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What Is Your Legacy?
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Many times as we walk through the cemetery and read the different words that have been placed on the grave markers, we see epitaphs of what people have considered to be that persons greatest accomplishments or what people thought about them while they were alive. However, what has been said may be far from the truth of what that person was really like while they were alive. Through the word of God we see legacies that have been passed down for many generations, the influence that they have had on people that they have been in contact with during their life. Our epitaphs are determined by the way that we live our lives.

God speaks of Abraham, that He knew him and that he would be the father of nations, passing down to his children the way of the Lord.

Gen 18:18 "Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? 19 For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him." KJV

There are many families today which do not have a father figure in their lives and all of us, either male or female can be a blessing to them, filling that position in their lives. Our influence on their lives can enable them to be what the Lord intends for them and in turn we shall benefit richly from the experience.

The power of influence that we have in our lives can be shown by the examples given of two men who had large families, one of the men, was an atheist, had many descendants but records shown that there were none in his family who had good outcomes in life and cost the government a lot of money for their care, but the other man, a Christian had an extremely large family, and the outcome of his descendants was remarkable; judges, lawyers, teachers and the list goes on, not costing anyone anything. Such a difference in the legacy that each man left with his children.

What kind of legacy are we leaving in this earth for our children, what is our influence with our families after we are gone?

Moses, Elijah, David, and Joshua are examples of men whose influence made for a great legacy that carried down to others. Moses was buried by the angels when he died, and Elijah was carried into heaven in a fiery chariot, David ruled for many years, leaving a legacy and Joshua was able to take over what had been started by Moses, the deliverance of the children of Israel, taking them into the promised land, declaring that he and his household would serve the Lord.

Legacies in the bible are usually stated in only one line of thoughts as the books of Samuel, Kings and Chronicles tell us "he wholly followed the Lord", "he followed the Lord with all of his heart", "he did evil in the sight of the Lord". What will our one liner be? Will it be "faithful to the end"?

Life is full of could have been, would have been and should have been. We see men and women in prison, who have a high mentality and are smart, who could, would or should have been, but because of the life style they have chosen, they think that they can beat the system and when they are able to get out chose to fall back into that old pattern in their life. They don't know that God is patient and longsuffering, but there will be a payday for them.

Paul's legacy or epitaph that he wrote for himself is found in the following scriptures. Our legacy should read the same as Paul's, that we have fought a good fight and have finished our course and kept

the faith.

2 Tim 4:6-8 "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. 7 I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: 8 Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." KJV

2 Tim 4:6-8 "For I am already about to be sacrificed [my life is about to be poured out as a drink offering]; the time of my [spirit's] release [from the body] is at hand *and* I will soon go free. 7 I have fought the good (worthy, honorable, and noble) fight, I have finished the race, I have kept (firmly held) the faith. 8 [As to what remains] henceforth there is laid up for me the [victor's] crown of righteousness [for being right with God and doing right], which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me *and* recompense me on that [great] day—and not to me only, but also to all those who have loved *and* yearned for *and* welcomed His appearing (His return)." AMP

Joshua's legacy and influence are recorded in the following scriptures. Joshua is remembering how he and Caleb along with 10 other men had been sent out to explore the land of Canaan and bring back a report to Moses and the children of Israel what they had found there. Joshua and Caleb said that they could overcome anything found there, but the others disagreed fearing that it would be too great for them to accomplish, as there were giants and walled cities in the land. This account is after they had crossed over the Jordan.

The 10 men were moved by what their natural eyes showed them, they came back with a "can't" mentality, the 10 men were able to influence the entire nation to turn back. Joshua and Moses used their influence, but it influenced a later generation who had been 20 years old or younger, they were taught how to fight and were able to take over the land that had been promised to the nation of Israel. Joshua and Caleb not only began in faith, but they finished in faith at the end of their years. They wholly followed the Lord.

In our journey to accomplish or finish our destiny here in the earth, God has given us a destiny or purpose that is greater than our own ability and we must move over into the realm of faith and walk by faith to accomplish that. We all have influence on others, though we are not always aware of it. Thinking that we don't have influence can and will be effecting generations to come in our lives. When we make a choice to follow God, regardless of what we may be doing, our vocation, He will use that influence for righteousness and we will have opportunity to let it be known that we will follow God.

Influence is much like the wind, we can't see the wind, but we see the effects of it, it turns the windmills and the results of that. Influence is the same way, you can't see it, some people seem to have more influence than others, a certain charisma and some people have an influence that draws out like leeches and uses other people for their own benefit. You can't see influence, but you see the result of it.

Influence also means a flowing into, by ability, your personality, your position or wealth, popularity, age or experience. By eventually following God wholly and completely, we will make decisions that separate us from wrong influence from people. If we don't make the right decisions then the wrong influence will keep us from wholly following God successfully. Our choice in wholly following God will influence our children and their inheritance spiritually.

By our walking in faith and our epitaph or legacy, our influence, God has a great inheritance for us here in this earth, and as we begin in faith and then encounter difficulty, are we going to continue in faith? It will take faith to inherit our promised land.

Josh 14:7-13 "Forty years old was I when Moses the servant of the Lord sent me from Kadeshbarnea to espy out the land; and I brought him word again as it was in mine heart. 8 Nevertheless my brethren that went up with me made the heart of the people melt: but I wholly followed the Lord my God. 9 And Moses swore on that day, saying, Surely the land whereon thy feet have trodden shall be thine inheritance, and thy children's for ever, because thou hast wholly followed the Lord my God. 10 And now, behold, the Lord hath kept me alive, as he said, these forty and five years, even

since the Lord spake this word unto Moses, while the children of Israel wandered in the wilderness: and now, lo, I am this day fourscore and five years old. 11 As yet I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me: as my strength was then, even so is my strength now, for war, both to go out, and to come in. 12 Now therefore give me this mountain, whereof the Lord spake in that day; for thou heardest in that day how the Anakims were there, and that the cities were great and fenced: if so be the Lord will be with me, then I shall be able to drive them out, as the Lord said. 13 And Joshua blessed him, and gave unto Caleb the son of Jephunneh Hebron for an inheritance." KJV

These scriptures are a result of Joshua wholly following the Lord. We have this same assurance from what the Lord has spoken to us, His plan and purpose will come to pass in our lifetime as result of our wholly following Him.

Josh 21:44-45 "And the Lord gave them rest round about, according to all that he sware unto their fathers: and there stood not a man of all their enemies before them; the Lord delivered all their enemies into their hand. 45 There failed not ought of any good thing which the Lord had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass." KJV

These scriptures are after they have taken the land of Canaan, some of the warriors had agreed to go with Joshua to take the land, but on the condition that they could leave their families and goods there until the land was taken, at that time they would be able to cross back to the other side of the Jordan and continue their lives there, they were taking their share of the spoils from the inhabitants that they encountered in the promised land. God had richly blessed them.

Josh 22:8 "And he spoke unto them, saying, Return with much riches unto your tents, and with very much cattle, with silver, and with gold, and with brass, and with iron, and with very much raiment: divide the spoil of your enemies with your brethren" KJV

God wants to bless us with an overflow and surplus in life up until the end as He did the children of Israel.

Josh 24:15,21-22 "And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." 21 And the people said unto Joshua, Nay; but we will serve the Lord. 22 And Joshua said unto the people, Ye are witnesses against yourselves that ye have chosen you the Lord, to serve him. And they said, We are witnesses." KJV

Joshua is now living in what God has promised him, the cities, the plunder, they have taken it all. Joshua is making a choice as to who he will serve, he is speaking to the people in regards to whom they will serve.

These scriptures tell us that the people served the Lord because of the influence that Joshua had had on their lives, however, there were those who in later years turned away because they were of a later generations that did not know Joshua, did not experience his influence in their lives. Somewhere there was a breakdown of passing the faith to the next generation.

Judges 2:7-11 "And the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the Lord, that he did for Israel. 8 And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died, being an hundred and ten years old. 9 And they buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnathheres, in the mount of Ephraim, on the north side of the hill Gaash. 10 And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel. 11 And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and served Baalim:" KJV

We see this same thing in the lives of people today, many make the statement that they will serve the Lord after going through some difficult times, but when faced with the wrong type of influence in their lives, they slip back into their old ways, forgetting about what the Lord has done for them. We have to make quality choices. Passing faith on to the next generation is basically the father's responsibility, but the women have a part to play also. We must have the desire on the inside to pass our legacy on to our children and to our grandchildren, because if we don't, there will arise a generation in our genealogy

that doesn't serve God. It is important that we pass our faith to the next generation. What kind of influence are we having on the people we work with today, with our children and grandchildren, are we using our influence correctly, is it positive, does it point to righteousness?

The book of Esther tells she was an orphan girl, being raised by her cousin Mordecia. There was a king named Ahasuerus or Darius, a mighty warrior and ruler of many provinces, had a wife named Vashti who was very beautiful and the king decided to have a year long party inviting all those who served him. He called for Vashti to come appear before the people, but she refused, making him upset, it was decided that she would no longer be queen and word was sent out to the provinces that young girls would be brought to his palace in order for him to find a new suitable queen. Hadassah or Esther, a young Jewish girl was among those coming and she was prepared for her meeting with the king, however, there was a man named Haman, in the kings court who disliked Mordeica because Mordeica refused to give him honor. Haman looked for ways to destroy him, he had build gallows to hang him on and thinking that he had the king on his side, talked the king into sending out a proclamation to all the provinces that on a certain date in the future that all the Jews living would be put to death. Haman was unaware that Esther was a Jew. One night since the king was unable to sleep, he began to read in the chroniciles regarding a man, Mordecia who had saved his life and the question he asked was "what had been done to honor that man"? Haman not knowing that it was Mordecia that he was asking about, and thinking the king wanted to honor him, suggested that he clothe him in the kings clothes, put him on his horse and lead him through the streets proclaiming how great he was, but the scheme backfired. Mordecia had talked with Esther explaining it would be up to her to use her influence with the king in order to save her people, the Jews, but she told Mordecia that she had not been called back by the king and if she was to go before being called, she could be killed. She decided that it was to important not to go and so she presented herself to the king and found favor with him. He offered her half of his kingdom but she refused, that was not her plan. Her plans were to prepare a feast for the king and Haman was invited and she would disclose what Hamans plans were regarding the Jews, she made this request a second time. She prepared herself by proclaiming days of fasting and then she prepared a feast for the king and Haman at which time she asked for favor in order to save her people from death. The king went out thinking about some things that Esther had said as he left the room. Haman thinking he could influence Esther fell on her, not to molest, but trying to get her to change her mind, at which time the king returned and seeing Haman on her, got extremely mad, she expose the plan that Haman made to the king. Haman ended up on the gallows, along with all his family.

Mordecia had used his influence with Esther to not tell that she was a Jew. Esther used her influence with the king to disclose the evil that Haman had planned for the Jewish people and saved a whole nation. Mordecia told her that if she didn't go before the king that God would raise up deliverance from someone else who would.

Influence is powerful, we need to use our influence to save our nation. We need to use our influence to influence our children and grandchildren, to use our influence to influence others in the church for committment, for perserverence and righteousness, to use influence to encourage others to stay away from addictions. Our responsibility is to use our influence to serve others. Our confession should be like Paul, we fought a good fight, finished the course, kept the faith, use our influence, don't let it be said that there goes another generation that didn't serve God. Return to the God of our Fathers.