

# An Unusual Invitation

**“Needless to say, I made a lot of money. Money I didn’t deserve, money I didn’t earn and money I didn’t know what to do with.”— Wayne Huizenga Jr**

Wayne Huizenga Jr grew up privileged. His father, Wayne Senior, was the founder of Waste Management and AutoNation and the owner or co-owner of Blockbuster Video, the Miami Dolphins, the Florida Panthers, the Florida Marlins, and many real estate assets. Wayne Senior started modestly in 1962 at the age of 25 by borrowing \$5,000 from his father to start a garbage hauling business and died a multibillionaire in 2018 at the age of 80.

Wayne Jr grew up around the family business (spending many hours at the Waste Management garbage facilities) and came to work for his father when he graduated from college—starting at the bottom as a clerk in a Blockbuster store. While at Blockbuster, he bought as much stock in that company as he could and made his own fortune when Wayne Senior sold the company to Viacom for \$8.4 billion.

Wayne Jr wanted to be just like his father. The influence, admiration and material trophies of success (mansions, jets, yachts, exotic cars, etc) were compelling, and he achieved all of that at a relatively young age. Then something happened....

Wayne received a call from a friend with an unusual invitation to take a three-day trip from South Carolina to Fort Lauderdale aboard a nuclear submarine. He couldn’t say no to that. During the trip, Wayne spent a lot of time with the boat’s captain, Captain Brad McDonald, who had a profound impact on him. As he tells it, “He had unbelievable wisdom and patience. I saw calm and a peace in him that I had not seen in anybody else.” Following that trip, since both loved to fish, Wayne invited Captain Brad to join him on his boat for a fishing trip. During that trip, Wayne asked Brad how he could be more like him, with a peace and calm beyond anything he had ever seen. Brad told Wayne about his personal relationship with God. He explained that everyone has a hole in their heart which can only be filled by that relationship. The Captain went on to observe that Wayne had been trying to fill that hole with things, trips and success. Wayne listened closely and the truth of Brad’s Scripture-based words resonated. His attention shifted from wanting to be just like his father to wanting to be just like Captain Brad.

Eventually Wayne and his wife Fonda started attending church. That’s where he learned more about how to have a personal relationship with God. Wayne ended up committing his life to Him. “I realized I had been given incredible gifts to do almost anything I wanted in life. But I was using it all for me,” says Wayne. From that point on, Wayne was determined that things were going to be different. He stopped drinking and partying. He resumed business activities with a new sense of purpose. People were amazed at the changes in him, but no one more so than his wife, Fonda. Fonda liked the changes, but she found it a little frightening. She eventually committed her life to God as well. “From that point on it felt like we were in a canoe and finally paddling together,” Fonda says.

Today, Wayne brings God into everything he does, including his business dealings. “To me, success is being able to use what I’ve been given to change other people’s lives.”

## Discussion

1. What direction might Wayne’s life have taken had he not met Captain Brad?
2. Have you ever met anyone like Captain Brad who changed your life?
3. Could you be a “Captain Brad” for someone else who needs your example?
4. What are you doing to make sure you don’t lose those opportunities?

Click on the link to watch a 7 minute video of Wayne’s story

<https://vimeo.com/379770261>