

HEART ATTACK

bob lucido, testimony

It was a Friday and I had just picked up a used van I had bought. It was all carpeted with just front seats. I was planning on using it for the band and the kids. Well, I noticed on the way home it seem to have a small leak in the exhaust system. That night I had some pains in the center of my chest, I automatically figured out that I must have been inhaling the exhaust fumes. I stretched out and rubbed it a bit and eventually it went away. This convinced me it was the fumes. Next day, same thing happened.. When I was at home I started getting pains again in the center of my chest, rubbed it out, stretched, it went away. The next morning Sunday I was getting ready for church, I hadn't even been in the van yet, and it started again. By this time I was starting to think it could be something else, like a cramp or some kind of chest cold. I remember we had to go to a cookout that day after church, the whole church must have been there. You know one of those people who had a pool and stuff so everyone went.. I had some cramps there, but I had driven over, so again I though it was the van, and I remember talking to some of the guys telling them exactly that, because I keep rubbing my chest every now and then and people asked if I was okay... of course I was okay,,, it was just from the exhaust and I had to get it fixed.. That night as I went to bed, I had pain again this time the rubbing

didn't help and the pain (cramps, like a charlie horse in your chest) didn't stop, but got worst... I started to get a little light headed and forced myself to get up. I went inside and told my wife she better call the emergency unit because I thought I was having a heart attack. I don't even know what make me said that, but I did. As soon as I said that I started to get hot flashes, then all of a sudden I was cold.. I remember laying on the sofa holding my chest and feeling so hot, Anthony, (my son) put a fan toward me and prayed, then I would get cold, I was really getting very nervous, I think you can sense when your life is in real trouble. At that time I was also very heavy, and we live upstairs in this God forsaken apartment where the stairs seemed to go straight up.. I thought to myself the emergency squad is never going to be able to get me down these stairs, So, I decided to go down the stairs myself.. I made it, no shirt on, hair wild, banging into the sides as I went down, I must have been some site. But your body kinda goes into this survival mode,, (I guess that is why people on fire just run, instead of falling down, you are just trying to get to survival, losing all real brain waves,, I think) as soon as I got to the bottom, the emergency squad was there, I felt much better. I asked where the doctor was, living in the country as we do, they said there was no doctor. Back into survival mode, I started hyperventilating, and shaking. They got me in and started giving me oxygen. It is about a 30-minute drive to the

hospital from my house. They keep trying to calm me down, and I would for a minute or two, then I would start shaking again, It really is scary when you think you are going to die. Well, as you can probably tell I did make it to the hospital. When I arrived I was pretty out of it, lots of pain. They gave me this drug (injected it) TPA, it is suppose to help stop a heart attack, the only problem is that it has to be done before you are too far into the heart attack. It takes a few days to see how well it worked I guess. Then you are lying on this table and they ask how the pain level is on a scale of 1-10, 10 being the highest, after the TPA the pain eased I thought it was getting better. Then it started to get stronger again, this is really scary because you think things are getting better when all of a sudden it starts getting worst again. In your mind you think this is it. It didn't work. You are now up to a 8 or 9 pain level. Someone asked if I had a Cardiologist, of course not I didn't even know I needed one. He said he knew a good group but couldn't recommend anyone, but if I wanted them he would say I asked for them. Well of course I did, otherwise he said they would use someone at the hospital. I don't remember much more of the emergency room, next I was in ICU, for heart patients. They really watch you good there, they make you feel a little better. Every so often you start thinking you are having another heart attack, you feel pain your chest and a burning feeling, the first thing they do is

give you something for gas or upset stomach to be sure it's not that. Most of the time it is. Well, the first night they keep asking if you know what happened and explain that you had a heart attack and that they still don't know if they caught it in time. The next day the doctors informed me that they thought they were too late with the TPA drug. That part of my heart was permanently damaged. This would mean less activity and there was not too much they could do with drugs to help. It took about a week to 10 days to recover and they were going to let me go home, after they showed me what I could and could not eat or do. But before they send you home you must also do a stress test to see how far or how long you could go on it, this is to determine how strong or weak the heart is at this point. I went about 30 seconds to 1 minute before I started having chest pain again. They couldn't understand why, the heart was damaged it should just work less and I should get tired and maybe exhausted but not pain and not so fast. They put me back in (no going home) for more test. After testing they seemed to find new results. (Results after many prayers) The entire area that they thought was damaged and dead was being keep alive with small blood vessels they call collateral arteries, (or vessels. . not totally sure). They keep a small supply of blood flowing to the damaged area, keeping it alive. So, what they thought was dead and gone was still alive. They decided they would try to put a balloon in to

open it up. After numerous tries, which keep failing and collapsing they decided they better get me up to emergency surgery because now they could keep the arteries open for blood flow. They did a by-pass 2 or 3, I am not sure anymore. I am sure they didn't plan on it going this way. My family and I were totally surprised. Now came the aftershock, my wife seeing me looking like I died, real grey looking I guess because they bring you down to such a cold temperature. Coming out of the anesthesia and not having a clue as to what was going on was one of the scariest experiences in my life. I couldn't open my eyes and thought I couldn't breath. There was something in my throat and I couldn't swallow. I didn't know it at the time but they put something down into your lungs for breathing. I remember lying there hearing the nurses and thinking "here I am and I can't talk and tell them I can't breath, I am going to die right here and I can't tell them". I guess I must have been moving around some because they seem to know I could hear them. They told me I had to relax so they could then take the breathing tube out of my throat. Right relax when you think you can't breathe. I started singing worship songs in my head and taking my mind off the situation and it wasn't long before they could take the tube out. I then asked for a bed pan and the nurse informed me she would get me up and we would walk to the restroom. The longest walk I've made so far in my life. Well, after some time in the hospital I finally

went home. Then rehab for 6 or 8 weeks and then as the case with many heart attacks and heart surgery depression. Oh, I was pretty good at not showing it, losing weight and getting better each day, but inside, not good. It is very normal I found out for heart patients to feel this way. No matter what anybody says inside you think your time is short now. You aren't going to be able to do all those things you had planned. I started not really caring about too much because I just couldn't get myself to look forward even though I tried and would confirm my plans for the future. When I was alone I would just have a very strange feeling like I was on borrowed time. One afternoon while I was home, my daughter was young then and in school, she was doing a dance recital at school and asked if I would come to watch her. I did and as I watched her dance on the stage (this was after 6 months of being home recouping) tears filled my eyes and I realized I wanted to live.. I wanted to see my daughter graduate school; I didn't want to die.. I know the feeling after heart surgery and heart attacks.. You not only think you are going to die; you are just sitting quietly and waiting for it. Then one day something kicks in and you realize you are not going to die, you have reason to live