

A HEART ATTACK ON THE WAY... AND I NEVER FELT BETTER!

"You are one of the healthiest guys I know for your age," was an expression I had become accustomed to hearing from my doctor. I have always enjoyed excellent health and have been what some might call a "health nut." So when I found myself on the operating table for a heart catheterization in the Fall of 2002 at 56 years of age and heard my cardiologist say: "You have massive heart blockage and need immediate open-heart surgery," I was shocked. In fact, my wife later exclaimed to the doctor in the waiting room: "Are you sure you have the right patient?" I had never experienced any chest pain, pressure, or shortness of breath, and in fact, had removed several large trees in my yard just two weeks prior to my surgery. No one, including my doctors, would have guessed that three major heart arteries were almost totally blocked...all over 90% and one greater than 95%. Here I was...a "picture of health," and yet I was only a heartbeat away from what my cardiologist said would have been a massive and fatal heart attack!

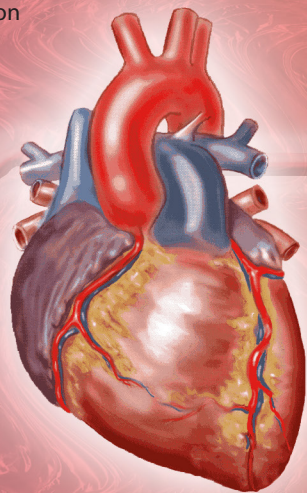
Ironically, I had just completed my annual physical exam, and the special blood profile my doctor had ordered came back as my best report ever. My total cholesterol was down to 171 mg/dl, triglycerides were a low 66 mg/dl, my blood pressure was normal,

the resting EKG was fine, and in fact, my profile indicated not a single cardiac risk factor! But prior to the physical, my doctor had ordered a treadmill EKG, and a very minor irregularity on the printout caught his attention. Because I had no symptoms, my doctor now wonders why he even ordered this test prior to my physical, but I believe it was intervention by God to save my life.

Based on my other normal test results, the doctor felt the treadmill results were a "false positive," but he seemed compelled to go further and ordered a more complex Thallium treadmill test. As far as endurance, heart rate, and blood pressure, I did great on all these treadmill tests and ran them with ease. In fact, during the Thallium test, the technicians said I performed 55% better than many men half my age. But the overall images and printouts were indeterminate, so I was referred to a cardiologist. He agreed the treadmill results could be false positives as he could not determine anything out of the ordinary other than a slight "crispness" to my heartbeat and ordered a heart catheterization just to make sure all was OK.

During this procedure, I will never forget the look

of shock and amazement on my cardiologist's face when he saw the extent of my heart blockage on the TV monitor. I was immediately scheduled for surgery, and two days later I entered the hospital. The surgery went well, and I awoke later that night with an astonishing seven bypasses!



I recovered quickly, and two days after my release from the hospital, I arose early and prepared my "family-famous" oatmeal waffles. The following day, one week after surgery, I ventured out of the house, got a haircut, and even had dinner with my wife at one of our favorite restaurants. Actually, my recovery has been as remarkable as the discovery of my heart problem has been a miracle. By the end of the second week I was walking up to two miles a day with no discomfort. And then just three weeks after the surgery, my surgeon gave me permission to start driving again and return to work! The following Spring, I participated in the famous 10k "Bolder Boulder" race in Boulder, CO, just seven months after my surgery. Although I intended to walk and slow jog the race, I started out running and never stopped until I crossed the finish line 6.2

miles later in 67 minutes before a cheering crowd of thousands in Folsom Stadium. What makes this remarkable is that I had never run a 10k race before, and I did absolutely no preparatory running to get in shape!

I am a blessed man, and I know it. Based on the severity of my heart disease, I realize that God could have taken me with a heart attack at any time, but He spared my life...no doubt, to tell this "amazing" story.

When I speak to groups, I emphasize that I am speaking...not to those who know they have health issues...but to those who think they are in good health and feel great. No one could have felt better than I did at the time my problem was discovered; yet I was on the verge of stepping into eternity at any moment! Thus, we need to make each day count and live it as though it were our last...as it might well be.

Our life here on earth is very short, and the spiritual decisions we make now determine our eternal destiny. One of the most well-known verses in the Bible is John 3:16-17 which tells us about God's love: "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him."

The Bible tells us we have all sinned and fallen short of God's glory (Romans 3:23), a condition which has separated us from God and leads to death: "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 6:23) The Good News is that we are saved by placing our faith in Jesus Christ, as He gave His life to pay our sin debt and bring us back into a living and eternal relationship with God. Jesus Himself stated: "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." (John 14:6)

These promises and truths become a reality in our lives as we respond to what Christ has done for us: "If you declare with your mouth 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved." (Romans 10:9-10)

If you have never made a decision to acknowledge and receive Jesus Christ as your Savior, this is your time to do so. I invite you to make sure of your eternal destiny by praying the following prayer:

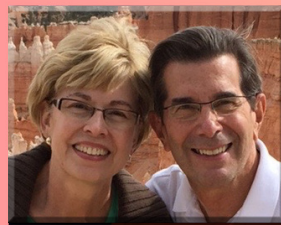
"Dear Lord God, I believe you sent your Son Jesus Christ to die in my place to pay the penalty for my sins and that He rose from the dead to defeat death. I confess that I am a sinner, and I now by faith receive Jesus Christ into my life as Lord and Savior. Thank you for forgiving me of my sins, for giving me the

promise of Heaven and eternal life, and for making me your child. Help me by your Holy Spirit to live for you every day. In Jesus' name I pray this prayer. Amen."

Read your Bible daily, speak often to God in prayer, and attend a good Bible teaching church regularly so you can grow in your faith and experience the many blessings God has in store for all who believe in Him. As my story indicates, God is a God of miracles, but the biggest miracle of all is when He forgives our sins and gives the gift of eternal life to all who receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Unlike heart surgery that heals the body, this miracle of God heals our souls and lasts forever!



Larry and his surgeon at first post-op visit



From the time he was a young boy, Larry has been interested in sharing God's love with others, and he believes God allowed his miracle surgery in order to expand his ministry opportunities. As such, he has taken Psalm 40:3 as his life verse: "He (the Lord) has given me a new song to sing, a hymn of praise to our God. Many will see what He has done and be amazed. They will put their trust in the Lord."

Larry and Marilyn share the story of God's grace and Larry's "heart story" to everyone that God sends their way in daily encounters whether here in the U.S. or while traveling abroad. As confirmation of God's blessing, just several weeks after surgery, one restaurant waiter asked to attend church with them and after the service prayed to receive Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior. Truly, "...in all things (including unexpected heart surgery) God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose." (Romans 8:28) I am eternally thankful to be able to share my "heart story" with you!

Larry invites you to visit his website for this and other life experiences:
www.GodsTreasurePouch.com or
www.larrymcquinn.com

Scriptural passages are from the New International Version (NIV) and New Living Translation (NLT)

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Larry McQuinn runs his first Bolder Boulder 10k race 7 months after 7 bypass heart surgery!