



## Who is God When Life Stinks?

### A New Start

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We were ready now for a new start – or at least that is what we were anticipating! “Discharge day” from the nursing home had already happened and Bob was delighted to be home for a few days. The home health care nurses were visiting every day, and we knew that Bob would be readmitted to the hospital for removing his PIC line and the dialysis port. YES! Bob had gone to a follow-up visit with the kidney doctor, and he got the incredible news that his kidneys were now functioning at a level that they considered NORMAL!! How amazing to watch Bob’s body recovering in miraculous ways!

It would take several days in the hospital to wean Bob off the blood thinners, and then to balance the blood again after the precarious surgical procedures. Now, after another six days in the university trauma center, Bob was ready to head home “for good”?!

Free at last!?! We were hopeful that the worst was behind us, with rapid recovery ahead. Our nephew was getting married in Texas three days after Bob’s “final release” from the hospital, and we had really wanted to go see Bob’s family while they were all together for the wedding. A week earlier, Bob had booked our “refundable-option” tickets for that weekend. But we told no one in the family about our hopeful plans, except for our sister-in-law. We were not sure until the day of departure if Bob would actually be capable of travelling, and we didn’t want to disappoint family if we had to cancel. Bob was still very weak, but was slowly walking short distances now. With a cautious excitement, we drove to Orlando, boarded the plane and had a rental car reserved for us at the Texas airport. Bob was elated to be mobile again, and his deepest desire was to surprise his family and thank them IN PERSON for all their love, concern and prayers over the past four traumatic weeks.

Bob even had scripted in his mind a bit of “happy drama” for his parents, who had already flown in from their home in California, and were at the hotel in Texas. “Wouldn’t it be fun”, he schemed, “if we arrived at their hotel and just knocked on their door?” Oh, I could picture the shock on their faces and the joy it would be for them to see their oldest

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son ALIVE and in person. Thankfully, both parents were in good health, so I was pretty sure that they would survive such an unexpected shock!

Mom and Dad had five children, but only three were still living. One son died shortly after birth, and Bob's little sister Joy, had died at age 14 after a long, courageous fight against leukemia. Bob's brother, David (father of the groom this weekend), had been in a very serious accident just several years earlier. His severe head injury required a long recovery and had frightened us all. Mom and Dad did not want to lose another child, and we treasured their daily prayers and love. They had all their friends praying for Bob's survival through each crisis and for my recovery from cancer as well. Dad called me almost every day for an update, and during Bob's surgeries and his coma, these updates often included very heavy concerns. It was sometimes hard to reveal all the life-threatening scenarios to Bob's parents – knowing it would break their hearts to be so far away from their son. My parents were no longer alive, so Mom & Dad Bell also carried a protective worry about my health and all the stress on my shoulders.

We were tired from the flight between Florida and Texas, but excitement mounted as we drove up to the hotel. The sun was hanging low in the Texas sky, as it was late afternoon by now. Standing at the front desk, Bob inquired about the room number for his parents, eager to find them for our surprise appearance. Just past the desk, while Bob was talking to the clerk, I noticed a lounge area with a small crowd of people seated there. They all appeared to be relaxing together and in friendly, animated conversation.

“Bob!” I whispered quietly to my husband and nudged his elbow. “I think Mom and Dad are over there, talking with some of Bonnie (our sister-in-law)'s family.” I pointed to the group in the lounge area.

As Bob and I began to walk across the lobby, toward the lounge, squeals of excitement spread through the group! We were recognized by one, and then another, and the look of surprise on their faces was priceless! Mom gasped, hand to her mouth, and then cried. Dad's mouth dropped open and he looked like he was seeing a ghost! The excitement and shock rippled through the whole lobby as hugs and tears were shared.

Mom explained, after she caught her breath, that she had just looked up at the front desk only moments earlier. With the setting sun behind us, all she could see was the dark outline of two very tall people.

“And it was YOU!” she exclaimed between happy tears.

We had a quick dinner with Mom & Dad, and finally settled into our room with a deep need for some rest. We hoped to drop off early to sleep, but first we needed to answer the knock on our door.

Outside the door stood Bob’s brother, with a quizzical look on his face. David’s questions tumbled out quickly, “How are you?”, “How did you manage this?” and “How come I didn’t know?” As the brothers hugged, Bonnie (our sister-in-law) and I grinned at each other with delight. God had worked it out! We were in the arms of family who had held us up across the miles through their love and prayers.

At the wedding the next day, we fell so honored by everyone’s appreciation for our efforts to attend, and by many of the wedding guests and friends of family who assured us of their prayers. We were amazed at how God was working our story into so many lives, so many miles away from our home.

The following day we attended church with David and Bonnie, and again many approached us to give praise for God’s mighty answers to prayer in Bob’s recovery. We were awestruck at the privilege of demonstrating God’s power and love just by attending a family wedding! Our awesome God deserves all the praise!

**I Corinthians 10:31**

**“Whatever you do, do all for the glory of God!”**

From: Bob Bell IV  
Date: September 28, 2007  
Subject: Praising God!

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Below is an update from Mom/Ruth. It will probably be the last email update we pass along to in this fashion about Dad/Bob III.

Bob & I are PRAISING GOD every day, and we want to tell you why!

One week ago Bob was given FINAL DISCHARGE from the hospital!! His dialysis port was removed in the hospital, and all other wires and attachments are OUT!

The KIDNEY SPECIALIST a couple days ago exclaimed over Bob - "your kidneys are NORMAL!" (apparently "normal" for all of us is 80-90% function - WOW -how we rejoice at God's amazing work to restore Bob's kidney function from barely 10% to this level!!)

The WHEELCHAIR is no longer in use - Bob is WALKING, slowly and with sore muscles, but actually doing VERY WELL at it!

Bob's APPETITE is beginning to return - after losing 65+ pounds from tube feeding and bedrest, he is enjoying the tastes of his favorite foods again!

BLOOD CLOTS continue to be a life-time concern, with no apparent reason, but Bob will stay on medication. We are still trying to regulate this medication and blood properly, and we rejoice in finding an excellent DOCTOR to oversee the medication and testing.

EVERY TIME I touch Bob and feel warmth and LIFE, I remember God's generosity to us. We are very aware that often God's best plan for us does not match what we ask for...We are grateful that God's plan for right now has included LIFE for Bob. We do not know yet God's plan for the cancer in Ruth, but continue taking the medicine and working with doctors as we wait for the next PET SCAN in December to determine if the tumor is shrinking.

When we PRAISE GOD for His love, simultaneously we are reminded of all GOD'S PEOPLE who have loved us so well and prayed for us. THANK YOU for asking God for healing and for LIFE! Please know that we have been humbled and amazed with your loving prayers - you have been a clear reflection in our lives of our loving, amazing God!!

"Whatever you do, do all for the glory of God" I Corinthians 10:31

We praise God for His work and for His glory!

Love,  
Ruth & Bob Bell

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