



KYLE MARTIN

THE 16TH SECOND

<https://youtu.be/KlamZaWHzB0>

Good evening. On behalf of the senior class, I would like to thank all the people who make the King's Academy excellent. To the Board of Governors, for the wisdom you bring, the prayers that you pray, and the vision you lay out for TKA, we thank you. To the administration, for the godly oversight you bring to the school, and for making the tough calls when needed, we thank you.

To the faculty, who give your all each and every day, laboring to provide us with a tremendous education, and pushing us to do our best, even on the days that we don't want to learn, all the while taking the extra time to build relationships with us, that for some, will last a lifetime, we thank you. To the staff, who work tirelessly, coordinating our lives and our events, while supporting us and the faculty, we thank you.

To the King's Academy maintenance department, who keep our campus running efficiently, and create a beautiful place for us to come and learn every day, we thank you. To each member of each family represented in the senior class, whose support, sacrifice, and dedication has not been overlooked, we thank you.

Especially the parents and the guardians who have paid for, and who have supported us throughout our education, we thank you. And we love you. I stand before you tonight as the 2019 valedictorian. This time last year, I found out that I was in the running for this title. It was then that I decided I wanted it.

So, I worked hard for it. I sacrificed for it. And yes, I stressed for it.

And I got it. And at our senior award ceremony, it felt so good when I heard my name announced with this title. It was so good. For about 15 seconds. Yeah, 15

seconds of my heart racing and my adrenaline pumping. 15 seconds of, yeah, I won! 15 seconds of being at the top of the pile of all my accomplishments.

And it felt euphoric. But there must come a 16th second. And on that 16th second, sat down in my seat, I looked at my silver stole that says valedictorian, and I thought, that's it? What just happened? Why am I not feeling anything else? And to be honest, I don't even know what I was expecting. A parade of balloons to drop?

Or maybe I was hoping that all of my problems would fade away in comparison to this amazing achievement. But none of that happened. Not even in my heart. I felt nothing. I was shocked. This was a huge problem for me. And I needed to figure out why. So here was my thought process. Working hard is good. It is in fact biblical.

But it should not be done for the sole purpose of a goal shake at the expense of relationship with others. Looking back on this year, I realized that the stress of this year for this goal in a five minute speech was paid for with the lack of attending to relationships in my life. A lesson learned. And self reflection accomplished.

Now, I would like you, my fellow classmates, to do some self reflecting. I would like you to take a moment to fill in a different thing that you strive for and you focused on. Something that you thought was the end all be all. Perhaps it was sports. Perhaps it was fine arts. Academics. Getting into a particular school.

An unhealthy social life. Social media. Or video games. Friends, we are about to launch into life. And we haven't messed anything up yet. Now think. Instead of academics taking your focus off your important relationships, it was your career you chose over your spouse. Instead of sports, it's money that you pursue at the detriment of your children.

Instead of just the Instagram worthy picture, it's striving to be famous at the expense of time with your friends because now you're too self involved. I'm well aware that this is kind of a downer speech. But I don't care. Because a lesson learned should be a lesson shared. Now I'm glad that I've only made this mistake of striving for something that is in the light of eternity, not important, for just one year.

I can't imagine if I had learned this at 50 or at the end of my life. And here's the lesson. Have no regrets in the 16th second. Nothing is more important than your

healthy relationships. Nothing. Not your goals. Not your successes. And here is why. Relationships are where we get to influence, impact, and change people's lives.

Your life cannot be meaningful without them. We were put on this earth by our creator and we all have a purpose. To advance God's kingdom that all may be saved. Now how we all go about that, that's what's different. It's different in what college we choose, who we marry, and what career we choose. It's different in the triumphs and tragedies that come upon us.

But in all those things, new relationships are being formed. As you live your life on this earth, there is no greater good than you can do for a person than to love them so much that you point them to Jesus Christ. But first, he should be your first relationship that you cannot neglect. And I want you to know, I have been here at TKA for 14 years.

And I love this school. And I love all of you, my classmates. And tonight, I am imploring you, if you have not begun that personal relationship with Jesus Christ, just do it. There is no better way to start something new and close a chapter of your life than with him. If he is your Lord and Savior, then make sure you care for that relationship above all others.

And after that, prioritize what is important in your life. And never, never lose focus of your important relationships. So be generous with your time and money. And a lot of relational issues will be resolved. And by the way, it's not too late to mend fractured relationships. Any friends you haven't spoken to in a while because of your pride, parents whom you disrespected, and teachers who you never thanked, just do it.

Humble yourself. Start a conversation. Have no regrets in the 16th second. In conclusion, this has been one of the hundreds of life lessons I have learned at the King's Academy. And that has been more valuable than academics. So thank you to all who have taken the time to teach each of us our lessons. And once again, thank you to our parents who have been the main source of our lesson learning.

We did it. You and us. And we love you for your sacrifice to put us at King's and for putting up with our attitudes along the way. Thank you for sticking with us when we receive our diploma tonight. Just know, we all have earned it.

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