

Leaving A Legacy: Becoming A Man After God's Own Heart

A few years ago, I attended a men's retreat at Big Sandy Camp and Retreat Center (C&MA camp in McGregor, Minn.). Our weekend speaker, Dr. Greg Bourgond, founder and president of Heart of a Warrior Ministries (), centered his messages on Proverbs 4—the heart of a Christian and a God-focused lifestyle.

For six months after the retreat, I could not open my Bible without focusing on verse 23: "Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life."

There is a battle going on for our heart. Our heart is the core of who we are and forms our character. The desires of our heart trigger our actions and determine our reactions.

Because of this warfare, we need help to stand against the onslaught of the enemy. We need to put on the armor of God. The first piece of armor is the belt of truth. Living free in Christ starts with knowing the truth.

Turning Beliefs into Action

At the retreat, Greg challenged us to evaluate our own purpose in life and how we live out that purpose. We considered our biblically based values and how our actions reflect those values. It became evident that most men are inconsistent, and our actions are incongruent with what we say we believe. We demonstrate one set of values on Sunday and another set of values during the week.

George Barna sums up this challenge well: "Many Christians are hard-pressed to convert their beliefs into action. The ultimate aim of belief in Jesus is not simply to possess divergent theological ideas but to become a transformed person. ... Millions of people who rely on Jesus Christ for their eternal destiny have problems translating their

religious beliefs into action beyond Sunday mornings.”

To be a man after God’s heart, we must be committed to faithfulness through our actions and in all our deeds, so those who come into our company will see no discord between our confession and our profession. This can only be done through the empowerment of Jesus Christ as we daily turn our life over to Him. When we know to whom we belong, we know what to do.

It is because of Christ that I am who I am. I need Him. Everything I do is done according to God’s strength and for His honor. I want Christ to take total control of my heart and my life; to give me a relentless obsession to follow after Him; to instill a longing in me to know Him with all my heart, soul, mind and strength; to reveal Himself to me daily.

Being the man God has called me to be involves being the husband that my wife, Jolene, needs me to be and being the father that my daughter, Kelly, needs me to be.

God has called us to be authentic, value-centered men of integrity, to live in boldness with a tenacious commitment to the teachings of Jesus Christ (see Eph. 2:1–10). As men, we must hold tight to biblical values and truths.

In his book, *Renovation of the Heart*, Dr. Dallas Willard sums it up this way: “Christian spiritual formation is the process of transforming all essential dimensions of the self toward Christlikeness. It presupposes the birth from above and the constant action of the Holy Spirit. It also presupposes relentless action by the individual in obedience to the Word of God. It can also be said that a spiritual discipline is one that takes us to the kingdom of God; through which we can grow in the grace of God for the purpose of godliness.”

Significance in Christ

We spend our lives investing our energy into seemingly worthwhile endeavors, sacrificing everything to reach a

perishable goal. Once we get there, we realize the satisfaction is fleeting at best.

All that we've worked so hard for doesn't bring the joy we thought it would. So we identify another mountain to climb. We are like the explorers of the past who set their minds on what they would find behind the next mountain range, only to find another mountain.

Sadly, our dreams come at the expense of our significant relationships. At the end of our working life, we finally have time to share. But to our discredit, we have few to share it with. The field of our relationships is strewn with broken promises, unfulfilled commitments, reshuffled priorities and abandoned appointments.

There is nothing wrong with striving for success. But if our sense of worth is wrapped up in *what* we do and not *who* we are in Christ, we miss the opportunity of modeling His character. Significance in Christ is more important than worldly success. A life of significance is attained by living a legacy worth leaving in the lives of people God places within our sphere of influence.

A Godly Legacy

What we do in life echoes an eternity. Everyone will leave some kind of legacy, but the only legacy worth leaving is a godly legacy.

I have shared the following story with those in my Sunday school class of people who had not grown up in a Christian home. I was diagnosed with an eye disease called Keratoconus, which can lead to blindness. What is confusing about this disease is that it is hereditary. I looked at my doctor and asked him, "How can that happen? There isn't any family history of this disease, either on my mom's side or my dad's side." He looked directly at me and said, "It has to start somewhere."

It is never too early or too late for us to leave a godly heritage. When we meet the Lord face to face, will He honor us for wisely investing our talents in the lives of others, or will He chastise us as He did the servant who buried his talent in the ground (see Matt. 25:14–30)?

When God takes me home, what will my family say about me? What kind of husband was I? What kind of father was I? What will the employees who worked with me remember about me? How will my community describe me?

I have a desire to leave a godly legacy in the hearts and lives of my family and the men at church whom I lead. When I see my Savior, I want to hear the words, “Welcome home, Randy. You finished well!”

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