

There are times in one's life that seem like an eternity and there are times when time speeds by as if life were the Indy 500. I, as many of you, have experienced both in the last few weeks. It only seemed like yesterday was January and we were planning our VBS and getting theme ideas together; calling on teachers to fill slots in classrooms; basically getting it all started. Our theme was awesome as we explored the nature of God through accounts given in the Old Testament, our classroom teachers did an exceptional job of decorating the classrooms and teaching the material, our young people did an epic job of inviting their peers to be guests, our adults pitched right in to make sure everything went as planned. In short, it was one of the best VBS's we've had in my time here at this congregation. Then it was over! Gone, done, and it went so fast! It started on a Wednesday evening and ended on a Sunday night with a big fellowship meal prepared by our men and women of the congregation. Our numbers were great, the fellowship was awesome, and lives were touched in the community through the teaching of God's Word.

Next thing I know, I'm standing in the kitchen at our house getting ready for Summer Youth Series and my wife's family to come and celebrate Memorial Day and I hear the words, "My side is hurting." By 1:15 PM we're in the emergency room in Waverly and by 7:15PM I'm in a waiting room at Horizon hospital in Dickson praying my wife's surgery goes well and that recovery is swift.

It was while I was in this "surgery waiting room" that I discovered just how fast time had flown by. We've all seen the old commercials that tell us life comes at fast. Well, it's true or at least that day seemed to go by so fast. As I sat and waited on the call that Marlinia's surgery was underway, I reflected on the "possibilities" the surgeon had told us could go wrong during surgery. Blood clots, hemorrhaging, stroke, and heart failure were some of the terms used. I remember thinking, "Surely this couldn't happen, it was just an appendectomy." That's when the reality of life sat in and I thought about how when we both woke up that morning that neither of us thought we'd be in the hospital.

Folks, the sobering thought hit me like a ton of bricks. Even now as I write this, the thought of life without Marlinia sends chills over me, but that was the reality I was facing sitting there in that waiting room. I know many might be thinking, "It's a minor surgery, not that big a deal", however minor it was—it was happening and the realities were all the same. Time seemingly stood still in that waiting room. I looked at the clock and it read 7:45 for at least 3 days. I was waiting prayerfully for the call that all was well and it seemed like it would never come and when it finally did I felt as if ton of weight had just been lifted. We were headed for the room and the recovery I'd prayed for.

When I got in the room, I phoned Marlinia's dad, who was attending the Summer Youth Series here in New Johnsonville, to tell him all had gone well. It was in that conversation that I learned that the assembly that night had prayed a special prayer for Marlinia. Good people I could hardly hold back my emotions at this point and I realized the care and love God has for His children and the power of prayer.

As I had time to thank God for all the wonderful blessings of that day's unexpected circumstance, I thought of the many people who were going through the same thing. It hit me that though the possibility of no Marlinia was small, satan tried to use that to make me doubt my faith in God. It is in that instance that we see the old devil will take any opportunity to do us harm and pull us away from God. He'll try to make us doubt. He'll try to tell us prayer doesn't work. He'll lie to you because he is the father of all lies.

So when you find life coming at you fast, please know that God is right there with you—watching over you, caring for you, showing you the same love and mercy He has always showed you. I cannot thank each of you enough for your prayers and love you have shown my family. May God bless each of you as we travel through this life in hopes of the eternal life to come.