

Stephany Menezes
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Final Paper: "What will I tell my family about my death?"

I turned 29 this year and I never spent too much time thinking about my death. When I was younger and would have depressed moments, I would sit and think about what others would say about me at my funeral. I would wonder how they would feel however, this was always short lived and I would never actually believe I would die at a young age. As a believer in Jesus, I know death means being reunited with the One who created me and loves me more than anyone else ever will. However, the idea of dying still scares me. Death means living all that I have ever known to go into a void that I do not. As a believer, I have faith that Jesus is on the other side and is ready to embrace me. However, there is always a small voice of doubt where you start to ponder, "well what if we are all wrong, and there is nothing after this life." Those thoughts are usually bleak and I try not to feed it, as I believe there is too much evidence out there to not believe in God. Therefore, although I have talked about the idea of death with many people including my family, I have never actually planned my funeral or spoken much to my family about my death until this assignment.

After I heard about this assignment, I actually sat my mother and fiancé down to talk about what I would like to happen if I died. This became a conversation starter where we all started talking about our possible deaths. I came to the realization that although I think scattering ones ashes in the sea or off a mountain or in a field of wild flowers is somewhat poetic, I would rather just be buried. I do believe in the rapture and the second coming of Jesus and there is always a what if in my head of whether or not our old bodies will rise to then be transformed into new ones. I would like to play it safe and just have my bones lay in a plot of land. My mother also chimed in and said she would not like to be cremated, as the process is actually disturbing to her. I did, however make a request.

I have always liked being unique and I believe I am different than most people and I relish in that. I made two requests which were taken as more of a joke to my fiancé and mother but I actually meant it. I do not want to be buried in a land that I know. I was born in Mount Vernon, New York and that does not mean I want to be buried here. My family is from Brazil and I do not want to be buried there either. I would like be buried somewhere new with preferences in either Scotland or Greece. I am an adventurous person, and I love going to new places. I want my body buried in an exotic place but not so exotic that no one visits. I would like to be buried in a famous burial ground that is also ancient and full of history. It may seem like an extreme request but I have \$100,000 of life insurance that could at least cover my funeral if I were to suddenly die now. Plus, I believe the trip would be a bonding experience for all.

As I spoke to my mother and fiancé, I remembered a scene from Friends where Phoebe's grandmother died. Towards the end of the episode, they all put on their 3-D glasses and head into the funeral. That image has never left my mind whenever I think about how I'd like my funeral to be. I want it to be different and memorable. A trip to Scotland for the burial would be pretty different. Then, at the wake, I'd like a video to play. The video would be a mini highlight reel of my best moments here on earth with the people that I love. Maybe record those who couldn't make the trip to give nice speeches

about me. Although I believe it would be a sad moment, it would also be a moment to reflect on the beauty that is life and living every moment like it is your last. I'd want my last gift for my family to be to remind them to live life to the fullest and take advantages of the opportunities that present themselves. To live well, learn a lot and love with no limitations. But above all, to remind them to love God with all their hearts and that I am in a better place.

When I spoke to my fiancé about my death, we mentioned what we should do if I died once we were married. I told him that if I died even before our wedding day that he should feel free to move on with his life and get married to someone else. He went on to say that if I died when we were married and we had kids, that he would not remarry until they were out of the house. I applaud his wishes, as I do know that having stepparents can be a challenge for younger children. However, I do believe it is important to acknowledge that if he does find a wife while our hypothetically children were young, then that would be ok, as long as she loves our children. I know that I cannot control anything after my passing and I want my fiancé to be happy even if it means he is happy with someone else. I wouldn't be here to see it anyway.

I did ask one thing of my fiancé however. I believe God has given me a dream that will one day come to fulfillment. God has called us to the great commission as it is written in Matthew 28:16-20. My goal in life is to proclaim God's love and to reach those who do not even know the name of Jesus. I want to go to the unreached corners of the world, where Jesus is an unknown name. My fiancé is a great preacher, who desires to do missions ministry one day. Therefore, my only request to him would be to fulfill the dream that God has given me. To live for Jesus with all his heart and to reach an untouched corner of the world where the mention of God is either not allowed or not known. I know that if I cannot personally fulfill what God has placed in my heart then He will use me to enlighten and inspire others to complete the task.

Lastly, although I only had this conversation with my mother and my fiancé, there are other people that I would like to talk to about my death. My father lives in Belgium while my brother is a college student who is a social butterfly. I do not seem them as regularly as I do see my mother and fiancé however, if I do not get a chance to speak to them, I'd like to leave them letters. I would want to encourage my brother that he does not have to live in my shadow for being the younger sibling but that he could thrive and make his mark on the world. I'd like to tell my father that he is more than his addictions and that he has a purpose on this planet. I'd like to leave letters for my friends who I love very much. Additionally, I am young and have no property therefore a will wouldn't be necessary but I do believe that in my letters, I can gift people certain belongings that I believe would be useful to them.

My death is a scary thing to me at times but I do not want my family or my friends to be devastated with grief. Death is apart of life and although we have a period of mourning, we find joy in God. I do not have everything planned for my funeral for my family to arrange but I trust that they will know me enough to celebrate me for one last time. The only things that come to mind is that the music has to be poetic and beautiful with splashes of old Disney songs. The flowers, white lilies but I love all flowers, so if they want the wake to be in a field of flowers that would be lovely. However it happens, at the end of it all, I want my family to be able to move on after mourning. Enjoying life is meant for the living and I want those who I love to seize the day.