

Soo Kim

MFT 605 Individual & Family Development

5/2/23

What would I tell my family about my death?

This is an eerie thought. I have difficulty thinking about the mortality of my own parents, let alone me. Prior to marrying my wife, I would not have given this much thought. In fact, this wouldn't be a big deal because I wasn't yet accountable to someone in my life. But once I chose to merge my life with my wife's, then everything changed. No longer would my death be just revolving around my immediate family of my parents and my two brothers. Now, my death impacts my wife and my daughter.

The timing of these words would also heavily determine what is said. I think about this stage in my life right now. I'm 32 years old and from when I was 21 years old, I thought, "When I'm in my 30s, I'm going to be a real adult, like my life is over!" Yes, I was an incredibly naive and foolish 20 year old, essentially just another 20 year old. But I feel amazing and healthy. I am thankful to have a wonderful wife and a beautiful and vibrant young daughter. If I think about the possibility that I would ever leave my family without a husband and father, it breaks me.

The mortality I face is also one of lost dreams. If I think about what my life has been about up until now, I would categorize it as a series of mistakes and winding turns that have finally led me to a path where I could potentially follow for the next few years of my life. By the grace of God, I am thankfully not a lawyer as I had originally imagined for my life but I am following my calling in ministry as pastor and future counselor. It was a lot of rebellion and running away from God to get to this point where I would not be pursuing a career and life for the approval of the world.

I am finally at a point where I am going all-in to my calling as a pastor as I continue to minister to married couples in my church. I am continuing my calling as counselor as I now go full-time at Alliance to pursue my Masters in Marriage and Family Therapy. Since graduating college, I was never 100% sure of what my next career step or my general step in my life would look like. But now at the ripe young age of 32, I don't feel I'm quite there yet because I haven't practiced as a counselor, nor have I led a church as a pastor. But for the first time, I really do feel that I am exactly where I am supposed to be with the exact people that I am supposed to be with.

Now as I am called to face my own mortality, I think about what this would mean. I first would speak to myself and affirm my eternity in the Lord. I realize that for most of my young life, I was trying to build a name for myself. I was trying to establish my own kingdom where I would be self-sufficient. I was relying on my own intellect and efforts to carve out a safety net and security where I wouldn't be dependent on anyone. Funnily enough, now as I enter into a deeper sense of security and comfort in my life, I actually long to depend on the Lord even more. I long for the days when I wouldn't have things so set and I remember how it was to be so desperate for God. Being desperate for God would humble me in a way where I would not rely on anything else but God. So as I face my mortality and think about my relationship with God, I realize that building anything up for the sake of this world is a waste. Instead, I would consider it a joy to spend the rest of eternity in heaven, enjoying the fellowship of Jesus Christ. I would tell the Lord that I am glad to spend my life with him, free of the burdens and temptations of the

world. I would thank God for the restored body I have that is free of any kind of sickness or aching. I would praise God for freedom from all that I had to labor through in this world and now I get to experience the riches of his kingdom.

As for what I would tell my wife right now, I would be so grieved for her. She and I have had many conversations about this, even before we got married. We both have said to each other that we would want the other to remarry and find someone else to do life with. But for my wife, she says that it would be a lot harder for her to remarry and when I hear that, it breaks my heart. I would only want my wife to be cared for and to be loved so that she doesn't have to go through this difficult life alone, let alone as a widow. I would also want her to feel supported by my parents. Her parents are out of the country for business for months of the year and they're not as available to help watch our daughter. My parents are retired and local. They are able to support her in a way that has been even able to mend their relationship. I would want my wife to feel supported and feel like she can actually handle raising a daughter without me. I would also want my wife to not blame God for my death. The thing that attracted me the most to my wife was her amazing faith. She truly loves the Lord and shares her faith whenever she can. She disciples women in our church and leads with such spiritual authority. I would hate to see anything compromise her faith, let alone the sudden demise of her husband. I would also encourage her to trust her instincts as a parent. She is an amazing mother who cares so well for our daughter. So instead of trying to consider what her dead husband would do in certain situations, I would encourage her to trust her maternal instincts to best raise our daughter. And lastly, I would just remind her that the Lord is good and his steadfast love endures forever over her life.

What I would tell my daughter would be so difficult to process. She's barely turning 1 but I already have a sense of the kind of joyful and magnetic personality she would have as she grows older. I would probably write a letter to her that she could read when she turns 10. I would say that daddy learned more about God's love for us through her birth. I would tell her that she was so deeply loved by so many people and that she is truly fit for her name. Abigail, in Hebrew, means the joy of my father. Abigail is called to be someone who is meant for great things in this world. But not to make her name great, but to glorify God in her life. I would encourage her to dream big and to pursue her dreams in line with what God has called her to do. I would also ask that she not give her mom such a hard time as she grows up throughout her middle school and high school years. If my wife and our daughter were to fight like my wife and her mom, then I know they're going to have a rocky relationship at times. Regardless, I would tell her to be best friends with her mother so that she could really experience the best friendship she could ever have because that's the best friendship I ever had.

What I would tell my own parents would be heartbreaking. It would be incredibly sad for my parents to have to bury me. I know that they would have such guilt for all that we endured as a family, particularly after my college years. I would tell them that I don't hold anything against them and that I am so thankful that they're my parents. Even though we didn't get to experience financial security or comfort in our lives, we had faith in God and we chose to worship God throughout all of the difficulties. I would encourage them to continue to model faith for their community through this difficult time. And lastly, I would ask that they would support my wife as she raises Abigail by herself and be the most present grandparents around. I never had grandparents growing up but just seeing how my daughter is so loved by my parents is such a

blessing I never anticipated. I would want her to experience all the joy through the love that my parents show.

This idea of facing my own mortality is sobering. What I would say to my family in light of my death is less about the right words but more about how they would be able to handle the death. I want to live life right now so that we can always be assured of who we are in Jesus Christ so that we never fear death on this Earth. We of course can mourn and lament over death and loss but because this is not our final destination, we have hope that our eternity is in heaven where we will one day be reunited with Jesus Christ.