

This is the Day...Friday

January 7, 2022

Get Busy Living

In the fall of 1994, I met Donnie Bennett. Donnie and his family were members of a church where I was the new pastor. Donnie's wife and children attended church nearly every Sunday. The children were deeply involved in all our Sunday School and children's activities. And Donnie's wife, Marie, was very faithful and always present for Bible Study and special events. But it was a bit different with Donnie. He attended church occasionally and rarely attended our Bible Study time. The conversations I had with Donnie felt somewhat guarded as he appeared unwilling to commit more time to his faith. To his credit, Donnie was a hard worker. At times he worked seven days a week. When he wasn't working, Donnie would spend time with his buddies but rarely was at home with his wife and children. Then one day everything changed.

Marie mentioned to me that Donnie had not been feeling well lately and that he had been to several doctors. After several weeks, Donnie showed up at my office one afternoon. He had just received news from his doctor that he had a rare form of Lymphoma. The doctors said that they would begin treatments immediately, but they were not very optimistic, and Donnie should get his affairs in order. For the next couple of hours, Donnie sat in my office. He spoke about the life he had lived, and he wept for the life he would never have. We read a few Scriptures together in the hopes of finding some comfort for Donnie. The one that seemed to resonate with Donnie was from Matthew 6:34, "*Do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.*" As he was leaving my office, Donnie said, "I guess I better get busy living today!"

It was amazing to watch Donnie over the next several months. Although the treatments were difficult for him, Donnie was a new creation. His whole perspective on life seemed different. No longer did he work so many hours. Instead, he protected his time and made sure he was present with his wife and children. Even though the end of his life seemed inevitable, there was a new joy in his family. They seemed genuinely happy and did everything together. Donnie even began worshiping with his family and developed a hunger for God's Word. One day at church I said to Donnie, "Looks like you got busy living!" Donnie told me that he started focusing on the things that were important and the unimportant things became even less important.

Sometimes it is easy for us to get bogged down in the things that don't matter. We can spend so much time and energy on things that will have no lasting impact in our lives, and we miss the special moments that will last forever. Donnie stopped worrying about tomorrow and got busy living every day. Thankfully, several years after Donnie's diagnosis, he was still doing well, and the cancer was in remission. But Donnie's life was never the same again. He got busy living and is still living today.