



Who is God When Life Stinks?

Ditsy Nurse

Will I ever understand it? My world is falling apart, and yet God says He loves me!! What exactly does that mean, and what does it look like in drastic times?

This was one more day to head to Bob's noisy, tiny CICU pod. I knew it would be filled with bustling nurses, doctors, residents, technicians. Each day many of these faces were new ones, as the staff in this large university hospital rotated often.

My challenge was to always "stand tall" by Bob's bed and listen closely, watching every detail of the care given Bob, just as he would want me to. Little did I know when I was growing up, that my sisters' complaints about me being so "nosy" would one day become a life-saving attribute! Usually I looked forward to every team that came to the edge of Bob's bed – listening intently to see if they had accurate information, what the latest updates were, and making sure they recognized me and "this patient" as PEOPLE, not just another "case". My efforts to be present and personable with the medical staff was usually returned by their attentive care to my husband.

But this particular day I wanted none of that. I was breaking apart inside from exhaustion and grief after weeks of watching Bob in agony. It seemed impossible to gently oversee yet another new nurse at his bedside. It was taking all my determination to guard my own emotions from despair – how could I be alert enough to attend to my husband's care?

God always gets to hear my honest opinion, and today He heard that I just didn't feel up to this job. Suddenly, a gentle reminder swept through my heart that Bob's wife (ME!) was NOT the one in charge of guarding my husband's life. GOD was, and He had loving allowed me this privilege of standing in daily to represent His interests.

"Oh, God. Could I represent you again today? What will that look like in the life of one weary wife?" At all times, I had been careful to be pleasant and respectful to the staff. Most of them had heard of the "miracle man", even if they didn't know his name. We were delighted to know that God chose to work through Bob's life story, and I wanted our lives and manner to be consistent with the love and compassion that God had shown us.

“But God, I just want to zone out today. I’m so tired, I can only focus on myself. If you want to touch someone’s life through us today, you’ve gotta drop them right in front of me!” This was weary honesty.

Entering Bob’s room, I sighed at the face of a new, very young nurse assigned to him today. Bob was still considered “critical”, requiring one-to-one care, so this nurse would be spending twelve hours with us today. Instantly, I discovered that she was the “chatty” type. Uh, oh. If Bob had been alert and vocal he would have used his description of “ditsy” for her. Usually he whispers that term with a grin, rolls his eyes, and raises an eyebrow! A little too chatty... too peppy... and perhaps “too blonde” (in Bob’s terms!).

Before I even sat down at the bedside chair, Elise (not her real name) immediately started asking our life story – how did we meet, how many years married? When did we fall in love? Oh my, how tall are we? My tired heart couldn’t suppress a giggle, and I think God’s heart giggled too. Sure, I’d like to roll my eyes and shrug off our wide-eyed new friend, but God had other ideas.

It didn’t take long at all before our chatty young nurse was telling me all about her love relationship with a doctor, living with him for a year, and recently suffering a disappointing break-up. She was clearly looking for love and wanting to share her hurt. God knew I wasn’t up to putting forth much effort, but that didn’t matter. Elise just kept talking! Any morsel of compassion or attention I showed was gobbled up by her, and we chatted on and off all day.

Bob would slip in and out of awareness, and I would doze on and off. But Elise kept coming back to talk some more. During this twelve hour nursing shift, God allowed openings for us to talk about God’s love, how it never ends and how he never leaves us. I felt compassionate for my new friend, and told her that God’s love doesn’t mean there will be no hurt, but that He loves us in the middle of hurt. Oh, we have definitely experienced that truth over and over this year. I explained to Elise that God also wants us to obey him (gulp, I’m glad for my honesty with him that morning!) and he promises to work in our lives!

Near the end of her shift, Elise came to my bedside chair with two cups of tea. One for her and one for me. Awe warmed my heart as the hot tea slid down my throat. God had again shown his love to me, and to her, through my simple surrender of two ears and a car-

ing smile. We hugged and Elise ended her day. I pray it was a day where she heard God say, "I love you". That is how I will remember it, and whenever I do a smile begins to creep across my face.

God comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.

I Corinthians 1:4

From: *Beth A. (A friend of Becky's)*
Subject: *Update on Becky Bell's Dad...*
Date: *Sun, 15 Jul 2007*

Dear Praying Friends,

I just got off the phone with Becky who expressed her appreciation more than once for all your prayers and concern for her and her family. She and her family have been so encouraged by everyone's responses and prayers, and especially by messages they have received from people saying that their faith has grown because of all their praying for Becky's dad and the family. It is amazing to hear Becky saying how much it means to them that God is being glorified in the midst of this very difficult time.

Becky's dad is still in critical care, but he is not getting worse. This gives them reason to cautiously hope! Every little while there is a new concern...but those concerns are being addressed. On Friday it was the liver and kidney function (her dad is still on dialysis), but they are hoping that the liver will repair itself (generate new cells to replace the damaged ones) and that the kidneys will adapt and begin to operate at 100% again, even though the kidneys themselves have been compromised and portions are not functional (evidently the liver and kidneys can do these two respective things in response to damage). So we need to keep praying for that.

Today, the concern was that infections had developed in Becky's dad's lungs and blood. So they have put him on antibiotics now and have also reduced the number of intravenous lines going into him, as the more puncture points (I can't remember the correct terminology!), the more places where infection can enter. So they've consolidated four lines into one, I think.

Up until now, her dad has been heavily sedated...but beginning tonight they are taking him off sedation and allowing him to gradually wake up more throughout the night so that if he is awake enough tomorrow, they hope to take the tube out of his throat

which would allow him to swallow and talk when he is up to it...and also for his poor throat to heal where the tube may have hurt it. They tested his lung function today and found him doing very well on that front - he will be able to breathe on his own quite well, which is wonderful!

The surgery Becky's dad came through last week is only done on about ten people per year in the entire country, so it is very rare. So we can continue to give God thanks and praise for bringing Becky's dad through that, even as we pray for complete healing. Also, we should lift up **Becky's mom who has not been getting much sleep at night and has her own health issues with the breast cancer.** Becky worries about her. **Becky** herself is thankfully able to sleep, but of course **is hugely drained and in need of our prayers as she deals with so much.** She says the time with her family has been precious and good...but I'm sure it will be difficult for her to return to Connecticut on Tuesday.

Another **answer to prayer** has been the provision of an apartment free of charge for the family to stay in to be near the hospital. Becky's parents live too far from this hospital for her mom to go back and forth all the time. And there is evidently a church who owns this apartment and has it there for anyone with church connections who needs it - families of hospital patients and missionaries. Becky's mom is much more comfortable there than in a hotel room - she has a kitchen, etc. - so this is a huge provision from the Lord!

Thanks again for keeping this dear family in your prayers!

In His love,
Beth

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