

LEAVING AN INHERITANCE TO YOUR CHILDREN

Are you aware that all over the world people love their children just the same? It does not matter what country it is in, there is something about the family unit that God blesses. He watches over it. There is so much going on in the world today that is an assault against the family. There is divorce. There is remarriage. There are blended families trying to make it work and maybe you are in that situation. Maybe you are in a situation where your spouse died and you are having to do it all by yourself. Maybe you are in a situation where your spouse is in prison. Maybe you are in prison and you are watching this show because I know there are a lot of people in jail that write me and say "I am watching your show. Can you send me a Bible?" Those of you that have watched and wondered why did you not ever send me a Bible? I tried to, but I cannot do that because I am not a member of your family. I appreciate you watching the show. One man watching this show that is in prison sent me \$2.50 on a money order for Pennies from Heaven. I cannot tell you what that meant to me. That man is really trying and really caring about people. He does not have to do that at all and he did. It is the same way about being a parent.

There are some parents in the world that seemingly do not care about their children. They are so caught up in what they want to do and the kids are left to themselves. Are you seeing that in America, Betty? Oh yes, I really am. Are you seeing it in Amarillo? Most definitely. There is a ministry in Amarillo called City Church and they are on Gods Learning Channel a lot. Those people are so nice. That whole family is caught up in doing the call of God, to help children, not only to teach them about God but feed them. They are in families that the parents could not care if they eat or do not eat. In fact, there have been times that they gave them Christmas turkeys and sent them home. The next thing they knew, a drug dealer was selling turkeys because they sold them to him or got drugs for the turkey.

There are people who have no desire to build anything into their children's lives. In the jail ministry that I had for ten years, one common thing I noticed running through those women's lives, no matter what they had done, it was always "I wonder if my kids are okay. Are my kids okay?" I have even seen young women who are living a very wild, promiscuous life and could not seem to settle down, nothing anybody tried to do to get them to settle down worked. They got pregnant. They were not married. They were young. The next thing you know, you see that young woman and she has a baby. She is going to college. She is working. When you what happened, she said, "I have a baby. I have to give my child a good life. I need to get busy doing what I need to be doing." You young women who are watching this show, if you are pregnant and you have a baby or two and you have never been married, I want you to know that God will forgive you. All you have to do is say, "Lord, I am so sorry. I did not do it according to your plan and I am sorry for what I have done. I give You my life and I am asking You to make something good out of my life and let me be a good mother or a good father." There are men today raising kids. There are grandparents today raising kids and that is what we want to talk about today.

How do you leave a Godly inheritance to your children? How do you leave any kind of inheritance to your children? It could be financial and that is great. You have to be careful with it. Sometimes leaving money to your kids is not a good thing because they did not work to earn it. They did not have to learn how to earn it. They do not know what to do with all of that money; and they squander it. Before you know it they are broke again. It is not always a great thing to do. Do you know who Ross Perot is? He is one of the richest men in America. On television, on the Larry King Show, he said "I am not leaving my children anything; nothing. I have already told them. I am not leaving you anything. I am giving it all away because I am teaching you how to make money for yourself. I want you to use that and make your own money." It is not always a great thing to leave an inheritance of a lot of money. However, I know somebody who is very wealthy with generational wealth. They have been very careful as parents. Even though this tremendous amount of money was coming to their children, they made a great deal of study and effort to train those kids to handle that money when it came to them. They will spend it wisely. They will invest it wisely. They will do good things with it.

We are going to talk about leaving a spiritual inheritance for your children. What does that mean and what does God want? Do you look back in your past and can you see grandparents or aunts or uncles or great grandparents, or did you hear about people who lived a long time ago in your family that were Godly? Some of you say, "No, there was not anybody Godly in my family, I'm it. I'm the first one." That is okay. It can start from you down, from now on. You are the beginning of leaving a Godly inheritance. Most of us though can think of somebody in our family who had a big influence on us. For a lot of people

it is your grandmother. Sometimes it is your mother or your dad, what a wonderful thing. My children always felt like their dad was a big influence. He is a very quiet person. He does not say much, but who he is just comes out. They have said many times, "My dad was a great influence on my life." It does not have to be words. I am wordy. I talk to them a lot and they have said nice things about me, but I am just saying that you do not have to be a wordy person to influence and leave this inheritance.

I had a grandmother that was very Godly. To me, she was really old, real old. But she probably was not that old, now that I think about it. She would come and stay with us each summer. We would make this thing called tin can telephone. You make it with cans that vegetables came in. You clean them out and put a little hole in the bottom of each one. You put a knot in a string, string it to the next one and put a knot in it. When you pull it really tight, no matter how long it is, you can talk through it. The sound travels down that string and they can hear you, no matter how far away. Somehow, some way, as a child I knew my grandmother was Godly. I remember summers with her; including tin can telephone, the quiet except for the crickets creaking and the great night air. I would pick up the phone and say, "Granny, this is the Holy Spirit calling. Granny." My Granny Jamison would have it up to her ear listening. She would put it to her mouth and say, "Hello Holy Spirit, Hello Holy Spirit." We would just laugh and thought that was so funny. How did I know to even talk to her about God? I was just about 8 years old. I can remember being in my grandmother's lap. She would rock me and sing, "What can wash away my sin? Nothing but the blood of Jesus. What can make me whole again? Nothing but the blood of Jesus." She did not have a great voice. I am not saying I have a great voice either. But those words went into my heart, and it is one of my favorite hymns. When I reflect on some of the most important moments in my life, this comes back to me. What a heritage she left for me. She was not an educated woman. She never went to college, but she was smart. I know that she was kind. She was good. I could not wait until my Godly grandmother came because I felt so loved by her, so loved, just that kind sweet love. I am saying that to tell those of you who say, "I don't have much money. I don't have an education. The other grandmother can do so much for them, what can I do?" Just by being a sweet Christian, you leave a wonderful inheritance to your grandchildren and to your children.

My mother had a lot of problems with mental illness, but my mother loved Jesus. She played the piano in our church. I can remember one morning, real early in the morning, waking up and walking down the hall to go to the restroom. On the way back I looked into the kitchen. There was my mother on her knees at her sink praying. I never forgot it. Even today, I can remember how I felt. I did not say anything to her. She did not know I saw her, but it made a big impression on me. The Bible says in Proverbs 22:6, "Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it." Many people say, "I trained my child up and they went wild." Maybe they are not old yet. It says "when he is old he will not depart from it." The apple does not fall too far from the tree. Many times kids will say, "I want to do it my way. I want to do what I want to do. I do not want anybody telling me what to do and I sure do not want you telling me what to do." Yet later they are serving God just like you are; they are in church, they are doing things for the Lord and they love the Lord too.

Praying over your children is so important. I will tell you something else that is important. Pray for the children that are not even here yet. Pray for your grandchildren. Pray for your great grandchildren. Maybe you are 20 years old and you are not even married, but you know you are going to be married someday. Go ahead and pray for all of them. It sets things in motion. None of us have any idea what is going on in our life because the people that came before us talked to God about us and had the desire. I did genealogy for a couple of years on the internet and met people I did not even know existed, second cousins. One of them that I met who lives in Mississippi said, "When my daddy died, he died singing a hymn." How do you think I felt about that? I thought that was the greatest thing. A man died singing a hymn. What a great thing to happen.

What are some things that you actually want to concentrate on leaving as a spiritual inheritance to your children? The first one is a personal faith in Jesus. You want to live the Christian life before them. They need to see you serving Jesus. They need to see it. You do not have to say it. They need to see it; and then they need to hear you talking about the Lord and how much you love Him. If you talk about the Lord and you are excited, your kids want to be a part of it. My son got saved when he was six and he was mad at me. He said, "Mother, I wanted to get saved when I was five and you told me I was too young." I said, "I am sorry. I just did not know you could do it that early." My daughter got saved when she was four. I saw her come under conviction at two and a half. How could that happen? I saw it. She began to be aware. She began to say little things about God that I know was from hearing me talk about the Lord a lot, praying with people. Anytime I led somebody to the Lord at the house they were always around and heard what I did. When my daughter got saved, she went down the street and got her friend Cody that she played with every day. She said, "Cody, you need to get saved. Come down here. Get on your

knees. Put your hands just like this. Repeat after me Cody. Jesus, I know I am a sinner and I am sorry. Will You save me?" He said, "Jesus, I know I am a sinner. I am sorry. Will You save me?" He became a believer. You can leave that kind of inheritance for your children.

Another very important thing is that they need to see in your life is an ability to know how to be submissive to the will of God. How do they see that? They see you become submissive. They see you and your spouse go through something and sit down and say, "We have to pray. We have to know what the Lord wants us to do." Whether it is which house to buy, which car to buy, which job to take, which town to live in, which church to go to, they need to see you praying and saying, "Lord, tell us what to do." You say, "My husband would not pray with me." "My wife would not pray with me. My wife is not even a believer." "I am in this blended family. I go to this church and she goes to that church." They can still see you love God. There is a way to do it. If your spouse does not want to partake of it, it does not matter. There is a way to say it that still honors your spouse, but they still see you being submissive to God. You can ask God, "Show me how to do this Lord. I do not know how to do this."

Another attribute that you want to build into them is strong character and great character traits. One would be dependability and another would be faithfulness. How would you build that into a child and leave that as an inheritance? That is those times that they said they would do something for someone; mow their lawn, clean their flower beds out and all of a sudden they want to go swimming. "No, Mom, I want to swimming. Yes, I know I told her but I do not want to do it." You say, "No, you need to be known as a dependable person so you need to do what you said you would do." They need to see that you do it too. Kids will follow what you do, even more than what you say.

Children need to be able to receive love and to communicate love. Sometimes people can receive it but they do not know how to give it. They do not know how to show it. You can teach them. You can say, "Mrs. so-in-so down the street that her husband is sick, why don't you go down there and shovel the snow off her sidewalk for her and do not even tell her you did it." Do you want to mow the lawn for somebody and make some money but you want to be kind to somebody? We are going to show them love by doing it for them and not telling anybody who did it. We will do it when they will not know, when they are gone." That teaches them how to communicate love. Love is caught, not taught. They have to see you doing it too, making sacrifices to show love.

Another attribute that is spiritual; it does not sound spiritual, is to teach them the dignity of work by not complaining or griping about work. So many people today, when you ask them, "Do you like your job?" "I hate it. I do not like anything about it. I just cannot wait until 5 o'clock every day." That is not the dignity of work. Work needs to be challenging. If someone says, "I really do not like my job." There needs to be a ministry they are involved in. They need to be looking for something else to do because work is of God. Do you know what Solomon said? He was the richest man in the whole world with more money than Bill Gates and wiser than anybody. People came from everywhere. Kings came from everywhere and said "Can I tell you my problems. Will you tell me how to solve them?" He would say, "Sure" and tell them. They would say "That's it! Thank you." He said, "I tried everything to find happiness. I tried everything. Do you know what I found brought me the greatest happiness? Work." The dignity of work is a great thing. A good work ethic has to be built into children. You do it by starting small. Your job is to take out the trash. You can even start with little kids about the age of three. You can tell them that everybody has a job in this house. Your job is to pick up your toys before daddy comes home. If you both work, the man and the woman work, then you have to say, "We have to clean up and straighten up so that we can have a nice peaceful evening." Before they go to bed, "Let us straighten up. Let us lay out your clothes for tomorrow and let us be ready to go. When they get older you can give them kitchen chores. You can give them yard chores. When they get older than that, you can give them even heavier or more difficult chores. Do you pay them? I guess everybody has a different opinion about that. Our opinion was that there are certain things you do around this house that you do not get paid for. We all live here. We all pitch in. We all work together. You do not get paid for it. You have to do those every day, every week. However, if you want to make some money and have some spending money, if you will do some other things, we will pay you. The strong work ethic is that it does not matter how hard a job or how long you have to work, just be glad you are able to do it and that you have an opportunity to do it. The dignity of work.

Teach them respect for all people, all races and all nationalities. The world we live in today is getting smaller and smaller; with the internet, mass communications, mass commerce that is global commerce. If you live in the United States, they are people of many nationalities, and they are all Americans. They may not look like you, but they are an American citizen. They know they are American and they say they are. They are proud to be an American. In my town that I live in, Amarillo, Texas, has a population of

about 175,000. It is out in the plains of Texas. I live where the cowboys live. I live where the land is flat, hardly any trees and you can see for miles. It is where the cowboys live. You would not think that a lot of nationalities would live there. There are 55 nationalities living in my town. You have to teach your children to respect all people. You do not teach them that you are better than everybody else. You teach them concern, respect and learn how to work with them. Enjoy them for how they are different from you. You want to expose them to significant people. We made sure that we always had preachers and missionaries staying with us. We wanted our children exposed to other people besides us that love God. We then took them to concerts. We took them to museums. We took them to hear great speakers. We wanted those people speaking into their life, too.

We taught them about personal integrity, honesty and to apologize when you are wrong. It is really hard to apologize when you are wrong, isn't it? It is so hard to say it is my fault and I am sorry. You can teach them to do that. You can teach them that lying is wrong. You have to get lying out of most children. Most people when they get caught or are in a bind, they want to lie. You have to teach them that lying is from the devil. Tell the truth, even if you get in trouble, tell the truth. Give them a healthy attitude toward sex. Do not allow television and the media to teach them all about sex and sexual relationships because they will get a totally wrong attitude.

Teach your children to be givers. Most people are takers. Most people want to keep their money and be stingy. Teach them how to be a giver. They can learn how to give. They can learn how to tithe. As soon as they start making money, we tried to teach our kids that 10% goes to God, 10% goes in permanent savings and 10% goes into saving for whatever you want to save up for. It could be more than 10% and then you can spend some. Teach them to be givers. Teach them to be givers into the Kingdom. Teach them to be givers to people who have less than they have.

Teach them to be servers of others. What a wonderful inheritance if you can teach children that life is about serving others. Someone said to me one time years ago, "Betty, you and Bill need to get in the habit of having people stay in your home. Read the Bible, Betty. It says in Hebrews to get in the habit of having people stay in your homes. Sometimes you entertain an angel and do not even know it." Learning how to serve others, meet others needs at an early point in their life, builds it into them and it becomes a natural thing for them to do. They do not even think that you do it any other way.

Another thing you can teach children is delayed gratification. Do you know what that is? We all want everything right now. "God, give it to me and let it come right now. Right now, God, I need it right now." There is something about delayed gratification that develops character in you. You can teach your children that you do not always have to get it right when you want it. You can work and work and work and wonder if it is ever going to happen. When you do get it then it is so sweet and it has built something into you. Many times, and I know you know this, in walking with God you have to wait. He is not ready to move and nothing you say or do can make the Lord move. He is not going to do it. One time I was crying and He said, "Betty, your tears do not move me." That does not mean that God was not compassionate toward me. It was not that, it was, "I love you but your tears are not going to make Me move. I am going to do it when I want to do it." You can teach kids delayed gratification. Just keep on doing the right thing and it will happen to you.

What else? Maybe the most important is that they have value to you and value to God. You have to teach children. "Do you know how much God loves you? Do you know how special you are? God only made one you in the whole world and He loves you. He loves you so much. He has a plan for your life and you need to get in that plan. You need to serve the Lord. You need to serve people and it will bring you the greatest joy."

What a heritage you can leave for your children. Notice I did not place an emphasis on money. I did not say you have to be rich. I did not say you have to be smart. I did not say you have to live in a certain country. I said that you can train up your children in the way they should go, and when they are old they will not depart from it.

Quiet Time Questions

1. What type of inheritance do you want to leave your children?
2. How do you leave a spiritual inheritance to your children (refer to Proverbs 22:6)?

3. What attributes should you teach your children?
4. Who could you pray for (even if they are not born yet)?

To watch the video on LEAVING AN INHERITANCE TO YOUR CHILDREN, Pillar Three, Prayer, go to:
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