

- Lose a
Limb

Gain a

Life †

A Testimony by Dave Gillum
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“We are going to call 911.” The words that no one wants to hear...but I had been sick for several weeks. I was unable to get around; I was spending most of my time in bed. That fateful evening in August of 2020, six EMT personnel descended upon our church and begin to go to work on me. My heart was fine. My lungs were fine. And I resisted the idea that I would have to be transported to the hospital. The man said: “Let me take your blood sugar.” I said: “Why?” He said: “Standard procedure, along with blood pressure, and pulse, and respiration.” They took my blood sugar and I saw them all congregate together out in the hall, whispering. They came back in and explained that my blood sugar was 510 and that I needed to be taken immediately to the Emergency Room at Health Central Hospital.

That was devastating to me as I have never been in the hospital as a patient since I was two years old. I didn't want to go, and I was afraid. The pain in my leg was getting to be outrageous. I didn't know what I was doing for another week because this was the beginning of four surgeries in six days to save my life by losing a limb. I had no idea at the time that having my right leg amputated

would have such an effect on my commitment to God and my perspective on life. I believe that all of us take many things for granted when we are well that we don't take for granted when we are sick.

Over the next six days I would clinically die three times. My blood pressure was so low that they pumped me full of a massive amount of fluid to try to keep me alive. I, of course, was sedated and intubated during this period and I spent most of the time unaware of most of my surroundings. This opportunity was given to me by God to hear what he had to say to me about the rest of my life. The title of this book is very descriptive: "Lose a limb; Gain a life". I'm not advocating that everybody goes out and become an amputee. I'm not even advocating that everybody not take care of themselves the way I did. Being an undiagnosed diabetic for so long, had taken a large toll on my body. In many ways, when these six days was over, I would find myself going from about 205 pounds to 142. Weight and a leg is not the only thing I lost...but what I gained I hope to convey in this book.

I have done many things in my life and I've been successful by the world standards numerous times. God took this opportunity to make me understand the difference between success in the world and success in Jesus. I am so grateful that I got this opportunity to evaluate my life before it was too late. God mentioned to me several times in this traumatic six days that I should evaluate what I had, what I needed, and where I was, and everything that I was doing. He gave me a great perspective about life and about the journey that I was going to begin. It started in August, 2020. The journey is one that every single person must make for themselves as it cannot be done by anybody else.

The first thing that God asked me was: "What do you need?" Well, I was surprised at the answer that God and I came up with. As I laid close to death in the ICU, I said: "God, I need You and I need Jesus," and God said: "Do you realize that now?" and I said, "Yes". And he said: "Then what will you do from here on out to change what you've been doing?" And I, for the first time in my life, was able to completely say: "I will follow you!"

Now I don't want any of you to misunderstand what I am saying. There were not bright lights and visions and personifications of Jesus or God coming at me. This was simply a conversation I was having with God, One on one. There wasn't anything spectacular about it other than the joy when I told God that I would follow him. He then said: "Preach my Word." And I said, "God, I am," and He said: "Yes, but I want you to change it to be very personal and very straightforward, so that people understand it."

I studied intently in college the apostle Paul, and I enjoyed reading about him and seeing how he dealt with everyone the same way. The gospel was always clear, upfront, trustworthy, truthful, and loving. So, I took a page from Jesus' book and from Paul's book about how to preach the gospel, and I've done that ever since.

God then said: "So now that you know what you're supposed to do, what do you need from Me that you don't already have?" I have some very important relationships in my life: I have a brilliant caregiver in Mary, who defaults to prayer. No matter what the situation is, she's ready to pray and not only

pray, but make it public...to write it down and hold herself and all of us accountable for what we pray for. Night after night, when I got back from the hospital, she prayed Psalm 91 over me. I was so sick that at times I didn't want to hear it. That didn't change the fact that she did it.

I also have a marvelous lady who has been with the ministry from the beginning for 15 years and her name is Suzanne. She takes full-time care of another lady that lives in our house, Miss Harriette. Suzanne has provided an immense amount of comfort and care to me. Tina traveled from Maryland to Florida to help care for me for eight months. Through it all my son, Mitchell was there to listen and encourage.

I discussed this with God, and God said: "So what's the problem?" The entire time I was in the hospital I had my mother, who constantly wanted me to come back and preach and do ministry with her. God said: "Relationships are important, but only the ones that are based exclusively on me; not on vanity, not on ability, not on convenience, but on the Word of God." That was something I needed to learn. I've been vulnerable all my life to

people who have entered into a relationship with me because of what I could do, who I knew, or what it looked like on the outside. God said: "That's not what's important. Your heart and surrender to Jesus are what's important."

Now it's taken all of this time to set the stage for what needs to be said and done in your life and mine. That is, some life event must cause you to look at who you truly are and not what the world wants you to be. As a Pastor I was spending more of my time creating music than I was preaching. Now, I am a trained musician: I love to sing. I love to play. But that's not what God's called me to do. So, I am now incorporating my musical talent into the gift of preaching. I believe I now have the order correct. So, at 68 years old, I am beginning the journey to the cross. I am carrying the weight of God's cross up the hill to Golgotha knowing what's the end of my journey.

It's so important that we know what we should do and then what we need. You see, I have no need anymore. I have Jesus. And I have very meaningful relationships around me. There's no reason to seek anything else.

Now people will come and go in your life; we call them different seasons. The truth is if you commit yourself to Jesus Christ, you may lose a limb, but you won't lose your life.

I had some very deceptive people and deceptive relationships that were dragging me away from Jesus, even though I didn't realize it. I've not determined whether I was ignoring that fact or I just didn't know. I honestly don't know. That doesn't matter. What does matter is if you realize it before it's too late. There is a passage in the Bible that says that if your eye is afflicted pluck it out so that the rest of the body is not infected. Well, that becomes very pertinent to me. My right leg was killing me...literally. It turned gangrene inside and I didn't know that. I was dying physically and didn't know it. That kind of spells out how we are spiritually: we often are dying spiritually and don't know it. It's great if we can have an indication of that before the body is so infected that it can't be healed. The great news about Jesus is: regardless of what condition any of us are in, we can always go to the cross to be healed, until it's too late. We don't want, as the song says, for it to be "one day too late". We want to embrace Christ in all that we do.

Please understand that there's been a lot of pain physically, emotionally, and spiritually, in making this two-year transition. Rather than turning to medicine or to psychological doctors, I have turned to relationships in my life beginning with Jesus. I have been helped by all of these situations. It is extremely important that we lean on our Savior when times are really tough. It is equally as important that we praise Him and give Him the honor and the glory for the victories!

Today I am healthy. I went to my cardiologist, and he said, "Dave, you are back to normal and I don't want to see you for a year." In the condition that I was in, that is a major victory, and I give God all the glory for that. I see a hematologist, a kidney doctor, a urologist, and as I mentioned a cardiologist, in addition to my primary care physician. All have indicated that I am "good to go" to preach the Word of God. So, every night, I go online, and I preach the Word. I preach the Word a grand total of eight times a week; Bible study every night and Sunday morning Service.

The journey has not been easy. The journey is not over. I am still moving forward to

preach the Word of God to many people around the world.

We have made many changes in our ministry so that our focus is all on Jesus, not on us. I have made many focus changes in my life where I am not the focus; the people around me are the focus. It's extremely important to me that the people in my life that I love so much know what they mean to me every day. It gives me great joy to see Mary and Suzanne and Harriette, and my mother happy. They are happy, not because of the world; they are happy because of Christ. There are five of us that live here in God's care home. We take care of each other. We give to each other. We pray together, we eat together. It is an amazing thing when the precepts of Jesus take over your life.

This book is not intended to be a novel. It is not intended to be a long, drawn-out encounter. Rather, it is a testimonial to what God can do in your life. It is also a physical and spiritual warning to not wait until part of your body is dying to make the changes in your life that you need to make before it's too late. So, as you read this book please decide what God wants you to do and what you need. Or more importantly, decide who you

need to be to make that happen. Yes, I am advocating that you abandon the empty relationships that are of convenience, or work, or church, or family. If the relationship is not based on complete surrender to Jesus Christ, it's not a relationship at all. It is as the Bible puts it: "vain babbling".

Now I want you to be able to read this book in 15 to 20 minutes, and then spend the time with God that you need to correct a course in your life, so that everything you do centers around Jesus Christ. Make the course corrections now while you still can. For I will tell you, that it is worth losing a limb to gain a life.