

What Are You Leaving Behind?

How to cultivate a spiritual legacy

Mother's Day is a perfect day to reflect on legacy. What does it mean? Do I have a legacy? Am I living a legacy I'm proud of?

Mom's in the room, maybe you have your children in church with you today or watching with you online. Look over at them- they're part of your legacy.

Legacy: Something transmitted by or received from an ancestor or predecessor.

The legacy you leave is so important. And the craziest part is, you won't be around to see it fully come to fruition.

We are all descendants of the legacy Jesus set in motion thousands of years ago. He spent his earthly life teaching and leading his disciples how to live AFTER he's gone. To **carry on** the work He began with them.

Today we're going to look to scripture to identify ways we can cultivate spiritual legacies for those in our lives now and those to come.

Disclaimer: You may not think you have the legacy lifestyle you should have (married, children, grandchildren, etc.) but you are still laying the foundation for a legacy and you are **not less significant or less valued by God because of your marital or parental status.**

I. Live And Lead By Example

Parents: You want your children to grow up loving and serving the Lord, right? Are you showing them how to do that? Are you living a Godly life in front of them?

The single most important legacy you can leave is your children serving the Lord and thereby affecting their generation and the ones to follow. The quality of your life in Christ will be one of the major influences on them.

*1 Timothy 4:8 "Rather train yourself for godliness; for while bodily training is of some value, **godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.**"*

The legacy that you create does not have to mimic the one given to you. You may be the product of divorce, abuse, addiction. These things can have a massive impact on the way you live and interact with those in your life. Can be referred to as a generational curse.

The Gospel Coalition describes a generational curse as: "the cumulative effect on a person of things that their ancestors did, believed, or practiced in the past" and "a consequence of an ancestor's actions, beliefs, and sins *being passed down.*"

A generational curse is like a reverse spiritual legacy. I also think of it as the legacy the enemy wants you to live in and pass down.

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Let me set you free this morning: **these generational curses can be broken.**

The enemy might say you're broken or destined to fail.
But God says you are made new and created with a purpose.

It's time you stop listening to the voices that want to destroy you and start living in the truth and freedom that is provided by Jesus Christ. Don't just do it for you. Do it for your family, and your families family.

Godliness is vital when cultivating a spiritual legacy.

II. Be Rooted In The Word

Isaiah 40:8 "The grass withers, the flowers fade, but the word of our God will stand forever."

Although in Erie it's hard to believe, winter doesn't last forever. Eventually the snow melts and the flowers bloom again. But only in their season, only in their time.

Isaiah 40 tells us the word of the Lord never withers, never dies. Cultural patterns come and go. What's relevant and trendy in the music or fashion industry today will shift and change (Thank you Jesus).

Our own self-created moral codes will vary from person to person. We've talked about this so many times throughout this past series, The Choice. Good isn't good enough.

What will bring sense and order to the chaos around us is the ***unchanging word of God.***

Can I become a doctor by attending just one class in medical school? Or a lawyer from spending one week in law school? In the same way, I can't have a foundational knowledge of scripture just by opening my Bible or Bible app once a month. Or less.

Do you want to leave a spiritual legacy for your family, your friends? Plant yourself in scripture.

Live by the Word of God, allow it to permeate in your heart and in your mind transforming you from the inside out.

Here's what I'm not saying: I'm not saying be a follower of man. I'm saying be a follower of JESUS. "Christian" culture in this day and age can mean a lot of different things depending on who you're talking to.

And as someone who is apart of the younger generation, I can tell you there is less & less of a desire to have a relationship with Jesus because of the way "Christians" portray Him.

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Jesus surrounded himself with the outcasts, the broken, the unwanted. He ate dinner with non-believers, He offered forgiveness to the lowliest of sinners.

Who argued and battled with Jesus the most? The religious. The pharisees. The people SO dedicated to tradition and expectation that they completely missed the wonder of Jesus, God in flesh.

Be a follower of Jesus, ROOTED in the unchanging word of God, and leave your world better because of it.

III. Be On Mission

Matthew 5:15-16 "Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. [16] In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven."

I pray we never forget what our mission here on earth. Before we talk about what it is, first let me tell you what it's NOT...

It's not only being a Christian on Sunday mornings at 10am.

It's not singing and raising your hands for 30 minutes once a week (when you feel like it) while sitting in the same pew.

You don't have to only be a follower of Jesus when you're in this building, did you know that?!

Our lives, our legacies, they impact more than just the family around you. What good is faith, what good is KNOWING the truth of God's word if you aren't going to share it with **everyone** you know? Or show Jesus by the way you live?

Your neighbors, coworkers, your kid's teachers? Can they see Jesus in you?

1 Corinthians 13:4-7 is one of the most popular sets of Bible verses, very commonly used in wedding ceremonies.

And while it's great words to live by in marriage, did you know Paul was not talking specifically about how to treat a spouse? He's talking about how to treat PEOPLE. With that in mind, let's read it together:

1 Corinthians 13:4-7 "Love is patient, love is kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things."

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Knowing now the context in which these verses were written, take a second to consider your own life. Can you identify areas where you're excelling at these examples of love towards people in your life? Or more importantly, can you identify where they are absent from your daily interactions?

The best way to understand each one of these is to see them in the life of Jesus. What if we replace the word "love" with Jesus..."**Jesus** does not rejoice at wrongdoing, **Jesus** is not irritable or resentful".

Let's take it a step further...put your name in there. "Jocelyn is patient and kind. Jocelyn does not envy or boast".

Can any of us read those verses back with our names in them and say we're absolutely nailing it, 10/10? Of course not! We aren't Jesus, we aren't perfect like He is.

But these words are practices we should be **ACTIVELY** working towards every single day with every person we come in contact with. **That is how we cultivate a spiritual legacy.**

Okay, so what's our mission? Jesus said to his disciples, *"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe **all that I have commanded you.**" Matthew 28:19*

Jesus gave them a clear direction on what their next steps were to be after He left the earth. **Make disciples of all men and teach them to observe all that I have commanded you.**

Their obedience set a fire ablaze. The Church grew, and grew, and the name of Jesus has been proclaimed from generation to generation, never dying out, never ceasing.

You, in this room and watching online, you are a direct result of this moment in history. This is the legacy of Jesus Christ, and now it's YOUR legacy if you choose to continue the work set out for you.