

Strengthen Your Marriage With This End-Times Principle

It may mean nothing to you, but my students having been eyeing this date on my dry erase board every day for the last two weeks, along with the ominous words “*examen acumulativo*.” Feb. 22 is the day they have to walk into class and be able to translate, into Spanish, 80 sentences out of the 125 they’ve been studying.

The first two weeks of study were pretty chill, but when I announced on Tuesday, “Two weeks until the cumulative exam,” I could see panic flicker across a few faces.

So it caught my attention yesterday when I read Tim Elmore’s blog post, “Five Reasons Why Deadlines Are Lifelines for Students.” He called deadlines a gift. My favorite two points he made were that deadlines create a very healthy sense of urgency and also help us to prioritize.

Which brings me to my crawl space.

Ah, you didn’t even know I had a crawl space. It is mine alone, because both of my men are over six feet tall and beg me to retrieve things for them.

And do you know what I always think when I go down there after something? *What if I die and people come in here? What will they think of me?* Perhaps an extreme thought, but there you have it. So I have determined to clean out my crawlspace this winter. Really clean it out.

Yesterday I made my first trip to the thrift store, and I handed off quart jars that had been in the crawl space for years. There was a dead spider in one of them, which integrity says I should have cleaned out, but I did not. I hope someone at the thrift store is very, very brave.

Yesterday a friend sent me a link to a website called Organize 365, which only poured gasoline on the fire of my decluttering flame. Over my after-school snack, I listened to the host talk about how to manage adult trinkets. She said this as I looked at my substantial snowman collection.

Yesterday (I know I keep saying this, but all of these activities in the same day began to layer in my thinking, like phyllo dough and butter in a good baklava) –yesterday I was working on writing a Bible study in 1 Peter, and one phrase lodged itself in my brain:

...you are to conduct yourselves in reverence during this time of temporary residence.” (1 Peter 1:17, HCSB)

This life is my temporary residence.

Peter gives a deadline:

The end of all things is near...” (1 Peter 4:7, MEV).

Mom and I were talking on the phone yesterday. (See? Yesterday was a big day in my soul.) Dad went to be with the Lord on Feb. 14, the same day my father-in-law went to be with the Lord 20-some years ago. So Mom and I we were sharing some quiet sorrow together. I was telling her how Dad’s death was a transforming event in my marriage. Matt and I have a sweeter friendship and tighter love now, and I believe it’s because we can feel the ever-present reality that we may not have tomorrow together. I’ll come back to this thought in a second.

The crawl space isn’t the only thing I’ve been tackling. Yesterday I had some filing to do and realized not one more paper would fit into the file drawer, so I spent the day cleaning out old files. I came across a few papers with my dad’s handwriting on them.

“Did you keep them?” Matt asked.

“No,” I said.

That brings me to my conclusion. We have a deadline. I haven’t set out to be morbid, but I mean an actual deadline—a time coming when this life will end. And this deadline is a gift.

It creates a sense of urgency.

It helps me prioritize.

Jars filled with spiders, marriage, and papers with Dad’s handwriting on them —how do I know what’s important and how to live and what to keep and what to take to the thrift store?

The end of all things is near.

This one statement tells me to love my husband well today. It helps me make decisions in my crawl space. It loosens my grip on trinkets and tightens my grasp on what is valuable to God.

I pray for you now. May the Lord give you the gift of branding this deadline in your mind. May the reality of your temporary residence on this earth inform every decision you make in your home and every action you take in your relationships. May it create urgency in your heart and a sense of what is truly important in life.