

To myself on my 35th birthday

Depending on when you read this, my 35th birthday may have already come and gone, but the lessons still remain year after year.

Turning 35 isn't really a milestone birthday, in my opinion, but it's a good number to take time and reflect on what I have done thus far and if I am where I thought I would be. The problem is, other than living the life of a religious, I really didn't know or plan what I would be doing at 35.

If you know me now, you'd be surprised because I plan everything and love making lists and learning how to make and achieve my goals. So why didn't I ever give thought to what I would be doing right now, as I embark on my 35th year of life?

I think, like most people, we let ages like that sneak up on us. This was especially true when I was in college at the Naval Academy. When I graduated at 21, I had no idea what I was going to do 14 years later! Now let me be clear: I have enjoyed everything I have done and relished in the fact that all of these experiences have contributed to the person I am today. So what am I really lacking? Just the conventional answer to what I'm going to do when I grow up!

Even in the last 10 years since leaving the military I have done so much it could make your head spin. But in all that time, I have learned so much about myself, how to interact better with other people, and how to really embrace the quirky person God created me to be, that I can't say there have been too many wasted moments.

I get to be with my family, write this blog, and have fantastic adventures and experiences. I get to spend more time in prayer and adoration as I learn how to heal my body and mind from my military disabilities. I get to be a resource for people when I have the blessing of being able to use my skills and gifts to help others.



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While I am at the point where I can no longer hold a traditional job, I remember that "freedom" gives me a chance to be around for other people and help in a way I couldn't before. Perhaps it's not official, but I feel like I am starting to live the life of a religious!

I have learned to accept that people may not be able to give me what I think I need, but, as I grow closer to God, I am able to find more and more peace in meeting people where they are and seeing them as God does. Sure there are more earthly things I wish for, but I know those have to be put in the proper perspective with my highest priorities.

While I am not where I thought I would be at age 35, I believe I'm in a much better place. I look forward to what is to come and how I can give all of me in the service of

God for my fellow human beings (that's about as sappy as I get).

And for everyone who reads these words, I hope and pray that you will live your life according to your highest priorities, for it is only there you will find fulfillment and contentment. It won't always be easy, but it will be worth it!