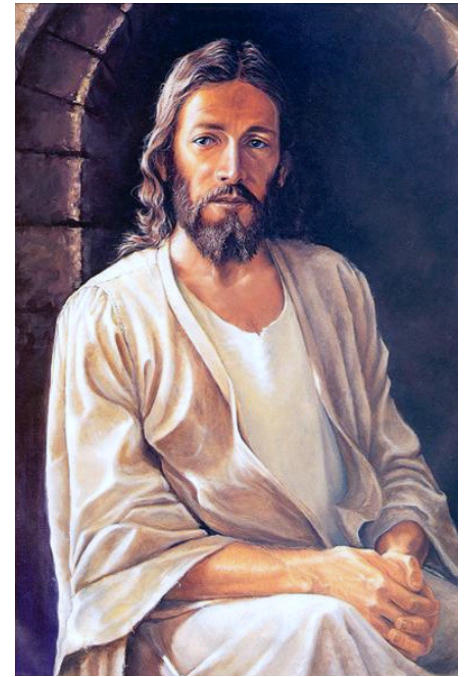




That's my Pal → →

[Shown below w/His Mom]

In Matthew 6:25-34, Jesus says not to worry about what you will eat or what you will wear, but to seek first the Kingdom of Heaven and all this will be given to you. Jesus talks not about what you want, but what you need: all that will be given you. On Tuesday, Nov. 24th, I ran out of money (for like the umpteenth time). I decided against asking for money in favor of seeing how God would provide. Since then I have not had to buy myself anything. Friends offered me food without my asking. Grocery gift cards came in unexpectedly. My Aunt fed me on Thanksgiving and gave me Thwaites' pies for Friday. I earned some income designing a Christmas card for a friend, which bought me gas for the car. I wrote two checks with negative money in my checking and one bounced but there's no fee. Someone bought me a gourmet pizza. A friend filled my gas tank for bringing him to the doctor's. Someone treated me to TGIFriday's. My groceries did not run out until I got more money on Thursday, Dec. 3rd. Amazing what God can do with so little!



Remembering what God has done in my past is encouragement that He'll do positive things in the future. Every day we face trials. But remembering how God has delivered from past trials gives confidence that He is teaching new, deeper lessons of trust with current trials. Some trials just can not be avoided: we have to go through them. Right now I am going through extreme pain in my back and my legs due to sciatica. I have no choice but to go through this pain until I can find relief. I have trouble sleeping at night because I can't get into a comfortable position. I have cursed God, to my dismay. I've sworn at Him and accused Him of being a bad God. Somehow I know I am supposed to believe in Him through bad situations as well as the good, like Habakkuk did. In the short little book of Habakkuk, nestled away in the end of the Old Testament, Habakkuk prays a prayer



of support and belief in God even though a brutal foreign country was to sweep through Israel. Anyway, I suspect I am learning more about how he could do that. Facing each night puts me in a fearful state of mind. I know when I curse God I put myself in the devil's courts more than I would ever like. I know my enemy thrives on this power. I have experienced it firsthand, which is why I am afraid of it. I've found myself in terrible situations when I give in to this enemy's desires. Anyway, my prayer is that I can come out through the nights of horror with a stronger understanding of God in the end. That is the reward for enduring pain, I guess. Suffering produces faith, essentially.

James 1:2-4 Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

Romans 5:2-5 And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.

After writing this, my fear subsided as I was able to get a good night's rest despite the pain. And, in fact, the pain decreased over a few nights, so I feel a bit better.

False Start on Job #28 – 10 Yards, Still Job #27

11/29/09 So I quit working for UPS two days before my first day. My sciatica was bothering me too much to bother it by standing 5 hrs/day. We're back to 27 jobs. And I forgot to mention why I left T.J. Maxx: I went through a 2 week period of hypomania. I'll sum that up by saying I was very mentally ill. I could not sleep; I could not drive; I could not work. After missing several days of work, I decided to resign. T.J. and I left on good terms. He said he'd hire me back if I get stable again. But I am an isotope like plutonium, and I'd rather work a desk job. That's what I'll be looking for. I applied for one tonight. A web ad for a bank was bothering me. They portrayed themselves as oh so awesome just because they gave away free pens. Back in my day, banks gave away free toasters! So anyway, I went to their home page to complain. While looking for the "contact" menu I found the "careers" one instead. So I applied to a bank that gives away free pens. Hey, I like to write! It'll be good for the both of us. The job is Part-time Courier/Driver.

10/10/80

11/30/09 Yesterday I learned the secret to financial living: 10/10/80. The idea is to give the first 10% of income, save the second 10% and use the remaining 80% for everything else. I've got the first 10% down pat, but have never saved the next 10%. Savings goes ERL: Emergency Funds, Replacement Funds and Long-term Funds. Emergency funds are for emergency, like unexpected unemployment. Replacement funds are for new cars, home repairs, education, etc. Long-term Funds involve saving for retirement or children's' college tuition. My goal is to live 10/10/80 by Dec. 2010!

Today was the first day I felt normal in 3 weeks: no hypomania, no dizziness. Praise God! I registered for a 3rd class at MWCC: Creative Web Design [CGD240]. This is a prerequisite for continuing in fall 2010. I love Mt. Wachusett! Additionally, I can buy dental insurance: \$192 for 8 months! Hello overdue teeth cleaning! Today I also worked towards finding a Realtor®. I've decided that I can live alone no longer: it gives me the creeps. I get very scared, lonely and down at times. It even affects my cat. I don't care that I'm upside down, I gotta get outta here! Let the Lord lead, but my plan is to sell first, find Christian housemates second and hopefully stay with a friend in between up to a month.

4:12

Today my brother told me that "he loves me this second, and yesterday, and at 4:12 today".

I thought I'd conduct a spiritual experiment to see how many times the number 4:12 pops up, and what happens at 4:12. When I went to put the last of my money into my car, I only had \$4.12 (and one Canadian penny, which I didn't use: it is not valid U.S. currency). When it turned 4:12, I was driving 41.2 mph and said 4 x 12 second prayer reps for my brother.

Then I thought I'd research what the New Testament had to say in verse 4:12 . . .

1 Peter 4:12 - Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you.

Philippians 4:12 - I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want.

1 Thessalonians 4:11&12 - ¹¹Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business and to work with your hands, just as we told you, ¹²so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependent on anybody.

1 Corinthians 4:12 - We work hard with our own hands. When we are cursed, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure it;

Hebrews 4:12 - For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

Galatians 4:12 - I plead with you, brothers, become like me, for I became like you. You have done me no wrong.

1 John 4:12 - No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.

Acts 4:12 - Salvation is found in no one else [Jesus], for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.

This is what I think it all means . . .

The first two verses related to my current financial situation, which is very difficult. However, through the difficulty I am learning financial discipline. I am learning how to be content while in poverty; I am learning how to depend only upon God and not upon my own riches and desires. In the third verse, the financial freedom aspect of my journey is highlighted where it talks about being dependent on nobody. Right now I am not independent and this puts me in painful situations. I am learning to work with my own hands instead of to beg, borrow or steal. As I go through this ordeal, I find a lot of need to forgive other brothers and sisters who had no pity on me but went on with their lives. I am learning to bless when I feel cursed and to endure persecution rather than write so many poison pen emails about it. As the 5th verse suggests, I suspect God is refining me in the fire and winnowing out the sinful parts of my personality, character and soul. Very painful stuff which could be the reason I am suffering. Galatians 4:12 is the part that I think relates to my brother, and others. I have come this far on my journey with God, and I beckon you to join me. The more I learn about God, the more I realize the need to meet my brother and others where they are at instead of with judgment and condemnation or impatience. The last two verses describe the method to finding God in their hearts: by loving. Loving each other becomes the method by which we love Jesus, our Savior, the only way we can come to be saved.

Puerto Rico Prayer Watch

Some prayer requests are needs and some are wants. I want to go to Puerto Rico. I enjoy it there: the cool breeze, the ocean swimming, and the family events. This year my family is traveling to Puerto Rico for my niece Amalia's baptism. I don't have the money to go. However unlikely, I am praying for it. Three things have to happen for me to be satisfied: I want a ticket to Puerto Rico, I want my sciatica to calm down so I can enjoy it, and I want my favorite step-brother, Joe, and his girlfriend Sari to come down. They can't afford it either because they just bought a new house. However, I just spoke with them and revealed that flights are \$460. They seem amenable if we can find them a free spot to stay. We'll be watching this one!



11/25/09	- \$591.20	- BOS (435/729)	SJU (732)	Jet Blue
11/30/09	- \$511.20	- BOS (431/743)	SJU (732)	Jet Blue
12/02/09	- \$561.20	- BOS (437/747)	SJU (732)	Jet Blue
12/05/09	- \$534.20	- BOS (835)	SJU (922)	US Airways
12/06/09	- \$459.20	- BOS (835)	SJU (922)	US Airways

jetBlue 
AIRWAYS® U.S. AIRWAYS

12/06/09 Yesterday I saw my niece Amalia at a family dinner. I've decided to be the best uncle I can to her. So I made her a sign with her name out of wood for Christmas. I forgot to take a picture of it, maybe next issue. It came out awesome and I know she is going to enjoy it for probably her whole life. I handed out all my Christmas gifts to my family, who loved them. I had to hand them out early because everyone is going to Puerto Rico for Christmas, except me, Joe & Sari. This is the first year I've given out gifts in a few years because of my financial situation. Most of the gifts were things of value I had lying around my condo, like candles and new Birkenstocks. Some things I bought at T.J. Maxx, and some things I made (with Uncle Ed's help). I only spent \$78 on 16 gifts, or \$4.87⁵ / gift! I was so happy to pass the gifts out. Now I turn my attention towards getting / making gifts for my closest friends, in particular those who've supported me with financial gifts. And one special man I hope to give a gift of \$50 in value, if I can figure out what to get.

Prayer Requests

I don't normally ask for prayer, but if you'd like to pray for me, a few things have come up. First, pray for a cure / relief from this sciatica I am experiencing. My butt and groin have gone numb, which makes certain functions interesting, to say the least. I am forced to walk very slowly and often times it is too painful to stand up for very long. I thank my friends for going grocery shopping for me! That would have been a chore. Anyway, the problem is that I have a herniated disc at the bottom of my spine. The disc is pressing against my sciatic nerve and it is very painful. Sometimes I hate my life because it seems I always have some medical problem or another that compromises my ability to work. As if bipolar disorder were not enough, now I face a crippling back problem. I am nervous that this sciatica trouble will be continued / prolonged. Please pray that it is not. I would like to go to Puerto Rico, but if I am in pain, there would be no point. And when will the pain end? Will it interfere with my schooling next semester? I sure hope not! Please pray about that. Will I be able to get a job in January to help support myself while I have this irritating sciatica? Please pray about that. I am already poor enough: I need to earn money. I'll go for some type of desk job in the future unless my back improves. Pray for doctors help and all that typical stuff and believe me, I am exhausting all avenues of help here! It isn't easy to do that on a negligible budget either. If I had more money half a year ago, I probably could have bought a new office chair and bed to avoid this problem. I can't afford the copays to go to Physical Therapy as much as they suggest. Yadda, yadda... poverty stinks! Life happens to me and not the other way around. Anyway, this is a horrible lament for me here, and I believe all my physical woes are tests caused by evil spirits to keep me from preaching and pronouncing the Word of God. Their tactics are discouraging and it works. But I am learning so much through this, especially how to be empathetic and helpful towards others. Thanks for praying!

Final Remarks

Thanks for reading Etoonin', the only place where you'll see one person's life become so public. Merry Christmas and Happy Hanukah to you this year, may God bless you and your families! Love, Jim

toon in'...

=====
Etoonin' created and published by Jim Bures. Edited by Hani Le and Sarah Nadeau. All works ©2009 Etoonin' Incorporated.

Want to give a **Christmas Gift** to **Etoonin'**?

== please donate online at www.toonin.com ==

Checks to: Jim Bures, 58 Spencer Road – 16K, Boxborough, MA 01719

Thanks a bunch when I was in a crunch!

Need a Christmas Card?

See what we've done so far...



Order your Christmas card with Etoonin' today!

2009 Christmas Card Promo

Help Etoonin' raise funds by purchasing our Christmas card design services.

Step 1: Choose card type...

Simple \$20



Simple designs include regular photos (4x6) or Christmas photos (4x8).

Complex \$40



Suggest a design starting point (gift box, ornament, etc.) or let our pros design one!

Your card can include up to 6 photos and will be optimized and touched up in Photoshop. Please supply any text you'd like to have on the card photo.

Step 2: Take the headache out of the ordering!

We use Winkflash.com for all our photo card printing: reliable, quality, and price: how nice! Give me your home address and I'll order the cards and ship them to you.

Prices:	Designer Card complete with Envelope -	89 ¢ each.
	Photo or Christmas Photo -	23 ¢ each.
	Shipping -	\$2.79 / ea qty of 50.
	Admin Costs for me -	\$5.00 / order

Please specify the shipping address for me to send to!

Step 3: The Premium Package!

Provide: 1. the photos, 2. your holiday letter (.doc or .pdf), 3. your address list, 4. your signature (optional) and We'll design the card, get it printed, collate and stuff each envelope and provide the stamp!

Premium Price = \$40 for admin / design + \$1.50 / card. **INCLUDES EVERYTHING!!!**

For more info: [Jim Bures - \(978\) 274-2476](mailto:jim.bures@yahoo.com) – jim.bures@yahoo.com