

Megachurch Pastor: What Every Spirit-Filled Christian Needs to Know About Leaving Legacy

The older you get, the more you realize that, at some point, you must leave a legacy. I recently interviewed an expert on this topic, global pastor Maury Davis. His message on legacy is so powerful that organizations all over the U.S. ask him to speak on it. In fact, when I heard him speak on legacy at the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference, I knew it was a message every believer should hear.

You may remember that I interviewed Davis recently about his powerful testimony. [Click here](#) to read about how God transformed him from a convicted murderer into a megachurch pastor. But Davis wasn't an expert on legacy until God performed a supernatural healing miracle for him and his quickly growing church back in 2013. [Click here](#) to listen to my full interview with Davis on legacy, or listen in this article.

When I asked Davis to tell me how that miracle came about, he told me it all started with a stubborn enchilada addiction.

"I was in my doctor's office for my cholesterol medicine, because I have an enchilada addiction," Davis said with a laugh. "So I just take Lipitor for cholesterol because it's easier than eating granola the rest of my life. And the doctor discovered some leukemia in my bloodstream. Our church, [Cornerstone Church in Nashville], was in a \$17 million building project—at the very beginning of it. And I realized that if I went to the oncologist and I was diagnosed with cancer, the bank would freak out and maybe shut the project down."

That fear kept Davis from seeing his doctor again for several

months. When he finally did, the test was worse than before. This time, the doctor was adamant that Davis should see an oncologist.

“In November of [2013], I went and had Pastor George pray for me—my pastor that led me to the Lord,” Davis says. “He was the first person I told. ... And then I went to the oncologist and discovered I’d had a supernatural healing. And I didn’t know if it was just a theory that my doctor had until my life insurance guy said, ‘You were diagnosed with cancer. We need to raise your life insurance policy.’ Long story short, I realized at that moment that even though I’m growing and the church is growing, there is no successor.”

Davis began to evaluate how old he would be if he used a five-year succession plan. Davis wanted to make sure his identity didn’t come from his work as a pastor.

“Paul said, ‘I’m identified with Christ,’ not ‘I identify with apostleship, evangelism or missions. I’m identified with Christ,’” Davis says.

So Davis worked with his consultant coach, Dr. Sam Chan, on creating a five-year succession plan with the elders of the church. During that five-year period, Davis worked hard to renew his mind through the Word of God.

“I didn’t realize that renewing your mind is a perpetual challenge,” he says. “If you don’t continue to pursue that personal development, you will create a lid that even faith won’t get over, because as a man thinks, so is he. So if you want to be a legacy pastor, you have to think as a legacy pastor rather than a lead pastor.”

Eventually, Davis had to say goodbye to his church members. He stopped attending church board meetings. He had to hand over the figurative keys to the new lead pastor. And in some ways, it was hard.

"It's an incredibly emotionally challenging season of life," Davis says. "I was in the church for the first time on Mother's Day this year, and it was the first time I'd been back in church since October. It was a wonderful experience. The church has transitioned and Galen, my son, is the pastor. And there are things that have changed. But the momentum and the attitude and the spirit of the church were incredible. And I just looked and thought, *We did it right*. I'm so grateful to God that He gave me friends to help me do that."

Davis encourages pastors to plan for this moment of transition before it takes them by surprise. The first step to doing this, he says, is to take an assessment of your vision, your desires, your dreams, your staff, your organizational structure and personalities.

"I had to transition with that kind of thinking," he says. "And you can't do that without somebody sitting with you monthly or every other month and saying, 'Where are we at?' ... You almost need a referee between the senior pastor and the successor to let the successor move the ball up 10 yards and letting him preach one or twice or three times a month and let you be gone 90 days."

The main thing to look for, Davis says, is that the successor has a firm grasp on the heart of the congregation. If that person doesn't, the transition won't work. From there, the two pastors can move forward for a smooth and healthy transfer of leadership.

Whether you're a pastor or not, the principles Davis teaches can still empower you to leave a lasting legacy.

"Every person leaves a legacy in some way," Davis says. "My wife and I have triplets who are now 33 years of age. My son, the one who just took the church, is one of them. And then we have a 24-year-old. All of my children are serving Christ in a church somewhere, and they're actually highly involved in the

churches where they are. ... So everybody has family legacy. Everybody has relational legacy. There are people whose lives you can affect, not from a pulpit but from walking across the street and loving on a neighbor, from your demeanor at work and your witness at work—your character leaves a legacy to the next generation.”

I hope you take Davis’ words to heart and choose to leave a legacy that honors the Lord. It all starts with seeking first the kingdom of God, but it also requires intentional steps to impact people in your life.

I encourage you to listen to my full interview with Davis right here or at the top of this article. And don’t forget to share this article with your friends!