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# Lakeland Hills Leader

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## What If You Knew When You Would Die?

*By Chuck Richardson*

My good friend and fellow preacher, Tommy Thornhill Sr., passed away this week unexpectedly. A week ago he authored an article as he has done several years on a weekly basis. A week ago, he contributed to a radio program hosted by Don McClain of the West 65th Street church of Christ of Little Rock, Arkansas.

Brother Thornhill and his wife Carol, worked with the Etna church of Christ of Ozark 1, Arkansas, just a few months ago. Brother and Sister Thornhill moved to Bryant, Arkansas to be closer to their daughter and son in-law. Brother Thornhill has taught Bible classes and continued to author articles for bulletin publication these past months. Brother Thornhill made the decision to move because his wife has Alzheimers, and he needed assistance with her care.

I was privileged to spend time with him over a six-year period, and Jeannie I were honored by the Thornhills spending time with us in our home. I cherish our memories. From all the information I have, Brother Thornhill was not particularly ill unto death, his greatest concern being for Sister Carol's well-being.

If you asked Brother Thornhill about his death, he would tell you he is ready (Phil. 1:21), so it should be for all of us, but sadly that is not the case for many (Luke 16:23,24). I'm thankful I have examples like Brother Thornhill to strengthen my appreciation of the need for the preparation of citizenship in heaven (Phil. 3:20), and steadfastness for my labor in the Lord, knowing that my labor is not in vain in the Lord (1Cor. 15:58). So, I express my thanksgiving for Christians like Brother Tommy Thornhill Sr., and as I reflected on his passing, I wondered if he knew death was imminent. Many waiting for transplants, in the later stages of cancer, or persons experiencing multiple heart attacks, certainly have a grasp of the imminency of death. Even if you knew the shortness of time like these or Hezekiah (2Kings 20), should it matter? Our life is in the hand of God (Eccl. 9), so the wise man decries, Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might; for there is no activity or planning or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol where you are going. I again saw under the sun that the race is not to the swift and the battle is not to the warriors, and neither is bread to the wise nor wealth to the discerning nor favor to men of ability; for time and chance overtake them all. {Eccl. 9:10,11}

That statement serves as the foundation of our observation in light of death. What are you doing with the life you have? Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit." Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away. Instead, you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that." But as it is, you boast in your arrogance; all such boasting is evil. Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it, to him it is sin. {Jas. 4:13-17}

First, be grateful for the day you have, and pray if the Lord wills you will enjoy it. Let us not be arrogant in certainty of our life and thinking we'll be on our way to a good life. Second, do what is right and you will have no worry of your death (Acts 8:18-24), but even more so, you will have a certainty of your destination (2Tim. 2:12; 4:7,8). Third and final, if you discover that you're not giving attention to your mortality, then read James 4:13-17 and repent (1 John 1:9). Does it really matter if we know when we will die? It is certain we will die and after that the judgment. (2 Cor.5:10; Heb.9:27).