

If You Thought You Were Dying . . .

by Wayne Goff

Andy Talley, Villanova football coach, thought he was dying . . .

“In 2002, Andy Talley thought he was dying. The pain began under his sternum. He had never felt anything like it, like something trying to gnaw its way out. Football coaches aren’t supposed to show weakness, so Talley rode out the stabbing in his chest for a few hours. Finally, he told his wife they should go to the hospital.

“The triage nurse didn’t hesitate. As soon as the magic words -- chest pain -- passed Talley’s lips, the doors opened. Before long, Talley lay on his back. A cardiologist hovered over him.

“ ‘You’re having a heart attack, and you have a blood clot,’ Talley remembers the cardiologist saying. ‘This is very serious.’

“Talley remembers precisely the thoughts that raced through his mind: ‘I’m not really interested in one more offensive play. I’m really not thinking about whether we’re playing man or two-deep zone. I wasn’t interested in one more hour in the office. What I was interested in at that point in time was my kids, my wife, my family, if I would ever see them again -- and where I was going to go if I died.’ ” [information & quotes from article by Andy Staples, SI.com, 1/20/10]

It shouldn’t take a near death experience for us to realize our life priorities, but the sad reality is that for many people priorities in life take a back seat to living life in a way that others view as successful. We call it “the rat race” for a reason. It’s like running on a treadmill until we fall off. Then someone else takes our place, while everyone else hardly notices the change.

Dear readers, listen to what Mr. Talley said! The two things that concerned him most while he was having a heart attack were (1) his family, and (2) his eternal destiny. Those two things should be everybody’s priorities. Are they truly yours, or are you, too, taking them for granted?

Importance of Family

Many people get away from the importance of family in their daily lives. They convince themselves that they really don’t need their family, and that their family doesn’t really need them. Thus they feel justified in ignoring family relationships until a crisis arises. Perhaps a loved one dies, or a child becomes seriously ill, or one has a near death experience. Suddenly, they feel foolish for having ignored their family. They may or may not have an opportunity to make amends. But why wait until danger besets us to do the right thing? Why can’t we see what is important now?

Yes, it is important to work and to provide for one’s family, 1 Tim. 5:8, but that is not the problem of the workaholic. He works and works for the sake of work itself!

Young parents, you have your children with you only once in life. Take advantage of that now, before it is too late. Spend time with your children and teach them the ways of God (Eph. 6:1-4). Be a godly example before them so that they know what is truly important (see 1 Cor. 4:16).

Importance of God

As important as family is, it does not compare to man’s first priority: serving God (Eccl. 12:13-14). Every man will stand before God in the judgment and give account of Himself to God (Matt. 25; Rom. 2; Acts 17:30-31; 2 Cor. 5:10; etc.). It is appointed unto all men once to die and after this the judgment, Heb. 9:27. In one quick second, everything could change. If you are unprepared, you will have an eternity to regret it! Get it right. Now!

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