THE DAILY BREAD

The Mission of the Apostles



Legacy

The Man You Will Have Been

A FORMATION BOOK BY

Kendall Peterson

The Everyday Apostle

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INTRODUCTION

The Verdict of a Life

One day a man's life will be complete, and it will be possible to say, finally and without revision, what kind of man he was. The record will be closed, the sum will be taken, and the man he actually became, across all his years, will stand revealed, no longer a work in progress but a finished thing. This is a sobering thought, and most men avoid it, preferring not to look ahead to the final reckoning of their lives. But it is one of the most clarifying thoughts a man can hold, for the man he will have been is being decided right now, by how he is living today, and to look ahead to that final verdict is to gain a standard by which to live in the present.

This book is about legacy, not in the shallow sense of the money or the monuments a man leaves behind, but in the deep sense of the man he will have been and the lasting good he will have done, the mark his life will have left on the world and on eternity. For the Christian, and especially for the apostle, legacy is not a matter of worldly achievement or remembrance but of the souls he has touched, the lives he has shaped, the faith he has handed on, and the man he has become, which are the only things that finally last. The aim is to help a man live now with the end in view, so that he becomes the man he will be glad to have been, and leaves behind him a legacy that endures not merely in human memory but into eternity.

Well done, good and faithful servant… enter into the joy of your master. — Matthew 25:21

We will begin by distinguishing true legacy from the false legacies the world chases. We will see that a man's deepest legacy is the man he becomes, the character forged over a lifetime. We will consider the legacy of the people a man shapes, which outlasts everything else he does. We will take up the handing-on of the faith as the most important inheritance a man can leave. We will face the question of what a man will be remembered for, and the difference between worldly and eternal remembrance. And we will see that living with the end in view, with a clear sense of the man one wants to have been, is the surest way to actually become him, and to leave a legacy that lasts forever.

CHAPTER ONE

The Legacies That Do Not Last

What the World Chases in Vain

Before a man can pursue a true legacy, he must be freed from the false ones that the world chases, the counterfeit legacies that consume men's lives and leave nothing of lasting worth. The world offers a man several visions of legacy, of what it means to leave a mark and to matter beyond one's lifespan, and most of them are illusions, promising a permanence they cannot deliver. Seeing through these false legacies is the necessary first step toward pursuing the true one, for a man who gives his life to a legacy that does not last has wasted it on a mirage.

Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher… all is vanity. — Ecclesiastes 1:2

Wealth and Possessions

The most common false legacy is wealth, the accumulation of money and possessions that a man imagines will secure his lasting significance, but which death strips away entirely and which leaves nothing of eternal worth. Men pour their lives into the acquisition of wealth, believing that what they amass will make them matter, will secure their legacy, will be their lasting mark on the world, but wealth is precisely what a man cannot take with him and what does him no good at the final reckoning. The wealth a man accumulates passes to others at his death, is spent or lost or forgotten, and leaves no lasting mark on eternity; the man who gave his life to amassing it arrives at the end with empty hands, having spent his one life chasing what he could not keep. This is not to say that money is evil or that providing for one's family is wrong, but that wealth as a legacy, as the thing a man lives for and hopes will make him matter, is an illusion, a false legacy that death reveals as empty. The man who has made wealth his legacy has built on sand, and the accumulation of possessions, however impressive, is a legacy that does not last, swept away at death and worth nothing at the judgment.

Achievement and Status

A second false legacy is worldly achievement and status, the accomplishments, positions, honors, and reputation that a man imagines will secure his lasting significance, but which fade and are forgotten with surprising speed. Men give their lives to achievement, to climbing the ladder, to winning honors and building reputations, believing these will be their lasting legacy, the thing that makes them matter and will be remembered. But worldly achievement fades quickly, and worldly status dies with the man or soon after; the positions are filled by others, the honors are forgotten, the reputation that seemed so important is lost within a generation or two, as a man discovers if he considers how little he knows of his own great-grandparents' achievements. The achievements a man gave his life to securing prove, in the long view, to be sandcastles, impressive for a moment and

then washed away, and the status that seemed so important is revealed as a vapor. This false legacy, like wealth, promises a permanence it cannot deliver, consuming a man's life in the pursuit of accomplishments and honors that fade and are forgotten, and leaving nothing of lasting or eternal worth. Achievement and status are a legacy that does not last, and the man who lives for them has chased a vapor.

The Vanity of It All

The deepest truth about these false legacies is the one the Preacher of Ecclesiastes saw, that all such worldly pursuits, considered as a man's lasting legacy, are vanity, a chasing after wind, empty of the permanence they promise. The wisdom of Ecclesiastes is precisely this recognition, that the things men give their lives to under the sun, their wealth, their achievements, their pleasures, their status, are vanity when weighed as a lasting legacy, for they do not last, they are forgotten, and they cannot satisfy or secure a man against the oblivion of death. This is not cynicism but clear sight, the recognition that the legacies the world chases are illusions, unable to deliver the permanence and significance they promise, and that a man who gives his life to them is chasing after wind. The point of this recognition is not despair but reorientation, the turning of a man away from the false legacies that cannot last toward the true legacy that can, for only the man who has seen through the vanity of the world's legacies will seek the legacy that endures. The vanity of the world's legacies, seen clearly, is the beginning of wisdom about legacy, freeing a man from the pursuit of what cannot last and turning him toward the true legacy that this book will trace.

CHAPTER TWO

The Man You Become

Character as the Deepest Legacy

The first and deepest form of true legacy is not anything a man leaves behind him but the man he himself becomes, the character he forges over a lifetime, for the person a man makes of himself is his most fundamental and lasting legacy, carried into eternity when all else is left behind. Everything else a man might leave, his wealth, his works, even his influence, is external to him and can be lost; but the man he has become is himself, and it is this, above all, that he carries out of this life and presents at the final reckoning. Understanding that character is the deepest legacy reorients a man's whole pursuit of legacy toward the becoming of a certain kind of man.

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done. — 2 Corinthians 5:10

You Are Your Own Legacy

The most important legacy a man leaves is, in a profound sense, himself, the person he has become through all his choices, for the man he has made of himself is the one thing that is truly and inalienably his, carried out of this life into eternity. A man spends his life not only doing things and acquiring things but becoming someone, forging through his choices a character, a soul, a person that is the real product of his living, and this person he becomes is his deepest legacy, more truly his than anything external he leaves behind. At the end, a man does not take his wealth or his achievements, but he does take himself, the character he has forged, the soul he has shaped, and it is this that stands at the judgment and enters eternity. This means that the becoming of a certain kind of man is not one legacy among others but the deepest and most fundamental, the legacy that a man is rather than merely leaves, and that the most important work of a man's life is the making of himself into the person he will carry into eternity. You are your own deepest legacy, and the man you become through your choices is the one inheritance that is truly and permanently yours.

Character Outlasts Everything

The character a man forges outlasts everything else about him, for while his wealth is spent and his achievements forgotten, the man he became is carried into eternity and is, moreover, the thing that most deeply shapes those he leaves behind. A man's character, unlike his possessions, is not lost at death but is precisely what endures, the person he made of himself standing permanently as what he finally was; and in this life too, a man's character outlasts his other legacies, for long after his achievements are forgotten, the kind of man he was lives on in the memory and formation of those who knew him. Children remember and are shaped not by their father's achievements but by the kind of man he was, by his character far more than his accomplishments, so that even a man's influence on others flows most deeply from his character rather than his works. Character outlasts everything, enduring into eternity and shaping those left behind more deeply than any external legacy, and this is why the forging of character is the deepest work of legacy, the making of the one thing that truly lasts. The man a fellow becomes is more lasting than anything he does or acquires, and his character is the legacy that outlasts all the rest.

Forged by Daily Choices

The character that is a man's deepest legacy is forged not in grand moments but in the accumulation of daily choices, built up over a lifetime by the small decisions that gradually make a man into what he becomes, which means that a man's legacy is being forged right now, today, in how he is choosing to live. Character is not conferred in a single act but built slowly, choice by choice, as a man's repeated decisions gradually form his habits, his habits his character, and his character the person he becomes; the man a fellow will have been is the cumulative product of all his daily choices, forged in the ordinary decisions of ordinary days. This means that the forging of a man's deepest legacy is happening continuously, in the present, in the small choices he is making today, and that he is, right now, building the character he will carry into eternity. There is no waiting for some future moment to begin forging one's legacy, for it is being forged in every present choice, and the man who understands this attends to his daily choices as the very material of his lasting legacy. Character is forged by daily choices, and a man's deepest legacy is being made right now, in how he chooses to live today, so that the pursuit of a lasting legacy is finally the pursuit of right living in the present moment.

CHAPTER THREE

The People You Shape

The Legacy That Lives in Others

Beyond the man he becomes, a man's most enduring legacy is the people he shapes, the lives he touches and forms, for the influence a man has on others outlasts everything else he does and carries forward long after he is gone. A man's deepest mark on the world is left not in things but in people, in the children he raises, the friends he influences, the souls he helps toward God, the lives that are different because he lived; and this legacy of persons, unlike wealth and achievement, truly lasts, carried forward in the people he shaped and the people they in turn will shape. Understanding that the people a man shapes are his most enduring legacy directs his life toward the investment in others that leaves a lasting mark.

You yourselves are our letter of recommendation, written on our hearts, to be known and read by all. — 2 Corinthians 3:2

Lives Are Your Lasting Mark

The most enduring mark a man leaves on the world is in the lives he has shaped, for people outlast things, and the influence a man has on others carries forward in a way that no material legacy can. The children a man raises, the people he mentors, the friends he

influences, the souls he helps toward God, all carry forward the mark of his life long after his wealth is spent and his achievements forgotten, living on in the people he shaped and spreading further through the people they in turn shape. This is a legacy that genuinely lasts, for it is written not in perishable things but in living persons who carry it forward, a letter written not on stone or paper but on human hearts, as Saint Paul said of those he had formed. A man's lasting mark on the world, then, is the people he has shaped, the lives that are permanently different because he lived and touched them, and this legacy of persons outlasts and outweighs every material legacy a man might leave. Lives are a man's lasting mark, and the influence he has on others is the most enduring thing he will leave behind, carried forward in living persons long after everything else about him is gone.

The Ripple That Never Stops

The legacy of the people a man shapes has a remarkable quality, that it multiplies and spreads beyond anything a man can see, as those he shapes shape others in turn, in a ripple of influence that extends far into a future he will never witness. When a man shapes a person, that person goes on to shape others, who shape others still, so that the influence a man has on even a few people ripples outward and forward through generations, touching lives far beyond those he directly influenced, in a chain of influence that never stops. A man who shapes his children well sets in motion an influence that will touch his grandchildren and great-grandchildren and their descendants; a man who forms a few others in the faith starts a ripple that may reach thousands he will never meet. This ripple quality means that the legacy of persons is far greater than it appears, extending through multiplying generations in ways no man can trace or foresee, so that the influence a man has on even a few lives may ultimately touch a vast number through the ripple of shaped lives shaping lives. The ripple never stops, and the legacy of the people a man shapes extends far beyond what he can see, multiplying through generations into a future he will never witness but will have genuinely touched.

Invest in People

The practical implication of this truth is that a man who wants a lasting legacy should invest his life in people, pouring himself into the shaping of others rather than into the pursuit of things that will not last, for it is in people that a man's most enduring legacy is made. This means prioritizing the investment in persons, in one's children, one's mentees, one's friends, the souls one can help, over the pursuit of the material legacies that will not endure, and recognizing that the time and love poured into shaping others is the best investment a man can make for a lasting legacy. A man's hours are limited, and he must choose where to invest them, and the man who grasps that people are his lasting

legacy invests his best in them, in the patient, loving shaping of the lives he can touch, rather than in the accumulation of things that death will strip away. To invest in people is to invest in the one legacy that truly lasts, and the man who pours his life into shaping others, into his children and his mentees and the souls he can reach, is building a legacy that will outlast and outweigh everything the world chases. Invest in people, for they are a man's most enduring legacy, and the lives he shapes will carry his mark forward into a future that his wealth and achievements never could.

CHAPTER FOUR

Handing On the Faith

The Inheritance That Matters Most

Among all the ways a man shapes others, one stands supreme as the most important legacy he can leave: the handing-on of the faith, the transmission to those who come after him of the treasure of faith in God, which is the greatest inheritance a man can give and the one that matters most for eternity. A man may leave his heirs many things, but if he fails to hand on the faith he has left them nothing of ultimate worth, while if he hands on the faith he has given them the one thing that matters forever. Understanding that the faith is the inheritance that matters most directs a man's legacy toward its highest and most consequential form.

We will not hide them from their children, but tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the Lord. — Psalm 78:4

The Greatest Inheritance

The faith is the greatest inheritance a man can leave to those who come after him, worth more than all the wealth and advantages he might give them, for it is the one inheritance that bears on their eternal destiny and the source of everything truly good in their lives. A man may leave his children money, education, advantages, and opportunities, all good things in their place, but none of these compares in worth to the faith, which bears on their eternal salvation, orders their lives toward God, and is the source of a good that outlasts every earthly advantage. To hand on the faith is to give the greatest gift, the inheritance that matters most, worth more than every material legacy a man could leave; to fail to hand it on, however much else one leaves, is to withhold the one thing of ultimate worth. This means that the handing-on of the faith should be a man's highest priority in the shaping of those who come after him, the inheritance he most labors to transmit, for it is the greatest gift he can give and the one that matters most for their

eternal good. The faith is the greatest inheritance, and the man who hands it on to his children and those he shapes has left them a treasure beyond all the wealth of the world, the one legacy that bears on eternity.

It Must Be Actively Handed On

The faith is not inherited automatically but must be actively handed on, deliberately transmitted to the next generation by those who hold it, or it will be lost, which places on every believer the responsibility to hand on the faith he has received. Unlike a material inheritance, which passes to one's heirs by default, the faith passes to the next generation only if it is actively transmitted, taught, modeled, and handed on, for it is not in the blood but must be received anew by each generation from those who hand it on. The failure to actively hand on the faith results in its loss, as a generation that receives the faith but does not transmit it sees the faith die with it, and the history of the faith's decline is largely the history of its failing to be handed on. This means the handing-on of the faith is an active responsibility, a deliberate work that each generation must undertake, and that a man cannot assume the faith will pass to his children automatically but must actively hand it on to them, through his teaching, his example, and his prayer. The faith must be actively handed on, and the man who would leave the greatest inheritance must undertake the deliberate work of transmitting the faith to those who come after him, for it will reach them only if he hands it on.

Beyond Your Own Children

The handing-on of the faith extends beyond a man's own children to all those he can reach and shape, for a man can be a spiritual father to many, handing on the faith not only to his natural children but to the many others he can touch and form. A man's legacy of faith is not limited to his own household, for he can hand on the faith to those he mentors, those he evangelizes, those he forms and influences, becoming a means by which the faith reaches many beyond his own family. This widens the scope of a man's legacy of faith, making him potentially a spiritual father to many, a transmitter of the faith to a wide circle of those he can reach, so that his legacy of faith may extend far beyond his own children. Even the man without children of his own can leave a rich legacy of faith, handing it on to the many others he can shape and reach, and every man is called to hand on the faith not only within his family but to all those his life can touch. Beyond his own children, a man can hand on the faith to the many he reaches, extending his greatest legacy to a wide circle of souls, and the man who hands on the faith to all those he can touch leaves a legacy of faith that reaches far beyond his own household into the lives of all those he has helped toward God.

CHAPTER FIVE

What You Will Be Remembered For

Worldly Fame and Eternal Remembrance

Men naturally desire to be remembered, to leave a mark that outlasts them in the memory of others, and this desire, rightly understood, can point toward a true legacy, but wrongly pursued it chases the vanity of worldly fame. The question of what a man will be remembered for reveals much about the kind of legacy he is pursuing, and there is a crucial difference between the worldly remembrance that fades and the eternal remembrance that lasts. Understanding what is worth being remembered for, and by whom, helps a man direct his desire for remembrance toward a legacy that genuinely endures.

The memory of the righteous is a blessing, but the name of the wicked will rot. — Proverbs 10:7

The Fading of Worldly Fame

The worldly fame that men chase, the being remembered by many for one's achievements, fame, or status, fades with remarkable speed and is in any case empty, unable to deliver the lasting significance it promises. Even the most famous are forgotten within a few generations, their names perhaps surviving while all that made them real is lost, and the vast majority of men, however much they achieved, are entirely forgotten within a generation or two of their death, as a man realizes if he considers how little he knows of his own ancestors. The pursuit of worldly fame as a legacy is therefore a chasing after wind, for the fame fades, the remembrance is lost, and even where a name survives it secures nothing of real worth; the famous dead are no better off for their fading fame. This fading of worldly fame reveals it as a false legacy, unable to deliver the lasting remembrance it promises, and the man who gives his life to being remembered by the world has pursued a vanity that death and time will erase. Worldly fame fades, and the being remembered by many for one's worldly achievements is an empty and fading legacy, unable to secure the lasting significance it seems to promise.

Remembered by the Few Who Matter

Far more valuable than being remembered by many is being remembered well by the few who truly matter, the family and friends whose lives a man has touched, whose loving memory of the kind of man he was is a truer and more valuable remembrance than any worldly fame. A man is remembered most truly and most valuably not by the many who

knew his name but by the few who knew him well, his family, his close friends, those whose lives he shaped, and their memory of the kind of man he was, the love and goodness he showed them, is a remembrance worth far more than the fading fame of the world. To be remembered with love and gratitude by one's children, to have shaped the lives of a few people who carry one's memory as a blessing, is a truer legacy than to be famous among strangers, for it is a remembrance rooted in real relationship and real influence rather than in the empty fame of being merely known. This directs a man's desire for remembrance toward what truly matters, toward being remembered well by the few whose lives he has genuinely touched rather than being remembered widely by the many who merely knew his name. To be remembered by the few who matter, with love and for the kind of man one was, is a truer and more valuable remembrance than all the fading fame of the world.

Remembered by God

The deepest and most important remembrance of all is to be remembered by God, to have one's name written in the book of life and one's life held in the eternal memory of God, which is the only remembrance that finally and forever matters. All human remembrance, even the best, fades at last, for those who remember a man also die, and the memory of even the most beloved is eventually lost to human history; but to be remembered by God, to be held in his eternal memory and welcomed into his eternal life, is a remembrance that never fades and that alone secures a man's lasting significance. This is the remembrance a man should most desire, to be remembered by God, to hear at the end the words well done, good and faithful servant, to have his name written in the book of life, for this eternal remembrance is the only one that truly lasts and the only one that finally matters. The man who is remembered by God, whatever the world's forgetting, has the only remembrance worth having, and the man forgotten by God, whatever the world's fame, has lost everything. To be remembered by God is the deepest and most important legacy, the eternal remembrance that alone endures forever, and the man who directs his life toward this remembrance, toward being held in the eternal memory of God, pursues the only legacy that finally and forever matters.

CHAPTER SIX

Living With the End in View

How to Become the Man You Want to Have Been

The whole value of thinking about legacy lies in letting it shape how a man lives now, for the man he will have been is being decided in the present, and living with the end in view is the surest way to actually become the man he wants to have been. It is not enough to reflect on legacy in the abstract; a man must let the vision of the person he wants to have been govern his present choices, working backward from the end to the living of today. Understanding how to live with the end in view, letting the desired legacy shape present living, is the practical heart of actually leaving the legacy one desires.

So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom. — Psalm 90:12

Begin With the End

The way to leave a true legacy is to begin with the end in view, to form a clear picture of the man one wants to have been and the legacy one wants to leave, and then to live backward from that vision, letting it govern one's present choices. A man who has thought clearly about the person he wants to have become and the mark he wants to have left has a standard by which to measure his present living, a clear end toward which to direct his daily choices, so that his life is shaped by the legacy he intends rather than drifting without direction. This beginning with the end is immensely clarifying, for it reveals which of a man's present pursuits actually contribute to the legacy he desires and which are mere distractions, which choices build the man he wants to have been and which betray him. The man who has not thought about the end drifts, his life shaped by whatever pressures and desires happen to move him; the man who begins with the end lives deliberately, directing his present toward the legacy he intends. To begin with the end in view, to form a clear picture of the man one wants to have been and to live backward from it, is the practical secret of leaving a true legacy, for it gives a man a standard and a direction by which to shape his present living toward the end he desires.

The Legacy Is Built Now

The crucial recognition is that a man's legacy is not built at the end of his life but throughout it, in the accumulation of present choices, so that the man he will have been is being forged right now, today, in how he chooses to live. There is a temptation to think of legacy as something to attend to later, in the final years, but by then the legacy is largely made, for it is the sum of a whole life's choices, built up throughout rather than appended at the end; the man a fellow will have been is being decided in the present, in every daily choice. This means that the time to build one's legacy is now, in the present choices that are even now forging the man one will have been and the mark one will have left, and that a man who waits to attend to his legacy has already spent much of the time in which it is made. The legacy is built now, in the present, choice by choice, and the man

who understands this attends to his daily living as the very material of his lasting legacy, knowing that the man he will have been is being forged in how he chooses to live today. The legacy is built now, not at the end, and a man leaves the legacy he desires by building it in the present, in the daily choices that are even now making him into the man he will have been.

No Regrets at the End

Living with the end in view aims finally at a particular goal, that a man should come to the end of his life without the regrets that haunt those who lived without direction, able to look back on a life that built the legacy he desired rather than one he wasted. The great sorrow at the end of a misdirected life is regret, the painful recognition that one spent one's one life on the wrong things, pursued the false legacies that did not last while neglecting the true ones that did, became a man one is not glad to have been; and the great blessing at the end of a well-directed life is the absence of such regret, the ability to look back on a life that pursued what matters and built a legacy that lasts. The man who lives with the end in view, who directs his present toward the legacy he desires, aims to arrive at the end without these regrets, having spent his life on what truly matters and become the man he is glad to have been. This is a powerful motive for living with the end in view, for the regrets of a misdirected life are among the bitterest of human experiences, and the man who lives now toward a true legacy spares himself these regrets and gains instead the deep satisfaction of a life well spent. To live with the end in view is finally to live so as to have no regrets at the end, to arrive at the close of life glad of the man one has become and the legacy one has built, having spent one's one life on what truly and eternally matters.

CHAPTER SEVEN

A Legacy for Eternity

The Only Mark That Lasts Forever

We come finally to the deepest truth about legacy, which lifts the whole subject beyond even the best earthly legacy to the horizon of eternity, for the only legacy that lasts forever is the one laid up in heaven, the eternal fruit of a life given to God and others. Every earthly legacy, even the legacy of character and of shaped lives, exists within time and is oriented finally toward eternity, and the deepest question of legacy is what a man will have laid up in heaven, the eternal treasure that alone lasts forever. Understanding

that the truest legacy is an eternal one completes the vision and reveals the final meaning of all a man does.

Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys. — Matthew 6:20

Treasure in Heaven

Christ taught his followers to lay up treasure not on earth, where it is destroyed and lost, but in heaven, where it lasts forever, and this is the deepest principle of legacy, that the only treasure that endures is the one laid up in heaven through a life of love and faith. The treasure a man lays up in heaven, the eternal fruit of his love, his good works, his faithfulness, the souls he has helped toward God, is the one legacy that is utterly secure, beyond the reach of the moth and rust and thief that destroy every earthly treasure. This heavenly treasure is laid up through a life given to God and others, through love, faith, good works, and the helping of souls, all of which produce an eternal fruit that is stored up in heaven and that a man carries into eternal life. To lay up treasure in heaven is thus the deepest form of legacy, the securing of an eternal reward that lasts forever, and the man who directs his life toward this heavenly treasure, rather than the earthly treasures that perish, builds the only legacy that is finally secure. Treasure in heaven is the legacy that lasts forever, laid up through a life of love and faith, and the man who stores up this eternal treasure has built the one legacy that neither death nor time can destroy.

Fruit That Remains

Christ promised that those who abide in him would bear fruit that remains, an eternal fruit that lasts beyond this life, and this fruit that remains is the truest legacy, the eternal harvest of a life joined to Christ and given in love. The fruit a man bears in a life joined to Christ, the love he gives, the good he does, the souls he helps, the holiness he grows in, is not lost at death but remains, carried into eternity as the lasting fruit of his life, the harvest that endures forever. This is the fruit that remains, in contrast to all the perishable fruits of worldly achievement, and it is borne by a life abiding in Christ and given in love, producing an eternal harvest that is a man's truest and most lasting legacy. The man who bears this fruit that remains, through a life joined to Christ and poured out in love, leaves a legacy that endures into eternity, an eternal harvest that death cannot touch and time cannot erase. Fruit that remains is the eternal legacy of a life abiding in Christ, the lasting harvest of love and faith that endures forever, and the man who bears such fruit has left the truest legacy there is, an eternal harvest carried into the everlasting life of heaven.

Well Done, Good and Faithful Servant

The final word on legacy is the word a man hopes to hear at the end from his Lord, the words well done, good and faithful servant, which represent the one verdict on a man's life that finally and eternally matters. All the world's verdicts on a man's life fade, but the verdict of God endures forever, and the words a man most deeply hopes to hear are these, the welcome of a faithful servant into the joy of his master, the divine approval of a life well lived in God's service. This is the legacy a man should most desire, not the fading praise of the world but the eternal well done of God, the verdict that his life was good and faithful, that he used well the gifts and the time he was given, that he is welcomed into the eternal joy of his Lord. To hear these words at the end is the truest success a man can achieve, the legacy that finally matters above all others, and the whole of a man's life is rightly directed toward hearing them, toward being at the end the good and faithful servant whom the Master welcomes into his joy. Well done, good and faithful servant, is the verdict a man should most desire and most live for, the eternal approval of God that is the truest legacy of all, and the man who lives so as to hear these words at the end has built the only legacy that finally and forever matters, the legacy of a life found faithful by the Lord who welcomes him into eternal joy.

CONCLUSION

Become the Man You Will Be Glad to Have Been

One day a man's life will be complete, and the man he will have been will stand revealed, and this book has been about living now so as to become the man one will be glad to have been, and to leave a legacy that truly lasts. We have seen through the false legacies the world chases, the wealth and achievement and fame that do not last; recognized that a man's deepest legacy is the character he becomes; seen that the people he shapes are his most enduring earthly legacy; understood that the handing-on of the faith is the inheritance that matters most; distinguished the fading remembrance of the world from the eternal remembrance of God; learned to live with the end in view so as to become the man one wants to have been; and arrived at the truest legacy of all, the eternal treasure laid up in heaven and the well done of God.

The great clarification in all of this is the distinction between the legacies that perish and the legacy that lasts, between a life spent chasing what death will strip away and a life invested in what endures into eternity, the man one becomes, the people one shapes, the

faith one hands on, the treasure one lays up in heaven. A man has one life in which to build his legacy, and the whole question is whether he will spend it on the vanities that do not last or invest it in the eternal legacy that does.

So become the man you will be glad to have been. Free yourself from the false legacies the world chases; attend to the character you are forging in your daily choices; invest your life in the people you can shape; hand on the faith as the greatest inheritance you can leave; seek not the fading fame of the world but the eternal remembrance of God; live now with the end in view, building your legacy in the present; and lay up for yourself treasure in heaven, bearing the fruit that remains. Do this, and when your life is complete and the man you will have been stands revealed, you will be found to have built not the perishable legacy of the world but the eternal legacy that lasts forever, and you will hear at the end the only verdict that finally matters, the welcome of your Lord: well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of your master.

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