



If Only I Knew

What Is Your Life?

You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes

James 4: 14.

These short and pithy meditative assertions are inspired by the fourteen year-old son of a friend who left home on his yellow bicycle, heading for soccer practice as he had countless times before, and was hit broadside in a street crosswalk by a car. The driver, a seventeen year-old young man was distracted and somehow never even saw the fourteen year-old until he hit the windshield. In the tragic moment a boy's life vanished like a mist, leaving behind a grieving mother who obviously loved him with all her heart.

We live in an uncertain world. When we leave home in the morning we assume we will return in the evening. When we say good-bye to loved ones, we take it for granted we will see them again. We presume they know we love them, so we seldom say the words. Unfortunately, we fail to consider the mortal reality that this may not be the case...until it's too late. Tomorrow does not always come.

Someone once said that "life is short, so keep short accounts with God." This is wise advice, but I would like to add that we should also keep short accounts with every person who is in the circle of our lives. We never know when life will be dramatically changed...sometimes permanently.

Think about it. Do not allow the regrets of "if only I knew" to be the final marker of your life. Be swift to love. Hurry to be kind and faithful to God and others. Take the time to make someone feel special. Freely give hugs and kisses and may "I love you" fall freely and often from your lips simply because you mean it and it expresses the deepest inner desire of your heart and soul.

Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves...Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony with one another....Do not be conceited. Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone

Romans 12: 10 - 18.

*If only
I knew...*

My days were coming to an
end, I would have numbered
them carefully, one by
one...and asked God to help
me make the best of them
because they are too
fleeting.

*If only
I knew...*

I would never hear your
voice again,

I would cherish your every
word...

every inflection of your
voice...

with all

my heart and soul....

*If only
I knew...*

The void your passing
would leave in my life, I
would have prepared for
it with a richer prayer life.

*If only
I knew...*

This was our last hug,

I would hold you

tight

and hope to

never let you go....

*If only
I knew...*

This was the last time...

the very last time...

I would ever see you,

I would take the time

to treasure everything

about you....

*If only
I knew...*

This was the last time...
the very last time...
I would see you,
I would take the time
to treasure everything about
you....

*If only
I knew...*

I had the chance to pray
with you one
more time,
I would take your hands
and welcome God's
presence to
surround us.

*If only
I knew...*

That even when everything
in my life
seems to go wrong
and comes crumbling down
around me, even when my
heart is broken,
God promises to always
be with me.

*If only
I knew...*

How often and how
badly I had
misjudged people,
I would have opened
my heart more often
to love and be loved.

*If only
I knew...*

That disagreements
do not mean
a lack of love,
I would have
been hurt
less often.

*If only
I knew...*

That no one ever
sees the same thing
in exactly the same light,
I would have found more
pleasure in others' opinions
even when they did not
share mine.

*If only
I knew...*

That momentary pleasures
could ruin a
reputation for a lifetime,
I would have found the
strength to say no
to temptation.

*If only
I knew...*

Tomorrow
was not coming,
I would ask you
today
to please forgive me for
any wrong I may have
done to you.

*If only
I knew...*

That I was
powerless to change
people,
I would have
stopped trying
and been free to love them
for who they were,
flaws and all.

*If only
I knew...*

This was the last gift I could
give you,
I would surprise you with
something
that says nothing
in all the world compares
with you.

*If only
I knew...*

That I was caught in the trap
of living for tomorrow and a
future that existed only in
my imagination,
I would have slowed
my pace, drawn boundaries
around my work, and taken
time for the people I love.

*If only
I knew...*

I could never share
another day
with you,
I would make the most of
every second.

*If only
I knew...*

That miracles
do happen,
I would cling to God
with all my heart and soul.

*If only
I knew...*

This was our final kiss,

I would use it

to tell you that

you are the love of

my life.

*If only
I knew...*

That it is not enough to
empty my life of wrong,
but to fill it with values that
truly matter.

*If only
I knew...*

That it was wrong to put
others under my own
expectations and make them
feel guilty, I would have
stopped manipulating
them and chosen
unconditional love
as the higher way.

*If only
I knew...*

That my memories of
you would be so precious,
I would take the time to
carefully gather your life
story.

*If only
I knew...*

That because everything
depends
upon what you believe, and
that ignorance is no excuse,
I would have been more
vigilant to put truth into my
heart.

*If only
I knew...*

How little I really
understood you,
I would listen closer to your
words, search out your
thoughts, and seek to know
the deepest desires of
your heart.

*If only
I knew...*

God gives us a lifetime
to become the person
He wants us to be,
I would have been more
patient with myself and
others.

*If only
I knew...*

That something so stupid
and wrong would hurt you
so badly, I would take a
stand and never let it
happen.

*If only
I knew...*

That anyone can bring
words of comfort and
encouragement and healing,
only God knows how many
lives I might have touched?

*If only
I knew...*

That friendships
are so precious,
I would never have taken
anyone for
granted,
especially you.

*If only
I knew...*

That sticking with it is a
way of life, I would have
learned more from
my failures and setbacks.

*If only
I knew...*

That when God closes a
door, He opens another, I
would have been less afraid
of change and more
welcoming of new
opportunities and
adventures.

*If only
I knew...*

I was about to lose
your smile, I would thank
you for all the joy you
brought into my life.

*If only
I knew...*

That God created me for
a purpose, I would have
passionately sought him to
discover what He desired.

*If only
I knew...*

Our phone call was the last
we'd ever have,
I would have spoken only
loving words.

*If only
I knew...*

The love and
strength and support
you have always given me
were about to end, I would
run to your side and thank
you for the million times
you made a
difference in my life.

*If only
I knew...*

That it is never too late
to rewrite one's life story, I
would have pulled out my
pen a lot sooner.

*If only
I knew...*

Your hand would never
hold mine again,
I would wish this moment
would never end.

*If only
I knew...*

How often I blindly
accepted another's beliefs,
copied someone else's life,
and tried to imitate their
spiritual experience,
I could have found
my own and made them
real.

*If only
I knew...*

My choices,
however small and
seemingly insignificant,
were taking me away
from you, I would turn
around and run to you.

*If only
I knew...*

That even a child's days
are sometimes cut short,
I would wish for a lot more
nights of rocking you
to sleep.

*If only
I knew...*

That others
are watching my life as an
example,
that my life was influencing
others,
I would have asked God to
shape my character to be a
reflection of his heart.

*If only
I knew...*

My voice
was about to go silent,
my words to you
would have been a
never-ending
punctuation of
"I Love You's"

*If only
I knew...*

Earlier on that the wages of
sin is
death, I could have avoided
so much misery in my life.

*If only
I knew...*

That a break
in our
relationship
might go
unresolved,
I would do everything
within my power to
mend it.

*If only
I knew...*

The richness of your soul,
I would have tapped into it
and been enriched myself.

*If only
I knew...*

That not one
word of love is lost,
I would have allowed my
tongue
more freedom to truly speak
from my heart.

*If only
I knew...*

The destructive power of
gossip, slander,
and talking behind other
people's backs,
I would have chosen my
words more carefully.

*If only
I knew...*

Much sooner
God's love for me,
my life would have been
incomparably easier.

*If only
I knew...*

That sometimes
it is better
not to know,
I would have spared myself
heartaches
and cares I was never meant
to carry.

*If only
I knew...*

This was our last walk, I
would try to express my
feelings for you, even
though my words have
always been inadequate.

*If only
I knew...*

I could never tuck you into
bed again,

I would cuddle you tight,

refuse to rush, and

enjoy the wonder of

being with you.

*If only
I knew...*

That my past is
no excuse for who I am
now, that truth could
have set me free to change.

*If only
I knew...*

That success is never
measured
in dollars or positions,
I would have treasured
the things that last forever.

*If only
I knew...*

That there is so much more
to life than being safe, I
would have been quick to
give myself to others.

*If only
I knew...*

The depths of wisdom and
insight possessed by people
around me, I would have
spoken less and listened
more.

*If only
I knew...*

That wonders
surround all we do...
everywhere...
all the time,
I would have searched my
little corner of the world and
been continuously
amazed.

*If only
I knew...*

That grief and heartache
could be so deep and
devastating, I would have
been there more often for
others.

*If only
I knew...*

That the love of God...
knowing God loves me...
reaches into my fears and
insecurities, I would have
allowed his love to
surround, engulf and pierce
into the depths of
my soul.

*If only
I knew...*

That real happiness is a state
of mind, and that there is no
substitute for a good
attitude, I would have been
more thankful for what I
had and the chance to live
and to work and to love.

*If only
I knew...*

That baskets of beliefs
are of little value,
I would have made certain
that my beliefs
were turned into convictions
that set the course of my
life.

SUFFERING FOR CHRIST KNOWS NO AGE LIMIT!

On the cover of today's Church Bulletin, we see a saint who suffered martyrdom at the age of 113! The Priest-Martyr HARALAMPOS lived in the town of Magnesia in Asia Minor in the 2nd century. He humbly served the Lord his entire life – first as a parish priest and later as a bishop. At a time when Haralampos was content to live out his life peacefully, the Emperor launched a series of brutal persecutions of Christians. The aged bishop refused to hide from the persecutors. Instead, he openly preached Christ's Gospel, even after being arrested and ordered to denounce our Lord.

Haralampos was forced to endure tortures that are almost too terrible to describe. He was tied to a post and lashed repeatedly with knives. He was dragged through the streets by his beard. To the dismay of his persecutors, Haralampos not only survived all this, but he responded with these words: *"THANK YOU, MY BROTHERS, FOR SCRAPING OFF THE OLD BODY AND RENEWING MY SOUL FOR ETERNAL LIFE."*

Seeing that the example of the bravery of Haralampos was actually *WINNING* converts rather than *DISCOURAGING* them, the Emperor ordered Haralampos to be executed by beheading. Miraculously, the saintly bishop died only minutes prior to his appointed execution. It is said that the two men commissioned to carry out this sentence became Christians after witnessing the blessed manner in which Haralampos was called to his eternal home.

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