

SOME THINGS WE NEED TO KNOW - 3

"Legacy Costs!"

2 Timothy 3:14-15

February 5, 2012

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INTRODUCTION:

What was the memory verse from last week? **Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete. --- John 16:24**

What about from 2 weeks ago? **Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight. ---Proverbs 3:5-6**

Next week's message from **2 Timothy 3:16-17** is another life verse we will study. You can get a head start on it. I want to bring you a message that is a message that we can all learn from. I believe a question that all of us, not only parents ask is: **"How can I make a difference in the life of another person."** For parents, the question boils down to what kind of a difference can I make in the life of my child.

Aging in America - In a special aired on MSNBC a few years back, researchers found that "The most defining social change taking place is the aging of America." Here are some stats that I've pulled together from the Census Bureau, the National Institute on Aging, and AARP.

- * Someone turns 50 years of age every six seconds and people over 50 account for 43% of all U.S. households
- * The over-85 age group is the fastest growing segment of the population and the number of citizens over 85 will double by 2030
- * The U.S. population age 65 and over is expected to double in size within the next 25 years

* Life expectancy at the turn of the century was approximately 46 years; today it is approximately 76 years

My concern is that the Christian faith is not being passed from one generation to another. Judges 2:10 paints a picture that may be prophetic of the state of the church today:

After that whole generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation grew up, who knew neither the Lord nor what He had done for Israel. --
-Judges 2:10

These findings from Thom Ranier in his book *The Bridger Generation*, show the decline of evangelical Christianity among each successive generation. Here's the percentage of Christ-followers in each generation:

- * Builders (born 1927-1945) 65%
- * Boomers (born 1946-1964) 35%
- * Busters (born 1965-1976) 16%
- * Bridgers (born 1977-1994) 4%

Here's what strikes me about these numbers. If it's true that many "Builders" and "Boomers" have a vibrant faith, then it's imperative that the older generation look for ways to intentionally pass along their faith to "Busters" and "Bridgers." Before passing on, make sure you pass it on by leaving a legacy. Friends, the character of our children tomorrow depends on what we put in their hearts today. If we expect the younger generation to grow spiritually, those of us who are older must pass on what we possess.

I hope for all of us the question is addressed to all the lives we touch as we live. What can you give to those you love that will make an eternal difference? What can you give to someone that will help them to be able to handle the pressures of life? Can you think of any material items you can give to someone that would help them to be able to better handle the pressures of life? Today I am going to share something with you that you can give to another person that will make an eternal difference in their life. Today we are going to explore "A Legacy of Faith."

What is a legacy? A legacy is defined as (1) money or property bequeathed to another by will or (2) something handed down from an ancestor or a predecessor or from the past. Legacies are rare and special gifts, from one person to another, from one generation to the next. As Christians we should seek to leave a lasting legacy of godliness for those who come behind us. So, according to the dictionary, it means: something that is handed down or remains from a previous generation or time. Today we are going to look at a passage written to a young man who had been given a Legacy of Faith:

But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it,¹⁵ and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. ---2 Timothy 3:14-15

As we look at our text, we need to understand the context of the chapter. Paul is explaining to the young evangelist Timothy, that there would be hard times ahead for him. He tells them in the first part of the chapter that people will be self-centered, not wanting to hear the truth. He shares with him that these people will drag other people down with them. In verse 12 he tells Timothy that everyone who desires to live a godly life will be persecuted. People will be deceived and will deceive others. We are going to learn from Paul how we can stand strong in the face of opposition, how we can stand firm when things are not going well in life. Paul is going to tell Timothy that in order to stand strong; he will need to continue to follow the legacy of faith that was given to him. We will look at where that legacy came from in a few minutes. The first thing we need to understand is that a legacy of faith will help us to stand firm. A **Legacy of Faith** will help you:

I. STAND FIRM.

When you are going through difficult times, you need something to anchor yourself to in order to endure the tough times. Where do you turn when the chips are down? What gets you through the problems that life throws at you? Timothy was going to face a lot of opposition, opposition that could make him want to abandon his faith. Look at part of verse 14 with me.

But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of... -
--Timothy 3:14

If Timothy is going to be able to withstand the attack on his faith, he is told to continue in the things he learned and that of which he had been convinced! To continue means to abide, to live. Jesus uses the same word in a few places

If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. ---John 8:31

Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. ---John 15:4

If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love... ---John 15:10

Timothy was given a legacy of faith so that he would continue to live in that legacy. Notice the faith he has is not a faith that he was born into in the sense that he took no ownership of it; it is something that he had learned and had become convinced of its truthfulness. The word "learned" carries the implication of intentional learning by inquiry and observation. Timothy had not learned from Scripture and from Paul or his family incidentally but by intent.

If you do not take ownership of your faith, you will not have much to stand on. The trick for any parent or spouse who is trying to win them to Jesus is to allow them to develop their faith. If my children had not personalized their faith, then it would not do them any good. Your children have to learn it with intent. They need to see it in you as their parents.

Because Timothy learned the faith, he was convinced of its validity. Look at the rest of verse 14:

...because you know those from whom you learned it ---2 Timothy 3:14

Timothy was fully convinced or persuaded on the basis of his own personal observations of those close to him. And his sources of information about the truth of God were reliable sources. Who passed on a legacy of faith to Timothy?

I have been reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also. ---2
Timothy 1:5

The legacy of faith started in Timothy's grandmother, who passed it to his mother, who passed in on to Timothy! The greatest thing you can give to your children and grandchildren is a legacy of faith! His faith was passed on to him and others, like Paul built upon the legacy that was started by Timothy's family! Giving a legacy of faith will allow a loved one to continue in the things of which they have learned and become convinced!

The word "leads" in this verse speaks of anticipation. When a parent anticipates, prays and leads toward Christ, they have every right to expect the cooperation of God in bringing their child to the Lord. This sounds simple; but it is not easy...or cheap. Susannah Wesley is said to have prayed one hour every day for her children. She was strict. But she was unselfishly faithful. She had six rules for teaching her children the priority of the Savior:

1. Subdue self-will in a child.
2. Teach him to pray as soon as he can speak.
3. Give him nothing he cries for, and only what is good for him when he asks politely.
4. Punish no fault confessed, but let no sinful act to go unnoticed.
5. Reward good behavior.
6. Strictly observe all promises you have made to your child.

A Legacy of Faith is:

II. BUILT ON THE BIBLE

Upon what are you building your legacy? Are you building it on money and material things? Are you building your legacy on traditions? What will your children, grandchildren and other loved ones remember was most important to you? Upon what did Timothy's mother and grandmother build their legacy? Look at part of verse 15 with me.

...and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures...---2 Timothy 3:14-15

The legacy of faith that was given to Timothy was built upon the scriptures. The sacred writings spoken of are the Old Testament Scriptures. The New Testament was not written when Timothy was a child. But the basic source of Timothy's knowledge, whether through Paul or his parents, was the "holy Scriptures". Next week we will delve into some more information concerning the scriptures. From his infancy Timothy had been taught "the holy Scriptures" (obviously a reference to the OT). In addition to knowing the character of those who taught him, Timothy also has "known the holy Scriptures" and their character.

The sources for Timothy's faith could provide another encouragement to continue in the faith: Paul, his mentor and friend, who provided an unmistakable example of God's faithfulness; the inerrant Scriptures that Timothy had studied and loved since childhood; and Timothy's dear mother and grandmother who nurtured and loved him. In the Old Testament we find this verse:

My son, keep your father's commands, and do not forsake your mother's teaching. - --Proverbs 6:20

Timothy listened to his family and then he watched how they lived out their faith. It is the job of the home to instruct the children in the ways of God. Too many families expect the schools to teach their children academics and morality. They expect the church to do all the spiritual teaching.

These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates. ---Deuteronomy 6:6-9

Teach them early and it makes it easier for them to stay with it. Live it out in your life and it will make an impression on them that will make it easier for them to stay with it.

ILLUSTRATION: GOD'S WORD AND DANIEL WEBSTER

Daniel Webster testified: "If there be anything in my style or thoughts to be

commended, the credit is due to my kind parents for instilling into my mind an early love for the Scriptures. From the time that, at my mother's feet or on my father's knee, I learned to lisp verses from the Sacred Writings they have been my daily study.

"The older I grow and the more I read the Holy Scriptures, the more reverence I have for them and the more I am convinced that they are not only the best guide for the conduct of this life, but the foundation of all hope respecting the future state."

Last, but not least; a Legacy of Faith will:

III. CHANGE DESTINIES!

Why is it so important for us to try to instill a legacy of faith in people? It is important because it can change their destiny along with the destiny of every life they touch for Jesus! Let us look at the last part of verse 15.

...which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. ---2
Timothy 3:15

Scripture, God's Word, teaches about salvation; but knowing Scripture alone saves no one (many Jews had known Scripture from childhood, yet had opposed Jesus and the salvation he offered—see 2 Corinthians 3:15-16; Paul himself exemplified that in his early years, Acts 26:9-11). The Scriptures show people their need for salvation and point them to the person who alone can give it—Jesus Christ. When we allow God's word to work in our lives, it will lead us to salvation. When we decide to follow Jesus, we will follow His Word, we will do what He wants us to do, we will become more and more like Him each day. As we are changed into the image of Jesus, others will take note and they will want have the indescribable joy we have. There is no other name in heaven or on earth by which we can be saved! We allow ourselves to get so distracted that we can forget how important God's Word is in our lives. We do what is important to us. We find the time to do the things we want to do. What if we were to have a contest in which everyone who read their

Bible daily and could pass a quiz on what they read for the next year would receive 100 million dollars? If you missed reading one day or could not pass the quiz just once (if you failed the quiz, you could re-take it until you passed.), you would not get the money. How many of us would make God's word a priority before anything else? We have more at stake than 100 million dollars, we have eternity to consider.

ILLUSTRATION: In a certain village in Europe several centuries ago, a nobleman wondered what legacy he should leave to his townspeople. He decided to build a church for a legacy.

The completed plans for the church were kept secret. When the people gathered, they marveled at the church's beauty and completeness. Following many comments of praise, an astute observer inquired "But where are the lamps? How will the church be lighted?" Without answering, the nobleman pointed to some brackets in the wall; he then gave to each family a lamp to be carried to the worship service and hung it on the wall. "Each time you are here, the area where you are seated will be lighted," the nobleman explained. "Each time you are not here, that area will be dark. Whenever you fail to come to church, some part of God's house will be dark."

CONCLUSION:

A legacy of faith! Parents; that is the greatest gift you can pass on to your children. Brothers and sisters, it is the greatest gift we can pass on to those about whom we care the most. For what will people remember you?

ILLUSTRATION: Louis Pasteur, the pioneer of immunology, lived at a time when thousands of people died each year of rabies. Pasteur had worked for years on a vaccine. Just as he was about to begin experimenting on himself, a 9-year-old, Joseph Meister, was bitten by a rabid dog. The boy's mother begged Pasteur to experiment on her son. Pasteur injected Joseph for ten days--and the boy lived.

Decades later, of all the things Pasteur could have had etched on his headstone, he asked for three words: **JOSEPH MEISTER LIVED.**

Our greatest legacy will be those who live eternally because of our efforts.
(Source: Leadership Journal)

ILLUSTRATION: A study was once done on two men who lived in the late 1700's, both from the same state of New York. The first, Max Jukes, did not believe in Christ or in Christian training. He refused to take his children to church even when they asked to go. Many fathers today are like Max, they do not follow Christ and they see no value in Christian training. Some even invent ways or make excuses for keeping their family from the true things of God. Max's decision was very destructive to his family and costly to the state of New York. Max had 903 known descendants. One hundred were sent to prison for an average term of thirteen years, ninety were public prostitutes, one hundred forty-five were admitted alcoholics, two hundred eighty-five had social diseases, and three hundred were delinquents. The report estimated that the crimes and care of the Max Jukes' family line cost the state of New York over one million dollars.

The second man studied was the great Puritan preacher, Jonathan Edwards. He was an uncompromising theologian and pastor who lived to please God and was a man of prayer. The researcher found 1,394 descendants of Jonathan Edwards. 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. It has been said that the family of this man of God never cost the state of New York a single penny for rehabilitation or for incarceration.

To keep proper balance and a true perspective one must realize that there may well have been people who held respectable jobs and did wonderful things for their communities from Max Jukes' family tree. And quite possibly there were some black sheep in Jonathan Edwards' family line that were not exposed during the investigation. But as a whole, the family line of Max Jukes suffered the consequences of neglecting God. (Romans 1: 18 - 32) The family line of Jonathan Edwards experienced the promised blessings of God. (Exodus 20: 4)