

“One Life”

I’ve lived many places in my 63 years. I’ve met a lot of people. I’ve been a student, teacher, and pastor in several different communities. As I grow older, I reflect on those places and people. I sometimes go online to not only catch up on the local news but to also look at the obituaries to see if I recognize any familiar names. Sometimes I see a name that I vaguely recall and then read further.

Recently I came across a name and obituary that caught my attention. I won’t share the name, but this person died at a very young age. Immediately when you see the young age of someone in an obituary, your mind starts to wander. What happened that someone so young died?

Below are some redacted excerpts from one of the most honest and profound obituaries that I have ever read. It is an obituary of this person, this “One Life.”

“_____ lost her ongoing battle with addiction. It’s impossible to capture a person in an obituary, especially someone whose life was largely defined by addiction. To some, _____ was just a “junkie”—when they saw her in addiction, they stopped seeing HER.

_____ had a hard life—one that most people can’t even imagine being real. She always tried to push forward and persevere. She made many good choices, but some bad ones too.

In 2022 _____ relapsed. She was so disappointed in herself, and she thought all her hard work had gone to waste. Her last relapse is what ultimately took her from us.

In honor of _____’s life, we ask that the truth be spread regarding this epidemic and awareness be raised. If you struggle with addiction and are reading this, please know that hundreds of thousands of families who have lost someone to this disease are rooting and praying for you. It is never too late. Let today be day one of the rest of your life.

If you have a hard time understanding addicts, please educate yourself about this disease. It does not discriminate. They need us, they need our support. Let’s stop the epidemic AND the stigma.”

The obituary concluded with the Bible verse from 2 Corinthians 12:9: “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.”

Like me, I suspect that you could fill in the blanks above with the name of someone you lost because of an addiction. Thanks be to God that God sees all of us, even when we see only part of each other.

God never stops seeing us just as we are. May we have an attitude of humility and compassion for all those struggling with addiction. In the words of the obituary, “Let’s stop the epidemic AND stigma.”

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