

Simplify Your Spiritual Life

LEAVE A SPIRITUAL INHERITANCE

“A good man,” says Proverbs 13:22, “leaves an inheritance to his children’s children.” Leaving a material and financial inheritance in a wise manner is good stewardship and can be a great blessing to your heirs. But have you considered ways to leave an inheritance to your family that will have a more direct spiritual impact on them?

These spiritual lives we’re trying to simplify aren’t lived for ourselves only. We also bear responsibility to influence others spiritually, especially the members of our own family. To that end, here are a few items to leave as spiritual time capsules with the belief that they will bless many generations of your descendants.

Prayers. The beloved old Bible commentator, Matthew Henry said somewhere that wise parents are more concerned about leaving a treasury of prayers for their children than a treasury of silver and gold. God can answer long after we are dead the prayers for our children and future generations we bring to His throne today. King Hezekiah’s wicked son, Manasseh, repented and turned to the Lord many decades after Hezekiah died (see 2 Chronicles 33:12-19), but no doubt the father left behind a rich inheritance of prayers to God for his wayward boy. You may want to preserve some of your prayers for your descendants in letters or journals.

Journals. One hundred years from now, quite possibly all that will be known of you will be from photographs or videos, and from what you write. Despite your decades of life and labor, few, if any, of even your direct descendants a century from today will know anything about your spirituality. (What do *you* know about the inner life of *your* ancestors who, just 1200 months ago, were as alive as you are now?) Leave your heirs a clear, written testimony of how you came to know God through Jesus Christ. Provide them with a record of answers to prayer, remarkable providences, significant spiritual events, and other

works of God in your part of their family history. Write letters to your descendants, urging them to trust Christ, to maintain a Christian heritage in the family, and to meet you in Heaven. Make a list of books that have influenced you.

Books. Leave a library—especially of Christian books—for your children and their children. The Lord may use the books to bring them to Christ and to give solid guidance to their spiritual lives long after you are gone. Collect good books for your children or grandchildren even before they are born. I’ve always bought books (both Christian and general reading) for my daughter, Lauren, years before she could enjoy them. In fact, I started buying books for *her* future children when she was just six years old. So if I find a bargain on boys’ books, I’ll buy them—even though Lauren will probably never read them—in anticipation of having grandsons some day. Who knows whether some of the great old used books I find for them today will still be available or affordable by then?

Daily planners. If you have the space, archive your daily planners. These reflect how you’ve spent your time and, combined with your journals, provide a fairly complete biography of your adult life.

Of course, your most immediate spiritual legacy is the life you live before the watching eyes of your children and grandchildren. However, some (all?) of your grandchildren or great-grandchildren may never know you personally. But if you leave them a rich spiritual inheritance, they may say of you, “He being dead still speaks” (Hebrews 11:4).

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