



## **Title: Legacy of Biblical Proportion**

### **Theme: Fathers Living Biblically Before Their Children**

“A good man leaves an inheritance for his children's children...” (Proverbs 13:22)

*“Inheritance” (nahal) here can be used figuratively meaning to leave a good heritage for our children. A man can choose to leave a good or bad heritage for his children to follow. God’s Word promises to “[punish] the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate [Him], but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love [Him] and keep [His] commandments (Exodus 20:5b-6).”*

Considering that it is Father’s Day, I believe the Holy Spirit of God would have us spend some time getting an understanding on how to live in such away that can plant life giving seeds into the hearts of our children.

*Just how do we live in a way that leaves a godly legacy? There is no greater heritage to have than that of a Christian family.*

## **Lasting legacy for the Lord**

The Bible gives four Christian character traits that can build a lasting legacy for the Lord. The first is to speak and live with Christian integrity. King David, a man whom God called “a man after My own heart” (Acts 13:22) confessed in a prayer to God, “I know, my God, that you test the heart and are pleased with integrity (1 Chronicles 29:17).” Psalm 41:12 says, “In my integrity you uphold me and set me in your presence forever (Psalm 41:12).” A psalmist wrote, “May integrity and uprightness protect me (Psalm 25:21).”

The Word “integrity” (*tom*) used often in the Book of Proverbs and Psalms protects a man’s soul from the flesh, the snares of the world and the lies of the devil because his hope is in the Lord Jesus Christ. (The Complete Word Study of the Old Testament; Gesenius’ Hebrew-Chaldee; Dictionary of Biblical Languages)

The Christian father that will enjoy a lasting legacy is the man of God that is surrendered to the Holy Spirit so he may be able to tell the truth, keep his word and live out what he believes.

Proverbs 17:7 says, “Arrogant lips are unsuited for a fool – how much worse lying lips to a ruler (Proverbs 17:7).” Christian fathers are to be leaders in the home and express a lifestyle of truthfulness. He must be able to gain the trust of his children.

Children will not follow a man who does not tell the truth. If a Christian father wants to pass a Christian legacy down to his children he must learn the joy of speaking and living out truth.

Fathers who leave a Christian legacy are fathers you follow through on their promises. Proverbs 25:14 says, "Like clouds and wind without rain is a man who boasts of gifts he does not give." The promises of a boaster are empty. Children are thirsty for gifts from dad that could give them what they need to help them succeed in the talents and abilities the Lord has given them. Dads are needed to do all they can to help their children obtain certain healthy goals just as rain is needed to bring fruit from the ground.

A father must not boast of having a car yet fail to make the time for his son to learn to drive it in the proper season of his life. A father must not boast of having a skill or trade and not take time to teach it to a child who desires to learn it. A Christian father must not promise to take his child somewhere or do something special and not make the time to fulfill the promise. Children will trust a dad who chooses to use his God given resources for the good of the children he is called to raise.

The Christian father who leaves a Christian heritage is the man who says as King David, "I will sing of your love and justice; to you, O LORD, I will sing praise. I will be careful to lead a blameless life -- when will you come to me? I will walk in my house with blameless heart. I will set before my eyes no vile thing." (Psalm 101:1-3)

When the Lord answers prayer or brings a blessing into the family, dad is to be the first to offer and lead the family in expressions of praise to Jesus. He makes an effort to live a life that expresses a heart of David who longed to let the Word of God and the Holy Spirit guide him. A Christian father lets the Holy Spirit of God place in his heart what the Word of God says about conducting His family affairs and official relationships. He is hungry for Lord's help and continued presence.

A Christian father with Biblical integrity will not set before his eyes that which is vile. The New American Standard Bible has the best translation with "I will set no worthless thing before my eyes..."

A Christian father will not allow wickedness to have dominion in his heart and he forbids it to be even placed before his eyes. Jesus taught, "The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eyes are bad, your whole body will be full of darkness (Matthew 6:22)." The father who refuses to look upon that which displeasing to God and useless for the Lord's glory opens the door to true Christian virtue.

For the past thirty years they have done an annual “Most Admired Men” list in America. While presidents, politicians, stars and athletes have come and gone, one man has been on that list every year for the last thirty years. He has ranged from first to third place, his name, Dr. Billy Graham. There are few men in America who has lived and overseen such a quality ministry with such a powerful expression of integrity. That Christian legacy has been passed down to his son, Franklin Graham. (The truths found in this portion of the message came about as I have studied the NIV Bible; The Expositors Bible Commentary; Barnes Notes; The Treasury of David; The Complete Word Study of the Old Testament)

### **Serves the Lord with intensity**

*A father with a heart for Biblical integrity will enjoy a lasting legacy and so will live a life that serves the Lord with intensity.* Colossians 3:23-24 says, “Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.” Proverbs 14:22b says, “But those who plan what is good find love and faithfulness. Jesus said, “whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant... (Mark 10:43).” The Holy Spirit’s challenge is to be a servant with a heart that serves Christ in everything he does.

Pastor Rick Warren recently read a study of youth that were asked, “What do you want to be when you grow up?” Not one child has ever said, “I want to grow up to be a servant.” Our American dreams and way of thinking have caused our children to place their hearts on being celebrities, winners and leaders.

A Christian father will strive to live before his children a life of servanthood with ambitions of serving for the purpose of glorifying Christ before those he serves. He serves hoping that the people he works for might ask about the things of God or take notice that he is actually serving the Lord who gave him his opportunities. Those in the world see employees who are only in it for the paycheck. It is those who serve for the right reasons who leave a Christian heritage.

A Christian who has been Holy Spirit taught on how to do his work as working for the Lord is enthusiastic, eager to get to work and do his work. He serves with intensity no matter what he is asked to do. The happiest janitor is one who cleans the office, the shop or bathroom as though Christ is standing right there beside him. The most diligent father is the one who manages his affairs of life and business in way that expresses recognition of daily accountability.

One of the most intense and hardest working preachers I know today is Rick Warren. He writes this about his dad, "My father was an incredible servant of God. He served others and he never became famous. He wasn't particularly brilliant, but he was a great man because he served with intensity. He was a carpenter and in his lifetime he helped build over 150 different churches all around the world and build water towers in towns ravaged by earthquakes..."

He paid for most of his personal expenses on those missionary outreaches out of his own pocket, just for the privilege of serving others and Christ."

Rick Warren is a hard working pastor with a heart to serve other pastors, a legacy of his dad who passed away just a little over a year ago.

Psalm 37:18 says, "The days of the blameless are known to the Lord and their inheritance will endure forever." The greatest inheritance a Christian father can receive outside of Christ Jesus is sons and daughters who know the joy of doing all their labors as unto the Lord and sharing the message of Christ's love to a lost a dying world.

### **Gives with generosity**

*A Christian father speaks and lives with integrity, serves with intensity and gives with generosity.*

2 Corinthians 9:6-11 says, "Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work... Now He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God."

A Christian father is a man who gives to the Lord's work in every way because it is the Lord's work, he does not give to get but for the glory of Christ. He gives much and reaps much.

A Christian father gives deliberately to please God, not grudgingly and not from compulsion. He knows that God does not accept a gift of money, talent, time and

energy that is not given out of a joyful heart. He gives with purpose in his heart by thinking about the need, how to give sacrificially for the glory of God and knowing exactly what the Holy Spirit prompts him to give. He knows that if there is any begrudging, reluctance or regret in his giving. He asks the honest question, “Why is not my heart to give joyful of my finances, time, energy, talents and abilities to the Lord’s work?” Then he invites the Holy Spirit to give him the faith he needs to be the giver the Lord wants him to be. A Christian father wants his children to see him give with a right heart before God, not to please man or out of personal honor and recognition.

A Christian father’s motives for giving to the Lord’s work is for the enrichment of his relationship with God, to meet the needs of the Lord’s work and for the poor, to prove loyalty to Christ, to enhance prayer, and to bring praise to God.

A man who gave generously and enjoyed a legacy that was passed on to his next generation was King David. Solomon, David’s son became king after David and was the one chosen by God to build a house of worship.

It is in 1 Chronicles 22 and 28 we read of David’s heartfelt desire to build a temple for the Lord his God and it is there we read of David hearing the Word of the Lord saying that he would not be the one to build the temple, his son Solomon would build it (1 Chronicles 28:3,6).

David says, “My son Solomon, the one whom God has chosen, is young and inexperienced, and the house to be built for the Lord should be of great magnificence and fame and splendor in the sight of all the nations... “So David made extensive preparations before his death (1 Chronicles 22:5).”

Through his authority he appointed stonecutters to prepare dressed stone (1 Chronicles 22:2). He supplied great amounts of iron, bronze and wood (1 Chronicles 22:3-4). In speaking to his son David said, “I have taken great pains to provide for the temple of the Lord... You have many workmen: masons, carpenters, as well as men skilled in every kind of work in gold and silver, bronze and iron – craftsmen beyond number (1 Chronicles 22:14-15).” David provided marble in large quantities as well as stones of various colors.

Let the Holy Spirit enable you to catch the heart of a father who has a heart after God. After David had provided through his political authority the Bible says David in “...his devotion to the temple of [his] God [gave from his] personal treasures gold and silver... as well (1 Chronicles 29:3).” I like how the King James Bible puts it, David said, “...I have set my affection to the house of God...”

1 Chronicles 29:3-4 tells us that David gave from his personal funds “...over and above everything [he] had [already] provided...” through his political authority. The amount he gave personally was in modern day measurements 3.6 million ounces

of gold and 8.4 million ounces of silver. This means that David gave generously 110 tons of gold and 260 tons of silver.

After making such a generous donation David asked the question, "...Now, who is willing to consecrate himself today to the Lord? (1 Chronicles 29:5) The Bible says, "...the leaders of families, the officers of the tribes... officials in charge of the king's work gave willingly... toward the work on the temple..." (1 Chronicles 29:6-7) **1** Chronicles 29:9 goes on to say, "...the people rejoiced at the willing response of their leaders, for they had given freely and wholeheartedly to the Lord."

Today the New Testament church is not a building but people who have in repentance accepted Jesus Christ as their personal Savior and Lord. Christians give to the Lord by supporting any work that glorifies Jesus Christ before the children of God and those in the world. Just as God used David in one part of his work, in provision and then He used Solomon in the tasked of getting the work accomplished, the Lord has set people in different places of service unto Him.

A Christian father who wishes to leave a legacy of providing for the Lord's work will be seen by his children as a generous provider and worker unto the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. (The truths found in this portion of Scripture came about as I have prayerfully studied The NIV Bible; King James Bible; Tyndale Concise Bible Commentary; New American Commentary; Matthew Henry Commentary; A Commentary, Critical and Explanatory; The Bible Knowledge Commentary; Barnes Notes)

In His prayer of praise David prayed, "But who am I, and who are my people that we should be able to give as generously as this? Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand (1 Chronicles 29:14)." David also prays to the Lord to keep this desire in the hearts of the people (1 Chronicles 29:18). David being a loving father wanted a Godly legacy to be passed on to his children prays for Solomon saying, "And give my son Solomon the wholehearted devotion to keep your commands, requirements and decrees and to do everything to build [the kingdom of God, worshipers for the Lord] (1 Chronicles 29:19).

### **Succeeds with humility**

*A Christian father speaks and lives with integrity, serves with intensity, gives with generosity and succeeds with humility.* A Christian father lives by the instruction of Colossians 3:12, "...as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. James 4:10 says, "Humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will lift you up."

"Humility" (*tapeinophrosome*) as it is used here means to have the correct estimate of ourselves. This involves the confession of sin and deep realization of our unworthiness to receive God's grace.

Glad Tidings ran the story of Doctor James Simpson, the man who discovered that chloroform could be used to render people insensible to the pain of surgery. This discovery made it possible for people in the late 1800's and many years beyond to go through the most dangerous operations without pain and suffering during the procedure.

Once during a lecture at the University of Endinburgh, Dr. Simpson was asked by one of his students, "What do you consider to be the most valuable discovery of your lifetime?" To the surprise of his students, who had expected him to refer to chloroform, Dr. Simpson replied, "My most valuable discovery was when I discovered myself a sinner and that Jesus Christ was my Savior."

A Christian father knows ultimately what matters is what God thinks about him. The Holy Spirit has illuminated the truth of Proverbs 15:33 deep within his heart, "The fear of the Lord teaches man wisdom, and humility comes before honor."

He knows that if he serves the Lord with his God given talents, abilities and Holy Spirit given gifts, the Lord will lift him to the place in life where God's wants him to be. He knows the truth of 1 Peter 5:6, "Humble yourself, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that He may lift you up in due time." A Christian father recognizes the Lord's presence in all his ways.

In order for a tree to grow upward and withstand the storms that are thrown at it, it must strike down roots deep; so it is with the Christian father, to be exalted he must have his mind and heart rooted down in a spirit of humility totally depending on the Providence of God in every part of his life. (The truths found in this portion of the message came about as I have studied the NIV Bible, The Complete Word Study Dictionary; Encyclopedia of 7000 Illustration; A Commentary, Critical and Explanatory)

## **A legacy of Biblical proportion must be based**

*A legacy of Biblical proportion must be based on speaking and living lives of high integrity, serving with intensity, giving generously and succeeding with humility.*

Psalms 103:17-18 says, "But from everlasting to everlasting the Lord's love is with those who fear Him, and His righteousness is with their Children's children – with those who keep His covenant and remember to obey His precepts."

One such Christian father who left a Christian legacy for his descendants to follow was Jonathan Edwards. He was an uncompromising theologian and pastor who lived to please God and was a man of prayer.

His descendants included thirteen college presidents, sixty-five prominent lawyers, thirty-two noted authors, ninety physicians, eighty-six state senators, thirty judges, three congressmen, one vice-president of the United States and two hundred ministers of the gospel.

The family line of Jonathan Edwards experienced the promised blessings of God.  
(Exodus 20:4)

Fathers, God gives you this day an opportunity to choose your family's legacy. It must be established in a relationship with Jesus Christ!

Let us pray!

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