



Who is God When Life Stinks?

"DID -- DID NOT -- DID -- DID NOT!!"

Anyone who has raised children (or been one!) has heard this line of argument passionately repeated back and forth many times!

"Yes, you **DID!**"

"No, I **DID NOT!**"

Bob was back in the hospital AGAIN! The chest was NOT healing well, even after the wound vacuum had been removed, and intense pain stabbed into his back and chest. The doctor decided there must be infection IN THE BONE, and that would require another surgery to cut out portions of Bob's ribs. It needed to be done, and would require reconstructive surgery a week or two after the rib removal surgery. We were torn between the desire to be home for the holidays, and the reality of Bob's pain increasing every day. We chose to schedule the first surgery in early December and to see how quickly he would heal to begin the reconstructive surgery.

Bob and I were recognizing a passionate debate, being carried on back and forth within our minds, between the siblings "**FATE**" (the stuff that happens) and "**FAITH**" (seeing God in charge of it all)!

We must decide daily to whom we will listen. Perhaps you would like to listen in and help us decide...

Bob **DID** stay in the hospital an additional FOUR weeks in October/November.

But he **DID NOT** have to be here over Thanksgiving. Instead, we spent Thanksgiving weekend in New Hampshire with all our children and grandchildren -- what fun!

Bob's intense pain **DID** continue to get worse and he ended up with more severe infection after Thanksgiving.

But he **DID NOT** have to wait the 4 weeks as scheduled to see the specialist for a follow-up. Instead, the home health care nurse became very concerned about some issues and Bob got an emergency, immediate appointment.

Bob **DID NOT** want to "turn himself back in" for another surgery! This was his fifth time for scheduled surgery, not to mention all the unscheduled procedures and painful bandage changes.

But God **DID** give us favor with the doctors and nurses for a private room, and the best surgeon was assigned to do the cutting!

The surgeon **DID** caution what they might discover, after opening him. There was a strong possibility of infection spreading to the heart wall, which would be cause for a very uncertain future.

But it **DID NOT** spread to the heart wall. How thankful we are for all the prayers!

The surgeons **DID** cut out parts of 3 ribs, a lot of cartilage, and portions of the chest wall in a drastic effort to remove all possible traces of infection.

But Bob **DID NOT** have to stay on the ICU floor as expected. The lack of complications allowed him to head back to the recovery fifth floor, where he is familiar to all and is well cared for by the staff there.

Bob **DID NOT** get the "three women" he expected after "removing three ribs". He felt this should be part of the deal, since Adam got one beautiful woman, Eve, made from just one rib!

Bob **DID** keep his humor and wonderful attitude. His first words after surgery were "we have so much to be thankful for"! No wonder I consider myself lucky to be his "one woman"!

Ruth **DID** have the PET scan update after Thanksgiving as planned.

The scan showed that the cancer **DID NOT** grow, and in fact, it is beginning to shrink again!! We praise God for his work in combating cancer through this alternative cancer medication and through many prayers!

Doctors **DID** say that Bob needs additional surgery to reconstruct the areas where infection and bones were removed. A muscle will be moved from the abdomen into the chest cavity and skin grafts from the leg will need to cover the chest opening. They are waiting for 1-2 weeks to verify that all infection is gone.

So far the doctors **DID NOT** see any recurring sites of infection.

Although we **DID NOT** plan on spending Christmas in the hospital, the doctors say we should plan on that. Our family is coming to visit, and we will need to adjust our Christmas activities to revolve around one small, bleak-looking hospital room.

But God **DID** say he loves us, and we are counting on enjoying that love **WHEREVER** we are for the holidays.

God **DID NOT** have to love us or make a way for us to be connected with him.

So why **DID** He send his own son to live on earth and die for us??

For us, the debate is settled when we ponder the profound truth of God's **LOVE**.

Bob and I decide - we desire **FAITH** to monopolize our hearts and our walk. We urge **YOU** to choose also!

**“The life that I now live in my body, I live by FAITH in the Son of God,
who loved me and gave himself for me.” Galatians 2:20**

From: Ruth Bell

Sent: December 2

Subject: Carpenter Tools in the Bells home

This week I was preparing the lesson for our Parenting Class at work, and was wanting to illustrate Jesus' parable about building our house on the rock. Looking for tools, I found a couple of screwdrivers, my sissy hammer (one of those little, light ones) and pliers.

These tools probably **DON'T** look like the ones Jesus used in his carpenter shop, because of the plastic handles, the rubber grips, and the steel shafts. However, that made me realize that Jesus is willing to work with **WHATEVER TOOLS** are available.

We **REJOICE** that God has chosen to **WORK** through the alternative medication that our doctor recommended for Ruth's breast cancer! Yes! - this week's PET scan indicated a slight **DECREASE** in the cancer cell activity in the tumor, and this is definitely the **RIGHT DIRECTION!** This medication works slowly, but without any harmful effects, so the plan is to continue taking it until the next PET scan 3-4 months from now. **THANKS** for praying God's work in this!

We're **REMINDED** that God's work doesn't happen on our time frame however, as Bob is headed **BACK** to Shands Hospital due to a change in his wound and infection area. It appears the rib bone is indeed infected and must be removed. When Bob asked "What does that involve?" the answer was "**A SAW**". Oops, we really didn't want that blunt of an answer, but we're going to pray God will use those tools in the capable hands of skilled surgeons to remove the infected bone.

Bob has an appointment at the hospital on Monday where they will let us know the surgery schedule and probably admit him then. We PRAY for God to work through the surgery and medications to eliminate his infection and bring his blood levels back quickly after surgery, so that he can be home for Christmas!

Isn't it a marvel that the God of Heaven came down to sleep in a wooden manger, made by rough hands here on earth? Isn't it a wonder that He chooses to continue working in OUR lives and YOURS? We continue to be amazed at the work God has done through the hands of gifted surgeons, caring nurses, and praying friends. We are desperate again for God to use US as instruments to show HIS WORK, because these bodies are quite TIRED!!

We're keeping our eyes open, so we can spot HIM at work - hope you are too!

Love,

Ruth & Bob

From: Carole
Date: Wed, 12 Dec 2007 21:14:33 GMT
Subject: Re: "DID - DID NOT" Bells update

It's amazing how many surgeries and procedures one man's body can endure.... and yet he can still keep his sense of humor.

It's amazing how one person can yammer and complain about a small cut on a finger, and another can laugh and praise the Lord thru' untold adversity!

It's amazing how some people are negative about EVERYTHING, and yet some can anticipate Christmas in the hospital (and surgery # 6) and STILL Praise God in all things.

It's amazing how one, normal, average (well not in height!! HA) couple can turn into GIANTS of the FAITH when pushed to the brink of trials, and continue to inspire the people round about them.

Again, we thank you for your faith and attitude and for the way you touch our lives. You guys are AMAZING. We love you. Keep your chins up, eyes on Heaven and knees on the floor. And we will too, in your behalf. Love, Carole O.

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