

**What I will tell my family about my death and grieving**

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I hope the time of my death will be a moment of gratitude for my family and friends. I think I have been demonstrating that I look at death with eyes of hope because of my faith in Jesus Christ. And I hope my attitude will help my family make the mourning process with serenity and peace too.

The first thing I will tell my family will be about the life I tried to live with and for them. Actually, I cannot see my own life apart from my wife and children, and I am aware their lives helped me to format my own life, making me the person I am in the present. I will use the time together for reminiscences, bringing out many memories that will make our connections much more strong, and timeless. There will be a rich opportunity to reassure our family's values and beliefs and to check out how they impacted our lives and our decisions too. Indeed, there will be a time to evaluate the decisions we have taken during our lives, talking about regrets, losses, reached goals, and dreams that never came true. I hope it will be a moment for reconciling with life in many ways and an opportunity for my family to realign their lives to keep moving on with more conscience.

I will tell my family how grateful I am to God for giving me the wonderful family he gave me. When I was young, I used to think I wouldn't be able to foster a family, 'I am not worth it', I thought to myself. Due to the fact I came from a very broken family I had no idea what I was supposed to do to love and be loved. To me, the family was a very far and impossible dream. Then, I found my wife, a person that loves me unconditionally, and until today she impresses me with her love. She keeps caring about me and forgiving me over these years, expressing how important I am to her. I think that my death will affect her a lot and when I imagine her pain and suffering I feel so sad too. She already said she would like to die before me because she wouldn't know what to do after my death. To be honest, I also don't know how I would live without her too. But I will tell her to remember the wonderful memories we have together since we started dating when we were young. I will encourage her to keep a grateful heart for the time God allowed us to stay together during all these years and for the wonderful family we built with our kids. I will tell her to keep moving on, adjusting to her life without me, and reaching her dreams by using the many gift and talents that God has given to her. I will tell her to keep doing a difference in the many lives she has been touching through her care and love.

Toward my kids, I will try to have not only one but some conversations about my death, together as well as one to one too. I remember that when my father died I was 37 years old, married, and with kids, but his death had a deep impact on my life that I wasn't aware of it. I thought I was more prepared for his death as he was very sick, but not. So, I feel that I need to prepare my kids for my death. A few days ago my second daughter, who is 28 years old and a single mother, told me that she would be lost without me or her mother. She is still struggling to pursue her career, trying to make herself financially stable while doing her duty as a mother. Her statement made me think about my kids' life without me and I got worried about it. Besides this daughter, I have two more children, the older daughter is married and my youngest son lives with us, although he is 24 years old and has a job. So, I think that my death will affect them a lot. That's why I will tell them how I would like them to face my death and my forever absence in their lives. First of all, I will use my experience of losing my father and share with them how I dealt with this and what I did to live with his absence in my life. Then, I will propose a time for reminiscences, I mean, I will encourage them to think about the great memories we had together, asking them to describe the best moments they remember about their childhood and that they will keep in their minds about us so that they can share with their kids too. Individually, I will check with everyone about their faith in Christ, their relationship with God, and their beliefs about life after death. I hope to be able to

support them in their journey of faith, making sure they will keep carrying on the spiritual inheritance that I will leave to them. Also, I understand that my time with my kids talking about my death will be also an opportunity to work on our feelings about our relationship. As a father, I am aware that I made mistakes and I see it had some consequences in their lives. So, it will be a time to check if everything is good or if I should do something to fix things. Individually, I will talk to each one according to what I see in their lives, giving some advice and trying to help them in areas of their lives I understand they should improve. Above all, I will reassure my unconditional love for them.

As I said in the beginning, I will make clear to my family what I believe about death and life after death, hoping this will help to minimize their suffering after my departure. As apostle Paul said, I believe that being with Christ is incomparably better and death is the way to meet Him, so I am so confident that after I close my eyes here I will open in His presence forever. This kind of confidence throws away the fear of death, giving space for a life full of hope and joy. I hope to be able to demonstrate my faith in Jesus so that my kids will feel very comforted toward my departure. Personally, I understand that the way I look at my own death has a great impact on the lives that my beloved around me.

Also, I will try to support my family in the process of, grieving my death. As I read in the books during my class, mourning is a continuous process with many tasks, and everyone reacts differently. So, as possible as I can I will help my wife and kids to be aware of the tasks of the mourning process, and the steps they need to take to fulfill every stage of the grieving. I will remind them about the feelings, pain, and thoughts that probably will take place in their minds and hearts, showing that even though everyone is experiencing different feelings and thoughts, it is still normal to experience what they will feel. Also, I will encourage them to talk to each other about their feelings, especially when someone realizes he is struggling with the pain and feeling alone. Mutual support will be very important and will help the family to stand strong as everyone keeps moving on in their lives.

One of the most important things I would like to say about my death is related to the celebration I want them to do in my memory. I desire that my funeral be a special moment to celebrate God for my life. I want a special, and spiritual party as part of my funeral service, with many songs of praise and rejoicing in the Lord for the gift of life and for the opportunity I had to know Him and serve Him as serving many people here and in my original country. I desire that God be glorified in my death as I am trying to glorify Him in my life, and I hope my family is aware of it. I don't want sadness at my funeral but people laughing about the funny moments they had with me as well as memorable experiences we had together. As I try to make my life impact lives through my love and care I would like my death to be the final moment to touch the lives that will be at my funeral too. If it is possible, I would like to prepare the liturgy of the service, choosing my predilect songs and Psalms and inviting the people that will address some words in the service.

Also, I will tell my family that I will always be in their hearts and It was a privilege to love them and to take care of them. I hope they will keep going in their lives, building a wonderful and useful life for them and everyone around them. Also, I will tell them not to feel guilt when they realize they are not suffering from my absence because I know that even if they don't talk about me, they are carrying me in their hearts forever.

Finally, I want to my family remember me as a happy man that tried to live a better life as possible, loving God with all my heart and loving and caring for them as better as I could. And still, I want to make mine the statement from Billy Graham: "When you hear that Billy

Graham is dead, don't believe it. I will be more live than ever with Jesus!" So, when someone asks about me, I want my family to say: "He is more live than ever! He is with Jesus"