

**ABIDE**

*From Tom Roy-Unlimited Potential, Inc*

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A few months back my good friend and head baseball coach at Huntington University had open heart surgery. I asked him to share his journey of faith with us.

“I​t was 4:06 am and the thought rushing through my mind was, “Can I really do this”? I knew that I had many family and friends that were praying for me, but for this moment I was all alone with my thoughts – and fears. I admit that I had things wander in and out of my mind for the past several days, but things were happening so fast I just did not have time to dwell on the reality of what was happening. It was about to happen.

Nine days ago I had went to my family doctor for shortness of breath. I had some tests set up for some issues with acid reflux and I had just attributed my shortness of breath to that. The next day I went for some tests on my heart. I had some tests about six months ago so I thought this was routine. Then, after a stress test, I was being admitted for a heart cath the next day. Ok, still pretty routine. I can do this. Suddenly, surgery for heart cath ended early and I was told I had blockage in several arteries. I would be having quadruple open heart surgery in five days.

In the days leading up to surgery, I had lots of time to think. Why didn’t I take care of myself better? What will life be like after surgery? After coaching college baseball for 33 years, is my coaching career over? Am I going to be a burden on my family? Who will do my job in the athletic office? And, of course, the nagging question and fear of, “Can I really do this?

As I stood in front of the mirror the morning of surgery, my thoughts continue d to be focused on being strong enough to get through this. Heart bypass surgery has come to be viewed by the public as no big deal. It is no big deal until it is bypass on you! Every time this “Can I do this” thought entered my mind it was almost swallowed up by the comfort that God has this. He was going to bring me through this.  As Diane and I drove to the hospital there were still concerns occupying my mind, but there was also a peace that seemed to cover any concern that entered my mind.

Surgery went well. My heart was strong enough for me to not have to go on the bypass machine. I only had three arteries bypassed and not four. Now as I sit at my kitchen table with my morning coffee I am almost continually reviewing life “post-surgery”.  I know that God has seemed to stop me in my tracks 2 or 3 times in my life to “re-direct” my path. That seems to be how God deals with my hard headiness! It happened in my first semester of college in Georgia when I was cut from a baseball team for the first time in my life. It happened when I was trying to decide who my life mate should be and I had two young ladies that I really cared about and then again when He led me into coaching in 1984. Is this another “re-direct”? Am I to continue in what I am doing and just do it better with my eyes fixed more on Him or is there another adventure out there? Is there some other way He wants to use me?

Many times I have read about men and women that God has led through traumatic circumstances and they share what God ultimately taught them. I am still learning what God has for me through this experience. My Thursday morning bible study is in the process of reading Watchman Nee’s book, “The Normal Christian Life” and my small group is currently reading Kyle Idelman’s book called “Not a Fan”. Through these two studies, God is speaking to my heart about simply abiding in His Spirit each moment of every day.  Nothing earth shattering or a big biblical revelation – just abiding. The Gospel of John in Jesus teaching about the Vine and the Branches talks about “remaining in Him. Remaining in Him was easier to do when my body was weak and my days were filled with simple rest. Now that I am stronger and going through rehab, my tendency is to do what a lot of men do – “God I got this myself”.  We seem to step out of this abiding relationship with Christ and want to run ahead of Him.

The longer I stay in coaching the more things coaching stuff I throw away and the more I try to simplify things. This is where I am in following Christ. Simple abiding in him from the time I wake up to the time I go to bed. It is not that simple and I am not very good at it. Life jumps in, but my goal is trying to abide in Him. God will take care of the details if I abide with Him every day. This is not a dramatic or earth shattering conclusion, but this is what God is trying to teach me. Stay tuned.”  Mike Frame