

CREATING A LEGACY

Creating a Legacy of Remembrance

Joshua 1–4



LET'S BEGIN HERE

We all leave a legacy. It may be a good one, it may be a poor one, but without a doubt, we leave a legacy. Our legacy may not have the breadth of a George Washington, whom Americans call the Father of Our Country, or a Mother Teresa, the founder of the Order of the Missionaries of Charity, a Roman Catholic congregation of women dedicated to helping the poor. But to those whom our lives may touch, our legacy will be just as monumental. The legacy we leave will be inescapably vital to the next generations.

Legacies don't just happen. They don't fall out of heaven, materialize in the middle of our living rooms, or appear on our doorsteps accompanied by a knock and a note. Legacies *are created*. They require thought, preparation, and action. What we do today becomes our legacy tomorrow — either positive or negative.

However, a legacy finds its birth in the most unexpected place: the past. *Creating a legacy begins with looking back on where we came from and how we became who we are.* That's the purpose of this first message: creating a legacy of remembrance.

What kind of legacy for tomorrow are you creating today?

When the next generation looks back on your life, how will they remember you?

Will your children and friends remember you for having mentored them by etching your affirmations in stone and writing your criticisms in dust?

Such mentoring represents a fabulous legacy to leave behind.



LET'S DIG DEEPER

1. God Wants Us to Remember

You may sometimes hear people talk about “forgetting the past” and “moving on.” Schools and churches celebrate anniversaries and recount their beginnings, the struggles they endured, and accomplishments they experienced, while some grumblers may fold their arms, yawn, and complain that these churches and schools need to get over the nostalgia and focus on the future.



Quotable

Legacy isn't about us. It's about God working through us for His glory, not ours.

— Charles R. Swindoll



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MM01

CREATING A LEGACY

Creating a Legacy of Remembrance

Joshua 1–4

There's just one problem with shunning our heritage or cutting a new path that's as different from our past as night is from day: God wants us to remember. Having traveled with the Israelites in Sinai for years, Moses told them to remember four things, each of which remains pertinent for us today.

First, they were to remember the *way of God* (Deuteronomy 8:2). Moses also told the Israelites not to forget the *Word of God*: “Beware that you do not forget the LORD your God by not keeping His commandments and His ordinances and His statutes which I am commanding you today” (8:11). The third thing Moses told the people to remember was the *wealth of God* (8:18). Finally, the Israelites were to remember the *wrath of God* (9:7).

2. God Wants Us to Turn the Past toward the Future

People forget. We forget names, dates, facts, and details. We also forget both painful and pleasurable experiences. Without reminders, those life-changing acts of God can be lost both to us and to future generations. This human forgetfulness is compounded in times of transition—especially times accompanied by crisis or conflict, but it's just at those times that we need to remember.

Creating a legacy is not about us; it's about God working through us in amazing, unexpected ways, and passing His story on to others who will experience the same presence and provision of God in their own lives. Creating a legacy is the old, old story of God, retold and relived by each new generation of men and women.

3. God Wants Us to Leave a Lasting Legacy

Times of transition always bring challenges, and for the Israelites the biggest challenge they faced as they began their conquest was the Jordan River. However, what appeared to be an obstacle to them was an opportunity for God to demonstrate His presence. The new generation of Israelites that had heard the story of the Red Sea were given a reminder of God's miraculous power.



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So upon leading His people into the Promised Land, God told Joshua to send a man from each of the twelve tribes to gather large stones from the bottom of the Jordan River to construct a memorial of God’s mighty deeds (Joshua 4:6–7). That monument of stones was to be a tangible, unmovable, and physical reminder of God’s presence and miraculous provision—a legacy to pass on to future generations. The book of Joshua gives three reasons for setting up the stones of remembrance on Jordan’s western shore.

First, the memorial stones were *to inform the children of God’s miraculous work* (4:6–7, 21–22). Second, the stones of remembrance were *to instruct all the nations* (4:24). Third, the monument was built *to instill a deep respect and reverence for God* (4:24).



LET’S LIVE IT

Today people are surrounded by memorials that remind them of their past. War memorials tell not only of sacrifice, honor, and bravery, but they also point to the pain, suffering, and loss that accompany times of national trial and triumph. Portraits, photo albums, and home videos chronicle special events such as weddings, birthdays, and anniversaries, and we return to these artifacts to relive the joyful moments of life. These tangible reminders are meant to do more than simply help us to dwell on the past. They’re meant to equip us for the future. This message should remind us, then, of two important truths:

- First, *individually, each of us has stones of remembrance that we need to gather and erect into memorials.*
- Second, *collectively, each of our churches has stones of remembrance that are visible reminders of God’s hand.*

What are some specific stones of remembrance you have in your life? What stones does your church have?



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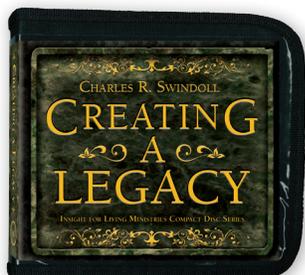
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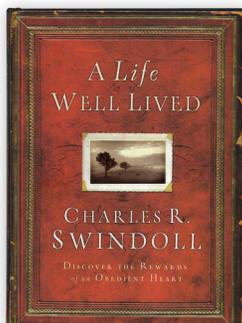
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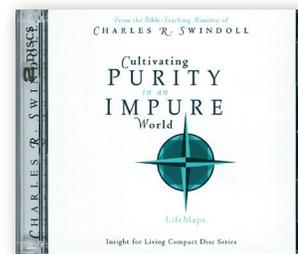
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MM01

CREATING A LEGACY

Creating a Legacy of Personal Mission

1 Corinthians 9:19–23



LET'S BEGIN HERE

Leaders without a purpose are like ships without captains. Their decisions are often based on surveys and polls instead of substance and principles. They waffle and flip-flop on issues. Their followers are frustrated, disillusioned, and disloyal. On the other hand, successful leaders have a sense of personal mission. Their decisions are based on general principles and a big-picture perspective rather than popular opinion or emotional whims. They can communicate clear objectives to their followers and measure success by more than just gut feelings.

Each person needs a personal mission. Many of us are just going through the motions, not sure where we're going or how to get there. Without a personal mission, we're like a ship adrift on the waves of change or a butterfly fluttering from flower to flower, never satisfied and always searching for "just the right thing."

By the end of this message, we want you to discover why it's important to have a personal mission, decide what types of things need to be part of your personal mission, and then take some time to prayerfully write a first draft of your own mission statement. As we tackle this issue, we'll begin by looking at a Christian's corporate mission—what God wants all believers to do. Then we'll look at a biblical example of a personal mission—what God called one individual to accomplish as part of that bigger purpose.

What kind of legacy for tomorrow are you creating today?

When the next generation looks back on your life, how will they remember you?

Will your children and friends remember you for having mentored them by etching your affirmations in stone and writing your criticisms in dust?

Such mentoring represents a fabulous legacy to leave behind.



Quotable

*Teaching,
fellowship, baptism,
breaking of bread,
and prayer. A
church needs them
all. WE need
them all.*

— Charles R. Swindoll



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MM02

CREATING A LEGACY

Creating a Legacy of Personal Mission

1 Corinthians 9:19–23



LET'S DIG DEEPER

1. Our Corporate Mission

The purpose of the church—indeed, the purpose of every believer—is not a mystery. The Bible clearly tells us what God expects from all of us, what the mission of the church is supposed to be. Let's look first at the end of Jesus's earthly ministry to see *what* the church was supposed to do, then look at the beginning of the church's ministry to see *how* they did it.

In Matthew 28:19–20, Jesus commissioned His followers to go and *make disciples*. The means of accomplishing this disciple-making mandate was by *baptizing* (the result of evangelism) and *teaching* (instructing believers toward growth in their faith). After these final words, Jesus sent His disciples to Jerusalem to await the coming of the Holy Spirit, who would empower them to fulfill this corporate mission (Luke 24:46–49; Acts 1:8).

After the coming of the promised Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1–40), the infant church rolled up its sleeves and got to work carrying out Jesus's mandate to make disciples. How did they do it? The first church did four things to achieve the purpose for which the Spirit empowered them (2:42). First, *they were teaching*. Second, *they had fellowship*. Third, *they worshiped*. Fourth, *they had prayer*.

2. Commitment to a Personal Mission

Under the umbrella of the church's corporate mission, Paul had a personal mission that conformed to his unique spiritual gifts, drew on his past life experiences, opportunities, and challenges, and also utilized his talents and skills. Let's take a closer look at his personal mission in 1 Corinthians 9.

Paul lived his life for preaching the gospel to as many different people as he could reach. This was his personal mission. Everything he did in life was focused on that goal, and he readily changed his cultural and religious practices to bring him closer to that end. The *methods* and *means* of achieving this goal changed with his environment, but the *principles* and *purpose* that set his course were unalterable.

What's involved in achieving our personal mission? What does the investment cost to run in such a way that we win? Paul had a mission to lead to Christ as many people as he could during his lifetime. He also had



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Creating a Legacy of Personal Mission

1 Corinthians 9:19–23

a strategy for accomplishing this mission that included at least five personal commitments that are woven through the fabric of 1 Corinthians 9. First, *our personal mission calls for sacrifice* (1 Corinthians 9:19). Second, *our personal mission requires vision* (9:19, 22). Third, *our personal mission means flexibility* (9:20–22). Fourth, *our personal mission takes courage* (9:24–27). Finally, *our personal mission includes involvement* (9:16–17).



LET'S LIVE IT

Creating your legacy begins with looking back on where you came from and how you became who you are, and it continues by looking upward to God, inward to ourselves, outward to others, and forward to the future to determine where you should be going and who you are becoming. This means writing a personal mission.

After praying for wisdom, write a personal mission statement that considers the following factors:

- What God wants all believers to do (Romans 11:36)
- How God has uniquely prepared you through events and experiences
- How God has uniquely gifted you with spiritual gifts, talents, or skills
- The needs God has placed in your path



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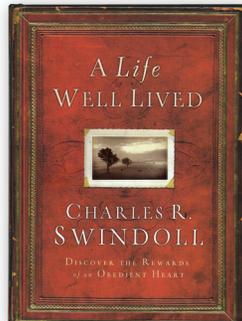
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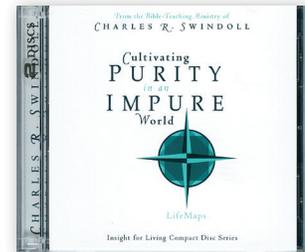
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MM02

CREATING A LEGACY

Creating a Legacy of Responsibility

Joshua 1:1–9



LET'S BEGIN HERE

Influential eighteenth-century American preacher Jonathan Edwards experienced frustration early in his ministry. His struggles could have given him an excuse to hang up his wig and retire his frock. Yet because of a strong sense of responsibility to his mission, he sparked the Great Awakening that eventually spread throughout the thirteen colonies, across denominational lines, and even into the wild frontiers of America.

His commitment was expressed in seventy resolutions he had composed before the age of twenty. These straightforward resolutions guided his steps toward fulfilling his personal mission of glorifying God through His preaching ministry. Yet Edwards was also a realist. He knew obstacles were inevitable, so many of his resolutions were written to address this challenge. No matter the difficulties that came before him, he resolved to continue upon the path laid out for him by God. That's responsibility, which is our topic for this message.

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LET'S DIG DEEPER

1. Joshua's Legacy of Responsibility

Joshua faced at least three clear challenges as he sought to fulfill the mission God had given him as the successor to Moses. Yet God met all of these challenges with His promise, power, and presence. Let's take a closer look. First, *Joshua had the challenge of his age*. Second, *Joshua had the challenge of losing his mentor*. Third, *Joshua had the challenge of unforeseen adversity*.



Quotable

*When you build
a legacy of
responsibility,
you stand by the
resolutions you
have made.*

— Charles R. Swindoll



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CREATING A LEGACY

Creating a Legacy of Responsibility

Joshua 1:1–9

2. God's Response to Joshua's Challenges

In response to Joshua's age, God didn't even bring it up. In answer to the loss of Joshua's mentor, God told Joshua to get up and move on. And in reply to Joshua's daunting adversity, God reminded him that all the land was already given to Israel, and no one would be able to stand in their way of taking what was theirs (Joshua 1:2–5). Most importantly, however, God reminded Joshua, "Just as I have been with Moses, I will be with you; I will not fail you or forsake you" (1:5).

Joshua needed both strength and courage, but God knew these things wouldn't come from within Joshua. God also reminded Joshua what He would do for the Israelite leader. First, *Joshua had the confidence of God's calling* (1:6). Second, *Joshua had the wisdom of God's written Word* (1:7–8). Third, *Joshua had the promise of God's personal presence* (1:5, 9).



LET'S LIVE IT

Each of us has a calling. If you haven't exactly ironed out your personal mission, you should at least be confident of the church's corporate mission to make disciples, which applies to all believers. We also have the wisdom of God's written Word. If you haven't taken advantage of this miraculous gift, now is your chance to change that. As believers in Christ, we also have the promise of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

Yet with all these provisions comes *responsibility*. Responsibility means making choices to pick up and move on, regardless of our disadvantages, setbacks, and adversities. Things from our past that we unearthed for our legacy stones can either bog us down or be used for God's glory. The mission statement we wrote can either be ignored or put into action. It takes responsibility. Amidst the struggles of life, the first step forward is sometimes the most difficult. And the next step? That's the most difficult, too. From there it might just go downhill. That's real life. But recall the words of Paul, who knew all too well the type of obstacles we face as responsible servants of God.



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CREATING A LEGACY

Creating a Legacy of Responsibility

Joshua 1:1–9

Responsibility, choice, strength, courage—they come from God’s grace, brought about by a confidence in His calling, the wisdom of His Word, and the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit.

How can you foster responsibility in your life? What specific actions do you think can contribute to you being a responsible person?



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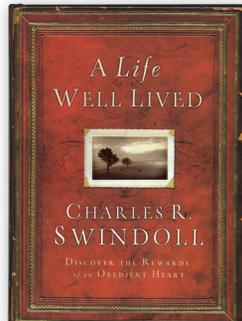
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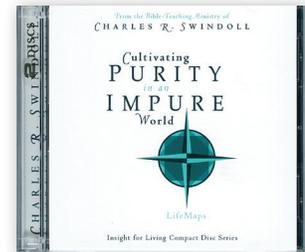
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MM03

Resolutions

Jonathan Edwards

Being sensible that I am unable to do anything without God's help, I do humbly entreat him, by his grace, to enable me to keep these Resolutions, so far as they are agreeable to his will, for Christ's sake.

Remember to read over these Resolutions once a week.

1. *Resolved,* That I will do whatsoever I think to be most to the glory of God, and my own good, profit, and pleasure, in the whole of my duration; without any consideration of the time, whether now, or never so many myriads of ages hence. *Resolved,* to do whatever I think to be my *duty*, and most for the good and advantage of mankind in general. *Resolved,* so to do, whatever *difficulties* I meet with, how many whatsoever, and how great whatsoever.
2. *Resolved,* To be continually endeavoring to find out some *new contrivance* and invention to promote the aforementioned things.
3. *Resolved,* If ever I shall fall and grow dull, so as to neglect to keep any part of these Resolutions, to repent of all I can remember, when I come to myself again.
4. *Resolved,* Never to do any manner of thing, whether in soul or body, less or more, but what tends to the glory of God, nor *be*, nor *suffer* it, if I can possibly avoid it.
5. *Resolved,* Never to lose one moment of time, but to improve it in the most profitable way I possibly can.
6. *Resolved,* To live with all my might, while I do live.
7. *Resolved,* Never to do anything, which I should be afraid to do if it were the last hour of my life.
8. *Resolved,* To act, in all respects, both speaking and doing, as if nobody had been so vile as I, and as if I had committed the same sins, or had the same infirmities or failings, as others; and that I will let the knowledge of their failings promote nothing but shame in myself, and prove only an occasion of my confessing my own sins and misery to God. *Vid.* July 30.
9. *Resolved,* To think much, on all occasions, of my dying, and of the common circumstances which attend death.
10. *Resolved,* When I feel pain, to think of the pains of martyrdom, and of hell.
11. *Resolved,* When I think of any theorem in divinity to be solved, immediately to do what I can towards solving it, if circumstances do not hinder.

12. *Resolved*, If I take delight in it as a gratification of pride, or vanity, or on any such account, immediately to throw it by.
13. *Resolved*, To be endeavoring to find out fit objects of liberality and charity.
14. *Resolved*, Never to do anything out of revenge.
15. *Resolved*, Never to suffer the least motions of anger towards irrational beings.
16. *Resolved*, Never to speak evil of any one, so that it shall tend to his dishonor, more or less, upon no account except for some real good.
17. *Resolved*, That I will live so, as I shall wish I had done when I come to die.
18. *Resolved*, To live so, at all times, as I think is best in my most devout frames, and when I have the clearest notions of the things of the gospel, and another world.
19. *Resolved*, Never to do anything, which I should be afraid to do, if I expected it would not be above an hour before I should hear the last trump.
20. *Resolved*, To maintain the strictest temperance in eating and drinking.
21. *Resolved*, Never to do anything, which if I should see in another, I should count a just occasion to despise him for, or to think any way the more meanly of him.
22. *Resolved*, To endeavor to obtain for myself as much happiness in the other world as I possibly can, with all the power, might, vigor, and vehemence, yea violence, I am capable of, or can bring myself to exert, in any way that can be thought of.
23. *Resolved*, Frequently to take some deliberate action, which seems most unlikely to be done, for the glory of God, and trace it back to the original intention, designs, and ends of it; and if I find it not to be for God's glory, to repute it as a breach of the fourth Resolution.
24. *Resolved*, Whenever I do any conspicuously evil action, to trace it back, till I come to the original cause; and then, both carefully endeavor to do so no more, and to fight and pray with all my might against the original of it.
25. *Resolved*, To examine carefully and constantly, what that one thing in me is, which causes me in the least to doubt of the love of God; and so direct all my forces against it.
26. *Resolved*, To cast away such things as I find do abate my assurance.
27. *Resolved*, Never wilfully to omit anything, except the omission be for the glory of God; and frequently to examine my omissions.
28. *Resolved*, To study the Scriptures so steadily, constantly, and frequently, as that I may find, and plainly perceive, myself to grow in the knowledge of the same.



29. *Resolved*, Never to count that a prayer, nor to let that pass as a prayer, nor that as a petition of a prayer, which is so made, that I cannot hope that God will answer it; nor that as a confession which I cannot hope God will accept.
30. *Resolved*, To strive every week to be brought higher in religion, and to a higher exercise of grace, than I was the week before.
31. *Resolved*, Never to say anything at all against anybody, but when it is perfectly agreeable to the highest degree of Christian honor, and of love to mankind, agreeable to the lowest humility, and sense of my own faults and failings, and agreeable to the golden rule; often, when I have said anything against any one, to bring it to, and try it strictly by, the test of this Resolution.
32. *Resolved*, To be strictly and firmly faithful to my trust, that that [*sic*], in Prov. 20:6, “A faithful man, who can find?” may not be partly fulfilled in me.
33. *Resolved*, To do always what I can towards making, maintaining, and preserving peace, when it can be done without an overbalancing detriment in other respects. Dec. 26, 1722.
34. *Resolved*, In narrations, never to speak anything but the pure and simple verity.
35. *Resolved*, Whenever I so much question whether I have done my duty, as that my quiet and calm is thereby disturbed, to set it down, and also how the question was resolved. Dec. 18, 1722.
36. *Resolved*, Never to speak evil of any, except I have some particular good call to it. Dec. 19, 1722.
37. *Resolved*, To inquire every night, as I am going to bed, wherein I have been negligent—what sin I have committed and wherein I have denied myself—also, at the end of every week, month, and year. Dec. 22 and 26, 1722.
38. *Resolved*, Never to utter anything that is sportive, or matter of laughter, on a Lord’s day. Sabbath evening, Dec. 23, 1722.
39. *Resolved*, Never to do anything, of which I so much question the lawfulness, as that I intend, at the same time, to consider and examine afterwards, whether it be lawful or not; unless I as much question the lawfulness of the omission.
40. *Resolved*, To inquire every night before I go to bed, whether I have acted in the best way I possibly could, with respect to eating and drinking. Jan. 7, 1723.
41. *Resolved*, to ask myself, at the end of every day, week, month, and year, wherein I could possibly, in any respect, have done better. Jan. 11, 1723.
42. *Resolved*, Frequently to renew the dedication of myself to God, which was made at my baptism, which I solemnly renewed when I was received into the communion of the church, and which I have solemnly re-made this 12th day of January 1723.
43. *Resolved*, Never, henceforward, till I die, to act as if I were any way my own, but entirely and altogether God’s; agreeably to what is to be found in Saturday, Jan. 12th. Jan. 12, 1723.



44. *Resolved*, That no other end but religion shall have any influence at all on any of my actions; and that no action shall be, in the least circumstance, any otherwise than the religious end will carry it. Jan. 12, 1723.
45. *Resolved*, Never to allow any pleasure or grief, joy or sorrow, nor any affection at all, nor any degree of affection, nor any circumstance relating to it, but what helps religion. Jan. 12 and 13, 1723.
46. *Resolved*, Never to allow the least measure of any fretting or uneasiness at my father or mother. *Resolved*, to suffer no effects of it, so much as in the least alteration of speech, or motion of my eye; and to be especially careful of it with respect to any of our family.
47. *Resolved*, To endeavor, to my utmost, to deny whatever is not most agreeable to a good and universally sweet and benevolent, quiet, peaceable, contented and easy, compassionate and generous, humble and meek, submissive and obliging, diligent and industrious, charitable and even, patient, moderate, forgiving, and sincere, temper; and to do, at all times, what such a temper would lead me to; and to examine strictly, at the end of every week, whether I have so done. Sabbath morning, May 5, 1723.
48. *Resolved*, Constantly, with the utmost niceness and diligence, and the strictest scrutiny, to be looking into the state of my soul, that I may know whether I have truly an interest in Christ or not; that when I come to die, I may not have any negligence respecting this to repent of. May 26, 1723.
49. *Resolved*, That this never shall be, if I can help it.
50. *Resolved*, That I will act so, as I think I shall judge would have been best, and most prudent, when I come into the future world. July 5, 1723.
51. *Resolved*, That I will act so, in every respect, as I think I shall wish I had done, if I should at last be damned. July 8, 1723.
52. I frequently hear persons in old age say how they would live, if they were to live their lives over again:
Resolved, That I will live just so as I can think I shall wish I had done, supposing I live to old age. July 8, 1723.
53. *Resolved*, To improve every opportunity, when I am in the best and happiest frame of mind, to cast and venture my soul on the Lord Jesus Christ, to trust and confide in him, and consecrate myself wholly to him; that from this I may have assurance of my safety, knowing that I confide in my Redeemer. July 8, 1723.
54. *Resolved*, Whenever I hear anything spoken in commendation of any person, if I think it would be praiseworthy in me, that I will endeavor to imitate it. July 8, 1723.
55. *Resolved*, To endeavor, to my utmost, so to act, as I can think I should do, if I had already seen the happiness of heaven and hell torments. July 8, 1723.
56. *Resolved*, Never to give over, nor in the least to slacken, my fight with my corruptions, however unsuccessful I may be.
57. *Resolved*, When I fear misfortunes and adversity, to examine whether I have done my duty, and resolve to do it and let the event be just as Providence orders it. I will, as far as I can, be concerned about nothing but my duty and my sin. June 9 and July 13, 1723.



58. *Resolved*, Not only to refrain from an air of dislike, fretfulness, and anger in conversation, but to exhibit an air of love, cheerfulness, and benignity. May 27 and July 13, 1723.
59. *Resolved*, When I am most conscious of provocations to ill nature and anger, that I will strive most to feel and act good-naturedly; yea, at such times, to manifest good nature, though I think that in other respects it would be disadvantageous, and so as would be imprudent at other times. May 12, July 11, and July 13.
60. *Resolved*, Whenever my feelings begin to appear in the least out of order, when I am conscious of the least uneasiness within, or the least irregularity without, I will then subject myself to the strictest examination. July 4 and 13, 1723.
61. *Resolved*, That I will not give way to that listlessness which I find unbends and relaxes my mind from being fully and fixedly set on religion, whatever excuse I may have for it—that what my listlessness inclines me to do, is best to be done. May 21 and July 13, 1723.
62. *Resolved*, Never to do anything but my duty, and then, according to Eph. 6:6–8, to do it willingly and cheerfully, as unto the Lord, and not to man: knowing that whatever good thing any man doth, the same shall he receive of the Lord. June 25 and July 13, 1723.
63. On the supposition, that there never was to be but one individual in the world, at any one time, who was properly a complete Christian, in all respects of a right stamp, having Christianity always shining in its true luster, and appearing excellent and lovely, from whatever part and under whatever character viewed:
Resolved, To act just as I would do, if I strove with all my might to be that one, who should live in my time. Jan. 14 and July 13, 1723.
64. *Resolved*, When I find those “groanings which cannot be uttered,” of which the apostle speaks, and those “breathings of soul for the longing it hath,” of which the psalmist speaks, Psalm 119:20 that I will promote them to the utmost of my power; and that I will not be weary of earnestly endeavoring to vent my desires, nor of the repetitions of such earnestness. July 23 and Aug. 10, 1723.
65. *Resolved*, Very much to exercise myself in this, all my life long, *viz.* with the greatest openness of which I am capable, to declare my ways to God, and lay open my soul to him, all my sins, temptations, difficulties, sorrows, fears, hopes, desires, and everything, and every circumstance, according to Dr. Manton’s Sermon on the 119th Psalm. July 26 and Aug. 10, 1723.
66. *Resolved*, That I will endeavor always to keep a benign aspect, and air of acting and speaking, in all places, and in all companies, except it should so happen that duty requires otherwise.
67. *Resolved*, After afflictions, to inquire, what I am the better for them; what good I have got by them; and, what I might have got by them.
68. *Resolved*, To confess frankly to myself, all that which I find in myself, either infirmity or sin; and, if it be what concerns religion, also to confess the whole case to God, and implore needed help. July 23 and Aug. 10, 1723.
69. *Resolved*, Always to do that, which I shall wish I had done when I see others do it. Aug. 11, 1723.
70. Let there be something of benevolence in all that I speak. Aug. 17, 1723.

Adapted from Jonathan Edwards, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, Vol. 1 (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1992), xx–xxii.



CREATING A LEGACY

Creating a Legacy of Moral Purity

2 Samuel 11:1–5



LET'S BEGIN HERE

There was no one mightier than David. As a lad David had faithfully protected his family's sheep from both the lion and the bear; then he astounded the nation of Israel when he felled the giant Goliath. He proved himself a valiant warrior, and, with David as commander-in-chief, no army was more feared than Israel's. He was a national symbol for truth, righteousness, justice, and compassion. He was a musician, songwriter, and visionary. That was the mighty David, the anointed one, a man after God's own heart. *What a legacy!*

And yet, at the height of his success, with a palace filled with faithful servants and luxuries immeasurable, King David fell in the midst of battle. But his lost battle wasn't against the lion, the bear, the giant, or the Philistines. *David lost the battle against himself.*

Before we examine the tragic episode in David's life that would forever mar his legacy, it's important that we understand that this is not simply an objective autopsy of one man's failure. It's a warning to all of us. Everything that's discovered about David—his mistakes and his weaknesses—apply to everyone. We need to remind ourselves of that daily, or after our autopsy of David's fall we could end up on the coroner's table ourselves.

What kind of legacy for tomorrow are you creating today?

When the next generation looks back on your life, how will they remember you?

Will your children and friends remember you for having mentored them by etching your affirmations in stone and writing your criticisms in dust?

Such mentoring represents a fabulous legacy to leave behind.



LET'S DIG DEEPER

1. King David: Autopsy of a Moral Fall

Through the years, David had allowed things into his life that weakened him—or at least stirred carnal desire and gave rise to precarious opportunities for temptation. Although we could probably make a long list of contributing



Quotable

Few things destroy legacies like a moral compromise.

Whatever it takes, don't go there.

— Charles R. Swindoll



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CREATING A LEGACY

Creating a Legacy of Moral Purity

2 Samuel 11:1–5

factors, let's focus on three areas of weakness that set up David for the fall. First, *polygamy weakened David*. Second, *success weakened David*. Third, *indulgence weakened David*.

2. How the Mighty Have Fallen in the Midst of Battle

David pushed back the silk sheets, yawned, stretched, rubbed his eyes, and threw his legs to the side of the bed. The warm breeze billowed the drapes in the upstairs bedchamber and brought with it restlessness—an itch that needed scratching. We all know the feeling. If David were alive today, he would have sat back on the couch with the remote control in hand and started flipping through channels, or he would have stared at his computer screen and started surfing the net aimlessly. Too tired to be productive, too alert to go to bed, David crossed over into the twilight zone of temptation. He got out of bed and took a stroll, looking for something—he didn't know what—anything to settle his restless spirit.

Hearing the sounds of splashing in the distance, David stepped onto the patio roof, a place where he could go to gather his wits, pray to God, or write and sing psalms. This time, though, he had neither harp nor pen, and his gaze was not toward heaven. “From the roof he saw a woman bathing; and the woman was very beautiful in appearance” (2 Samuel 11:2). At that moment, he lost cognizance of everything else as a glance became a stare. Lust sprang forth and hijacked his reason. At that point, he forgot the people he loved, the nation that looked to him for moral guidance, the little children that night who were praying for their king. He even forgot God.

Temptation had brought sin to David's door. After David indulged his sinful impulse, we can't help but wonder if the words of his lament over Jonathan's death several years earlier came back to haunt him that night: “How have the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle!” (1:25).



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2 Samuel 11:1–5



LET'S LIVE IT

Few things destroy legacies like a moral fall. Moral falls become the great “exceptions” in otherwise exemplary lives. Healing can come, forgiveness can occur, but the effects will always linger. Some of you reading this have been there and know firsthand the pain of trying to recover from the effects of a failure. Others may feel like you’re at the brink of a fall and will plummet over the edge if the right opportunity presents itself. Some of you may have secret sins that you don’t take seriously—an occasional longing glance, “harmless” fantasies, perhaps even a couple minutes a day playing “what if.” You’ve convinced yourself that things are under control and fooled yourself into thinking it’s just a harmless snack to tide over the urges of your flesh. Then there are a few of you who are so busy with life that cheating never crosses your minds. In fact, you’re part of accountability groups, enjoy happy and healthy marriages, and you’re convinced that you wouldn’t trade in any of it for anything.

The truth is that every one of us is at risk. Some may have more opportunity, but each of us has the same human weakness and susceptibility to temptation and moral failure. Therefore, we must heed the warning of David and do what we can to preserve our legacy and protect our moral purity.

So how can we preserve our legacy of moral purity? There are two parts to the process.

- First, *we need to keep from thinking we’re safe*. Therefore, we need to acknowledge our weakness and guard our leisure.
- Second, *we need to keep from falling into sin*. Therefore, we need to remain accountable and rehearse the consequences before the fact.

What practical steps will you take to preserve your own moral purity?



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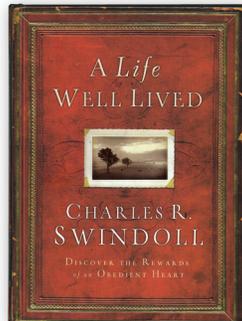
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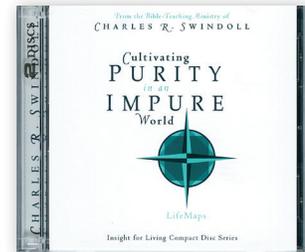
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CREATING A LEGACY

Creating a Legacy of Mentoring

Acts 18



LET'S BEGIN HERE

As in any relay race, the moment of passing the baton is the most critical. If you let go too soon or too late, the baton will fall. This is also true in life. Frequently, we're good learners but terrible teachers. When it comes to passing on what we have lived and learned, we sometimes drop the baton ourselves—or worse yet, we never even attempt to hand it off.

This final lesson on creating a legacy focuses on the critical element of mentoring—passing our legacy to those who will come after us. Unlike a relay, this passing of the legacy is not a moment but a lifelong attitude of mentoring others to carry on the tradition we received.

**What kind of legacy for tomorrow are you creating today?
When the next generation looks back on your life, how
will they remember you?**

**Will your children and friends remember you for having
mentored them by etching your affirmations in stone and
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Such mentoring represents a fabulous legacy to leave behind.



LET'S DIG DEEPER

1. People Who Molded Us: Four Major Influences

We can discern four general categories of influences from childhood, through adolescence, and into adulthood.

The first category is *parents or relatives*, including stepparents or extended family. The second category is *teachers or instructors*. This may even include coaches, tutors, or school teachers who left an impression on us. The third category is a *spouse or children*. Though spouses have a unique way of holding us accountable, nobody reflects our own weaknesses and idiosyncrasies like our own kids. The final category is *friends or mentors*. Friends are people with



Quotable

*A good mentor
believes in you
even when you're
not around. He or
she is a voice of
encouragement.*

— Charles R. Swindoll



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whom we connect based on mutual interests, gifts, and life situations. Mentors, however, show us the love of a parent, the instruction of a teacher, and the companionship of a friend.



GETTING TO THE ROOT

“Mentor” in the New Testament

Webster’s defines a *mentor* as “a trusted counselor or guide,” a “tutor” or “coach.”¹ Although the word *mentor* is not found in the Bible, various synonyms are used in relation to the Christian life. The child’s tutor, or *paidagogos*, was not merely a teacher but the person responsible for leading a young boy, overseeing his conduct, and serving as custodian, much like a nanny today.² The word is used three times in the New Testament, twice to describe the temporary role of the law in leading us to Christ (Galatians 3:24–25), and once in reference to various teachers that contribute to the growth of new believers (1 Corinthians 4:15).

Another New Testament synonym for *mentor* is *didaskalos*, often translated “teacher.”³ In Hebrews 5:12 the author complained that by this point in their Christian life his readers ought to be teachers themselves, but because of their immaturity they still needed teachers. In contrast, Paul’s words to Timothy illustrate the ideal model of mentoring relationships: “The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also” (2 Timothy 2:2). As these examples of *paidagogos* and *didaskalos* illustrate, mentoring means equipping others to live the Christian life in such a way that those mentored became mentors for others.

2. Marks of a Good Mentor

Acts 18 presents to us six marks of a good mentor. As we examine each of these, we’ll not only consider how our own mentor exhibited these marks but also how we can display these marks to those who will be heirs of our legacy.



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First, *because a mentor cares, he or she stays close* (Acts 18:1–4). Mentors don't operate from behind a lectern or come and go like a friend. Mentors dig in for the long haul and allow the ones being mentored to see how the mentor operates in normal daily activities. Second, *because a mentor is devoted to Scripture, he or she talks straight* (18:5–8). Mentors speak the truth without shame.

Third, *because a mentor takes the long view, he or she hangs in there* (18:9–17). Mentors know their personal needs and the needs of others, and they meet challenges with confidence in God's promises and provision. Fourth, *because a mentor believes in you, you're trusted when he or she is gone* (18:18–23). Because this is where real growth takes place, good mentors set their apprentices free to fly solo.

Fifth, *because a mentor is discerning, he or she sees weaknesses that need strengthening* (18:24–28). However, they are able to do so with a gentle spirit, speaking the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15). Sixth, *because a mentor is an encourager, he or she endorses the gifts and life of the one being trained* (Acts 18:24–28). The result is that the person being mentored is *empowered* to do his or her best.



LET'S LIVE IT

The baton is in your hand now. It represents your life, including your scars, information you've been blessed to receive, training and correction from those who cared enough to put their arms around you and invest in you personally. It may have been a parent, an instructor, a pastor, or a coach. That person believed in you, built you up, and then released you to carry on by mentoring others.

Have you dropped the baton? Are you holding it close and forgetting that it was passed to you so you could hand it off to others? Are there people in your life who could one day go through this lesson and list you as the most influential person who invested in them?

Are you currently in a mentoring relationship with anyone? If so, which of the six marks of a mentor can you better develop?

ENDNOTES

1. Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 11th ed. (Springfield, Mass.: Merriam-Webster, 2007), see "mentor."
2. Walter Bauer, William F. Arndt, F. Wilbur Gingrich, and Frederick W. Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 2d. ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 603.
3. Bauer and others, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, 2d. ed., 191.



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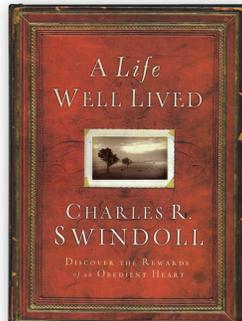
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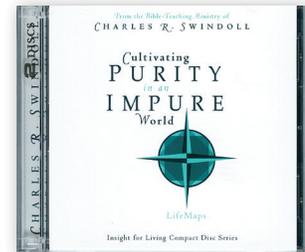
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