

Thoughts on Death
Marriage and Family Therapy: Individual and Family Development
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When I think about my death, I think about the immediate family I will be leaving behind. This is the family I have grown attached to over the course of three incredible years. This family is the one I have had the privilege to cultivate and form with my wonderful partner Caleb. The love we have for one another within our little family gifted us with another life; I think about Siobhan and her innocence. I think of the prayers I have prayed over her life since before she was born and everything my husband and I have seen come to pass since her birth. I think about the faithfulness of God and how he chose me to be a part of their lives. Death is fleeting, and I leave such joy behind me. Death is unavoidable and is a guarantee. I see all that I have been able to accomplish and see over my life time and think about how good I had it the times that I did. It is due to all of this beauty that I would want my family to know that I cherished every moment of it as best I knew how. All the good and the not so good. Although Death called me, it did created a way for me to let them know that even after death, I will remember everything I was born to love.

I have learned that grieving is a process that comes in different layers and forms; All of these layers and forms look different for everyone and it is important to honor everyone's grieving time equally. I would want to remind my family that I would want them to find their personal way of grieving, and taking their time through the process. No matter how it is that I die, whether it is due to illness, accident or old age, I would want them to know that I wanted them to be prepared for everything that would be taking place. Death can come at any time, so normalizing it would be better than not acknowledging it before it happens. I know that my family will have their own way of doing so and will find ways to remember me. However, I would want them all to take the time to remember one thing about me that I have shared with them. For example, I know that with my husband, we shared this routine of catching up before bed and making sure we did not fall asleep until we prayed together or we used to just enjoy one

another's company before closing out the night. I would want all of my family members to remember a detail that we individually shared. For my daughter Siobhan, I would like for my husband to remind her through photos and speak to her of all of the things I would do throughout my day, including all of the mistakes. I would want my memory to be solid and realistic for her and I would want everybody to let her know how much I truly loved her and prayed for her to come into this world.

As my husband and I have discussed in the past, in the event that something were to ever happen to me I would want for us to be prepared because it is important. I would like for my daughter to be raised by my sister and I would want for her to understand that the reasoning for this is because of the strength of faith there is in my sister's household. Faith is extremely important to our family and it would be important for her to continue to learn more about the truth of the gospel. Many of us who are thinking about the death and whatever is next to come never realize that we are doing those around us a service because, there is preparation in the midst of loss. I believe that normalizing this is also extremely important. Going over the conversation about grief is important and we need to make sure that we understand how essential and personal grieving is. I would request for my family to not want to open the casket and be at peace with not seeing the body. I would also love for my sisters to say a few words due to the strong bond we all have as siblings. One thing I would add to this piece is that I would want for everyone to come and write out what they would've told me before I would have passed. I would want to have them think about what they would write and give them space to leave it in a box by my casket.

Thinking about death and grief has changed my perspective on becoming more prepared as well as having the desire to value my time and family more. Because death is something none of us can escape, it should be something that allows us to reflect as well as prepare. Grief has been something that I have grown to value more because it is necessary in order to continue to value the life and the time that has been lost. Thinking about my death has reminded me that every opportunity I have been given has given me the chance to see life differently as well as make things better. Death is not only unexpected, but it is also a reminder to leave a legacy and a memory of good behind. We are only given one life and it is not measured. It should be greatly

valued and a reminder of God's perfect love for us. This is how I think of death and everything that comes with it.