he eventually began anticipating and fearing the night. Some nights I would go upstairs to check on him and find him curled in a fetal position. The strength and character of the man I knew was dwindling and the shift began to occur as roles were reversing.

I was the more irrational of the two of us as I assume women often are. By nature we are more emotional and do not look at facts to

drive our decisions. For a brief moment I gained perspective beyond my tendencies and looked at the irrational behavior of my husband and saw with clarity all that I needed to know which was the philosophy that we lived our life by: there had to be a physiological explanation for the manifestation of his symptoms. We already lived a life that was sound and built on God's principles. We ate according to a premise that simply believed that if God made it, it was good for you and if man altered it in any way, avoid it. I had stayed home to give birth to my children and we didn't vaccinate and disrupt the immune system of the perfection to which God created the human race. We didn't take aspirin for headaches or any other drugs to cover symptoms. We believed there to be a time and a place for medicine but we knew that to be mostly in emergency situations. Danny was solid. His philosophy was sound. His influence was contagious. He was a leader worth following and he gained his belief system based on the research of the science. He was not someone who just followed a trend. He needed proof. When the bottom fell out during this time, I was the one reminding him of what I ultimately had learned from him. I repeatedly reminded him that there just had to be a physiological explanation for what he was going through and that I just knew that God had created him with the slew of talents and abilities He did so that he could carry a message into the world that it needed to hear. I really had no idea what that was at the time but given the knowledge and purpose we were living out and sharing and our commitment and passion for God's ways being higher and better than our own, I just knew that there was a higher calling within it all. My only ability to see through the mess that we were living through was by a process of elimination: we had a good grasp of things that made sense but there were certainly areas within the realm of health that we didn't have experience with. At the time we lived in an old home in a small suburb of Pittsburgh that I had a thought about perhaps being part of the culprit: what if there was something in our house that was making him sick. It wasn't long before this that I too had some symptoms that were plaguing me and we weren't able to figure out the origin. I had this incessant tapping on the top of my head in the same spot for months, my neck would click when I would turn my head--and at times it was more aggravating than others, and I began having feelings of fear that would come and go. We would go to the bookstore and research and were led to believe that it was something relating to hormones--between having my first baby and being a vegan (eating no meat or dairy) and not being a proponent of supplementation it was quite possible that with the more reading he was doing the more a deficiency of some sort was a possible cause. After 2 babies, nursing, and more frustration and consequently more education I began eating meat. We learned it wasn't actually the meat, but what man had done to it to change its composition. That fit within our philosophy and within a very short period of time my symptoms dissipated.

So when I thought about the potential for our house to be making us sick I convinced my husband to seek out a toxicologist. We went to a prominent hospital in the city and they ran a battery of tests. It was more than a few thousand dollars later and a statement that infuriates me: " you are just under a lot of stress and need a good psychotropic drug"! Our position for our response took us back to our philosophy. Quickly putting into perspective that those living in third world countries who were dealing with war or famine were under stress. We live in America and our stress is manageable for the most part--at least under normal conditions. Once we left there, even though we were under a new degree of hopelessness, we were also left to The One that allowed it and He would surely answer our cries for help. He already led Danny to a greater level of understanding of health and a greater commitment to His purpose and the primary one that was front and center was getting his own health back! I gained greater hope for God's call upon our life as I watched my husband on his decent days research and pursue authors, scientists, peer-reviewed journals and articles searching for

authors, scientists, peer-reviewed journals and articles searching for avenues to lead to a road that would restore his health. The symptoms were brutal and seemed to have no predictability. He would watch a movie and whether happy or sad, passive or aggressive, Danny would not be able to recover. His heart would pound, his adrenaline would surge and he would be left spent and scared--if it were in the evening, he typically would not be able to sleep that night. There were times when I would be putting away the dishes or sliding hangars in the closet and he would tell me his nerves were jumping and I had to stop. He would accuse me of making more noise than necessary to accomplish tasks. There were times when the kids would make noise (and be kids) and he couldn't tolerate it. I would have to grab them and rush out of the house. I can remember leaving in bare feet and the kids in their pajamas. I can remember the feelings of desperation that washed over him out of nowhere and I would be driving us somewhere and he would share his mental state...as he always did...and I was SCARED. As those dreaded feelings erupted within him and his ability to communicate it with such emotional intensity, I anticipated him taking control of the steering wheel and ending it for both of us. I hid knives at times due to my fears of the power of his irrational mind.

I remember gauging life events as signs that things would soon improve. When I got pregnant with our 3rd child I immediately thought we were soon to be through this ordeal. When my cousin was murdered by her husband and he killed himself and her 7 year old twins--and one vaccine damaged--were now our children, I again arrived immediately at the same conclusion: surely God wouldn't allow this as there was no way Danny could handle it otherwise. We were living in crisis mode and couldn't seem to escape. Our new baby boy, Simon, was only 6 weeks old when the tragedy occurred. Daniel was 5, Izik 3, Simon was 6 weeks and Dylan and Olivia were 7. My head was spinning. My husband was just on the brink of finding the answer--mercury poisoning due to the improper removal of amalgam fillings and a diagnosis of Mad Hatters Disease. Knowing what it took to get Danny to where he now was, with hope on the horizon was truly a gift from God that we knew had a call attached to it. A new purpose with greater responsibility with unknown knowledge within even natural health was unfolding. Knowing what we had just learned over the past 3 years came with a price. The bible says the more you know the more accountable you are and now we also had another life to apply this knowledge to: Dylan's. He had a diagnosis of Sensory Integration which is an Autism Spectrum Disorder and my cousin Lisa, Dylan's mom, had been handed that diagnosis with a disclaimer: He will never be mainstreamed.

The past 3 years of living hell and simultaneous trust in what God was going to bring out of it had not allowed for room for giving up or giving in. This steadfast perspective led me to look to God as the author and perfecter of my faith. I now understood that the seed of hope and purpose God planted would become a tree with lasting fruit. If Danny was to be the deliverer of this information then I had to be his supporter and the mother of 5 children all uniquely challenged as a result of the burdens they were all carrying for different reasons.

POSTED BY MERILY POMPA AT 2:28 PM 2 COMMENTS  
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