

Why Did Kobe Bryant's Death Resonate?

Last Sunday, January 26th, 2020, Kobe Bryant and his 13-year-old daughter died in a helicopter crash. They and 7 others, the pilot, a college baseball coach with his wife and daughter, a mother and her daughter, along with a High School basketball coach. The young ladies were on the same team going to a sporting event.

After news of Kobe's death, the sporting world, politicians, basketball players, and celebrities all reacted with sadness. Some current NBA players were unable to play on Sunday. Kobe Bryant wore the numbers twenty-four, and 8 in his career. Each and every team at the start of their games deliberately took a 24 second shot clock violation along with an eight second back court violation in memory of the deaths.

When looking at Kobe's accomplishments one has to recognize his various and tremendous talents:

- He went directly from playing High School ball to the NBA

- 18 times he was on the All-Star Team

- 2008 he was the MVP

- Youngest player ever to score 26,000 points and later 30,000 points

- Two gold medals with the U.S. Olympic Team

- Five NBA Championships

- Twenty years in the NBA

Besides his basketball success Kobe was successful in the business world with his company Kobe Inc. worth over \$200 million, he won an academy award for Best Animated Short Film "Dear Basketball, and he wrote a book. There are a host of other accomplishments I could have listed but you get the idea, Kobe Bryant was very talented and successful.

Looking at the title of this article, "Why did Kobe Bryant's death resonate so

much with so many people?" I want to give some answers to this question and make application.

First, it was totally unexpected. His thirteen-year-old daughter was a really good basketball player. She hoped to play for the University of Connecticut after high school. Everyone on that helicopter had plans for Monday morning and suddenly their lives ended due to an accident. They were also young and in the prime of their lives. Kobe retired at the ripe old age of thirty-seven. His death reminds us how fragile and unpredictable life and death are. Solomon makes this point, "I returned and saw under the sun that-The race is not to the swift, Nor the battle to the strong, Nor bread to the wise, Nor riches to men of understanding, Nor favor to men of skill; But time and chance happen to them all. 12 For man also does not know his time: Like fish taken in a cruel net, Like birds caught in a snare, So the sons of men are snared in an evil time, When it falls suddenly upon them." (Ecclesiastes 9:11-12)

Kobe was very successful in his endeavors. Many people strive to accomplish what Bryant had. He had a wife and four children, lots of money, and fame. He was one of the most recognizable men on the planet. People may not say it out loud but many successful people think their success makes them different and immortal. Our wealth will not buy us one second more toward our last day. Solomon was an accomplished man with great fame as his wisdom was widely known throughout the world. He had wealth beyond comprehension, many wives and children. Keep in mind, I am not saying it was good for him to have his many wives and concubines, but he obtained what many rulers of his day strived for. Yet, Solomon said, "Then I looked on all the works that my hands had done and on the labor in which I had toiled; And indeed, all was vanity and grasping for the wind. There was no profit under the sun." (Ecclesiastes 2:11)

Kobe left everything behind. He and everyone else on that helicopter left loved ones behind. They left spouses, children, parents, and more behind to mourn their death. I wish I could say something good about the spiritual condition of those who died but they will all stand before the judgement seat of Christ. "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may

receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.” (2 Corinthians 5:10) None of those five NBA Championships will matter, the net worth of each individual will be meaningless on that day. The only thing they and we really take with us are our deeds.

Kobe Bryant’s death will resonate for a while with the public but eventually it will fade in people’s memory. Just today I saw a headline about thirty service men who died in a helicopter crash. I dare say the world will pay little attention to their death but their families will. Solomon ended his letter with these words, “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, For this is man's all. 14 For God will bring every work into judgment, Including every secret thing, Whether good or evil.” (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14) -- Dennis Tucker