

Unfavorable Odds

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Season 1, Episode 7: Walk By Faith

Guest: David Kline
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Kim: So, there was a moment when you're there, lying face down in the water, did you think about breathing at all? What went through your mind? How long was it? Was it just seconds?

David: It, probably, was seconds; and really, I wasn't stressed. I wasn't even thinking about taking a breath of air—not sure why—but fortunately, my little brother who I dove next to—he thought I was playing, and he didn't know why I wasn't turning back over. He kept telling me to turn over, and I wouldn't.

He had never seen his big brother injured. So, I think that was farthest thing from his mind; and just out of frustration of me not turning myself over, he decided to flip me over. Fortunately, he did, and I was able to take a breath of air; but still, he didn't know something was wrong until I finally said, with a dead look on my face and looking into his eyes, "Something is wrong." Then he noticed I wasn't moving.

Kim: From the FamilyLife podcast network, this is *Unfavorable Odds*. I'm Kim Anthony.

Unfavorable Odds—well, it's all about finding hope and help in those seasons of life when things get pretty difficult. You know Jesus has promised us that whenever we walk through those dark valleys. He's always going to be with us. We'll never have to do it alone. So, on each episode of this podcast, we'll be talking with people who have learned how, in the dark places of life, to draw their strength from Jesus.

Imagine living life as a teenager where you succeed in everything you do—athletics, academics, theater, choir, social life—you name it. Whatever you touch turns to gold; but then, in a split second, everything you once enjoyed just disappears and leaves you vulnerable, dependent on others to meet your basic needs. What do you do? How would you respond? Would you blame God?

Well, I had the chance to sit down with David Kline, and he shared his story in a book he has written called *Walk by Faith*. It's his story I was just describing. He had everything going for him; and in an instance, it was all taken away.

Talk to me about that day. You were babysitting your little brothers.

David: Yes, it was a sunny July day up here in Northern California. So, it was warm. So, I took my brothers to the lake, and I was up on shore watching them swim. One of my brothers called up to me and asked if I would swim with him. So, I took off my watch and my shoes and set them on the towel, ran down the beach into the water, and dove in next to him. Somehow, I hit my head on the sand under the water and, instantly, broke my neck—just like that. I didn't black out. So, I remember everything even to this day.

I don't know how I hit my head. I don't know how I would have dove high to come down on my head or not had my hands out in front of me like everyone does. I heard later that maybe my brother was sitting on his knees, and I maybe thought he was standing. So, maybe, in my mind, I thought the water was deeper.

But as I said, I instantly broke my neck, and I knew it. Somehow, I knew it. I'm not sure how. Maybe, it was because I had already read Joni Eareckson's book. I knew that if you hit your head wrong from diving, you might end up paralyzed. So, maybe, that was my first thought; but there under the water, knowing this tragedy had just happened, my first thought was: "Well, God will heal me." That put me at a real peace.

Kim: And why wouldn't He heal you because all of your life things have gone your way, you've been able to overcome struggles in athletics and achieve your dreams. So, why wouldn't God heal you during that time? I can understand why you would immediately think that.

David: Sure. I've wondered if maybe it was God's voice just giving me peace and calm. I've also wondered if it was my brain in denial about what just happened to me; but regardless, I'm glad it did help me keep calm because I was face under the water not being able to move a muscle. So, I easily could have been panicking and really stressed out; but fortunately, my little brother who I dove next to—he thought I was playing; and just out of frustration of me not turning myself over, he decided to flip me over. He called the lifeguard, but my story could have ended right there if he hadn't turned me over.

Kim: So, Jonathan is his name.

David: Yes, he was just 11 years old at the time.

Kim: He literally saved your life.

David: He did. He did. The county we live in gave him a little hero's proclamation at a board meeting which was great.

Kim: That's wonderful. Now, what happened after Jonathan turned you over, the lifeguard came over? They took you up on the beach; didn't they?

David: Yes; at first, the lifeguard was keeping my head and neck still, and he moved me toward shore keeping my neck still. Even in where I was with the injury—fresh injury—I

remember thinking, “Well, this—this lifeguard who is just my age—he is pretty smart to know to keep my head still”: but of course, I think the damage to my neck had already been done.

Kim: Okay.

David: So, it kind of didn’t matter, but I was impressed by his doing that. They called the ambulance. So, I just waited there kind of right at the shore. A few people had gathered around. I remember hearing a lady say, “Get him a blanket. He’s going to go into shock.” I was kind of thinking, “No, I’m okay. I’m fine. I’m not going to go into shock”; but I think my body had already gone into shock. I didn’t feel any pain, fortunately. So, I think that’s the shock response. So, finally, the ambulance came and picked me up.

Kim: At some point, they had to Life Flight you to a different area. Do you remember what was going through your mind during that time because, as I read your story, it sounds like you were relatively peaceful? There was no panic. What were you thinking?

David: Yes, I really was. It’s got to be from God. The only thing I remember about the helicopter flight to the major hospital was just that it was really loud and really bumpy. I don’t even remember being panicked or worried. I think I should have been. I think I should have been pretty stressed out and probably crying; but I wasn’t. I think it’s got to be peace that God gave me and faith and trust which I am grateful for.

Kim: That’s powerful. So, you undergo a series of tests, x-rays. What was your diagnosis?

David: You know it’s funny because I don’t think a doctor ever even told me my diagnosis; and I certainly remember never getting the grand doctor speech that you see on TV shows when the doctor says, “You will never walk again.” I never got that. I think just from overhearing doctors and nurses and my parents and hearing what the x-rays showed—I think putting all that together plus, of course, not being able to feel or move, all those were clues that I had probably broken my neck.

So, my injury is—I broke the fifth cervical, and that left me quadriplegic meaning four limbs are affected. I also have no sensation from chest down, but I can use my arms a little bit.

Kim: So, tell me what it was like for you to lie in that hospital bed. You were, at times, alone. A lot of times your mom was there to support you, and you were a bit modest. Yet, there were these nurses coming into your room and doing all types of things to your body. How did that feel? Was it uncomfortable for you?

David: It was a little awkward. I had never spent time in the hospital; and then all these things—there was just a rush of things—x-rays and MRIs and doctors and nurses—in and out—doing things. It was just go, go, go. I just had to go with the flow.

Some things were awkward and embarrassing. As I described in the book the first time they had to use a catheter on me to drain my bladder, the nurse didn't explain anything. So, I didn't know if the red stuff on her fingers—I thought she made me bleed down there. That sounds horrible. It turned out to be iodine; but I just wish people would have explained things.

Kim: Right.

David: I don't remember even stressing about my injury. I just remember just trying to go with everything they were doing to me, and I just had to trust and know, "They are doctors. They are nurses. They know what they are doing." So, I just had to go with that.

Kim: At one point, you mentioned that while you were in the hospital your mom said that she was surprised that anything bad had happened to you because you had always been so cautious. How did that sit with you? Did you have any thoughts about what she meant by that?

David: Well, I am a really cautious person and really make sure everything is okay before I do something. I've never been reckless; but when I tell my story and I tell people I had a diving accident, sometimes, they think I jumped off a bridge, or I jumped off a rock. In fact, when I was in the hospital, rumor was going around my small town that I had done a double back flip. So, like, I didn't do anything stupid. It was just a freak accident, and that is what it is.

Kim: David, you talk about how you lived your life cautiously; and as you were describing that, I thought about your walk with God up until that moment that the accident happened. You spent time with your friends, in Bible study. You chose to practice abstinence. You really honored God with your life. Was there any moment as you are learning more about the severity of your injury where you began to wonder, "Hey, why is this happening to me?"

David: I remember thinking that it was strange that it was happening to me. I was the outgoing guy in a lot of activities, sports, and events. It felt weird that this happened to me; you know? Those things happen to someone else. So, that was a weird experience for me; but I never questioned God or even got mad at God.

Some people have asked if I got mad at God, but I always thought, "God is God. He's the Creator of all things, and He knows all things beginning to end." I felt like—"I can't get mad at God because He sees something I don't / something that He's going to use, maybe, ten years / twenty years down the road that I don't even know yet. So, I really tried to trust that God was in control. It wasn't always easy, but I had to believe that.

Kim: David, you were 17 years old. That level of faith is impressive. Where do you think that came from?

David: Well, again, I'll say it was God because I couldn't have come up with it on my own. My parents were Christians. All my friends were Christians; but I think that kind of faith must have been just a gift from God.

Kim: You were in ICU for two weeks. Then they told you that you had gotten well enough or stable enough to be transferred to a regular floor; but something happened that prevented that from happening. What was it?

David: Yes; I had been in intensive care for a couple of weeks, I think, at least. That wasn't a fun experience, first of all—all the rushing and monitoring and equipment and all the things that go with it; but right before I was going to be transferred to the regular floor of the hospital, I ended up getting double pneumonia. Both of my lungs had pneumonia.

Part of this accident, not only paralyzed my muscles, but also my lungs a little bit were paralyzed. So, they're certainly weaker; and being in the hospital for a while is no good with all the germs. So, the double pneumonia set me back, and that was a scary time because it's difficult to breathe with the way my lungs are and then having pneumonia. So, it was a tough time in the hospital.

Kim: Tell me about the breathing treatments that you had to get. It seems—up until then, you talked about how you were pretty naïve and just relaxed and trusting about the different procedures that were taking place; but this one procedure, the breathing treatments for the double pneumonia—that was a lot different than anything you had experienced.

David: Yes; those were some of the scariest times—those breathing treatments. What they would do was—put a mask over my face attached to a canister with some sort of fumes that would help break up the mucous in my lungs. Then they'd turn me over on my stomach—and this is after my spinal cord surgery. So, I had a metal brace attached to my head and chest. They'd turn me over and loosen the brace which I think my surgeon would not like to know that they loosened all these contraptions that were stabilizing my neck.

My head would kind of hang over the head of the bed so far over that I could read the manufacturers label on the headboard. Of course, I was reading upside down. Then, suddenly, the physical therapist would start pounding on my back to break up the mucous in my lungs; and this treatment worked as they had planned; but that meant all this mucous was now coming up and blocking my airway—

Kim: Oh.

David: —and I would choke and panic and couldn't breathe. Then they'd send suction tubes down my throat to suck up the mucous. It was scary. It was very scary. I had to do

it every 12 hours. I was so scared that every time that treatment would come around, I would ask my nurses to pray with me.

Kim: Oh.

David: It was a very scary time. Nothing I had dealt with before was like that.

Kim: You talk about how your mom would get underneath the bed so that she could see your face and tell when you started to get that panicked look—

David: Yes.

Kim: —about you so that they could flip you over.

David: Yes; my head would be hanging over the bed, and I could see her down there watching me to make sure I didn't give a facial expression like—"You need to help." If I did, she'd alert the doctors. Yes; she was great for me during the hospital.

Kim: There was one instance in your hospital stay where you flat lined. What happened?

David: Yes; that was scary. I was there on my hospital bed on my back as I was for weeks and weeks, and my mom and dad were there. They were talking with me and doctors. Suddenly, I remember things started to go black. Then I came to again. Suddenly, my room was filled with more people panicking; and my mom had just seen what happened. I had flat lined on the monitor, and then I flat lined again. Then I came out of that. So, it was a scary time. I guess God wasn't done with me yet.

Kim: When was it that you came to grips with the seriousness of your condition?

David: That's a good question because for a while, in the hospital, I really had some positive thinking that—"I might / could beat this. I could walk again." In the hospital, my dad had brought me a movie about a guy who had broken his neck; and six months later, he was walking. I think the movie was called *The Miracle Man*, and this guy was a friend of Zig Ziglar, the motivational speaker.

So, I thought, "Well, if this guy could be walking again six months, I probably could." I even gave myself, like, nine months. I thought, "Well, I will just be conservative. I'll say nine months. So, that would put it right around my senior ball / high school graduation. So, wouldn't that be a big treat if I surprise everyone and walked through at senior ball." I think that's some denial on my part on the reality of my injury and just over time that dream or thought kind of faded, and reality set in—"This is a pretty permanent, lifelong type of injury." So, for a while there, I was thinking, "Oh, I could beat this."

Kim: As I was reading your story, the word positive kept coming up over and over again—just your attitude from the moment of the accident on. I mean before the accident I believe that, as you said, the Lord has gifted you with such positivity / such an overcomer spirit.

David: Thank you. I really believe that if we ask God for faith and trust, He'll give it to us. He gave it to me before I even asked, I think. I think He provided that when I needed it, but I really learned God will equip us for what He calls us to do. If we need faith to trust Him when things don't seem clear or we don't understand why bad things have happened, I think if we ask for faith and trust, He will give that to us.

Kim: That's good. That's a good reminder.

One night, as you were lying in your hospital bed, you said that you were dwelling on some thoughts / some questions: "How did this happen to me? How did this happen to David Kline? He is this outgoing, athletic, social one. This isn't him. This can't be right. This kind of thing happens to someone else. This doesn't happen to David Kline." Did you get any answers to those questions?

David: Well, I probably have—someone once told me that—I knew things happen for a reason. I really have believed that; but this person took it a step further, and he said, "Maybe, God picked you specifically for a purpose; and maybe, He knows"—God knows—"that someone needs to hear the gospel, and that someone might only hear it from someone in your condition."

Kim: That's powerful.

David: "Maybe, that's the only person they'll ever hear who shares the gospel." So, this friend of mine said, "Maybe, God has that planned. This happened, and maybe, God knows that you're going to minister someday—maybe, a caregiver or someone I'm connected with." So, that philosophy didn't come right away for me—that thought—but eventually, I began to accept that. God wants to use me for a reason. I just have to keep my eyes open for it.

Kim: I know it was your faith that allowed you to do that, but what would you tell the person who is experiencing something tragic / something very difficult that they think they have no ability to overcome. How would you help them to focus on the opportunity in the midst of that?

David: Well, if that person believes in God, which I hope he or she does, then we need to acknowledge, I think, who God is; and I like to say, "God's a big God." The Bible says He knows the beginning from the end / the Alpha and the Omega; and He knows everything. So, He already knows our whole life. He already knows how He's going to use us. He already knows what blessings are coming around for us. So, I think if people

believe in God, even when they are going through troubles, we just have to really believe that He's in control; and He is a big God; and He can handle anything.

I try to look things—look at things, maybe, from an eternal perspective. You know our lives are short compared to eternity. So, if, maybe, something we can do can lead someone else to Christ or encourage someone else, that someone else might end up in heaven because of, maybe, a little bit of suffering here on earth. So, as hard as it might be for us and those who are going through trials and struggles, the big picture is that God's already at work; and we might see the blessings that He has for us.

I saw something the other day—a little meme that I liked. It was about Zacchaeus in the Bible. He was the one who had to climb the tree to see Jesus. This little quote said, “Long before Zacchaeus needed that tree, God had planted that tree.”

Kim: I like that.

David: So, God is so many steps ahead of us.

Kim: There came a point where it was time for you to move on, and you chose to go to the Shriners Hospital. There you would face some of your biggest challenges yet. Can you tell us about what you had to learn how to do once you got there?

David: After I spent five weeks at UC-Davis Med Center, I finally was stable enough in my health to transition to a rehabilitation hospital—a Shriners Hospital. It was there—their goal was to teach me what life would be like now as a quadriplegic. They would teach me what kind of care I needed; teach me how to teach caregivers to do my care; and then we would have physical therapy and occupational therapy trying to strengthen what muscle I had use of, trying to learn daily skills—like writing or feeding myself.

Those three months there were filled with challenges, and I didn't meet a lot of the physical therapy goals they had for me—like transferring from my wheelchair to my bed or vice versa. I just didn't have the skills or the muscle to be able to do that or even sitting up and balancing. I couldn't do that after my time in the hospital there, either.

I mentioned one of the things they taught me was how to feed myself again; and for that, I got some arm movement—no movement in my fingers. So, that little contraption that fits in my hand—I can hold a fork, but I just couldn't quite stab the food and get the fork up to my mouth. They developed a contraption for me that rested on the armrest in my chair, and my arm would rest in it. They'd put a fork in my splint in my hand, piece of food on the fork.

The theory was if I pushed down on my elbow, then that would swivel the contraption up and bring the fork up to my mouth. Unfortunately, every time I did it, it would curve out, and it would go to the side. So, I could watch the food come up and go over here. I always thought I could feed the guy next to me. [Laughter] But just learning the basics—

typing, writing, feeding myself—took a lot of work, and it took, really, years to get even better at it; but those three months were challenging, but I think they were necessary—a necessary part of my recovery.

Kim: Part of those three months, you met other teens / other people who were in similar situations. Was that help for you?

David: It was. Shriners Hospital is a hospital for children. So, there were a number of other kids my age who had recent injuries—spinal cord injuries. There was one particular—a patient that I bonded with. Her name was Leigh Ann. We were about the same age. She was great. She was a great friend, and we could bounce things off each other / deal with things together. I've since learned that, I think, all of the other patients there at the time I was there, except for Leigh Ann, have since passed away, which is tough.

Kim: I'm sorry.

David: It is a tough thing to hear, but it takes a lot of diligence and effort to stay as healthy as we can.

Kim: How have you handled having to go from total independence to relying on people to help you to do those everyday tasks?

David: Yes, that was a change for me. I was very independent before my accident. I use to come and go as I pleased; but then, all of the sudden, you have to rely on other people for everything. So, still to this day, I do have caregivers that help me out. They come at a few different times during the day. Fortunately, I have great caregivers right now; but it hasn't always been that way. As I explained in the book, I've got some real horror stories. It's so difficult relying on someone for my life. I could die without the care I need.

Relying on someone who is a drunk while trying to help me or high on drugs trying to help me—or I have had people who steal from me or were flaky and just don't show up—

Kim: Right.

David: So, that's been one of the greatest challenges of being quadriplegic—is the struggle with caregivers.

Kim: I'm so sorry that you've experienced all of those things; but yet, you continue to exhibit this positive attitude / this belief in God's plan for you / His purpose for you. There were times when you wrote about feeling vulnerable, weak, limited, and insecure. What types of things have you done to help you deal with those aspects of life?

David: Good question. Again, that's something I wasn't accustomed to. For example, as I described in the book, a time that I felt really embarrassed was just picking up my water bottle.

As I mentioned earlier, I use my fingers. So, I can't just grab a water bottle. I kind of—I use both arms; and I'll squeeze my hands, squishing the bottle between them, and can gradually scoop the bottle up to mouth to get a drink out of the straw. It looks really awkward. I'm sure it does, and there was a time in college when I wouldn't even take a drink in public because I thought it was kind of embarrassing; or people would think whatever they would think.

It just got to a point where I thought, "Well, who cares what they think? I need a drink of water. If they think it looks silly or awkward, then that's their problem. You know I'm not doing anything wrong. I just need a drink of water."

Kim: Right.

David: So, a lot of things I've had to just accept; you know? I just have to do things differently, or it looks different or not so put together. For a while, I had a chest brace that would keep me from falling over because I don't have good balance; and I had this big, leather chest strap just outside of my shirt that looked pretty awkward; but I'd fall over without it. So, I had to have it.

Kim: Right.

David: I just had to accept a lot of things and then just be confident and move on. Just keep pursuing the goals and the direction God has set me.

Kim: Right. If I were to run into you out in public and I were to see you wanting a sip of water and possibly struggling to get that sip of water, what would you want me to do about it? Would you want me to just stay back and allow you to do that on your own, or would you want me to offer help?

David: That's a great question. I've met some people in wheelchairs who do not want anyone's help.

Kim: Yes.

David: They want to do it all on their own even if it's a super struggle. That's not me. If someone wants to help, that's great. I appreciate it. I appreciate when people are being thoughtful and thinking of me and others. If someone wants to open the door for me, thank you. I really appreciate that. If they see me struggling and they offer their help, I appreciate it. I'll usually say, "Yes." I am for that. I like when people are helping others and are thoughtful—so, yes.

Kim: You know what, David? As you were saying that, I was thinking, “Those are the words of a man of humility: If you want to help me, come on do it”—so encouraging.

David: They’re making it easier for me. So, I do appreciate that; you know? I could struggle and struggle; but if someone wants to lend a helping hand, that’s great. I appreciate it.

Kim: How were you able to overcome your fears of uncertainties?

David: I don’t know if I have a lot of fears, to be honest. I like to joke that my main fear is curbs—falling off curbs or sidewalks.

Kim: Okay.

David: But I don’t know what God has planned for me; but I know that He’s watching out for me—

Kim: Okay.

David: —and He’ll get me through it. I’ve been through a lot of stuff as I explained in the book, and God got me through each one. So, He’s got a good track record.

Kim: This is true.

David: I believe He’s a faithful God and that He honors His promises. As I explain in the book, I really rely on Romans 8:28, which is a promise. That verse says, “Now, God causes all things to work together for good to them who love God and are called according to His purpose.” Well, that’s a promise. When I look in the Bible, God makes a lot of promises; but He’s also fulfilled His promises.

Kim: Yes.

David: He’s a faithful God. We can trust Him when He says something. So, if this—my injury / being quadriplegic is going to work for good, then I’ll trust God; and I know He knows what’s good better than I know what’s good. So, I just have to keep an eye on what He thinks that good is and just do my best going in the direction He has planted me.

Kim: Right. So, if I understand correctly, you never really wrestled with fears about your future.

David: Oh, there have been tough times; and for a while, right after my accident, I didn’t think I’d be able to handle college. There was a time when I told my mom, “I’m not going to college.” You know I didn’t think I could handle it. She looked me straight in the eye and said, “David, I’ve never had to tell what to do or what friends to hang out with.

You've always made good choices." Then, she said, "But you will go to college." So, she knew I needed an education to have a career as a quadriplegic.

So, there's been probably some nudging done by my parents to make sure I am going to college and pursuing some sort of direction, but I don't think I had necessarily fears, thankfully, that something is not going to work out at all. Some things haven't worked out or have been difficult, but God's gotten me through it—like some of those caregivers in my book as I mentioned.

Kim: What's a day in your life like?

David: Well, my morning routine—getting up and ready for the day takes about two to two and a half hours every morning—things like stretching and doing exercises that—just everything takes longer—bathing, getting dressed. Everything takes longer.

So, I've got that. Then, once I'm up in my wheelchair, I can get to my computer and do work that I need to do; but then I need caregiver help a little bit at lunch, caregiver help again in the afternoon, and then at dinner. Bedtime takes an hour and a half to get ready for bed. I do more stretches. During the day, I'll do some more exercises. I've had to constantly recline in my chair to take pressure off my bottom. So, I keep an eye on the clock all day long.

Usually, I keep my day pretty busy with work. If it's a sunny day, I'll try to get a little reading done out in the sunshine that I enjoy. That's kind of my typical day.

Kim: That's good. Tell me about your work.

David: Well, right now, I'm managing a couple businesses from home and promoting my book, *Walk by Faith*. I love that there is technology like the internet that allows me to run these businesses from home; but I've only been doing this for about two years. Prior to that, I taught English at my high school—my alma mater—taught for 17 years. So, for 17 years, my day was consumed with school and teaching. I'd get up early and race out the door to get to my classroom and teach until the afternoon. Then I'd come home and grade papers until bedtime and then grade papers all weekend.

Finally, a couple of years ago, I got to the point where I just thought, "I'm just too tired."

Kim: Yes.

David: It really is exhausting. As rewarding as it is, it is exhausting.

Kim: I can imagine.

David: So, that was my day for 17 years.

Kim: You've talked about not wanting your life to be defined by your disability. So, what defines you?

David: Well, as you've mentioned my positive attitude, I really do hope I come across to others as positive. I pray that I would be a light to those who need a light. I pray that God would use me. That quote from my book—I didn't want people just to see a wheelchair and think, "That's just a guy in a wheelchair," or that I can't offer anything to anyone in this life.

In fact, I coached soccer for a number of years from my wheelchair, and I know some of the opponents' coaches would probably see me as entered the field with my team, and they probably thought, "Oh, piece of cake. We've got this guy. Their coach is in a wheelchair." So, I like surprising people.

When I was teaching and I would meet people, they would always be surprised that I was a teacher. I think a lot of people, maybe, just assume someone in a wheelchair doesn't do anything or can't do anything. So, I like surprising people that way.

Kim: How has your faith changed since the accident?

David: Well, I certainly did a lot of praying in the hospital—more praying than I probably had ever done. Then, as I explain in the book, when I got to college, I found a group of college students who were really on fire for the Lord. Growing up, all my friends were Christians; but then I met this group, and they just really lived it in every part of their lives. You could just see it and hear it.

I remember going to a birthday party for one of these college kids in the Bible study, and the birthday party turned into a praise and worship session. I'd never seen that before where—because these people really just loved God, and it showed. I thought, "I want that. I want to live like that. I want people to see Jesus in me and hear Jesus through the words I speak." So, that was a real, real boost in my faith journey.

I just kind of over these years took to trust God and rely on Him for everything. I think that's where He wants us. I think He wants us really trusting and relying on Him, and He provides. He is a good God.

Kim: He is a good God. David, throughout your challenges, you have maintained the thought and belief that you were put here on this earth for a purpose. What is your purpose, and how are you living that out?

David: For a number of years, I didn't know what the purpose was. When I was in college, I was thinking I would go to law school; and just one day, it hit me out of the blue that I would be a lot happier as a teacher than as a lawyer—no offense to any lawyers—and I thought I'll be a lot more of a positive influence on kids as a teacher than as a lawyer. So, I just set my goal on becoming a teacher; and in that moment, I also

felt like, “This is really where God wants me.” The more I thought about it; the more I thought, “This could easily be one of the reasons why I had this accident.”

Because before my accident, I had never thought of being a teacher; but now, with this thought of being able to help kids and hopefully be a light to these kids, I really felt like this was where God wanted me and His purpose for me. So, a couple of years ago, when I decided to retire—and that was big because I had been doing what God—

Kim: Yes.

David: —what I thought God wanted me to do. So, I had to do a lot of praying to make sure that my retiring was also part of God’s plan and purpose; and I think it was. In the time since I’ve retired, I wrote my book and got it edited and published and now doing interviews and speaking. I think that’s how God wants to use me now. Further down the road, I don’t know; but I’m open to what God has planned.

Kim: What a journey. David Kline’s positivity absolutely astounds me; and as he said, it’s not something that he crafted by his own will. It’s a gift from God, and it’s grounded in the truths he believes about the God he serves. What I learned from him in our time together is the importance of our daily walk with God and how prioritizing our relationship with Him today, actually, helps prepare us for whatever our future may hold—whether it’s triumph or tragedy.

Now, we don’t know what’s ahead for us. We don’t know what the future holds. We don’t even know what’s going to happen later today, but we do know that wherever we are God is going to be right there with us. When we compare our short years on this earth and the eternity we get to spend with God, it makes it a little easier to endure some of the hardships we face.

2 Corinthians 4:17 tells us that whatever we are facing in life is momentary, light affliction that is producing in us—get this—producing in us an eternal weight of glory that is beyond all comparison.

Thanks for listening.

If you’d like more information about David Kline or his book, *Walk by Faith*, check out our show notes on the *Unfavorable Odds* page at FamilyLife.com/podcasts. If you enjoyed today’s conversation with David Kline, I hope you’ll consider subscribing to the podcast. You can search for *Unfavorable Odds* on iTunes or Stitcher or wherever you go for podcasts.

Oh, and by the way, we’d love to get your feedback, and positive reviews are appreciated. If I can ask you a big favor, help us spread the word about our podcast. Maybe, think about one or two people who you think might enjoy or benefit from listening.

On the next episode of *Unfavorable Odds*:

Carol: We went through two and a half years and seven postponements of Jason's case before he was eventually convicted of first degree murder and sentence to life without the possibility of parole.

Kim: Carol Kent, next time.

I'm Kim Anthony. Thanks for listening to this episode of *Unfavorable Odds*.

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