

# Clarity

My heart jolted my entire body. My mind and frame were exhausted. I thought I should push the call button next to my hand, but somehow, I didn't have the strength. My heart beat again reverberating throughout my limbs. The prospect of opening my eyes was too much. Simply moving my hand a few inches to push that nurse call button was a daunting task. I knew if I went back to sleep, I would never wake again. I was as certain of that as I had ever been about anything in my life. Yet, sleep beckoned me like a warm blanket on the coldest night. I wondered if my heart would beat again. It seemed like the pause between beats this time was too long. Sleep summoned me ever closer as I waited on the possibility of one more jolting heartbeat. My thoughts faded away. . . My heart jolted my body again stirring my consciousness. Had I drifted off again? If so, for how long? Was it a second? A minute? Hours? I couldn't tell. Time was no more. It no longer existed for me. I thought again about pushing the call button . . . My heart jolted my body stirring me to consciousness once again. Had I fallen asleep? I wasn't sure. My thoughts were unclear. I was tired. I drifted ever deeper away from my thoughts opening my mind and embracing the last sleep.

Sometime later, a nurse awakened me. She added an antibiotic bag to my infusion pump which I had lightheartedly named Gertrude, and she gave me something she said would reduce my fever. As I gained my senses, the reality set in that I was still alive. I thought I

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## The Clarity of the Deathbed



**My final moments (or so  
I believed).**



had faced death and succumbed to it, but I had survived. This realization brought no elation because it meant my ordeal was not over. I was neither happy nor upset to be alive; I simply was. It has been over ten years since those events took place. Today, I look back on that time of my life, and I think I can partly relate to how Paul felt in Philippians 1:21 – 23. I was closer to God on that night than I have ever been, yet I knew far less about the Bible and the Word of God then than I do now. I didn't feel like I really knew Christ then, but I could certainly confide my deepest thoughts to my Creator. I didn't ask to live in that moment. I had previously, but at that moment, I was ready to go even though I had no idea what that would mean. Many times since then I have longed for the peace that the certainty of ceasing brought as death drifted over my existence. There were no cares, nor worries, nor pride, nor arrogance, nor ambitions, nor desires, nor lusts. As my thoughts faded, there was only God and peace.

Those events forever changed the philosophical meanderings of my mind. They moved me toward new understandings, greater ideals, and a simpler life. The next time I talked to my wife, I told her some things were going to change when I came home. I said this with no regard for the fact that she had not lived the same life-changing experience that I had. I told her we were going to reduce our stress by getting rid of things that were not really important. I was ready to give up many of the trappings of life, but my wife was

understandably less enthusiastic. Still, she listened and was cautiously tolerant of my newfound enlightenment. We raised goats as a hobby at that time. Why? They cost money and cause stress. We wanted to build a fancy house. Why? We didn't have the money to do it. Besides, we had a mobile home to live in, and we also had a small rental house. If we wanted to live in a "real house," we could move into the rental. We eventually made those changes and more, but as the prospect of life crept back into my thoughts, so did my aspirations.

As I recovered from my illness, I poured myself into the Bible and into this website. I felt like I drew closer to God by doing so. I worked daily on my attitude and my character. I failed a lot, but changes slowly came through the sanctification of a loving Creator. I am nowhere near where I want to be, but I am working in the right direction. One of the toughest things for me has been to embrace simplicity not only because my wife is not fully on board, but because I am torn between wants and what I absolutely know to be true. In my mind, I know simplicity is the correct path to happiness. I have lived the moment when the material world was utterly unimportant, and self fell away into the abyss bringing peace. But, with the breath of life comes hope; with hope comes ambitions; with ambitions comes success; with success comes pride which renews ambitions; and the circle perpetuates. The more we have in this world, the more we have to worry about, and the

more we have to possibly lose. If we have two coats, we must decide which one to wear. If we have a big house, we have more to clean, we must have more furnishings, we must have more money to pay additional utilities, it might make us a target for theft, and so on. These are called the trappings of life for a good reason; if we are not careful, we become slaves to our possessions. At the same time, there is some level of wealth that provides at least a sense of security and insulates us from the harshness of the world. Additionally, most of us simply like having nice things. Finding the correct balance between poverty and plentiful possessions can help open our world to happiness.

If we have any moment for musings when the breath of death lingers on our lips, our thoughts will not dwell on the kind of car we drove, the size of our house, or our finest suit. We will float through a realm of consciousness where precious energy is no longer wasted on ambitions, arrogance, or self. We will dwell in a place where importance lay only in emotions and feelings and where peace is the ultimate possession.