

Leave a Lasting Legacy

The phone call jarred me. A friend in her mid-40s, who had survived a bout with breast cancer and been cancer-free for three years, had just passed away. Suddenly, only a few weeks after learning that the cancer had returned, she was in eternity.

What if you knew you had only a short time to live? What legacy would you want to leave your family and friends? How would you want them to remember you? Would you have regrets?

Hebrews 9:27 reminds us that “it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment” (NKJV). We will be held accountable for what we do with our lives.

Many of us believe that accomplishing a lot defines success. Others think success is going through hard things for the Lord. We revere those who died as martyrs for their faith.

In Revelations 2:1-7, the church at Ephesus is described in a way that makes it seem successful. The people had accomplished a great deal, endured hardships and persevered without growing weary. They held a high standard of righteousness and operated with great discernment. From a natural perspective, it appeared to be a thriving church.

But God was displeased with them because, for all their great works, they had left their first love. Passion to pursue the Lord was no longer the driving force of their souls.

Where do you stand in your walk with God? Are you as fervent to pursue Him now as you were when you first became a Christian?

Many of the things that distract us are not sinful in themselves, but our attachment to them lessens our passion for

Christ. We turn away from what God says should be our highest priority. The process is gradual but results in lukewarmness.

You find it easy to skip your daily Bible-reading and prayer time. You think less and less about God and more about other things. The most minor distraction keeps you from pursuing Him. These are all signs that you have left your first love.

Thankfully, there are things you can do to foster spiritual passion. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you what stands between you and a passionate heart for God. Ask Him to reveal anything you have made an idol in your life.

Repent of whatever is taking first place. God's desire for fellowship with us is so great that if we move back toward Him, He immediately responds.

Make a commitment to genuine communion with the Lord through prayer. No relationship can stay passionate without regular communication and fellowship. Find a friend who desires the same thing and pray together.

Renew your commitment to read the Word—not as an academic assignment but as a love letter. The Holy Spirit is our teacher, and He will guide you in your studies if you ask Him to.

In recent months I helped produce a devotional guide from the writings of R. T. Kendall, who has written more than 40 books and is considered a great theologian. I chose selections that I believe will help you mature in your walk with God.

As you begin the new year, desire to go beyond your present experience with God. Renew your passion for Christ. Commit yourself to growing spiritually, to daily following the Holy Spirit's lead and to making an impact for eternity in the lives of others. This is the way to leave a lasting legacy—no matter how unexpectedly the Lord calls you home.