

What Inheritance Are We Leaving?

Introduction. Life insurance ads often show a family and emphasize the need for caring for those left behind in cases of premature death. These commercials highlight real concerns. The Bible shows that concern for children is normal (Matthew 7:9-10; 2 Corinthians 12:14), so what will happen to my children after I am no longer here?

Generally, most parents desire to leave their children a good inheritance, but how can we give our children what will really benefit them? What is the best inheritance we can leave them? I wonder what Solomon would have said if someone had asked him about his childrens' future (1 Kings 11:1-3)? Many well-meaning parents have good intentions for their children, but they have a wrong sense of values!

I. ***The Memory Of A Christian Home?***

- A. The memory of the righteous is blessed (Proverbs 10:7).
 - 1. Paul could remember the sincere faith in Timothy along with his mother Lois and grandmother Eunice (2 Timothy 1:5).
 - 2. The prodigal son had learned righteousness and morality from his father (he knew he had "sinned," Luke 15:17-18).
 - a) His home had been filled with righteousness, mercy, and love. This is what inspired him to return.
 - b) In contrast, think of the people who try to go home to visit as little as possible, or those who never return home.
 - 3. Do you think Job's children had any doubt about his concern for their spiritual well-being (Job 1:5)?
- B. What kind of example do we set as parents?
 - 1. Is the father the head of the house (1 Corinthians 11:3)?
 - 2. Is the wife submissive (Ephesians 5:22)?
 - 3. Are the parents always talking badly about others (Proverbs 10:18)?
 - 4. Is the home environment one of peace and godly instruction (2 Timothy 3:15)?
 - 5. Is the Bible studied with children (Psalm 119:105)?
- C. "God give us Christian homes" must be more than just a sentiment. We have to work to make it reality. It is a memory that we can give our children that will last a lifetime.

II. ***Respect For Those In Authority?***

- A. The first four of the ten commandments dealt with man's relationship to God (Exodus 20:3-11). God has the right to define our realms of authority.

1. Citizens of a government must obey that government (Romans 13:1-4).
 2. Servants must obey their masters (Ephesians 6:5-8).
 3. Church members must respect their elders (Hebrews 13:7, 17).
 4. Children must honor their parents (Exodus 20:12).
- B. However, there are limits to the respect of authority (Acts 4:19-20; 5:29). It takes great courage to stand against what is wrong, but sometimes it is necessary.

III. **A Good Work Ethic?**

- A. Work is sanctified by God (Genesis 2:15; Deuteronomy 5:13; 2 Thessalonians 3:8, 10). Even the Son of God learned a trade (Mark 6:3).
- B. It is important that we love our children. However, it is dangerous when parents show too much compassion (Lamentations 3:27). A sincere desire to work is an inheritance we can leave our children that we and they will never regret.
- C. The Bible says that idleness ruins a person (Proverbs 26:13-16).
1. It generates worthless excuses (vs. 13). With the idle man there is always some pretext for evading duty, however frivolous and absurd.
 2. It produces a love of ease and self-indulgence (vs. 14). As the door swings perpetually upon its hinges without moving from its fixed position, so does the sluggard. Idleness makes one a slave of sin and bad habits.
 3. It makes all exertion bothersome (vs. 15). Idleness breeds bad work habits. Even the most necessary exertion will become distasteful. Why is a sluggardly person hard to convert? Too much exertion is involved in reaching the bread of life!
 4. It breeds conceit and folly (vs. 16). The empty hand fancying itself full of wisdom is a strange irony.
 - a) Our children are going to meet people who brag about milking unemployment benefits or welfare. They believe they have a "gravy train."
 - b) Once children get to a certain age, except for birthdays or other gift-giving occasions, they should be made to earn their money.
- D. A lot of people are not being taught to work.
1. Working for a living has an important place in the life of every person (Ecclesiastes 2:24-26). Work is good for the soul!
 2. When the company founded by Andrew Carnegie was taken over by the U.S. Steel Corporation in 1901, it acquired as one of its obligations a contract to pay the top Carnegie executive, Charles M. Schwab, the then unheard of minimum sum of \$1,000,000. J.P.

Morgan of U.S. Steel was in a quandary about it. The highest salary on record was then \$100,000. He met with Schwab, showed him the contract and hesitatingly asked what could be done about it. "This," said Schwab, as he took the contract and tore it up. That contract had paid Schwab \$1,300,000 the year before. "I didn't care what salary they paid me," Schwab later told a Forbes magazine interviewer. "I was not animated by money motives. I believed in what I was trying to do and I wanted to see it brought about. I cancelled that contract without a moment's hesitation. Why do I work? I work for just the pleasure I find in work, the satisfaction there is in developing things, in creating. Also, the associations business begets. The person who does not work for the love of work, but only for money, is not likely to make money nor to find much fun in life."

IV. **A Wariness Of Pleasure?**

- A. Western society has more possibilities to enjoy itself than any other time in the history of the world. Do we see the dangers of pleasure (Luke 8:14)? In 2 Timothy 3:1-4, "lovers of pleasures" is condemned along with some pretty "serious" sins!
- B. Thinking about the prodigal son again, he knew he had to work (Luke 15:15, 19), but his problem was his lack of fear regarding pleasure (Luke 15:13). He illustrates that one can easily drift into sinful pleasures without a wariness of pleasure.
- C. What teaching will help our children have a wariness of pleasure?
 1. The characteristics of a sluggard (Proverbs 13:4; 20:4).
 2. A healthy fear of "the good life" (Ecclesiastes 2:1-3; Luke 12:21).
 3. The proper priorities in life.
 - a) Do you miss services for football or baseball games? Do you stay up late on Saturday night watching TV and then not have my Bible class lesson ready for Sunday? Do you have so much fun in travel that you and your children miss worship assemblies at a local church?
 - b) If your children do not have a wariness of pleasure there is a real danger they will not go to heaven when they die.
 - (1) On one hand, they need to learn that possessions are far from permanent (Ecclesiastes 2:18-19).
 - (2) On the other hand, they need to learn that putting Christ first will cause suffering (Matthew 6:33; 2 Timothy 3:12; cf. Matthew 13:20-21).

V. ***A Compelling Desire To Be Like Jesus?***

- A. The ultimate goal for children is teaching them to achieve the "measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:13-16).
- B. When it came to the raising of children, there was never a greater contrast than between Hannah and Eli (1 Samuel 1:11; 3:13).
- C. Paul gave up everything to be like Jesus, with an expectation of being with Him in heaven (Philippians 3:7-14).
- D. When all is said and done, what will really count is not what we or our children have accomplished in this world (Revelation 14:13).

Conclusion. What will we leave our children? Really the question is what are we leaving our children every passing moment? We are, at this time, leaving them their inheritance. Non-Christian families can only leave money, lands, or keepsakes -- nothing of eternal value. Only God's people can leave their children an inheritance that is truly valuable.