

I Saw A Friend Die

by *Dee Bowman*

Death is indeed sad. To watch a death scene is an event not easily erased from one's catalog of memories. I saw a friend die recently. It was slow — so slow in fact that he didn't know it was happening. I saw it coming, even warned him. But it was all to no avail. He wouldn't listen. He finally just died. May I take a few moments of your time and tell you about it? It could save your life.

He first began to show signs of disease with a loss of his appetite. He didn't seemly care to eat. And he paid no attention to **when** he ate or **what** he ate. He simply wasn't interested in diet. He remarked that other matters needed his attention. His yard, he said, needed his attention. His family, and things other than his own health were demanding of his time. No time to eat.

Now showing signs of a loss of strength, he became sluggish and obviously anemic. It became more and more apparent that he was ill. I talked with him about it. He was evasive; he showed no signs of wanting to discuss his situation. He made excuses about his loss of strength and he was not at all impressed with my suggestion to get some help for his condition. "I will," he said, "when I see that I need some help."

Then a terrible thought occurred to me. This is a contagious disease and even if he won't allow me to help him, at least he will allow me to help care for his children. But, no — he would not! "If I die," he seemed to say, "they are going to die with me."

Now they are all gone. My friend, his wife, and a lovely group of children. All were at one time the picture of a healthy, happy family, actively engaged in living a good, clean life. Now they are gone and I can't believe it happened. Why should it happen? Why should a seemingly happy and healthy family just die like that? It is sad ... so sad.

The preceding story is true. You have already surmised, I am sure, that the death of the family was a **spiritual** one, not **physical**. I hasten to remind you, however, that the fact that the death was **spiritual** should not lessen the impact of the story. On the contrary, it should bring **greater emphasis** to it. Where spiritual death occurs there is the most tragic of all events, the saddest of all happenings. Hope is gone to be replaced by despair and intense depression. How completely and utterly sad is such an occurrence. Sad, because it did not have to happen.

Why did this spiritual death occur? It is certainly a fact that it need not have happened. Then why was it not prevented? Why was not something done or said to stop this spiritual demise? **The simple fact is, you can't force folks to serve God!** They have the right to refuse advice, cast off concern, ignore admonition. And there are many who do exactly that, too.

I just hope that the father and mother have considered carefully the consequences of their actions. It is not enough for them to consider their own course of action, they must also be impressed with the fact that they have committed **spiritual homicide** by bringing about the spiritual death of their children as well. These children are their special charge, their own personal obligation. And these are the very children who just awhile ago were learning, growing, interested in learning to live life as it ought to be lived. What man has the right to commit such an act? Will not God hold him responsible for such actions? Certainly so.

Yes, I saw a friend die — just pass away. A friend and brother in the Lord is gone. I will miss him. I will miss the way we used to talk about heaven and how wonderful it will be. I will miss how he talked about his children and how he wanted them to be good. But now he is gone.

Will he ever come back? I don't know. I hope so.

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