



A Tribute to
Perry Siddle

AUGUST 3, 1958 – OCTOBER 10, 2008

*So we fix our eyes not on what is seen,
but on what is unseen.
For what is seen is temporary,
but what is unseen is eternal.*

2 CORINTHIANS 4:18, NIV

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NATIONAL TRAINING COORDINATOR

Perry David Siddle

“Life is short; eat dessert first.”



The following message was delivered by Doug Marsh, National Royal Rangers Director at Perry Siddle's memorial service at Central Assembly of God, Springfield, Missouri on October 14, 2008, at 2:00 p.m.

As I prepared this message, I asked myself, "What if Perry could preach his own funeral? What would Perry want to say to all of us here right now, knowing it was his last chance to have our undivided attention?" Now, obviously, he cannot do that. But I think, without being presumptuous, we can probably tell from the way he lived his life what his values were and what he might say to us.

Since Perry was an excellent communicator, mine is not an easy task. Students, class is in session. Our professor is Perry David Siddle, the national Royal Rangers training coordinator. Let's listen to what his life has to say.

Drawing from his actions (the way Perry lived his life), I believe he would say at least three things:

The first thing I believe Perry would say is **“Life is Sweet!”**

Now, I know what you are thinking! As soon as you hear the name Perry and the word sweet used in the same sentence, you automatically think of dessert.

Perry loved his sweets! He had a motto: "Life is short; eat dessert first." I've not known many people who eat a very small steak just so they could eat a very large dessert.

But Perry would want you to know his life was sweet for reasons far more important than cookies, pies, cakes, his "off the shazam" (as he would say) good cinnamon rolls, or Captain Crunch cereal.

You see, 25 years ago just after Perry and Lisa were married, Perry was in a horrific accident at a construction site. He should never have survived it. Others might have lived as victims or become bitter, but not Perry!

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*The Perry Siddle family:
Natasha, Lisa, Michaela, Perry and Heather*

Every day from that day forward Perry accepted life as a gift from God. He said it countless times even in the hospital, "Every day is a gift from God." He lived his life as a gift offering back to God. That is what makes life sweet.

That is the wisdom Perry would ask us to apply in our daily lives—a sweet life is a life received from God as a gift, a life lived as a gift back to God, and a life that helps others to "taste and see that the Lord is good" (Ps. 34:8). (Of course, Perry might have preferred the word "sweet" to "good.")

Perry was excellent at his job! In the office, he would often search the training database to acquaint himself with the human assets he had to work with as instructors and to search for those positioned to take the next step in their leadership development. After Perry and Lisa purchased their home here in Springfield, Beverly, his administrative assistant, suggested he update his records with his new address and phone number, which he did.

Last Friday morning after I announced to the staff that Perry had passed away, Beverly looked up his training record to find Lisa's cell number. She didn't find it, but here's what she did find. In the occupation field in his record, Perry listed his title not as "The Big National Training

Coordinator" but simply "Beverly's Assistant." Perry was a strong but humble man. He didn't have anything to prove. He only had a gift to offer, which was a gift to God and a gift to others. That is what made his life sweet.

Perry intentionally lived a sweet life. It's a choice that Perry made, and he would ask us to make the same choice. Life is sweet when you receive life as a gift from God and you offer it as a gift back to Him and to others.

Yes, I'll concede, he would probably insist that desserts "off the shazam" might just make life a little sweeter!

The second thing I believe Perry would say is **"Family is a Haven!"**

No one ever doubted where Perry's affections lay. He loved you, Lisa; he loved you all—"His girls" as he would call you. We have seen and heard about these strong ties in the excellent photos and eulogies already!

Lisa, it was very evident to everyone who watched (and we did) that you and Perry had a very affectionate and solid relationship with one another and with the Lord. That created stability, a haven, a home. Perry may be gone, but the cherished memories and the solid Christian foundations you built your relationship and home upon will remain. That is a legacy!



In the Bible, God uses the relational imagery of a bride and a groom to describe His deep commitment and His high purpose for the Church. So naturally, God is very interested in healthy marriages and families that exemplify His love. Lisa, in your marriage and family God found just such an example. Again, that is a legacy!

What made the Siddle household a haven was a choice that Perry and Lisa made, first individually, then as a couple, and then as an entire family, to honor the Lord. They made the same commitment the Old Testament leader Joshua made, "As for me and my household, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15).

That choice is what makes family a haven. Here again, based on how Perry led his life, I believe he would advise each of us to make Jesus the central focal point of our home. Jesus is who makes family a haven.

"Every day is a gift from God."

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Perry did not eat **DOG FOOD** to simply raise money for a worthy philanthropic cause. He did it to share the good news of **GOD'S LOVE** with people unaware.



“I want to introduce boys and their families to a relationship with Jesus Christ.”

The third thing I believe Perry would say is **“Serve God!”**

I became acquainted with Perry in 2002, and I quickly learned that his life was organized around one overriding goal, one that God intends for all of us to organize our lives around — to help people grow in their relationship with God.

A few years later, that high goal was put on display in “Perry Siddle fashion.” He took it upon himself to challenge the Georgia district Royal Rangers to raise a sizable amount of money for missionary work by suggesting that he would eat dog food if the goal was met. As you can imagine, that rallied the men and boys, and they exceeded the goal. Perry knew how to have fun and motivate people! And, yes, he ate the dog food! Even said it tasted good! (I’ll take his word for it.) He said that what he really appreciated about eating dog food is that it did exactly what the television commercials promised—it made his hair shiny!

Perry did not eat dog food to simply raise money for a worthy philanthropic cause. He did it to share the good news of God’s love with people unaware. That’s what Perry and Lisa’s life together has been about.

Serving God is what motivated Perry and his brother, Joe, to travel together and minister to kids all over the country when they were young adults.

Serving God is what moved Perry and Lisa from Augusta, GA here to Springfield, MO to serve with Royal

Rangers at the Assemblies of God headquarters. If you had asked Perry, like so many did, why he would accept a very sizeable pay cut at the prime of his career to assume the position he did, you would get a simple reply, “I want to introduce boys and their families to a relationship with Jesus Christ.”

Serving God is what motivated Perry and Lisa to devote part of their 25th wedding anniversary celebration in Costa Rica last year to minister with missionary, Jeff Cooper, at schools. Their involvement inspired a project now called “Mochila Madness.” As a result, this Christmas, backpacks like this one, filled with school supplies, literature explaining God’s love, and a New Testament will be given to kids in Central America.

Serving God is what took Perry, along with Jim Barger, to Singapore earlier this year to train Royal Rangers leaders in Asia to reach the next generation for Christ.

Serving God is why Perry chose to be the national training coordinator. He knew that by preparing men to mentor boys that he would replicate himself through them and touch hundreds of future men and their families with God’s love; he would influence the lives of people he would never meet.

Perry’s life was about expending himself to lead people into a relationship with Jesus Christ. His life verse was 2 Corinthians 4:18, “So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.”

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Perry's whole life has been devoted to pointing people to God, the Eternal One. The Loving One we cannot see, but we can meet and relate to personally. So if Perry were here, he would invite you to put your faith and trust in God.

Doing so is a firm decision to live life God's way. After all, the Bible says, "We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way" (Is. 53:6). Living life your way or living life my way instead of God's way is what the Bible calls sin.

The Bible says we have all sinned, and the consequence of that sin is eternal separation from God in this life and for all eternity. Perry enjoyed God's best in this life, and today he is in heaven because he lived putting his faith and trust in Jesus Christ. Someday Perry wants to meet you there.

But God will not allow sin into heaven, and there is nothing you or I can do to remove our own sin. But that is where the good news of the gospel comes in. John 3:16 tells us that God loved the world so much He sent His Son to die on the cross for my sins and your sins. As a gift, Jesus paid the penalty price for your sins. Your responsibility is to accept it by committing your life to Him. Romans 10:9 says, "If you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord [i.e., 'Jesus you're the leader; I'll stop living life my way and live it Your way'], and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved."

Would you bow your head with me? As an act of worship, I'd like everyone to repeat this simple prayer after me, "God, thank You for sending Your Son to die for a sinner like me. I've led life my way, but I want to make You my leader. I want to live life Your way. Forgive me of my sins, come into my heart, and take control. I will follow You."

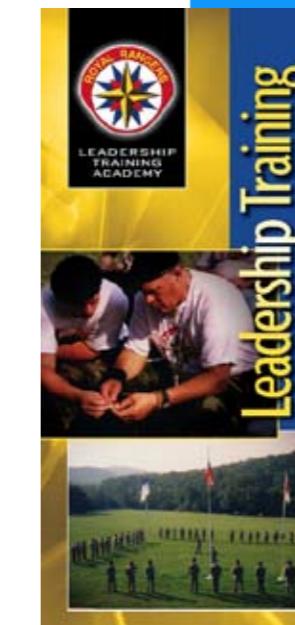
With heads bowed and no one looking around, I'd like to ask you a question. Did you offer that prayer for the first time? Did you mean it? If you did, and you want Jesus to be the driving force in your life the way Perry did, I'd like you to indicate that by looking up at me. I don't care to make you uncomfortable, but this is what Perry would want. He would want you to become a follower of Christ if you're not already. If you meant that prayer, would you look up at me?

If you committed your life to the Lord, I'd like to ask you to do one thing. Would you talk with someone like me, another Ranger leader in a uniform like mine, or a family member? We would like to pray with you and help you find a dynamic church where you can grow in your relationship with Christ.

*"Heavenly Father, we are going to miss Perry!
But we thank You for what his life's example
teaches us — that life in You is sweet, that family
with You at the center is a haven, and that serving
You is our highest call. Because of You in Perry's life,
we all inherit a legacy of faithfulness to emulate.
We thank You for Perry. We thank You for
a life well lived! Amen."*



Sympathy cards can be sent to:
Lisa Siddle
3325 South Saratoga Avenue
Springfield, MO USA 65804



Perry Siddle Training Memorial Fund

Checks can be made out to *Royal Rangers* with the name of the memorial fund in the memo line.

Mail to:
Royal Rangers
1445 N. Boonville Ave.
Springfield, MO 65802



Write a tribute and your remembrance of Perry on the National Royal Rangers Ministry Facebook page.
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