

Greetings everyone, I ask that you please overlook the impersonal nature of a group message. If you are receiving this message it is because I value your friendship or acquaintance and your prayers. I wanted to give everyone an update on what has been going on in my life in the past few years.

As most of you know Clara and I got married in July of 2008, and came to Moody Bible Institute in Chicago in January of 2009. In the spring of 2010 I was rushed to the emergency room at Northwestern where I spent about 3 days in the ICU plus two more days in a regular room. This was related to complications with my liver. When I was seventeen my immune system began attacking my liver. They call this auto-immune hepatitis (This is not a virus. Hepatitis is a general term for liver inflammation). Basically since I was seventeen my immune system has been chipping away at my liver. It has been somewhat controlled with medication, but has not gone into remission.

About 2 weeks before the semester started in August 2011 Isaiah was born. That was a very difficult semester that was made more difficult by the noticeable decline in my energy level. This spring was my last semester. We were planning and preparing to move back to Tennessee at the end of May (Clara has been dreaming of the day we get to move back since the day we got here). In April I had a visit with a cardiologist because of something unusual my other doctor heard while listening to my heart. I had an echocardiogram (ECG) before the appointment with the cardiologist. He proceeded to tell me that I had a mitral valve prolapse (MVP). This simply means that the valve between the right atrium and ventricle are not closing properly. It can occur without any major problems accompanying it, but that was not the case with me. He said it had significantly gotten worse since the 2010 incident (apparently they

were aware of it when they did a complete diagnostic workup which included an ECG in 2010).

He said it is likely to continue to get worse if it is not repaired with surgery. With our not having a solid job lined up in TN nor insurance, and being on Medicaid in IL because we were broke students, and throw in the fact that we're just a few miles from Northwestern Hospital, it made following through with our plan to move back to TN seem rather unwise. We were left dealing with the emotional letdown of not moving home, and facing heart surgery.

Upon further consultation with heart surgeons and hepatologists we learned that doing the heart surgery with the present condition of my liver put me in a category where there is only a 30% chance of surviving the surgery. Liver cirrhosis is the biggest risk factor in open heart surgeries. The cardiac surgeon reassured me that my ventricle is still functioning well and maintaining muscle tone, although he did say that in terms of leakage (medically called regurgitation, because the blood flows backwards into the atrium instead of forward throughout my body) I was about a 3.5 on a scale of 4. This means my heart is working a lot harder in order to maintain normal activity. A few months after receiving this news, earlier this week in fact, I found that the team at Northwestern has continued to discuss my case. They have decided that it is time to find a donor in order to do a living donor liver transplant. Then they can address the heart surgery while I have a healthy liver.

I also want to share that Clara and I found out a couple of weeks ago that we are expecting another child. The due date is likely towards the end of April. We are excited about another child, and the prospects of improved energy levels after the surgery. I'm also excited about the prospects of being able to return to my former cycling activity level. We are simultaneously overwhelmed at the prospects of having a liver transplant, open heart surgery,

and a newborn and a one and a half year old possibly all in the same time span. We do want to acknowledge that God has again and again shown his faithfulness as he has walked with us through the trying times in the past few years. He has seen us through safely, and we put our hope and our trust in Him. We have felt the effects of the prayers of our friends and family, and ask that you continue to pray for us. And finally we ask that you consider donating part of your liver. If you wish to receive more information regarding the living donor process let me know via email at [jtowry77@gmail.com](mailto:jtowry77@gmail.com) . There is a lot to think about that probably shouldn't be covered in this message.

Thanks for reading this long message, I know it's difficult to sit and read an email this long as busy as everyone is. I hope this message finds you well. Please email [jtowry77@gmail.com](mailto:jtowry77@gmail.com) if you have any questions or want more information about the living donor process.

May Grace and Peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and Jesus our Lord,  
Jeremy, Clara, and Isaiah