

Sample of a Spiritual Legacy Will

Dear Children and Grandchildren;

I want you to know that I am not writing this to you because I expect to die any-time soon. You will have to wait until then to have any hope of inheriting any of my material goods, as limited as they are. If I am survived by your mother, then you will have to wait even longer. Please know that we intend to do what we can to use it all up before we go. Instead this Spiritual Legacy is to give to you things that are of far greater value and which you can have now.

My Spiritual Journey

I went to church almost every Sunday when I was growing up. I can remember the boys Sunday school class meeting in the furnace room in the basement of the Raymond United Methodist Church. All the children participated in the annual Christmas program. One year I was one of the wisemen and another year I got to pull the star of Bethlehem across the stage on a wire.

When I was in junior high school I was in the junior choir. It was at this time that I took confirmation classes on Saturday mornings. We memorized The Apostles Creed, the books of the Bible, passages such as the beatitudes and the 23rd Psalm, and we learned the meaning of the Trinity and Methodist history.

Next came the prayer asking for God's forgiveness. It happened when I was a junior or senior in high school and in a friend's house. She asked me if I was born again. I have to admit that I was ignorant of this concept at that time. Not necessarily because I had never been told about this, I may not have been listening whenever it came up. So I prayed in her presence. It would take years before I could claim that I was catching on to what forgiveness and grace meant.

Progress over the next several years was slow. The analogy of the diamond is most appropriate because every facet of my life needed polishing.

Even though this is about some of the high points, I don't want to minimize the effects of things like seminars, sermons, or songs. We attended Focus on the Family, Love is a Decision, Christian parenting classes, Christian concerts, and listened to both TV and live evangelists, etc., etc.

Around 1980, on a Saturday afternoon, I was home alone and decided to watch a popular TV evangelist's program. On this particular program the host was explaining what he called the cosmic calendar. He started with the big bang and outlined the time line of the universe as if it happened in one year. By the time he was done I was thinking that this was the stupidest stuff I had ever heard. The "evangelists" name

was Carl Sagan. What he preached is what I had for years tried to import into the creation story of the Bible. It was on that afternoon that I decided to believe God and what He has communicated in his Word. This, I would come to realize, is possibly the second most important decision one can make. It gets rid of the grays. It is why Genesis 1:1 is a favorite verse.

Another major lesson happened one Sunday morning after a sermon about the importance of praying for your family. The pastor invited anyone who wanted to come forward to pray for their family. I had not done it very often before or since, but that Sunday I went up front and as I knelt this phrase came into my head "You are in my way. I have plans for your sons but you're getting in the way" Well, I knew that my response had to be to completely surrender them. I asked God to take over the role of parent for my sons. I gave the results over to God. They were now His responsibility. I actually gave them up to the point that it didn't matter if they ended up in a palace or a prison. It was now God's problem. I also at the same time received assurance that God was going to do something special through them.

I really respect how all of you are there for each other. I encourage you to continue to be there for each other when times are tough. I encourage you to maintain your identify as brothers and sisters, because there is no one else who is better suited to be there for you, and for your wives and husbands, and all those precious grandchildren. Be aware of each other's struggles, whether it's a personal issue or a health issue, or something in finances. Help each other in times of need and turmoil even though you reside at great distances. There are so many areas that can be devastating in life and you each need to know that you can turn to each other to help with what needs to be done.

Continue to honor your mother. Make her happy - as much as it is in your power to do so. She more than deserves such consideration from each of you. She always wanted the best for each of you. Be worthy of her devotion.

Find time:

For Prayer: Hebrews 4:16 *So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it.*

For Bible study: 2 Timothy 3:16-17 *All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It straightens us out and teaches us to do what is right. It is God's way of preparing*

us in every way, fully equipped for every good thing God wants us to do.

For Compassion: James 1:27 Pure and lasting religion in the sight of God our Father means that we must care for orphans and widows in their troubles

For Church: Deuteronomy 31:12-13 *Call them all together men, women, children, and the foreigners living in your towns so they may listen and learn to fear the LORD your God and carefully obey all the terms of this law. Do this so that your children who have not known these laws will hear them and will learn to fear the LORD your God.*

For Each other: 1 Corinthians 13:1 *If I could speak in any language in heaven or on earth but didn't love others, I would only be making meaningless noise like a loud gong or a clanging cymbal.*

For Yourselves: Mark 6:31 *Then Jesus said, "Let's get away from the crowds for a while and rest."*

Be Patient: Romans 15:5 *May God, who gives this patience and encouragement, help you live in complete harmony with each other ^ each with the attitude of Christ Jesus toward the other.*

Be Humble: Proverbs 22:4 *True humility and fear of the LORD lead to riches, honor, and long life.*

Be Giving: Psalm 112:5 *All goes well for those who are generous, who lend freely and conduct their business fairly.*

Be Slow to quarrel: 2 Timothy 2:24 *The Lord's servants must not quarrel but must be kind to everyone.*

Choose a verse to bet your life on. Mine is: Genesis 1:1 *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.*

Have a motto for you life. I like: Proverbs 17:28 *Even fools are thought to be wise when they keep silent; when they keep their mouths shut, they seem intelligent.*

Put off making decisions as long as possible. Isaiah 40:31 *But those who wait on the LORD will find new strength. They will fly high on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not faint.*

You have been put here to praise God and to develop and use the gifts that he has given you, do these two and then you are successful. Ephesians 1:3 *How we praise God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms because we belong to Christ.*

Remember "What we leave behind is not as important as how we've lived" (Captain Jean-Luc Picard; Commander, U.S.S. Enterprise NCC-1701-E)