

Searching

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I often wonder how my life would be different if he were still here, alive, sharing with our family. What would our life be like? I am comforted when I see the otherwise overlooked and insignificant copper penny laying on the ground that lets me know that he is still here, watching over me as he had always done, but there is nothing quite like having him here in person. I wonder if our relationship would be the same. Although he would probably live miles from here now, would we laugh, and joke, and play as we had done as kids? It seems unfair for me to have to wonder these things. I have heard countless times that all things happen for a reason, and while I agree, I am finding it difficult to understand what that reason could possibly be. I know that I will find the answers to my questions someday; maybe one day far from now, but for now, all I know is that he was too young to die and that he had so many great things he had yet to accomplish. *He* is my brother, and his name is Rob.

Rob was killed in a car accident nine years ago when I was just fourteen years old. At an age when I was still discovering who I was and what my purpose in life would be, the world that I was living in was turned upside down. I was a naive and unexpecting girl who thought bad things didn't happen to good people. Rob was such a good kid, the model child, student, citizen. Why him? If I were confused by the world before Rob's death, I was in a complete state of oblivion afterward. My life has never been the same. Attempting to put the pieces of my life back together has been difficult. It's easy for some to say, "You'll see him again," and "He would want you to move on," but it is truly easier said than done. I am not angered when these comments are said to me. I'm just not sure that people truly take time to consider the difficult nature of working through the emotions of loss. If they understood that, I think that many would see comments like those are insignificant. I am also discouraged when I hear one say to "give it time." Whoever said that time heals all things is sadly mistaken. In some respects, time makes healing harder, knowing the opportunities that will be missed for my brother and with my brother. Truthfully, I don't think there are many things that can be said to ease the pain of loss. I have learned that in some situations it is better to say nothing at all, and to simply lend a listening ear or a shoulder to cry on instead.

Now while I must admit that I have spoken these infamous, and somewhat overused, lines before in reference to myself and others, I have come to the conclusion that I was using them in my defense. These statements allowed me to mask my emotions from the world so that I wouldn't have to face them and deal with the effect that losing my brother has had on my life. I do know that I'll see him again and that in time I will understand why he died so young, but knowing this doesn't make living without Rob any easier. Losing Rob has forced me to stretch beyond my limitations of comprehending this one life that I have been given to live, and I feel that I am a better person because of my loss.

Rob has allowed me to see the value in my life. True, I do have one life to live,

but we are not guaranteed a set number of days to live our one life. I have no idea what tomorrow could possibly bring. I hope that I will be able to grow old with my husband, watching our children and their children grow. I would like to lead a successful and productive life, but the reality is that I may not. Sadness, happiness, success, or failure could be waiting just around the corner. However, the biggest question that resonates in my thinking is, "Will I be ready if tomorrow doesn't come?"

My mom took me to church nearly every time the door opened. I was raised on His teachings and expected to follow His word. I have tried to give God the glory for all things and have tried to do His will, but until Rob's death I had never really understood the power of God. I didn't understand the strength that God could give me. "I **can** do all things through Christ who strengthens me." Phil. 4:13. Now, I was angry at God for awhile, and I still don't understand His plan, but I have come to realize that my life is meaningless without His presence. He is the answer. He is the reason that I am able to get up every morning with a love for life and a willingness to go on. For something to be so clear to me now, I wonder how I had not known this from the start.

At one time, I had become very hard on myself, striving for perfection in an imperfect world. At the time, I had no idea what provoked me to be a perfectionist. I was just unhappy and unsure of who I was, and I had adopted the philosophy that in order for my life to be perfect again, I must be perfect at everything that I attempted. Man, was I setting myself up for disappointment! I was perfect, alright. Perfect at beating myself up, crushing my self-esteem, and sending me on what seemed to be an endless roller coaster of panic and anxiety. I had forgotten that in the grand scheme of things, worldly things and accomplishments cannot make me happy when I am so unhappy with myself. Of course, I like worldly things quite well and, I value the things that I have been able to accomplish, but what is my ultimate goal in life? What is my purpose for living this life? My goal is to have eternal life, to live in a mansion that has been prepared just for me - the only existence of perfection. I will never achieve perfection here on earth, but I can achieve perfection through Him.

So, after nine years of searching for purpose in life, searching for answers, and searching for perfection, I've found all three and all three points in one direction - God. Life is certainly precious and definitely way too short, but while I'm here, I will do my best to be a vessel for spreading God's word and to live by His example. Ultimately, my purpose in life will be for all those that I encounter to see God's love through me. We are all in this journey of life together, and we are all going to face trials and tribulations, but we must remember the ultimate sacrifice that Christ made for us. I'll be ready if tomorrow never comes. After all, I've got a brother to see.