

Why Kobe Bryant's Untimely Death Should Prompt Believers to Contemplate Their Mortality

We have all come face to face with eternity this week. Kobe Bryant, the basketball legend, the family man and American hero, was tragically killed in a helicopter crash. Eight others were also killed including his 13-year-old daughter, a rising basketball star, Gianna.

As soon as I heard news of the devastating crash, instantly I wondered, *Kobe, where are you? Where will you spend eternity?*

Death is a sobering reality and it must be faced with sacred respect and with self-examination. The severe truth is that none of us gets out of here alive. Wealthy people and poor people die; famous people and obscure people die. Educated people and blue-collar workers die; married people and single people die.

This is an opportune moment to consider our own mortality and to speak with others about their views on death. We are each given the opportunity to determine where we will spend eternity—no one decides it for us, but it is a personal and powerful decision. This singular decision is a vital part of human life and must not be ignored.

One day, each one of us will take our final gulp of the oxygen that surrounds earth and will step into the eternity that we have chosen.

As you ponder the impact of Kobe's incredible life and his untimely death, perhaps it would be an appropriate time to contemplate your own mortality. What, yet, do you have to

accomplish before you leave time and enter eternity? Is there someone that you need to forgive? Is there a wrong that needs righting? Is there someone who needs to know that you care about the life they are living?

As Kobe's death is spoken about around the water coolers this week, and as others are processing the inevitability of death, perhaps it will present the opportunity for which you have been praying. Maybe, just maybe, you could respectfully and honorably share with your co-workers and friends where you will be spending eternity. It might be the moment when someone will listen to your heart of faith and will consider the peace that is yours because of Jesus.

Kobe and Gianna stepped into a helicopter and stepped out into their chosen eternity. I don't know where they are, but I know where I will spend eternity. I must share with those whom I love why my decision matters so deeply. I wish I could have shared it with Kobe and Gianna.

If you are looking for the words to say, perhaps these thoughts might help you as you share your faith with others: "I am not afraid of death because of an important decision that I have made. My decision is based on radical forgiveness, on a mercy that I didn't deserve and on a love that I don't understand. My decision was in response to the love of the man and our God, Jesus. He died young just like Kobe did. But He died so that I could live. I have asked Him to forgive my sins and now I know that I will live forever in heaven. Would you like to join me there?"

I am praying for Kobe's wife and for Gianna's mother today. I am praying for the family members of the others who were in the crash. I am praying for you as you share your hope with others. {eo}

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with great joy and enthusiasm. Carol encourages and empowers women with passionate and practical biblical messages mixed with her own special brand of hope and humor. She has written five books: No More Ordinary, Holy Estrogen!, The Rooms of a Woman's Heart, Defiant Joy! and Refined: Finding Joy in the Midst of the Fire. Her teaching DVD The Rooms of a Woman's Heart won the Telly Award, a prestigious industry award for excellence in religious programming.