Bob: Tyler Trent was a university student at Purdue University, who covered the college football team for the school newspaper. He was diagnosed during his freshman year with a form of bone cancer, and the odds were not good. That's when Tyler made a prediction; he predicted that the Purdue University Boilermakers would upset the Ohio State Buckeyes when the two teams played that fall—another prediction that had long odds.

Tyler’s dad, Tony, says, “Focusing on that game and on Purdue’s football season was a welcome distraction for Tyler and the whole family in the midst of the cancer battle.”

Tony: If you’ve walked this journey of cancer before—if you walk something really, really, really difficult—just getting a moment with your family that you don’t have to think about the illness is so powerful and so important. Thanks to all the people out there that do that for families that are hurting; it matters.

Bob: This is FamilyLife Today for Friday, January 10th. Our hosts are Dave and Ann Wilson; I’m Bob Lepine. You’ll find us online at FamilyLifeToday.com. We’re going to hear about Tyler Trent’s battle with bone cancer today and about the upset he predicted in the 2018 college football season. Stay with us.

And welcome to FamilyLife Today. Thanks for joining us. A lot of families, who are listening to us, have had the experience of a family member/a loved one get a diagnosis that’s the kind of diagnosis you never hope to hear, whether it is cancer or some other disease. The experience of going through a battle, and coming out the other side and thinking, “Okay; we think, maybe, we’ve beaten it,”—and then there is a relapse; then you get a second diagnosis; and you hear, “Oh, no; it’s back,”—when you get that news, “Oh, no; it’s back,” that’s something, again, nobody wants to hear.

We’ve got, joining us today, Tony and Kelly Trent. Guys, welcome back to FamilyLife Today.

Tony: Thanks for having us again.

Kelly: Thank you.
Bob: Tony and Kelly are the parents of a remarkable young man, Tyler Trent. You guys have—are sharing with us Tyler’s story in a book that he wrote called *The Upset.* When I say, “…he wrote,” he was dying as he sat down with a writer, and shared his story, and talked about what was important to him. John Driver took that and turned it into this remarkable book that is Tyler’s story.

He was a senior in high school when you got the second diagnosis; is that right?

Kelly: Correct—spring/that spring.

Bob: And what was happening that caused you to go back to the doctor? Was it just a routine checkup or—

Kelly: No.

Bob: —he was starting to experience something again?

Kelly: Yes; we took him to Florida for his senior trip that January. He started complaining about his hip hurting him, so that was like the end of January. Then he went on a ski trip in February. He called us that night and said, “I have to go to the doctor tomorrow; my hip is killing me.” We went, had an x-ray. Nothing showed up. They just thought it was a groin injury or something like that. Then—

Ann: There was probably a sense of relief; wasn’t there?

Kelly: Oh, for sure.

Ann: Yes.

Kelly: Like 100 percent—never dreamt that is was another diagnosis, at that point.

Then, about four or five weeks later, he was limping. I was like: “Yes; something is just not right. We need an MRI.” Turned out he had another osteosarcoma diagnosis in his—it had invaded his hip, and then it also had like attached to his pelvis.

Tony: Yes; and he said, “I don’t care what they are going to do to me, but I’m going to be at Purdue in the fall.” We had surgery to remove his pelvis and his hip; and two weeks later, he was on campus with crutches.

Ann: Was that scary for you guys, as parents? Was there a part of you that wanted to protect him?

Tony: Oh, yes.
Kelly: Yes; a hundred percent—like when he went back in 2018 for the fall for seven weeks, when he had had multiple other diagnoses; but yes, it was really hard to let him go.

Bob: When you got the second diagnosis, is that when you thought, “This is, maybe/probably, fatal”?

Tony: Yes; with osteosarcoma, if you don’t stay out of remission for five years, the odds of beating it are really, really slim. It’s a tough one; it really is. As Kelly mentioned, there isn’t a new treatment for 35 years; and if you think about that, I mean, there isn’t a hospital that any of us would walk into and say: “Oh, by the way, I want this technology that’s 35 years old.”

Bob: Yes.

Tony: “Oh, by the way, it’s designed for adults, not children.”

Tonight, when you all go to bed, and you lay your head on your pillow, you can think about the 46 kids that just got diagnosed with cancer today in the US; and 91,250 kids die a year from pediatric cancer.

Bob: This is a part of the mission that you guys have today to want to raise money and raise research dollars—

Tony: Right.

Bob: —to beat this.

Tony: Yes; so Tyler’s name/his legacy has raised $2.5 million for cancer research and numerous other things. There is a scholarship in his name at Purdue University. A gentleman donated a $100,000 to get that going. Just today, in the airport, we got an email from a professor that wants to name her professorship after Tyler. I mean, it just keeps going—every day. This lady just finished a 500-mile walk in Tyler’s name to raise money. There was a kid from Purdue University, in the middle of winter, walked from Purdue University to Indiana University in one day—no; three days—100 miles to raise money.

Tyler’s legacy is being accomplished by what we say is the five reasons why he wrote the book. Number one is Tyler wanted to, obviously, have his name/his legacy move on. Number two, he wanted to bring awareness to cancer; especially, pediatric cancer. Number three, he wanted to raise money for pediatric cancer; his goal was to raise a million dollars—we’ve far surpassed that.

[Number four] We want to bring hope to hurting families. This book is not what most people think is about sports; it is not. It’s—the name of the book is called The Upset.
The reason why we called it *The Upset* was because we all have upsets in life. Lastly, we wanted to communicate the gospel. We felt that: “What better way to use a kid, that loves sports, to try to communicate the gospel in a way that they might not get it.”

**Dave:** Tony, talk about this—because a little while ago, you’re talking about the second diagnosis and your honest anger.

**Tony:** Yes.

**Dave:** I would have been, I’m sure, feeling the *exact* same thing. How did you get through that?

**Tony:** You know, I don’t think it was anything that I did. I think it was all of the body of Christ praying for us/the body of Christ loving us so well. I would share with people: “There isn’t a word that you can tell me that’s going to help bring encouragement to me. It’s the Word of God that’s going to bring encouragement to me.” That is so true when you are going through something that is—you are so broken, and you/there is *nothing* you can do—and only the Word of God brings hope. God brought me back; that’s all I can say.

**Dave:** Really?

**Tony:** [Emotion in voice] And I think about the verse, where it talks about “Well done, good and faithful servant”; and I’m so glad to walk through the journey, having a child that loved Jesus so well. I can’t wait to see—I can’t wait to be in his presence again and to see what kind of responsibilities God’s given him in heaven, because I’m sure it’s going to be some fun ones.

**Bob:** Can you describe for us his freshman year of college? He’s going through chemo while he’s in school. He’s on crutches; but he’s full-on freshman, loving the college experience; right?

**Ann:** Living on campus.

**Kelly:** Yes; living on campus. He was even offered a room by himself that he could have all the amenities that he wanted; but he was like: “No way! I want a roommate. I
want the real college experience.” He just lived life to the fullest. I mean, nothing stopped Tyler—for real.

Bob: He was a sports reporter for the college newspaper. He would travel and cover the team. He loved football, and he was—I mean, we’ve got to acknowledge, again: the Boilermakers were not in the top 25 that year; maybe, not the top—

Dave: Not the top—

Bob: —50. [Laughter]

Dave: —maybe, 100. [Laughter]

Bob: But he was a Boilermaker, through and through; and he had a dream. It’s kind of the double-side of the title of his book, The Upset. He had a dream that, before he died, he wanted to see the Boilermakers pull off the upset that no one imagined they could pull off; right?

Kelly: Correct. As a matter of fact, it’s kind of a funny story. When ESPN caught wind of his story, and they came to do it—when he said that Purdue was going to beat Ohio State—Tom Rinaldi from College Game Day literally looked at Tyler and said, “Are you sure you want to put this on the air?” [Laughter] He was like, “What?!”

Bob: The way the media first found out about what was going on with Tyler was pretty interesting. In fact, I’ve got another clip. Here is Tyler sharing the story of how he got found out as the Boilermakers super fan.

[Previous Recording]

Tyler: You know, the media first picked up my story because me and one of my best friends had a really stupid idea of camping out for Purdue football game, which was unheard of. They wrote a story on us: “There is this kid with a crutch, who is bald, camping outside of the Purdue football stadium. Why was he bald and on a crutch? Because he had just had chemotherapy, and just had a pelvic reconstruction surgery, and was crazy enough to camp out for a Purdue football game.”

[Studio]

Bob: The reason it’s crazy, because you don’t have to camp out to be first in line for a Purdue game; [Laughter] but he thought: “We’re going to do this all out. We’re going to camp out the night before the game,”—with, on his crutches.

Ann: As a mom, I would be thinking: “No!”

Bob: Yes.
Ann: “This is the dumbest thing ever!”

Kelly: Oh, for sure.

Ann: Yet, I love that he did this. I love that you gave him the freedom to live this dream out.

Kelly: Yes.

Tony: Yes; I tell other parents—sometimes, your kids know better than you do.

Dave: Yes; that’s good.

Tony: We need to hear what they have to say; because I said: “Tyler, are you sure you want to do this? You just had chemotherapy. You’re sleeping on concrete.” [Laughter] If he wouldn’t have done that, I don’t know where this story would be; and if Purdue wouldn’t have beaten Ohio State, I don’t know where this story would be.

Just a real shout out to all the Ohio State fans out there—they did an amazing job making us feel so loved. I mean, we got a stack of cards, that is probably ten inches tall, of just how, “Boy, if we could lose, we would lose to Tyler.”

Bob: At the time, Ohio State was undefeated.

Tony: They were. We kept them out of the National Championship. [Laughter]

Dave: That’s right!

Bob: What was Purdue’s record going into the game? Do you remember?

Tony: I don’t remember exactly; but I believe it—they were batting probably 50 percent.

Bob: Alright; and nobody was picking Purdue to win this game except Tyler.

Dave: And Tyler’s the co-captain?

Tony: Yes; he was—

Dave: Was that that game?

Tony: Yes; he was co-captain two times. There has been—now, they have the Tyler Trent Captain Award named—so three offensive players; three defensive players are named Tyler Trent Captains; but yes.
Bob: You’re sitting with him for the kickoff of this game. I’m a parent, thinking, “Okay; we’ve just got to recalibrate our expectations,”—right? [Laughter]—“I mean, I know we’d all love for this upset to happen, but let’s be real. This is the Ohio State University”—

Dave: —the…

Bob: —“we’re playing against.”

Were you thinking, “We’ve just got to—we’ve got to have some reality injected into this thing”? 

Tony: You know, he picked them to win at the beginning of the season; and he stuck with his guns. It was a magical night. It was unlike another—any other night that I’ve ever been a part of—and I’ll never forget the night.

Dave: It’s actually a miracle; isn’t it? Wasn’t he in the hospital the day before?

Tony: Yes.

Kelly: Not the day before, but ESPN had been there. They literally were at our house—Saturday, all day Sunday, Monday morning—they left and we took Tyler to the ER; because—I don’t know, like, if you watched the ESPN piece—he does not sound good.

Bob: Yes.

Kelly: He looks really sick. Well, he was toxic because of just some—he had nephrostomy tubes, and he just needed some adjustments made to his health.

Bob: Let me just say—if you haven’t seen the ESPN clip, you can go to our website, FamilyLifeToday.com; we’ve got a link to it, and folks can watch it there; yes.

Kelly: Thank you.

Ann: In all of this time, Tyler became friends with many of the players on the football team.

Kelly: Oh, yes.

Tony: Oh, yes.

Ann: How did that happen?

Tony: Well, it—it really started to happen when he camped out. Coach Brohm came over and said, “Thanks!” The players were like, “Boy, we’ve got a real fan here; thanks!”; you know? [Laughter] I mean, he was in the front row because he camped out.
The players were coming up and shaking his hand, saying, “Thanks for being a real fan,” because, as we mentioned before, Purdue football was just not in the caliber of Alabama or anything.

So then, the relationships just started to grow. They would come to our house and talk to Tyler. They would reach out to him on social media. It’s—the same happened with ESPN personalities, and professional football players, and Cubs players. It just kept growing, and growing, and growing.

Bob: What was it like, sitting in the—because you guys had a box to watch the game—when you see Purdue take the lead, and it looks like, “There might be something happening,” what was Tyler doing?—and what were you guys doing? Do you remember?

Tony: Yes; we were in the box with Tyler. You know, all these signs said, “‘Tyler Strong’ on it.” I look over to Tyler and I said, “Tyler, this is all for you.” He starts crying, and we stayed until 1:30. We were the last people to leave. We were in the locker room. We, literally—we went home; we couldn’t sleep. It was—if you’ve walked this journey of cancer before—if you’ve walked something really, really, really difficult—just getting a moment with your family that you don’t have to think about the illness is so powerful and so important.

Thanks to all the people out there who do that for families that are hurting. It matters; but professional sports players—you’re offering up your time—I tell people all the time that, “Sure, what you do on the field is important, but what you do off the field is even more important.”

Ann: When you say, “Tyler was good for the Boilermakers,” that’s what you meant. He gave them a sense of: “Man! He believes in us more than anybody.”

Tony: Right; yes. I mean, you know, they are kids too. They need direction in their life as well; and Tyler just, I think, brought them a lot of encouragement because they saw a kid, who was going through something so difficult; and they look at their problems, and they say: “You know what? My problems aren’t quite as big as Tyler’s, so let’s just move on with life.”

Bob: You’ve heard from people, who came to faith in Christ,—

Tony: Yes.

Bob: —because of Tyler’s testimony and what they saw him—they watched him walk this journey by faith; and they go, “I want what he has.”

Tony: Absolutely.
Bob: To see that—and Tyler knew that—Tyler knew that there were people coming to faith, and that’s what gave him joy and strength in his final days; didn’t it?

Tony: It did. You know, we would get letters from people. We would—people would talk to my sister. There was—we had t-shirts that Purdue made that has a Bible verse on the bottom of it. There’s this guy wearing one; and my sister goes up to him and says, “Hey, thanks for supporting cancer research by purchasing the shirt.” He said, “Oh, you don’t know about this kid.” My sister said, “Well, tell me more.” He said: “Oh, I was an atheist, and this kid has brought me to Jesus because of the way he is living his life.”

There are other stories from people who send us letters, and it’s quite extraordinary to know that Tyler is a part of that.

Bob: Here is how Tyler saw it as he looked at what life was all about. Here’s his reflection on that.

[Previous Recording]

Tyler: I’d say legacy is really important to me—so leaving a legacy—what it means for someone of my age to leave a legacy and leave an impact on the world.

[Studio]

Bob: Dave, you’ve talked, many times here on FamilyLife Today, about the importance of legacy.

Dave: That’s why I can’t lift my head. That word, legacy, is—I think it’s why we are here. What are we going to do with our life? What will last? What will be remembered? You know, my legacy handed to me was adultery and alcohol; and I get a chance to say, “I’m going to change it to a godly legacy.” Thank God—He has done that.

Tyler would have never chosen cancer; and yet, the legacy—because of how he handled it—and really, how you all/the whole family have handled this—Tyler Trent’s name is going to forever be connected to faith in Jesus through trial. Atheists are going to come to Christ, decades from now, because of a young man, with an unbelievable maturity, responded, Christ-like, to a horrible, horrible thing.

Tony: Every time we were in the hospital, there was a frosted window door on the bathroom. It became our goal and our mission to share the love of the Lord to all the staff at the hospital. We’d write something different every time we were there; and we’d write, like, 1 Peter 5:10 on there.

We would write—and one of my favorite ones was: “God is holy; I am not. Christ is my Savior; God saves.” I think about those short words that we would write on there, and I
think that that sums it up what Dave was sharing about our legacy—is that God is holy, and we’re not. The only way to have a real legacy is to have Him part of that.

**Bob:** There is so much of Tyler’s story that we haven’t had a chance to unpack.

**Ann:** I would say that some of you might be listening and thinking: “Oh, this is a sad story. I don't know if I could read it.” I want you to know—this is an *inspiring* story—

**Bob:** It’s a glorious—

**Ann:** —glorious, wonderful. It’s a page-turner; it’s such a good book.

**Kelly:** Thank you.

**Ann:** It’s such a great man, who God used. I’d really encourage listeners: “Get this book.”

**Kelly:** Thank you.

**Bob:** Yes; we do have copies of the book in our *FamilyLife Today* Resource Center. I'll tell our listeners how they can get a copy here in just a minute.

Guys, thank you.

**Kelly:** Our pleasure.

**Tony:** Thanks for having us on.

**Bob:** Thanks for sharing Tyler’s story with us; and I hope our listeners will get a copy of his book, *The Upset*, and read his own words on the journey that God took him on. He had a chance to lay all of this out before he died. Again, you can get a copy of the book, *The Upset: Life (Sports), Death…and the Legacy We Leave in the Middle*. Go to FamilyLifeToday.com to order your copy of the book, or call 1-800-FL-TODAY. Again, our website: FamilyLifeToday.com; or you can order by calling 1-800-358-6329—that’s 1-800-“F” as in family, “L” as in life, and then the word, “TODAY.”

By the way, while you’re on the website, check out information about Dave and Ann Wilson’s new video series for couples; it’s called *Vertical Marriage*. It’s a five-session DVD series that you can use for small groups or for Sunday schools. Great content from their book, *Vertical Marriage*; and it’s now available. You’ll find information, online, at FamilyLifeToday.com; or call if you have any questions or if you’d like to order by phone—1-800-FL-TODAY is our number.

Then, finally, before we wrap up this week, this is the last time I’ll have to tell you about the special offer we’ve been making to *FamilyLife Today* listeners this week. We want
you and your family to spend more time in God’s Word in 2020. That’s why we teamed up with our friends at Logos Bible Software to make their software system available to you for free. They put together a package—a library of more than $2,000 worth of books and resources: Bible versions, commentaries, systematic theologies, classics—a whole bunch of content that’s available for free.

All you have to do is go to FamilyLifeToday.com and click the link for Logos Bible Software. You can download the system from there—load it on your computer, on your tablet, on your mobile device. You can have the Logos content available to you wherever you are. I know you are thinking: “So, all of this is free; so what’s the catch?” Well, the catch is we hope you’ll spend more time studying the Bible in 2020; and the folks at Logos hope that you like the software, and you’ll want to add additional resources to your library as you continue to see how user-friendly this software system is.

I use this all the time; I love my Logos Software. I have a big library of resources that I can draw from. So, again, we want to set you up with the system for free. Go to FamilyLifeToday.com; click the link for Logos Bible Software, and enjoy our gift to you as you begin the New Year—free Logos Bible Study Software for you and your whole family.

And we hope you have a great weekend. I hope you and your family are able to worship together in your local church this weekend; and I hope you can join us on Monday when we’re going to talk about what it is that couples, who are in joy-filled marriages, are doing that the rest of us ought to start doing. Marcus Warner and Chris Coursey will be here to talk about The 4 Habits of Joy-Filled Marriages. I hope you can be with us for that.

I want to thank our engineer today, Keith Lynch, along with our entire broadcast production team. On behalf of our hosts, Dave and Ann Wilson, I’m Bob Lepine. We will see you back next time for another edition of FamilyLife Today.

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