

Captain Tom Joyce – Danger Zone

Tom is a graduate of the Naval Academy, and former TOPGUN fighter pilot and instructor. He flew F-14 Tomcats for the Navy, and was also one of the F-14 stunt pilots for the movie “Top Gun. He became Commanding Officer aboard the aircraft carrier USS Kitty Hawk, recognized as the best fighters squadron in the Pacific Fleet. Tom was in his office in the Pentagon when the building was attacked on September 11, 2001.

Discussion Questions

1. Following 9/11, after finally getting home from the Pentagon where his life was spared from the hijacked plane flying into it, Tom’s son asked him this penetrating question: “Dad...God spared your life. What are you going to do with the rest of your life?”

Question: How would you answer your son or daughter if your life was spared and they asked the same question of you?

2. Tom’s high school football friend Jay had his spinal cord severed in a freak football accident and was paralyzed from the waist down. Knowing he would soon die, his eyes told Tom that he needed to know what would happen after he died. Tom admits that he was unable to tell him at that time, because he didn’t know. No-one had ever told him.

Question: Would you have been able to tell him had you been Jay’s high school friend? What would you tell him now, if you could?

3. Several years later, a Naval academy classmate asked Tom if he were to die today, where would he spend eternity? Tom mocked the question and said..”how do I know? How does anyone really know? The classmate responded by asking if he would like to know? Tom said “yes” and the classmate invited him to a Bible study. By his senior year the truth had been poured into Tom in that Bible study, and when the time was right he knelt down and gave his life to Christ. Remembering that he had no answers for Jay, he committed that he would never again not have the answer of the truth of the Gospel when asked.

Question: What might have become of Tom had his Academy classmate not asked him that question? Would you be bold enough to ask that question of a friend? What would you risk losing? What might be gained? Is that a “Danger Zone” of sorts for you?