

The Big One

I live in California and often when we hear the phrase, “The Big One” we think of earthquakes. But I am thinking of another “Big One” that can cause more significant kinds of damage than broken gas lines, collapsed buildings, or loss of electrical power.

Phil came by to pick me up for a lunch and maybe a decent movie (getting harder and harder to find). Before we left he complained of pain in his shoulder and asked me if I had some Tylenol. I gave him an Advil and we sped away in his Explorer. As we approached the restaurant for lunch he said he was experiencing heart-burn and suggested we go to a nearby drug store to get some Peptol Bismal which he had taken in the past for heart-burn.

He was chugging it down as soon as he had taken it off the shelf and I saw that he was in a great deal of pain. The PB didn't seem to help. We decided to go to a Chinese restaurant just a couple of doors down. We went in and got seated. The soup came. A couple of spoonfuls was all he managed. He was beginning to sweat and went to the men's room to get some water on his face; then outside to get some air. It was becoming increasingly clear that it was more serious than heartburn. He suggested we call the paramedics.

Out came my cell phone and in a matter of minutes they were there. Within a half hour Phil was at the hospital. It was indeed the big one. It was a scary experience watching a 39 year old close friend have a heart attack before my very eyes.

Phil had 100% blockage in one artery. They took some pictures, did a quick procedure to locate the blockage and inserted a stent. He was going to be okay. According to the doctor he had no heart damage and would not need bypass surgery. Phil had his wake-up call. Others don't get that chance and the first call is their final call, as in the case of David, another friend who keeled over (without making a peep) in his living room in the middle of the night at age 54.. He apparently left his wife in bed walked into the living room and dropped dead.

I have been doing a lot of thinking since Phil's close call. Proverbs 24:32 came quickly to mind:

“Then I saw and considered it well. I looked upon it and received instruction”

The last thing I want to do is to get to heaven ahead of time and find out my mansion is not ready yet! What can I do to avoid the “Big One” There are the standard medical answers about diet and exercise, no smoking and cutting back on the alcohol, but here are a few more that I am trying to practice:

1. Solitude- Sufficient time with the Lord and His Word to keep His perspective, keep encouraged and keep dependent

2. Say no-Trying to do too much to keep others happy and at bay? The need is not the call! What is it about the word “no” that people don’t understand or accept?

3. Slow down-Going to fast for my own good-speed is the death of relationships. Some of us are ready to pay others to smell the roses for us

4. Simplify-Too much “stuff” in my closet and in my life. The “stuff” is taking too much time and energy to: repair, insure, replace, store, worry about. The difference between the men and the boys is the cost of their toys

Are you a candidate for the “big one” or will it pass you by? If it comes, will it be your wake up call or your final call?