**A LEGACY**

***What Will Your Children Remember About You?***

Seven years ago I did something for my family. I arranged for my funeral and burial, purchasing a plot, casket, vault and making all arrangements so my wife or my children will not have to do that when death comes. Sobering, to say the least. Among the items listed on the brochure I was asked to fill out was: *Letters To Your Children*. They called it a Legacy Note. What did I want them to remember about me? I thought about that long and hard. I’ll give you a condensed version of what I wrote them.

**1. LOVE IS A VERB**

The most abused word in the English language is love. The media, song writers, Hollywood moguls and the world in general have so dirtied and cheapened the word as to make it meaningless. If it is true (and it is) that “*God is Love*” (I Jn. 4:8), then it has to be far more than a mere feeling or emotion. “*For God so loved the world that He gave*…” (Jn. 3:16). Love is something given. “*God demonstrates His own love toward us*…” (Rom. 5:8). Love is a demonstration of something internal. “*Love never fails*” (I Cor. 13:8). Love is eternal, based on values, not feelings. It is unconditional, never asking the object loved to reciprocate or return the love. May my children always “Love” as God has loved them. May they always say to God and others, “I Love You” – and mean it.

**2. SET ONLY INTERNAL / ETERNAL GOALS**

The sickening plunge of our nation into a cesspool of moral depravity and selfishness makes it so hard for children to focus on goals that are internal and eternal. By *internal* I mean values that are godly. For example, the beatitudes. “*Blessed are the poor in spirit… they that mourn… the meek… the merciful… the pure in heart*…” (Matthew 5:3-12). Or the Foundations of Faith. “*Add to your faith virtue… knowledge… temperance… patience… godliness… brotherly kindness… love*” (2 Peter 1:5-7). Build your life from the inside out, not from the outside in. Beauty is skin deep, Godliness is to the bone!

By *eternal* goals I mean that which takes the long view, the day-of-judgment view, not the temporary here-and-now view. Solomon wanted the same for his children when he wisely wrote:

“*Rejoice, O young man, in your youth, And let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth; Walk in the ways of your heart, And in the sight of your eyes; But know that for all these God will bring you into judgment… Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth, Before the difficult days come, And the years draw near when you say, "I have no pleasure in them*" (Eccl. 11:9; 12:1).

Paul said it differently, and yet the same: “*Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory*” (Col. 3:1-4). Jesus said it best: “*Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these other things will be given to you*” (Matt. 6:33).

**3. YOU REAP WHAT YOU SOW**

For every cause there is an effect. For every action there is a reaction. What you sow you will surely reap. This eternal principle of God plays like a broken record all through the Bible. “*Even as I have seen, those who plow iniquity and sow trouble reap the same*” (Job 4:8). “*Those who sow in tears shall reap in joy*” (Psa. 126:5). “*He who sows iniquity will reap sorrow*” (Prov. 22:8). “*But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully*” (2 Cor. 9:6). Solomon put it this way: “*Cast your bread upon the waters for you will find it after many days*” (Eccl. 11:1). And my very favorite: “*For as a man thinks in his heart so is he*” (Prov 23:7).

Everything you do has an impact on your life. You are, right now, the sum total of all you have thought about and done in your life. Thoughts, and deeds, determine a man’s destiny, both now and for eternity! What you think about (Phil. 4:8), and what you say (Matt. 12:35-37), will all be brought before God at Judgment. From the friends you choose (I Cor. 15:33; Prov. 17:17), to those you date and mate (Prov 12:4; 31:10-31) all of these will have a lasting impact on your happiness both now and forever. How you spend your time (Eph. 5:15-16), along with your money (I Tim. 6:7-10), will speak volumes as to who and what you become. If you sow to the flesh, you will reap corruption. If you sow to the Spirit, you will reap everlasting life.

These three principles are the lasting legacy I hope to leave my family. When they remember me I hope and pray they will focus upon these God-given goals for life. They have stood the test of time, for they were given by an all-wise Father.

I now ask you fathers and mothers, you husbands and wives, to give thought to what legacy you hope to leave for your loved ones to remember at your funeral. When the silver cord is loosed, and your dust is returned to the earth and your spirit returned to God (Eccl. 12:6-7), what will be your legacy?

NOTE: I returned last night from a week with my daughter Meredith and her husband Joel Walker. I spent seven glorious days holding my eight month old Madeleine, and playing hide-n-seek, “chase me,” and ring-around-the-rosey with my precious three-year old Corinne. It made me think, and then pray, about my legacy. Now you know why I wrote this article.

I love you … to the moon and back! – Rick