THE DAILY BREAD

The Missio of the Beloved



Your Spiritual Will

A FORMATION BOOK BY

Kendall Peterson

The Everyday Apostle

THE DAILY BREAD

Missio of the Beloved

Your Spiritual Will

The Letter of Faith You Leave Behind

✦ ✦ ✦

A Daily Bread Formation Book

The Everyday Apostle

INTRODUCTION

The Inheritance That Matters Most

Most people, if they think of a will at all, think of a legal document that distributes their money and possessions after they are gone. But the most important inheritance a woman leaves is not her property but her faith, her wisdom, her values, and her love, and these are passed on not through a legal will but through a spiritual one. A spiritual will is a letter a woman writes to those she will leave behind, setting down what she most wants them to know, the faith she has lived by, the lessons she has learned, the blessings she gives them, and the love she bears them, so that her deepest legacy is not left to chance or lost with her passing but deliberately handed on. It is the most valuable thing she can leave, and far too few ever write one.

This book is about writing your spiritual will, the practical articulation of your legacy. It will explain what a spiritual will is and how it differs from a legal one; why it is worth writing now rather than someday; what to pass on in it, the faith, the lessons, the values, and the love; how to write it personally to those you love; how to live the will you write, so that your life matches your legacy; the ongoing work of legacy beyond the document; and how to finish well. The aim is wholly practical, to help a woman actually write and live her spiritual will, so that the inheritance that matters most, her faith and love, is deliberately handed on to those who come after her.

All these are the twelve tribes of Israel. This is what their father said to them as he blessed them, blessing each with the blessing suitable to him. — Genesis 49:28

When the patriarch Jacob was near death, he gathered his sons and spoke to each of them, blessing each with a blessing suited to him, a kind of spiritual will handed down to the next generation, and this ancient practice of passing on a final word of blessing and wisdom is one a woman can take up in her own way. This book will show her how. A spiritual will is her chance to speak, deliberately and lastingly, the words of faith, blessing, and love she most wants those she leaves behind to carry. This book is about writing that will, so that a woman hands on the inheritance that matters most, not left to chance but set down in love for those who will come after her.

CHAPTER ONE

What a Spiritual Will Is

More Than a Legal Document

A spiritual will is a written legacy of faith, wisdom, and love left to those one leaves behind, distinct from and deeper than a legal will that merely distributes possessions. Understanding what a spiritual will is gives a woman a clear sense of the document she is called to write.

And I will make every effort so that after my departure you may be able at any time to recall these things. — 2 Peter 1:15

Not a Legal Will but a Legacy of Faith

A spiritual will differs from a legal one, for while a legal will distributes a woman's possessions, a spiritual will passes on her faith, wisdom, values, and love. A spiritual will is to be distinguished from a legal will, for a legal will concerns the distribution of a woman's material possessions after her death, her property, money, and belongings, while a spiritual will concerns the far more important inheritance of her faith, her wisdom, her values, her blessings, and her love, so that the two are entirely different documents, one handing on things and the other handing on the soul of a life, the spiritual will being the legacy of faith that matters most. This means a woman understands that a spiritual will is not a legal document but a legacy of faith, so that she sees it as passing on her soul's inheritance rather than her material possessions. The woman who understands it is not a legal will but a legacy of faith sees it as handing on what matters most. Not a legal will but a legacy of faith, a spiritual will passes on a woman's faith, wisdom, and love rather than her possessions.

A Letter to Those You Leave Behind

A spiritual will takes the form of a letter or document addressed to those a woman leaves behind, in which she sets down what she most wants them to know and carry. A spiritual will is essentially a letter to those a woman leaves behind, a written document addressed to her children, family, and loved ones, in which she sets down the things she most wants them to know and carry after she is gone, her faith, her counsel, her blessings, and her love, so that it is a personal communication meant to be read and treasured after her death, her voice speaking to them still, a letter from her heart to theirs that endures beyond her earthly life. This means a woman understands a spiritual will as a letter to those she leaves behind, so that she sees it as a personal written communication of what she most wants them to know and carry after she is gone. The woman who understands it is a letter to those she leaves behind writes to speak to them beyond her death. A letter to those you leave behind is what a spiritual will is, so that a woman sets down what she most wants them to know and carry.

Making Your Faith Recallable

Like the apostle who wrote so his teaching could be recalled after his death, a woman writes her spiritual will so that her faith and counsel can be recalled and held onto by those who survive her. Saint Peter wrote so that after his death his readers could at any time recall the truths he taught, and a woman's spiritual will serves the same purpose, making her faith and counsel recallable after she is gone, setting down in lasting form the things she has lived by so that those she leaves behind can return to them, remember them, and hold onto them, her written words keeping her faith and wisdom available to them long after her voice is silent, her teaching made recallable. This means a woman writes her spiritual will to make her faith recallable, setting down her counsel in lasting form, so that those who survive her can return to and hold onto what she has taught. The woman who makes her faith recallable preserves her counsel for those who survive her. Making your faith recallable is the purpose of a spiritual will, so that a woman's counsel can be held onto by those she leaves behind.

CHAPTER TWO

Why Write One Now

Not Waiting Until Someday

A woman does well to write her spiritual will now rather than postponing it to some distant future, for life is uncertain, the writing itself is clarifying, and it is a gift best prepared while she has the time and clarity to do it. Understanding why to write it now moves a woman from intention to action.

Yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes. — James 4:14

Life Is Uncertain

Because life is uncertain and no one knows the day of her death, a woman does well not to postpone her spiritual will but to write it while she can. Scripture reminds us that life is uncertain, that we do not know what tomorrow will bring, and that life is like a mist that appears briefly and vanishes, so that a woman cannot assume she will have ample warning or time to write her spiritual will at the end, and the wise course is not to postpone it to a distant someday but to write it now, while she is able, not presuming on a future that may not come, so that her legacy is set down before it is too late. This means a woman understands that life is uncertain, so that she does not postpone her spiritual will

but writes it now rather than presuming on a future that may not come. The woman who understands life is uncertain writes her will now rather than postponing it. Life is uncertain, so that a woman writes her spiritual will now rather than presuming on a future that may not come.

The Writing Itself Clarifies

The act of writing a spiritual will is itself clarifying, forcing a woman to distill what she most believes, values, and wants to pass on, and so deepening her own life now. Beyond its value for others, the act of writing a spiritual will is clarifying for the woman who writes it, for in setting down what she most believes, what she has learned, what she values, and what she wants to pass on, she is forced to distill the essence of her life and faith, to clarify her own convictions and priorities, so that the writing itself deepens and orders her present life, the exercise of articulating her legacy helping her to live it more intentionally now. This means a woman understands that writing a spiritual will clarifies her own life, so that she sees the act of writing it as a benefit to her present living, forcing her to distill what matters most. The woman who understands the writing itself clarifies finds it deepens her own life now. The writing itself clarifies, so that composing a spiritual will forces a woman to distill what she most believes and values, deepening her present life.

A Gift Best Prepared with Care

A spiritual will is a gift to those a woman loves, and a gift is best prepared with care and foresight, written thoughtfully now rather than hastily at the end. A spiritual will is a precious gift to those a woman loves, and like any valuable gift it is best prepared with care and forethought rather than thrown together hastily at the end, so that a woman who writes her will now, while she has time, clarity, and health, can craft it thoughtfully, revise it, and make it truly worthy of those who will receive it, giving them a considered and loving legacy rather than a rushed one, the gift prepared with the care it deserves. This means a woman understands that her spiritual will is a gift best prepared with care, so that she writes it thoughtfully now rather than hastily at the end, giving those she loves a considered and worthy legacy. The woman who prepares the gift with care gives a thoughtful and worthy legacy. A gift best prepared with care is a spiritual will, so that a woman writes it thoughtfully now rather than hastily at the end.

CHAPTER THREE

What to Pass On

The Content of Your Legacy

A woman's spiritual will can contain many things, but at its heart it passes on her faith, the lessons she has learned, the values she holds dear, and the blessings and love she bears, the true substance of her legacy. Understanding what to pass on helps a woman fill her spiritual will with what matters most.

Hear, O sons, a father's instruction, and be attentive, that you may gain insight, for I give you good precepts; do not forsake my teaching. — Proverbs 4:1-2

The Faith You Have Lived By

The first and most important thing to pass on is the faith a woman has lived by, her testimony to God and her conviction of what is true and eternal. The heart of a spiritual will is the faith a woman has lived by, so that she passes on her testimony to God, her conviction of the great truths of the faith, her experience of God's love and work in her life, and her deepest belief about what is true and eternal, giving those she leaves behind her witness to the faith that has been the foundation of her life, so that the first and most important thing she hands on is the faith itself, her living testimony to the God she has served. This means a woman passes on the faith she has lived by, her testimony to God and conviction of what is eternal, so that she gives those she leaves behind the witness of the faith that founded her life. The woman who passes on the faith she has lived by gives her testimony to God. The faith you have lived by is the first thing to pass on, so that a woman hands on her testimony to God and conviction of what is eternal.

The Lessons and Values You Hold

A woman passes on the lessons she has learned and the values she holds dear, the hard-won wisdom of her life offered as counsel to those who come after. A spiritual will passes on the lessons a woman has learned and the values she holds dear, for over a lifetime she has gained wisdom through experience, learned what matters and what does not, and come to hold certain values and principles as true, so that she offers these as counsel to those who come after, the hard-won wisdom of her life, the lessons she wishes she had known sooner, and the values she most wants them to embrace, giving them the benefit of her experience and conviction. This means a woman passes on the lessons and values she holds, offering the wisdom of her life as counsel to those who come after, so that she gives them the benefit of her hard-won experience and conviction. The woman who passes on her lessons and values offers her life's wisdom as counsel. The lessons and values you hold are to be passed on, so that a woman offers her hard-won wisdom as counsel to those who come after.

Your Blessing and Your Love

Above all, a woman passes on her blessing and her love, speaking words of blessing over those she leaves behind and assuring them of the love she bears them. The most treasured content of a spiritual will is a woman's blessing and her love, for she passes on words of blessing spoken over those she leaves behind, as the patriarchs blessed their children, and above all the assurance of her love for them, telling them plainly how much she has loved them and bestowing her blessing on their lives, so that they carry forward not only her faith and wisdom but the felt knowledge of being loved and blessed by her, the blessing and the love being the most precious things she leaves. This means a woman passes on her blessing and her love, speaking blessing over those she leaves behind and assuring them of her love, so that they carry the treasured knowledge of being loved and blessed by her. The woman who passes on her blessing and love gives those she leaves behind the most precious legacy. Your blessing and your love are the most treasured content, so that a woman speaks blessing over those she leaves behind and assures them of her love.

CHAPTER FOUR

Writing It to Those You Love

A Personal Word to Each

A spiritual will is most powerful when it is personal, addressed with particular love to each of those a woman leaves behind, a specific word of blessing, counsel, and love suited to each one. Understanding how to write it personally helps a woman give each loved one a word meant uniquely for them.

For you know how, like a father with his children, we exhorted each one of you and encouraged you and charged you to walk in a manner worthy of God. — 1 Thessalonians 2:11

Addressing Each Person Particularly

A woman makes her spiritual will personal by addressing each loved one particularly, giving each a word meant for them rather than only a general message to all. A spiritual will is most meaningful when it addresses each person particularly, for just as Jacob blessed each son with a blessing suited to him and Paul exhorted each one, a woman does well to write a specific word to each of those she loves, her children, her spouse, her dear friends, a personal message meant for that one alone rather than only a general address

to all, so that each receives the particular love, blessing, and counsel she has for them, feeling personally known and addressed in her final words. This means a woman addresses each person particularly in her spiritual will, giving each a word meant for them, so that each loved one receives a personal message rather than only a general one. The woman who addresses each person particularly gives each a word meant uniquely for them. Addressing each person particularly makes a spiritual will personal, so that each loved one receives a word meant for them alone.

The Blessing and the Charge

To each person a woman can give both a blessing, affirming and calling down good on them, and a charge, lovingly exhorting them toward the good she hopes for them. A powerful form for the personal word is to give each person both a blessing and a charge, for a woman can bless each loved one, affirming them, expressing her love and pride, and calling down good upon their life, and can also charge them, lovingly exhorting them toward the faith, virtue, and good life she hopes for them, as Paul charged his people to walk worthily of God, so that each receives both the affirmation of her blessing and the loving challenge of her charge, held and sent at once. This means a woman gives each person a blessing and a charge, affirming them and lovingly exhorting them toward the good, so that each receives both the comfort of her blessing and the direction of her charge. The woman who gives the blessing and the charge both affirms and exhorts each loved one. The blessing and the charge are given to each person, so that a woman affirms them and lovingly exhorts them toward the good she hopes for them.

Words They Will Treasure

A woman writes her spiritual will knowing her words will be treasured and reread by those she loves after she is gone, so she writes them with the love and care such treasured words deserve. A woman writes her spiritual will aware that her words will be treasured, kept, and reread by those she loves long after she is gone, cherished as among the most precious things she leaves them, so that she writes with the love, honesty, and care that such treasured words deserve, knowing that a sincere and loving word from her will mean more to them than she can imagine and will be held close in grief and in years to come, her words becoming a lasting comfort and treasure. This means a woman writes her spiritual will knowing her words will be treasured and reread, so that she composes them with the love and care such cherished words deserve. The woman who writes words they will treasure composes them with fitting love and care. Words they will treasure are what a woman writes, so that she composes her spiritual will with the love and care such cherished words deserve.

CHAPTER FIVE

Living the Will You Write

Letting Your Life Match Your Legacy

A spiritual will carries weight only if it is lived, for the words a woman writes must match the life she leads, and the most powerful part of her legacy is the life her will describes being actually lived before those who read it. Understanding how to live the will she writes keeps a woman's legacy from being mere words.

Set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity. — 1 Timothy 4:12

The Will Must Be Lived, Not Just Written

A woman's spiritual will must be lived and not merely written, for words of faith and love ring hollow unless the life behind them has embodied them. A spiritual will is only as powerful as the life behind it, for the finest words of faith, blessing, and counsel ring hollow if the woman who wrote them did not live them, so that the will must be lived and not merely written, her life embodying the faith she professes and the values she commends, so that those who read her will recognize in it the woman they actually knew, her written legacy confirmed and made credible by the life she led, the lived will carrying a weight the written one alone never could. This means a woman understands that her spiritual will must be lived and not merely written, so that she embodies in her life the faith and values she sets down, making her written legacy credible. The woman who knows the will must be lived embodies her legacy in her life. The will must be lived, not just written, so that a woman's life embodies the faith and values she sets down.

Aligning Your Life with Your Legacy

A woman aligns her present life with the legacy she hopes to leave, closing any gap between the woman her will describes and the woman she actually is day to day. Writing a spiritual will invites a woman to align her present life with the legacy she hopes to leave, for in setting down the faith and values she wants to pass on, she is confronted with whether her daily life actually matches them, and she is moved to close any gap between the woman her will describes and the woman she actually is, so that the writing of her legacy becomes a spur to live it, aligning her present conduct with the legacy she wishes to leave rather than leaving a contradiction between her words and her life. This means a woman aligns her present life with the legacy she hopes to leave, closing the gap between her written will and her actual conduct, so that she lives in a way that matches

the legacy she wishes to pass on. The woman who aligns her life with her legacy closes the gap between her words and her conduct. Aligning your life with your legacy closes the gap between the will you write and the life you lead, so that a woman lives what she hopes to pass on.

Your Life as the Real Legacy

In the end, a woman's life itself is the real legacy, the living example that teaches and blesses more powerfully than any document, so that how she lives is the truest will she leaves. The deepest truth about living the will one writes is that a woman's life itself is the real legacy, for the example of how she actually lived, loved, believed, and endured teaches and blesses those who knew her more powerfully than any written document, so that her truest spiritual will is not the letter she leaves but the life she led, the written will serving to articulate and confirm the legacy that her life has already been writing, her life itself the real and lasting inheritance. This means a woman understands that her life itself is the real legacy, the living example that teaches more than any document, so that she sees how she lives as the truest will she leaves. The woman who understands her life as the real legacy makes her living the truest will. Your life as the real legacy is the deepest truth, so that how a woman lives teaches and blesses more powerfully than any written will.

CHAPTER SIX

The Ongoing Work of Legacy

Built Daily, Not Just Written Once

A spiritual will is not written once and forgotten but is part of an ongoing work of legacy, built daily through a woman's choices and revisited and revised as her life unfolds. Understanding the ongoing work of legacy keeps a woman building her inheritance every day rather than only in a document.

And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. — Philippians 1:6

Legacy Is Built in Daily Choices

A woman's legacy is built not mainly in a document but in the daily choices of her life, each act of love, faith, and virtue adding to the inheritance she will leave. The real work of legacy happens not mainly in the writing of a will but in the daily choices of a woman's

life, for her legacy is built up, day by day, through each act of love, each choice of faithfulness, each practice of virtue, so that the inheritance she will leave is accumulated over a lifetime of ordinary choices rather than composed in a single document, the spiritual will articulating a legacy that her daily living actually builds, her legacy made in the daily choices that compose her life. This means a woman understands that her legacy is built in daily choices, so that she sees each day's acts of love and faith as building the inheritance she will leave rather than only her written will. The woman who understands legacy is built in daily choices builds her inheritance every day. Legacy is built in daily choices, so that a woman's inheritance is accumulated through each act of love and faith rather than only in a document.

Revisiting and Revising the Will

A woman revisits and revises her spiritual will as her life unfolds, updating it over the years so that it continues to reflect her deepening faith and changing circumstances. A spiritual will is not written once and never touched again but revisited and revised over time, for as a woman's life unfolds, her faith deepens, her circumstances change, and new loved ones and lessons enter her life, so that she does well to return to her will periodically, updating and enriching it so that it continues to reflect her present faith and the people she now loves, the ongoing revision keeping her will a living document rather than a fixed relic, revisited as her life grows. This means a woman revisits and revises her spiritual will over the years, updating it as her life unfolds, so that it continues to reflect her deepening faith and changing circumstances. The woman who revisits and revises her will keeps it a living document. Revisiting and revising the will keeps it current, so that a woman updates it over the years to reflect her deepening faith and changing life.

Trusting God to Complete the Work

A woman builds her legacy trusting that God, who began a good work in her and in those she loves, will bring it to completion, so that she labors in hope rather than anxiety. The ongoing work of legacy is undertaken in trust that God will complete it, for Scripture assures that He who began a good work will bring it to completion, so that a woman builds her legacy and hands on her faith not in anxious self-reliance but in confidence that God is at work in her and in those she loves, carrying the good work forward beyond what she can do or see, and will complete in His time what she has begun, so that she labors at her legacy in hope, trusting the outcome to Him. This means a woman trusts God to complete the work of her legacy, so that she builds and hands on her inheritance in hope rather than anxiety, confident that God will finish what she has begun. The woman who trusts God to complete the work labors at her legacy in hope. Trusting God

to complete the work lets a woman build her legacy in hope, so that she relies on God to finish what she has begun in herself and those she loves.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Finishing Well

The End of Formation, the Rest of Your Life

This final book brings a woman's whole formation to its completion and sends her into the rest of her life, where the one thing that remains is to finish well, to live out her days faithfully to the end and receive at last the crown God has promised. Understanding how to finish well gathers up all a woman has become and points her toward the end.

Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life. — Revelation 2:10

Faithful to the End

Finishing well means remaining faithful to the very end, persevering in faith, love, and mission through all the days that remain rather than faltering near the finish. The call to finish well is above all a call to be faithful to the end, for Scripture promises the crown of life to those who are faithful unto death, so that a woman's task, through all the days that remain to her, is to persevere in faith, love, and mission to the very end, not faltering, drifting, or giving up as the finish approaches, but keeping the faith to her last day, so that she finishes the race faithfully as Paul did, her fidelity sustained to the end being the mark of a life well completed. This means a woman understands that finishing well means being faithful to the end, so that she resolves to persevere in faith, love, and mission through all her remaining days rather than faltering near the finish. The woman who is faithful to the end finishes the race well. Faithful to the end is the call of finishing well, so that a woman perseveres in faith and love through all her remaining days.

The Crown That Awaits

A woman finishes well in the hope of the crown that awaits, the reward God has promised to the faithful, which gives her strength to persevere and joy in the finishing. The one who finishes well does so in the hope of the crown that awaits, for God has promised the crown of life and righteousness to those who are faithful, so that a woman perseveres to the end strengthened and encouraged by this hope, not finishing in grim endurance alone but in the joyful expectation of the reward God has prepared, the crown awaiting her at the finish giving her both strength to persevere and gladness in the race, her eyes fixed on

the prize that awaits the faithful. This means a woman finishes well in the hope of the crown that awaits, so that she perseveres strengthened by the expectation of the reward God has promised to the faithful. The woman who looks to the crown that awaits finishes well in hope and joy. The crown that awaits strengthens a woman to finish well, so that she perseveres in the hope of the reward God has promised the faithful.

Formed, Sent, and Finishing the Course

A woman comes to the end of her formation as one who has been formed, sent, and is now running the last of her course, carrying all she has become into the rest of her life until she finishes and comes home. At the close of her formation, a woman stands as one who has been loved as a beloved daughter, formed in conviction, sent as an apostle, and is now running the final stretch of her course, so that her whole journey has prepared her for this, to carry all she has become, her faith, her mission, her love, into the rest of her life and to finish the course faithfully, the formation now complete and the living of it continuing until she crosses the finish and comes home to God, formed and sent and now finishing well. This means a woman sees herself at the end of her formation as formed, sent, and finishing her course, so that she carries all she has become into the rest of her life and runs faithfully to the finish. The woman who is formed, sent, and finishing the course carries all she has become to the end. Formed, sent, and finishing the course, a woman carries all she has become into the rest of her life until she finishes and comes home.

CONCLUSION

You Know What You Believe. Now Go and Give It Away.

The woman who has journeyed through this formation now comes to its end, and to the writing of her legacy. We have seen what a spiritual will is, a letter of faith and love rather than a legal document; why to write it now rather than someday; what to pass on in it, the faith she has lived by, the lessons and values she holds, and above all her blessing and love; how to write it personally to each one she loves; that it must be lived and not only written, her life itself the real legacy; that legacy is an ongoing work, built daily and revised over time, trusting God to complete it; and that the one thing remaining is to finish well, faithful to the end in hope of the crown that awaits.

This is the last of the thirty stations of the trilogy. A woman has been loved as a beloved daughter in Fiat of the Beloved, grounded in conviction in Magnificat of the Beloved, and sent as an apostle in Missio of the Beloved. The formation is complete. What remains is the rest of her life, lived as the woman she has become, and the legacy she will leave.

So write your spiritual will, and then live it. Set down for those you love the faith you have lived by, the wisdom you have gained, the blessing you bestow, and the love you bear them, a letter they will treasure when you are gone. But know that your truest will is your life itself, so align your days with the legacy you hope to leave, and build that legacy in every daily choice, trusting God to complete the good work He has begun. Carry all you have become into the rest of your life, and finish the course faithfully, in the sure hope of the crown that awaits. You have been formed. You have been sent. You know what you believe, and you know why it holds. Now go, and give it away, until the day you come home, and hear the words every beloved daughter longs to hear: well done, good and faithful servant. Enter into the joy of your Lord.



Your Spiritual Will is part of The Daily Bread Library.

The Everyday Apostle · everydayapostle.com