

Your Spirit-Powered Way to Leave a Lasting Legacy

Our bedtime tradition with the kids includes a story and a prayer. When Ella was younger, she always wanted to hear the story of her grandpa. Her grandpa, my father, left an indelible legacy. He founded Calvary Church in Naperville, Illinois, and pastored it for 30 years. The church now has nearly 10,000 people in attendance. Thousands have been baptized there. It has invested millions of dollars into local and international mission efforts.

My dad was a giant of a man, physically and spiritually. When he was 55 years old and in the prime of his ministry, he died suddenly of a heart attack while at breakfast with a man he was discipling. It was a devastating loss to our family, but his legacy did not die with his body.

Each night at bedtime, Ella, my 6-year old daughter, would ask me to tell her about Grandpa.

I'd say, "Ella, you never got to meet your grandpa, but he was a very good man. Do you know what people called him?"

She would respond, "Passor Bob."

"That's right, Ella. Thousands of people loved and cared about Pastor Bob, and he loved and cared for thousands of people. He was a really big man. Do you know that he had huge hands? His hands were large and thick. Your grandpa used to pray for people, and when he did, he'd take his big hand and put it on their heads, like this, and he would pray for them."

Each night, I'd place my hand on Ella's head and pray for her. I prayed the Lord's favor and blessing and passion, and that He would raise her up to be a leader in her generation. Amazingly, it was the only part of her day when she'd actually

sit still! I don't know if it's because of the prayer or because she thought it was weird that I put my hand on her head, but it worked.

I prayed for her this way every night, but one night, the weight of his absence overcame me. I sat on the bed, a bit despondent. I was filled with a great sadness, wishing my dad could have prayed over and into my daughter.

As I prayed over my little girl, God prompted this thought: *Your dad is praying for her—right now, through you. His legacy and his prayers live on through you.*

The thought caught me in such a way that I began to cry. I didn't just tear up, but I began to cry out loud. It wasn't movie crying, where you still look good, but the ugly kind, where your face starts contorting and people have to look away. Ella saw me and initially thought I was laughing, so she started giggling. After a second, she paused, sensing something was off. She had never seen her daddy cry.

She said, "Daddy, are you okay?"

I didn't want my little girl to see fear or weakness in her dad, her protector. But I asked the Lord to make it a teaching moment.

I said, "You've never seen this, but Daddy can get emotional when thinking about how much he and Mommy love our family. I was thinking about how much I loved your grandpa. I was thinking about how much I love you. I just wish you both could have met. But then I realized that what was given to me, I actually get to give to you."

It was a legacy moment. I realized that if I live a faithful life and have a faith-filled marriage, the blessings of God won't stop after I do. The blessings of my grandparents are still going. They're still going for my dad and mom. They're still going for Abraham and Sarah. As philanthropist Stanley

Tam says, “God can’t reward Abraham yet because his seed is still multiplying.

When the storms of life come crashing down on you, it’s hard to remember that God’s blessings are still going. When you’re warring, when you’re disconnected, when you’re off-balance, it’s hard to see the greater story God is writing. It’s important that you don’t give up. My uncle, Betta Mengistu, used to say, “Whenever you have a setback, don’t take a step back, because God has already prepared your comeback.” We are believing for a blessing over your marriage today as you step out in faith to live out the legacy He has designed for you.

The psalmist encourages us with these words: “We will tell the coming generation the praises of the Lord, and His strength, and the wonderful works that He has done” (Ps. 78:4). {eo}

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