

Life Is A Gift

Ready:

“How can I repay the Lord for His goodness to me?” -Psalm 116:12 (NIV)

Set

My father, Edward T. Britton, who was also my best friend, passed away at 7:52 a.m. on May 2, 2008. Eight days later, on May 10, more than 1,100 people attended his Celebration Service to honor a life well lived. It was an incredible evening of laughing and crying as we not only lifted up a man who impacted thousands during his lifetime, but also celebrated the Lord Jesus Christ. Throughout his journey with leukemia, he always talked about God's goodness, God's greatness and God's graciousness. One of my dad's favorite verses he quoted often was Psalm 116:12: “How can I repay the Lord for His goodness to me?” He was so thankful for his life and God's rich blessings.

My dad, who was just inducted into FCA's Hall of Champions as a result of the impact he made through FCA, had a solid faith that did not allow his circumstances to define him. His faith never wavered through the entire sickness, which lasted almost two years! He never asked why God let this happen to him. Not once. He said that he did not have the right to ask. Instead he asked, “What?” He asked what the Lord wanted him to learn through this trial. He stayed the course. He maintained the mission!

Dad was totally focused on finishing well. Every time I called him during the last two months of life to ask how he was doing he would say, “Contending.” It was his way to say that he was fighting the good fight; running the right race. His focus can be best described by a journal entry he wrote on his CaringBridge site on January 25, 2008: “I continue serving and marching with the King daily. I'm absolutely convinced that I'm able to convey this positive update due to the serious and ongoing prayers of all of you! I am enjoying daily the final laps of my 'retirement.' May HE be ever present in your daily lives, starting with a serious quiet time in the mornings.”

My dad lived every second of the day as if it was his last. Not just when he became sick, but throughout his entire life. His favorite quote was, “Life is God's gift to us. What we do with it is our gift back to Him.” He desired to repay the Lord with the way he lived his life. That became his life ambition!

What a great challenge for us who still have life. We take life for granted and do not realize how special it is until one of our loved ones passes away. However, the key is not only to understand that God has given us a gift called life, but also to understand that how we live it is our gift back to Him. If you are like me, then you are way too consumed with wanting God to bless you and not with how you can bless Him. What are you doing with your life? Is it a

blessing to God? Are you investing your life in things that please God? As athletes and coaches, what does it mean for us to lay our lives at the feet of Jesus? The life He gives us because He loves us should be returned back to Him. Not just, "Lord, here is my life, and You can have it back," but, "Lord, I give to You my entire being – every action and decision, all my hopes and dreams, my thoughts and talk. I surrender it all back to You. May my life be a gift that brings You pleasure."

Life is God's gift to you. What you do with it is your gift back to Him!

Go

1. If you could somehow package your life up as a gift and give it to God, what kind of gift would it be?
2. Do you see life as a gift from God? Why is it so hard to understand that life is a gift? What gets in the way of our thinking that way?
3. God is God. He does not need anything, so why does He need us to give Him our lives?
4. How can Psalm 116:12 impact your life on a daily basis? Be specific.
5. As athletes and coaches, how can the way we compete be a gift to God?

Workout

- 2 Peter 1:3-11

Overtime

"Jesus, I want my life to bring You pleasure. You know the deep yearnings in my heart to please You. So often my sin prevents me from loving You and others the way I should. At times I feel like my life is not a good gift for You. Please forgive me for the times that my life does not bring You honor and glory. I give You my life, as a gift, as is. Help me Lord to live for You. I ask for the strength to be the child of God You created me to be. You have blessed me so much. Thank You, Lord. I love You. Amen."



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