

CREATE A

HOW TO SHARE YOUR WISDOM AND WEALTH

THRIVING

WITH YOUR CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN

FAMILY LEGACY

"This is a placeholder testimonial for Jeff and his work."
-JOHN SMITH, author of Book Title



JEFF ROGERS

ForbesBooks

**Create a Thriving Family Legacy:
How to Share Your Wisdom and Wealth with Your
Children and Grandchildren**

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Front Matter

Table of Contents

A Word from the Author

Introduction: The Wealthy and the Wise

SECTION ONE: PERSONAL LEGACY

Chapter 1: Roots and Wings

Chapter 2: Wisely Stewarding Your Family Wealth

SECTION TWO: FAMILY LEGACY

Chapter 3: Living Up to the Family Name

Chapter 4: Shirtsleeves to Shirtsleeves

SECTION THREE: FINANCIAL LEGACY

Chapter 5: How Much Is Enough?

Chapter 6: Death to Taxes

SECTION FOUR: BUSINESS LEGACY

Chapter 7: Business as an Engine of Blessing

Chapter 8: Handing Off the Baton

SECTION FIVE: KINGDOM LEGACY

Chapter 9: Living Out Your Legacy

Chapter 10: Investing in Eternity

Conclusion: Only One Life

Epilogue: Goodbye to Gram

Suggested Resources

To protect privacy and confidentiality, the names and some details of case studies cited in this book have been changed.

A Word from the Author

Of the few books on family legacy, even fewer are written from a faith-based perspective. Imagine a world in which families build for eternity with God's word as the basis for their stewardship. To encourage that growth is the goal of Stewardship Legacy Coaching™.

I am a Christian, and that faith is at the core of who I am. This book, though intended primarily for Christian families and business owners, is not exclusively for them. I am confident that those who do not share my faith perspective—and that includes some of my clients—will find here a compelling strategy for leaving a lasting family legacy. As an ambassador for my faith, I will be true to my heart as I share my story.

Everyone of any faith, or lack of faith, will leave a legacy, whether good or bad, intentional or unintentional, well-planned or unplanned. ***What will be yours, and how long will it last?*** In many families, the legacy ripples through a few decades at most. Other families, unwilling to accept a mere ripple, anticipate that their legacy will sweep like a tsunami through generation after generation. They want a legacy that will last for eternity.

What words would you like to be spoken at your memorial service or to be inscribed on your tombstone? How would you want your children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren to remember you? Imagine that you could write your own legacy. The good news is you can and that's what this book is all about. If you want to find out how to create an intentional plan for a lasting legacy, read on.

The number of financially blessed families in America is increasing as the builder generation and the boomer generation grow older. Many of them are examining what their family legacy will be. The elders need to prepare their heirs to become effective stewards of their inheritance and perhaps to take the reins of a family business. That calls for more than the transfer of wealth. That calls for a transfer of wisdom.

Wisdom is the reflection of virtues and values. Parents and grandparents often are less than thrilled with the directions in which their children or grandchildren are going. They sometimes shake their heads at the lack of character they perceive in the coming generations. Business owners may worry that their founding principles will be forsaken. They want to avoid "mission drift."

Family leaders can take heart in knowing they can do much to foster and instill those virtues and values upon which the family was built. Business owners, as well, can transfer the organization's vision, mission, core values, guiding principles, and culture to those who will carry it forward into a productive future.

You have learned many lessons in your lifetime. Perhaps a wise mentor helped you along, or perhaps you learned through mistakes along the way. The question now is whether you have an intentional and proactive plan to take those life lessons and that wisdom and pass it on to your children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren, or throughout your business.

Stewardship Legacy Coaching differs from traditional estate planning, which involves merely the transfer of wealth with the aim of leaving the maximum amount of it to the next generation. Traditional planning is about preparing the wealth for the heirs. Our emphasis, by contrast, is about preparing the heirs for the wealth. It is as much about passing on values as it is about passing on valuables. It is as much about passing on wisdom as it is about passing on wealth—perhaps more so.

I hope to inspire you with a new approach to building a family legacy that will endure for generations. We will be considering much more than your money and your stuff. The wealth transfer is certainly important, and we will be examining the legal, tax, financial, and technical aspects of building a strong family legacy. We will be doing so, however, in the context of wisdom transfer. Without the latter, what is the point of the former?

A glance at the table of contents will show you how this book is structured. You will see five sections that reflect the five major areas that we consider to be whole life stewardship. We will look at the personal, family, financial, business, and Kingdom aspects of legacy that together create a holistic approach to stewardship. Each of the sections has two chapters, with the themes generally organized into the issues of wisdom transfer and wealth transfer, although those discussions, by their nature, will overlap.

We begin with the need to identify purpose and passion in one's personal life. Why were you put here on this earth at this time in history? What is the mark that you are meant to leave? How will the lives of your children and grandchildren be different because of you? Will the world be a better place because you were here? Will you leave an impact on eternity?

In this book, you will see that I believe it is my calling and my ministry to help families build strong and lasting legacies. I will share with you my own story that led to that calling, in which I now have been engaged for over thirty years. It is my privilege to show families how they can generously release resources that will further God's Kingdom and support the causes that are near and dear to their hearts. This is my passion. It is what drives me.

We are accomplishing much more than just showing financially blessed people how they can give more to charity or just build "bigger barns." We are showing them how to build strong families of enduring character. I wish to serve and guide them, doing my part not only to strengthen families but also to spread God's word and help to fulfill the Great Commission throughout the earth. I have messages God has put in my heart. Come along with me, in the chapters ahead, as I share them.

—Jeff Rogers

Introduction

The Wealthy and the Wise

*Wisdom along with an inheritance is good.
... For wisdom is protection just as money is protection.*
—Ecclesiastes 7:11–12 (NASB)

Inside the front cover of the Bibles that my grandmother gave my brother and me when I was ten, she wrote, “Read Psalm 46:1.” This was a birthday present, but it was not my birthday, nor was it my brother’s. It was hers. That’s the way Gram Rogers was. She was generous. Others receive gifts on their birthday, but Gram gave us a gift, and it would change our lives and our eternal destinies.

“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble” were the words I saw when I turned to that verse. Gram Rogers knew so well what I needed, though I didn’t have a clue myself, and I wouldn’t discern the truth for several years. Gram had prayed that I would find the way on my spiritual journey, but I was far from it.

By age thirteen, I had become a juvenile delinquent in our rural New Hampshire town. My parents thought I was a good kid—and at home, I was. Outside the house, I not only hung out with the wrong crowd but was a leader of that crowd. The details are unimportant. To describe my wrongdoing would only glorify it. Suffice it to say that I made life miserable for my teachers, my classmates, the police ... and I found that the “high” of fighting and drinking and evil mischief doesn’t last. There are consequences to the choices we make in life, and I was about to discover them.

But then God, in His divine grace and mercy, drew me to Himself.

Seeds Taking Root

The seeds had been planted years earlier. From as early as I can remember, Gram shared her faith, not only in words but through the example of her life and her actions. I would tag along as she visited people in need, sharing the joy of Christ as she brought them groceries and other

necessities. For years she sold real estate and Avon and was successful, and with that sales ability she probably could have been rich in this world's goods, but she chose to be poor as she met the needs of others. She gave away much of her money. She lived out her faith as a model of joy and generosity.

Gram had a radiant smile, and with her red hair, before it turned gray, she looked somewhat like Lucille Ball. Though she knew the source of joy, there were earlier times in Gram's life when she wasn't smiling as much. The Great Depression had been difficult enough, but she also had married a mean man who beat their children, one of whom was my father, who left home at age twelve to get away from the abuse. One of my aunts took such severe beatings that she was emotionally troubled all her life. Gram tried to protect her children, stepping in at times to stop her husband, and he would turn his wrath and his fists against her.

Despite his ill temper, my grandfather professed to be a religious man, and he was the son of a minister who also beat his children. In fact, my father said the two of them were the meanest men he had ever known. It was because of my father's bad experience with religion as a boy that he was not eager to become a Christian himself. My mother, too, was raised in a strict and harsh religious atmosphere that made her wary of church. That is why I did not have the privilege of growing up in a Christian family. My mother and father did teach us honesty, patriotism and a strong work ethic. They were great parents in that way, but they didn't teach me about Jesus Christ because they didn't know Him.

Nonetheless, because of Gram's example I had an innate knowledge of God. I believed that He was who He said He was, and that the Bible was the true word of God and that Jesus was His Son. Once, during sixth-grade biology class, I spoke out boldly against the theory of evolution by presenting the facts of creation. Even as an unsaved teen on a troubled path, I knew about Christ, though I didn't know Him as my personal Savior. Even as I was going astray in my junior high years, I still embraced the truth. I was living a double life, and it seemed something would have to give.

It did. About that time, my best friend's mother started a youth group in the church of our small town. My friend, and partner in evil, had no choice but to attend, After all, his mother was leading the group. He had grown up in a Christian home. His father had been a police officer who found the Lord and decided to become a pastor, but then died in a car crash. My friend was just a little boy at the time, and his loss caused him to go astray. Nonetheless, he grew up in and around the church, with a mother who modeled the Christian life. As for me, I accompanied him to the youth group because he was my best friend, and because they did fun things such as bowling and roller-skating.

It was there that I first heard the plan of salvation; the good news of Jesus Christ and His loving sacrifice for me. I heard about his death, burial, and resurrection—for me! I learned that I would have to give an account one day to God for my actions. I knew that I needed Jesus Christ in my life. My daddy didn't raise no fool! I could fool my parents and the teachers and the police, but I knew that I couldn't fool almighty God.

One night at a youth rally attended by hundreds, I saw the reality of heaven and hell. I saw how far short I was falling from God's standards. The seeds that my grandmother had planted finally took root in me. She had shown me the joy of Christ and the example of generosity, but never had I confronted the consequences of my sinfulness. I knew that as things stood, I wasn't on the side of righteousness, and that would mean eternity in hell. That night, I became a Christian.

My life radically changed almost overnight. No longer did I feel proud to be bad. My best friend, too, got right with Christ that night. The two of us ceased to be leaders for evil in our junior high school and started to become leaders for good. The old things passed away. We began growing in Christ.

It was as if a revival were taking place in our school. Many young people came to know Christ. We began having fellowship with teachers who we hadn't known were Christians. Our school was experiencing a transformation, and I was eager to play an active role in doing God's work. Another young man who had been a leader in our group also turned his life around. Instead of hating people, we started loving people. Instead of hurting them, we began helping them.

Soon I was also seeing God at work in the lives of the rest of my family. The pastor of the church where I went to the youth group was also my school bus driver. Mel Jones was probably the friendliest man I have ever met, forever smiling and offering enthusiastic handshakes. After I began attending church, he would visit our home, and in his winsome way he befriended my mother and father. He heard the story of why they had turned their backs on religion, and he gently answered their every question and objection.

As I continued to grow in Christ, I wanted to be baptized, and my family came out to share that celebration with me at a little lake in New Hampshire. There, as the pastor proclaimed the Gospel, my brother, Brian, stepped forward. He became a Christian that day. About a year later, my dad became a believer at an evangelistic service at our church, and at a service a year after that, my mom became a believer as well. One Christmas, we decided to buy a new Bible for my other grandmother, Gram Humphrey. The family asked me to write a personal note in it, expressing our love for her and sharing the plan of salvation. Within months, she surrendered her life to the Savior.

"Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ," the Bible tells us in Acts 16:31, "and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." I was watching that truth in action. Though that verse was directed to the centurion, I had taken it as a promise and prayed that God would save my entire household—and He did!

"You Need to Come Home ..."

A few years later, as I was graduating from high school and determining what I would do next, I decided to go into vocational ministry. I went to Word of Life Bible Institute in Schroon Lake, New York, and was planning to go on to Liberty University and Dallas Theological Seminary. I thought that was God's will for me, and I had it all mapped out. Then one day, as graduation was approaching at Word of Life, I was talking on the phone with my father back in New Hampshire.

"Jeff, I don't know why, but I really feel like you need to come back to New Hampshire," he told me. I paused, taking in his words.

"Dad, there are no Christian colleges or seminaries in New Hampshire," I pointed out.

"I know. I just feel that way," he said. "I'm not demanding it. I'm not telling you what to do, but it's this strong feeling that I have."

He was my father, and I felt that I needed to honor his counsel even though it made no sense to me. I returned to our home in New Hampshire and got a job, and I became involved both in high-school youth ministry and in college and career ministry. At night I took courses at a local business college, and I listened for God's direction. It was 1981, and I was young, with so many years ahead of me.

One morning, a few months after my return, as I was brushing my teeth, I heard a noise from my parents' bedroom. My dad was in the kitchen preparing for his day, and he also heard the sound.

"Boys, are you all right? Was that you?" he called out.

"No," we answered in unison, and the three of us already were rushing to check on my mom. What we had heard, I believe, was the guttural exhalation that some people call the death cough, the sound of life leaving a body. That, at least, was how it seemed to me.

Mom was gone. I knew that, even as I rushed to dial for help from the head of our youth group, one of the state's top paramedics. He arrived within minutes. Meanwhile my brother, an emergency medical technician, tried to revive her. Their efforts were for naught. Mom had had a massive heart attack.

Even as grief gripped my heart, I felt a deep peace settling in alongside it. I had lost my mother, but I knew without a doubt that she was in the presence of Jesus. And I also knew then the first reason that God had redirected my path back to New Hampshire. He wanted me to be there on that day. Though my father and brother were Christians, they still were relatively young in their faith. In a way I served as the family's spiritual leader, offering support and strength in that difficult time.

At my mom's funeral, I had the opportunity to share the Gospel and the blessed assurance of believers that our loved ones who know Christ are with Him in heaven and that one day we will be reunited with them. My oldest sister reached out for the Lord at the funeral, and it was my best friend's mother, the woman who had started the youth group, who led her in prayer. My thoughts turned again to Acts 16:31. I had believed in Christ, and my entire immediate family had come to faith in Him.

Now let's fast-forward a year or so, when the day came that my father married the widow who had started the youth group where I found my salvation. In God's divine sense of humor, my spiritual mom became my stepmom, and my best friend became my stepbrother as well as my brother in Christ.

Such is what God can do. He can transform families. If your loved ones have yet to take the step of faith, never give up hope. He is still at work. Pray for them and live out your life faithfully in front of them, and God will reach them in His time. I have seen what He has done in my family, and His love can break through to your family as well.

Discovering God's Calling

God, as it turned out, had other reasons for bringing me home to New Hampshire, as I soon would come to see. His plan for my career was not the one that I had envisioned. As I was working and getting involved in youth ministry, another good friend introduced me to a company called Christian Mutual Life, whose motto was "Serving the Savior and the Saved." Founded in 1885, it had long helped Christians and churches to be good stewards of what God had entrusted to them.

I joined Christian Mutual Life in 1983, a couple years after my mother's death. What attracted me to the company was the uniqueness of its ministry. It was committed to not investing any of the clients' money in companies involved in abortion or pornography, gambling or other things that ruin people's lives, lead to bondage and destroy families. Instead, it helped fund the building of Bible preaching churches, and Christian schools and camps around the country.

I was excited about that mission. I liked the combination of helping people to be wise stewards while using the money for good and furthering the Great Commission.

God poured out His blessings. I was the rising young star in the company and soon became a manager and within a few years, a regional vice president. And along the way, I fell in love. My manager had asked me to join him in southern New Hampshire and help him open a Massachusetts office. While I was there, I attended his church. And there I met Cathy. Her mother ran the nursery, and her father played piano and was a church leader. Cathy had been in that church since she was in the womb. When I met her as a young woman, still in her teens,

I appreciated both her outer and inner beauty. She already was deeply involved in ministry. We went out on a date, and another, and a few years later, in 1986, I asked Cathy to marry me.

That was about the same time that the company asked me to open a new location, agreeing to wait until after the wedding. I was given great leeway on where in the country I would open this new office, with only a few exceptions. It was still a relatively small company, with lots of wide-open space where we could set new roots. Cathy and I prayed on it. We looked at the weather map and the demographic maps. And we chose Orlando. Immediately after our honeymoon, we headed to Florida.

We didn't know a soul there, but God again blessed our efforts. I started from scratch to build the Orlando office, and within a year, we were the second-highest-producing branch in the country, superseded only by the branch where I had started with my mentor in New England. In our many years in the Orlando area, Cathy and I have been involved together in a variety of ministries, both in leadership and support roles, ranging from our long time small-group Bible study, to youth ministry, to assisting ministries such as Compass--finances God's way, Campus Crusade for Christ, Wycliffe Bible Translators, World Help, and scores of churches and other ministries.

A few years after our move to Orlando, another company bought out Christian Mutual Life, and it lost the focus that had drawn me to it. The mission that had meant so much to me was missing. For me, this was the death of a vision. I was at a crossroads, and so I sought the counsel of what I call my spiritual board of directors: my pastor, my father, and a few other business and spiritual mentors. Separately but unanimously, they all said something such as this: "Jeff, God has wired you for this business and ministry. You need to find a way to stay in it and to make it work. We encourage you to start your own company."

And so I did. In 1992, I launched what today has become Stewardship Advisory Group. Later we started Stewardship Legacy Coaching, which is our family and business legacy coaching company. Over the years, I have had the privilege of personally serving many families and business owners, and of mentoring and discipling other advisors in our firm's offices around the nation.

Other companies that offer similar services are simply making estate planning more palatable for their clients. We strive to be different by incorporating biblical stewardship into our process. We help families pass on both their wealth and their wisdom. We assist them in planning the financial, legal and tax issues to effectively transfer wealth to the next generations, and at the same time, we help them become more intentional about passing on their virtues, their family values, their faith, and their wisdom. We call it ***effective Wealth Transfer combined with intentional Wisdom Transfer™***.

Before my father suggested I go home to New Hampshire and everything changed, I had thought I would become a pastor or evangelist. My studies were in evangelism, discipleship and ministry. I believe that God chose me for this work in stewardship and legacy coaching not

because of a background in finances but, rather, because He knew my heart. He gave me this passion for a reason.

Once I got into this business, I found that all the technical aspects came easily for me, but as a child, I didn't dream of someday becoming a family and business or Stewardship Legacy Coach. God directed my life for His purposes. If I had become a pastor, I might have touched, over the course of my ministry, a few thousand lives in a small New Hampshire church. But because of this work that I'm involved in, I've been able to touch hundreds of thousands of lives through the resources released to fund Christian ministries and churches! Wow, humbling!

In my career, I have prayed with clients and led some of them to Christ, although about 90 percent already are Christians. Those who aren't have generally come to us by referral from a good friend or relative who is a Christian. Our values attract them. We have seen many families become wiser stewards, and we have seen them healed from dysfunctions and difficult family dynamics. We have had the joy and the pleasure of helping numerous families and business owners build powerful legacies.

We also have seen a groundswell of what we call Kingdom Capital™, which are current and planned gifts directed to God's Kingdom. that have been dedicated to God's work. At this point, the Lord has used us to help raise over \$970 million for the cause of Christ. Within a year or two we hope to break the \$1 billion mark for Kingdom Capital, which has been a longtime goal.

For more than three decades now, it has been my privilege to serve the Lord both personally and through my career. Many years ago, one of my mentors pointed out to me that what we were doing was not just a business and not just a ministry. It was a business/ministry. I see it, as well, as my calling from God.

SECTION ONE
PERSONAL LEGACY

Chapter 1

Roots and Wings

We will not hide these truths from our children; we will tell the next generation about the glorious deeds of the LORD, about his power and his mighty wonders.
—Psalms 78:4.

<DESIGN>

Tom and Jane had reached the point in life when they were pondering the meaning of it all. The couple had worked hard for years and deeply appreciated the family and financial blessings that had come their way. *This is good*, they thought, *but what's next?* They were not thinking in terms of how to make another million. They were thinking in terms of eternity.

Both husband and wife had grown up in middle-class America. Theirs was not a rag-to-riches story, but it was a story of strong values and entrepreneurial initiative. The Lord had blessed them, and now, with two preteen children, their thoughts increasingly turned to their legacy.

As a boy, Tom had shown early ambition, making some money around the neighborhood by shoveling snow and raking leaves. He opened a Christmas tree lot when he was a teenager. That led to other entrepreneurial endeavors with the Boy Scouts and other organizations. He went on to open a business, eventually selling it and getting into other business lines. His financial net worth had risen to \$60 million, and then to \$80 million. In the previous year alone, he had made about \$20 million from the businesses.

Jane had been involved since childhood in ministry work and missions, and she, too, grew up with strong values. Neither she nor her husband had a wealthy background, but as the years went by, the couple reached a state of affluence far beyond what either of their families ever had experienced.

As Christians, Tom and Jane understood the true source of those resources. “What would the Owner (God) of all this have us do with it?” they asked themselves. “How might we give back to our community, and to the world around us, to make the world a better place? How can we invest in something that will last ... forever?”

As they thought back to their childhoods, they realized how much they appreciated the work ethic and values that their parents had instilled in them. And certainly, they were teaching their

own children, a boy and a girl on the cusp of adolescence, the difference between right and wrong. But growing up in such affluence, would their children embrace that work ethic themselves? Would they appreciate the value of a dollar? They stood to inherit a fortune someday. Would they be prepared to be good stewards of it?

The couple knew that a good education and a solid moral foundation were essential for success in life, but they realized that their words alone and even their example would fall short of what their children needed. They wanted them to have experiences that would plant those virtues and values deeply in their hearts. It was for this reason that a friend and mentor of the couple introduced them to me and our Stewardship Legacy Coaching process. They decided that our process was exactly what their family needed and engaged us to help them navigate these important issues.

It was my privilege to help their family design an intentional plan to build an enduring family legacy. With our encouragement, Tom and Jane and their children took steps that changed their lives. Those steps differ for every family with which we work. The strategy is not prescriptive. The best course of action will depend on the family's unique needs and goals. For this family, the transformation began with two mission trips.

The first was an extended stay in Africa with a Christian ministry dedicated to fighting hunger, poverty, and disease while sharing the good news of Jesus Christ. The ministry's focus is to meet not only the practical and material needs of the people but also their emotional and spiritual needs. It strives for a transformational impact, and that often is what happens in the lives of the givers as well as the receivers.

Tom and Jane and, more importantly, their children witnessed a level of poverty there that they never had seen before. They saw desperately hurting people, and it broke their hearts. Later the family took another trip, this time with a mission organization working in the Appalachian Mountains to help people in need. They had not realized the extent of suffering in their own country. To see such impoverishment of body and spirit was both distressing and motivating to them. They wanted to make a difference.

From those experiences, the family gained new perspectives. They have been supporting such ministries generously, helping to adopt a village and sponsoring children and schools. Tom and Jane saw a radical transformation in the lives of their children, who gained a greater appreciation and gratitude for their material and spiritual blessings. Untethered for a time from the Internet and electronics, they found that their games and gadgets held less appeal and that the needs of a hurting world around them were more important than these trivial distractions. The children (and parents) are seeing that their affluence gives them more than the ability to buy things; it gives them the ability to make a difference in the lives of those less fortunate.

In many wealthy families, the children stand to inherit a fortune, but will they be prepared to wisely handle those resources? In her book *The Golden Ghetto*, Jessie O'Neil defines *affluenza* as "the disease and dysfunction caused by affluence." Many families struggle with children or

grandchildren who have an entitlement mentality, slacker syndrome, or “failure to launch”—all of which are the symptoms of affluenza. It doesn’t have to be that way. Affluence can open greater opportunities to be a blessing to others when it is combined with wise planning, teaching opportunities, and life-changing experiences. We should use affluence in a positive way to counteract the dysfunctions of affluenza.

The experiences of those mission trips, on which they went without electronic gadgets and saw abject poverty and disease, also strengthened the family bonds between parent and child and brother and sister. Together they felt a depth of thanksgiving, and along with that came a keen sense of responsibility for the wealth with which they were entrusted and the blessings that they enjoyed. Their common purpose drew them together in a family spirit of generosity. They felt a responsibility to use their financial blessings and resources to help others less fortunate than themselves here in America and around the world.

The story of this family and their experience is just one example of how to fight back against the risk that affluence might produce in children a sense of entitlement that blinds them to the world’s needs. Families of wealth can use their wealth positively, but unless they manage it well, it can also harm them and those around them. You will find that theme woven throughout the pages of this book. Affluence is not wrong, in and of itself. The question is how we steward it, and how we use it. Is the money simply for our own consumption and enjoyment? Or do we generously share with others around us? Is there a purpose to our prosperity?

The Seeds of Wisdom

In Tom and Jane’s story, we see how a couple took practical actions to galvanize their family to envision a legacy. Much of this book will be about the importance of a family mission to preserve & foster family virtues and values. That mission, however, starts with the individual.

God gives each of us a life purpose, and we each are on our personal path to finding it. We yearn to learn why we are here. In the discovery of our individual missions, we can lead the way for others—in our families, and in our communities—to accomplish what matters most.

Beyond success lies the realm of significance. It’s not enough to get to the point of saying, “I’ve made it,” because that raises the sometimes unsettling questions of “Why did I bother?” and “Is this all there is?” The world’s definition of success—money, fame, power—fails to satisfy the soul.

Your personal legacy is the key to building a strong family legacy. You can discover your personal legacy by contemplating some fundamental questions. Why were you born into the circumstances in which you find yourself? Why has your life journey been on the path that it has taken? Why are you here, and why does your life matter? It often is not until people’s hair

is gray, well after they have found worldly success, that they begin seeking God's plan in earnest, asking what they can do that will last.

And thus begins the search for significance. I believe that everyone, ultimately, wants to live a life that matters, that has meaning and significance. The words of Augustine are most appropriate: "Thou hast formed us for Thyself, and our hearts are restless until they find rest in Thee." Or, as Blaise Pascal put it, we mortals try in vain to fill our emptiness, but "this infinite abyss can be filled only with an infinite and immutable object; in other words, by God himself." In other words, all of us have a "God-shaped" hole in our souls that only can be filled by a personal relationship with our Creator!

Our hearts tell us that we were put here for a reason, and in time, our quest for success turns to fulfilling that purpose. We are unlikely to find that fulfillment simply by sitting and pondering the matter. Instead we must be intentional and proactive. I often ask families whether they have a specific plan to mentor and disciple their children and grandchildren—that is, to prepare their heirs by making sure that their wisdom and values are transferred along with their wealth. Most admit they don't have an actual plan for that. They "hope" it will happen; but **hope is not a plan!**

Money represents our work and our efforts in the world, but when pursued for its own sake, it leads to emptiness. How many times have we seen examples, whether in Hollywood, on Wall Street or Washington, of people who pursued money, fame and power and, ultimately, found misery? Money, if not wisely stewarded, can harm family relationships. It can squelch initiative and work ethic in the lives of our children and grandchildren. It can create slackers with an entitlement mentality. Rather than empower, it can enable—and disable. However, when we transfer both wisdom and wealth, we empower and prepare our heirs to not just survive but thrive.

Money's greatest strength is in helping others. It matters most when it is a currency for eternity. Whether wealth becomes a blessing or a curse depends largely on whether it is dispensed along with wisdom. If the rising generations are to have access to that wisdom, it first must be born within the heart of the family leadership. The father and mother, the grandfather and grandmother need to understand what really matters if they are going to build a family legacy. How can the elders expect the youth to carry on values that they themselves have yet to define or expect the younger generation to live with virtues that they themselves are not living out?

Often it is in the heart of grandparents or great-grandparents where great wisdom resides. They may harbor deep concerns about the direction that younger people in the family have been taking. Often, people in their 60s, 70s, or 80s and beyond, are also the ones who are more likely to be thinking about the family legacy.

A legacy, however, is not always something that is passed down to the next generation. Sometimes it is passed UP to the previous one. I am in my early fifties. When I think of my

family legacy, my thoughts also turn to how my wife, Cathy, and I might serve our fathers, now that our mothers both have passed on to heaven. These days, people live far longer than once was the case. That presents a great opportunity to reach up to the previous generation, to serve them and love them in their later years, to hear their stories, life lessons, and experiences.

In whichever direction you pass your legacy, if you feel moved to take action, don't wait. Taking action will be your personal legacy. Each of us will leave one. What will yours look like? Are you sowing the seeds of wisdom into the lives of others so that they might someday bear fruit?

Clarity of Purpose and Passions

It's hard to answer such questions when rushing around with all of life's daily responsibilities, but the time comes when we need to hit the pause button and stop long enough to get clarity about our purpose. How do we attain that clarity? Here are some questions to get you started:

- What are the things you are most passionate about? What gets you fired up or brings a smile to your face? What are the things that when you do them, you feel God's pleasure?
- What are the causes that break your heart? If you could fix one problem in this world, what would it be? If you could relieve one suffering in your community, what would it be?
- What are the causes that you believe break the heart of God? If you could make a difference in those areas and be used for a purpose higher than yourself, what would it be?

The lack of clarity about purpose leads many people to a state of confusion, and they stall out. Instead of moving forward, they don't do anything. Clarity combats that confusion, and it builds confidence that we can fulfill our purpose. And that confidence in itself gives us a greater capacity to do more. Think of it as the four Cs: *Clarity* eliminates *confusion*, which then builds *confidence*, and increases *capacity*.

Though many people have found financial and business success, they still yearn for significance. How will they leave their mark on this world and on eternity? As has often been observed, people can spend a lifetime climbing the ladder of success, only to find it was leaning against the wrong wall. Sometimes, business people sacrifice their families on the altar of the almighty dollar, missing too many of Johnny's ball games and Suzy's recitals. They and their children look back with regret at the loss, and relationships suffer. The pursuit of success has, in many cases, led to failure in the things that matter most.

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Through the Stewardship Legacy Coaching process, we help our clients to go deeper and gain the clarity that will prevent such regrets. We help them to identify what breaks their own hearts, and what breaks the heart of God. They gain clarity, as well, about their passions.

Those passions often involve noble causes that will impact the world, their communities, and eternity, though often a big step is just to identify something, a hobby, perhaps. that will be a source of great joy and fulfillment. We can help them to see how they might use a hobby in a way that is more than just for recreation and enjoyment. It actually can build the family legacy.

I was talking with a retired client recently who told me he plays golf three times a week, and we looked at ways that he might use that pastime to also pursue a higher purpose. We often encourage people to do so. Often, a hobby or sport can be an opportunity to spend some one-on-one time with loved ones, such as a child or grandchild. That time alone with them is precious. Rather than just swatting a golf ball, why not ask what is happening in their lives, what they are dreaming about, what is worrying them. Then, while crossing the fairway, why not look up at the sky and talk about how it all got there. Who created all this? It's an opportunity to build an incredible relationship. It's golf with a higher purpose. Professionals often talk about business deals on the golf course, and that's all well and good, but why not talk about the much bigger deal of life itself?

Many such leisure activities, when shared with others, can deepen the human bond. Whether boating or hiking or enjoying a cup of coffee together, what a beautiful opportunity to get closer to family and friends, or to strengthen a marriage. These are the moments when each of us can share our story and the lessons we have learned on our journey. How natural to do so in the course of having fun. This is a transfer of wisdom, not in a preachy or condescending way, but while just doing life together.

At Stewardship Legacy Coaching, we also help couples to discover, or rediscover, how their passions and purposes line up. Husband and wife, created individually but joined by God as one in marriage, must stand united in defining the family mission. They need to be clear about where they are going and the family legacy that they desire.

On the other side of retirement, after the kids have left home, or after the business is sold, what is next? Many couples lack that clarity. Often, the husband and wife have been on parallel paths. If the wife's identity has been tied up in raising the kids, she now may be wondering what she should be doing now that the nest is empty. Meanwhile, if the husband's identity has been tied up in his career or his business, he may be wondering about his purpose now that he no longer is needed at the office. Their paths have run parallel but separate, and the challenge now is to come together to discover and pursue common purposes and passions.

Stripped of what they thought was their purpose and identity, husbands and wives often feel empty. As a couple, they need to find their common purpose and identity for the second half of their lives. As Bob Buford says in his wonderful bestselling book *Halftime*: "For the second half of life to be better than the first, you must make the choice to step outside of the safety of living on autopilot. You must wrestle with who you are, why you believe what you profess to believe about your life, and what you do to provide meaning and structure to your daily activities and relationships."

To that end, it is essential that husbands and wives get to know each other again. Divorces among older couples are rampant nowadays. Sometimes they divorce in retirement after spending forty years together. It happens, far too often, after the family business is sold. The couple has all that money from the sale, and they have a lot more time to spend together. But neither knows who the other is. They lack a plan for the second half of their lives. They don't have a purpose together as a couple.

“We’ve just grown apart,” they sometimes try to rationalize. Another way that they could look at it is that they now have an opportunity to grow back together. Rather than each of them venturing out on their own again, they could enter a marvelous growth period in their marriage. It’s not enough that they came together and stayed together. Now they must work together. That’s success.

It's important that we finish well. Every couple should ask themselves what they can work on together, in the second half of their lives, for personal fulfillment, for the pursuit of passions, and for the family legacy. What virtues and values will they champion as they travel the road together from confusion to clarity, from confidence to capacity? Together they can decide how to have an everlasting impact and serve their family, community, and God.

Inspiring the Ambassadors

Most people go through life hoping that the legacy they leave will be a good and lasting one. That is their desire, and the next step is to make it a mission to finish well and leave that kind of legacy. To be good stewards, we must make the most of our time, talents, and treasures to impact the lives of others.

We have so much opportunity to serve God’s Kingdom. God puts many people within our sphere of influence, including friends and neighbors and coworkers. We have the ability to touch a multitude of people. It is through our relationships that we expand our ability to serve. Each person whom we touch could in turn become an ambassador who will spread the good news. The essential questions for each of us on our personal journey are these: What are we doing to positively influence others? Are we cultivating relationships to serve eternal purposes?

The first and most important mission field is the family, up and down the generations: the children and grandchildren, the parents and grandparents. “You can give your children roots and wings,” according to an old saying, “or you can give them money and things.” Many people do too much of the latter even though they understand the importance of the former. Children need roots so that they know who they are. They need to know what it means to be part of the family, to be a responsible member of society and to be a patriotic citizen. And they need wings

so that they can pursue their destiny and find the purpose for which they were uniquely created.

If you could only give your children or grandchildren roots and wings *or* money and things, which would you give them? The good news is it doesn't have to be a zero-sum game. You can give them both. But I would submit to you that if you give them only money and things—in other words, if you transfer wealth without wisdom—then you will likely harm them. If, however, you give them roots and wings, you will inspire them to greatness (and they can earn their own wealth if they have wisdom).

You can leave a legacy of both wealth and wisdom—that is, if you have attained them both. We should manage our lives so that we are building a personal legacy that is worthy of passing on. As for me, I want my legacy to be this: I was a faithful servant and a good ambassador for Jesus Christ. It's a question that I often ask both individuals and couples: "Are you inspiring your children and grandchildren to become ambassadors as well?"

Sharing Your Story

Each of us has a story. We all can tell tales of life as we knew it when we were growing up, of how things were at home, in school, and with friends. We have memories to share about our first date and our first job, of triumphs and trials, of joys and heartache.

Do your children and your grandchildren know your story? It is an essential element of your family legacy because within it are life lessons that need to be preserved and applied by future generations. Along your journey, through your many experiences, you learned the principles and precepts of your parents and grandparents, and you made choices every step of the way that modeled those values. If you're like me, you also made some mistakes along the way, and because you learned from them, those experiences are important to your story as well. Just as you can show by example what your children and grandchildren should do, you can also show them what they should not do. Share what you've learned from both your mentors and from the school of hard knocks. Your children and grandchildren will learn wisdom from your life lessons and, hopefully, pass them on for generations to come.

Stories draw families together, and they draw the generations together. Something so valuable merits wise stewardship. What you have put in your memory bank is as important as what you have in your bank account. You need to be intentional about preserving those stories. It happens so often: The elders pass away, and with them go their memories. Their children and grandchildren recall only the outline of the story. They no longer can see the brush strokes that made the portrait of a life so beautiful. Those details were rich in lessons, but they are lost forever. A few generations later, the great grandchildren struggle to remember even the names.

We must share our family stories before it is too late. Tell your loved ones about the twists and turns of life that made you who you are. What does your family represent? What does it mean to be part of your family? Your stories can inspire them to take pride in living up to the family name.

“We will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord, his power, and the wonders He has done,” we are told in Psalms 78:4. And Deuteronomy 6:7 instructs us to talk to our children about God’s ways, “when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.”

“What’s your story about His glory?” the Christian songwriter and artist Matthew West asks in his song *Next Thing You Know*. Through your own testimony, you have the opportunity to share your faith. You can show how you have strived to live out God’s ways, and wherever you fell short you can show how you grew from the incident and experienced God’s grace. Your personal legacy is what builds the family legacy. By sharing how you discovered your own roots and wings, you encourage your loved ones to find theirs—and you help to inspire your family’s identity and destiny through the generations.

Questions to Consider

1. Do your children know your family story and the story of what it was like for you growing up?
2. If you could only pass on one thing to each of your children or grandchildren, what would you pass on to them?
3. If you could give your heirs only one inspirational challenge, word of encouragement or one piece of wisdom, what would you challenge them with?

Chapter 2

Wisely Stewarding Your Family Wealth

Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.
—1 Peter 4:10 (NIV)

Wisdom does not depend on the size of your portfolio or your net worth. Whether your resources are modest or abundant, your virtues and values should be unchanging as you pass them on. That part of your legacy, which we examined in the last chapter, has nothing to do with money.

Nonetheless, money matters. Your personal wealth is also an essential element of your legacy because of the good that it can do in serving the next generations, your community, the world around you, and the Kingdom of God. Family leaders are called to be good stewards in their financial affairs.

In this chapter, we will look specifically at whom we are best positioned to help accomplish that responsible stewardship and the types of situation in which our clients benefit from our coaching.

With greater levels of wealth, the financial opportunities and risks increase exponentially. More money can lead to more family dysfunction, such as feelings of entitlement and a lack of ambition and motivation—in short, the “affluenza” that can infect loved ones, as we saw in chapter 1.

That is why “financially blessed” families of relatively high net worth are likely to benefit the most from Stewardship Legacy Coaching. We call them financially blessed out of recognition that wealth and success come from God.

Often people like to think that they are self-made men or women who have pulled themselves up by the proverbial bootstraps. It's a reflection of the common American rags to riches tale and pride in one's ability to overcome. What we must always remember is that it is God who gave us that ability. He gave us the grace. Any opportunities that came our way were because He allowed us to have them. He arranged for them. Deuteronomy 8:18 says, “But remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your ancestors, as it is today” (NIV).

In other words, there are no self-made people. They just think they are. All our possessions, talents, abilities, and wealth, we owe to God, who deserves the honor and respect as the “ultimate” wealth creator.

In truth, God is the owner of it all. “The earth is the Lord’s and everything in it,” the Bible says in 1 Corinthians 10:26, and that includes us. We are His stewards. We are His managers. He blesses families in many ways, only one of which is financial. When families have built up significant financial resources, however, they need expert guidance in handling that wealth wisely to do good in the world. It should be used to help, not to harm, to empower not create enablement or entitlement

The People We Serve

Most, though not all, of our clients at Stewardship Legacy Coaching are Christians. They are conservative in their values and beliefs. Many are parents or grandparents who are committed to building a strong family legacy. Some are single, or their spouse has passed on. Some are couples without children and grandchildren but nonetheless place a high value on leaving a lasting legacy.

Many times, those who have begun to think seriously about their personal and family legacy are between the ages of fifty and eighty. That does not mean that younger people do not need to be thinking about their legacy. In fact, they should. The sooner that people get clarity and take definite steps to build a legacy, the better off they will be. They will be way ahead of the game compared with the person who does not get started until age seventy-five.

The clients whom we serve best have a net worth of \$10 million or more if they are single, or \$20 million or more for married couples. Often they have a significant annual income of \$500,000 or more. Many have made their money as business owners, real estate owners, farmers or ranchers and they want to be a good steward of their business legacy as well as their family legacy.

If bequests are made from the wrong accounts, for example, families can unnecessarily pay hundreds of thousands of dollars in taxes. Let’s say a couple has a million-dollar IRA or 401(k)-type retirement account. If the children were to inherit it directly, they would, typically, lose around \$400,000 and only get to keep \$600,000. If, instead, the children were to receive \$1 million of other assets, such as real estate or regular stocks or bonds, they wouldn’t pay any income tax on that (because of the step-up in cost basis). They would get to keep the whole million. From a tax perspective, it makes all the difference in the world which assets are left to the children or grandchildren and which assets are left to charity. If a charity inherited that IRA or 401(k), it could keep the entire \$1 million because of its tax-exempt status.

Some clients have highly appreciated real estate or other investments. They want to avoid the capital gains on their liquidation. Many of our clients also have valuable oil, gas, or other petroleum or mineral assets. The common denominator is that they are at a stage of life where conversion from growth assets to income assets is an attractive proposition for them and they don't want to pay any more taxes than required by law.

In essence, our typical clients are people who have a heart for stewardship and want to be prudent planners. They want to be wise in what they do. They feel a sense of responsibility that comes with their wealth. Often they do want to plan through what I call the **Lens of Biblical Stewardship™**. They are supportive of Christian ministries or other charities and either are already a major donor to a ministry or could become one.

We serve families that desire to create a strong legacy and want to go from success to significance. They are looking to find clarity about their life purpose, and they are committed to finishing well. They want to make a difference in the world. They want to have an impact on eternity.

And they want help along the way. Our clients desire a trusted relationship with a guide who understands both what is in their head and what is in their heart, whether it is for their family or business legacy or for their charitable endeavors. They want a coach who will work collaboratively with their other professionals in shepherding that process, and they are willing to heed the counsel that they get. They have faith in the future, not a fear of it, and don't just want to hear about what they could do. They want to do it.

Not everyone we work with has all those characteristics. In fact, nobody has all those characteristics. That is simply a description of whom we serve best and who might find the Stewardship Legacy Coaching process to be most valuable.

The Family Legacy Scorecard™

Often in getting to know clients, we help them to develop what we call a Family Legacy Scorecard™. It is an assessment by which they can assess how well they are already doing and where they might have gaps. The client ranks a series of statements on a single page from 1 to 5, with 1 meaning strongly disagree and 5 meaning strongly agree. I will share some of those here, and you can find a more complete scorecard in the appendix.

"I *can* / *cannot* clearly envision or communicate the family legacy I would like to create."

"My family is *aware* / *unaware* of the stewardship legacy I would like to create."

"I have fully prepared / not prepared my family for the wise stewardship of wealth."

"My spouse is / is not in alignment with my stewardship objectives."

"My current giving is / is not in alignment with my purpose or passions."

"I feel / do not feel a sense of true financial freedom."

"I believe / do not believe that conflict and/or unresolved issues exist in my family that interfere with moving forward."

"I do not have an understanding / I have a complete understanding of the tools, techniques, and strategies that can help me achieve my stewardship family legacy objectives."

"I have not clearly identified the barriers / There are no barriers that prevent me from fulfilling my passions."

Seven Significant Trigger Events

Often our clients are facing, immediately or within a few years, one or more major events. We call them trigger events. They want to wisely steward these events, which are likely to be the largest financial transactions of their lifetime. It might be a golden parachute and severance package from an employer. It might be the sale of a business that they nurtured for decades. It might be the sale of significant real estate, or other assets. In any case, our clients want to be good stewards of these events.

Once-in-a-lifetime events call for a great degree of wisdom in how they are handled. We have identified seven significant trigger events that the Stewardship Legacy Coaching process helps our clients to manage.

- **The sale, exit, or transition of a business.** We help business owners with their business continuity and succession planning. In the years leading up to that transition, many decisions must be made. Who will take over the business? Will it be someone in the family, perhaps one or more of the children or grandchildren? Have they been properly mentored and trained? Are they fully equipped and empowered to lead and manage the business? What if they are not interested? Might the company be sold to a longtime key employee or team of employees with experience in managing it? Would the best choice be to sell to an outside buyer? We help owners think through those considerations, all the while looking for opportunities to reduce or eliminate the capital gains or income taxes on the sale. A business truly is a stewardship responsibility that goes beyond the financial, legal, and tax issues. It's an opportunity to transfer both wealth and wisdom to the next generation of business

stewards and leaders. A business legacy, can endure for generations as a family legacy can—if wisely planned.

- **The sale of real estate.** We can help clients reduce or even eliminate the capital gains tax on the sale of highly appreciated real estate. For example, we recently worked with some people who were selling several million dollars' worth of real estate, all of it with a low cost basis, meaning it had appreciated greatly in value since they had acquired it. If they had just sold it outright, the capital gains taxes would have been staggering. We showed them how to structure the sale with several options to either reduce that tax or eliminate it completely.

- **Excess income over lifestyle.** If you find yourself cringing every time you write one of those quarterly estimated tax checks to the IRS, we can help you lower your income tax and increase the tax efficiency of your investment portfolio as well as your charitable giving. We help with both strategic and tactical tax planning, developing a long-term plan, and annually identifying specific opportunities to save money, from a few thousand dollars to tens of thousands, and even millions, for some clients. Many people are frustrated that their current advisors don't offer them tax-saving suggestions. Their CPAs may be good bookkeepers, accountants, and tax preparers but not as good at tax planning. Many tend to be reactive rather than proactive, telling their clients on April 15 of the next year what they should have done the previous year, *prior to the transaction!* By contrast, our annual Tactical Tax Planning process suggests ideas in time to implement them every year. Although we don't do accounting or tax preparation, we do actively help our clients save significant taxes. We like to work collaboratively with our client's tax professionals leveraging their expertise and ours proactively.

- **A large taxable estate.** The 2018 federal exemption for estate tax is \$11,210,000 per person, or twice that for a married couple. In other words, the value of an estate exceeding that amount is currently subject to a 40 percent federal estate tax. We work with families to reduce or eliminate the amount they must pay. Rarely do our clients, regardless of the amount of their wealth, pay *any* federal estate taxes. We accomplish that through wise planning. We zero out the tax. We do not simply sell them a life insurance policy, as some planners and life insurance agents do. With life insurance, they still are paying the taxes and probably don't like how the government spends all those dollars. Instead, we show our clients legal ways to eliminate the estate taxes. We call that Zero Estate-Tax Planning. Many of the wealthiest families in America do not pay a lot in estate taxes because they know the rules, amassing money generation after generation. A leading reason that family businesses, farms, and ranches fail to continue into the next generation is that they must be sold to pay the estate taxes. We help our clients stay fully informed about the rules and know how to wisely navigate them.

- **Large retirement plans.** People who have a lot of money in a retirement plan such as an IRA, 401(k), 403(b), or annuities will face a huge tax on that money when it is transferred to the next generations. That is the IRD tax, which stands for "income in respect of the decedent." Basically, it is the income tax that comes due on tax-deferred investments when

left to heirs. The amount of the transfer often is sufficiently large to push the children or grandchildren into the highest marginal tax bracket for the year in which they receive the money. Often they end up paying 37 percent. That's almost 40 percent of your retirement plan that could go to your least favorite governmental agency, the IRS! The IRD Tax is the "gotcha" tax that most Americans don't even know about. We show our clients how to eliminate the IRD tax. Tax-wise giving to charity can be a great saving opportunity.

- **Large amount of corporate stock or options.** Many corporate executives have accumulated stocks or stock options that have greatly appreciated, or upon leaving the company they get a large severance package or the "golden parachute" of a deferred compensation plan. For many of them, this will be the largest financial windfall in their lives, and they must properly steward it. We share strategies to reduce or eliminate the capital gains tax and to lower the income tax. We have saved many clients tens or even hundreds of thousands of dollars on these once-in-a-lifetime transactions.
- **Oil and gas holdings.** Another trigger event in which clients find our services to be helpful is their need to manage significant oil and gas holdings. They may be receiving royalty income, or they may wish to liquidate or sell an operating interest. We can help them attain a large savings on their current income tax liability as well as estate tax savings.

Anyone who is experiencing one or more of those triggers could benefit from Stewardship Legacy Coaching. These events and situations, if structured wisely, can contribute to building a strong legacy. Our clients have saved significant sums, gaining the financial freedom to pursue meaningful activities and to transfer greater wealth to the next generations and to charitable causes. By modeling wise stewardship to their families, they also have opportunities to transfer wisdom to them. Through tax-wise planning, they have been good stewards of the money that God entrusted to them.

Questions to Consider

1. How did you score on the Family Legacy Scorecard? What are the opportunities for improvement?
2. Do you have wealth in some of the assets that create trigger events and do you have a plan for wisely stewarding the future sale, gift or disposition of those assets?

Should you consider retaining a Stewardship Legacy Coach to help guide your family and business in building a strong and lasting family legacy and to create a plan to wisely steward your assets and trigger events?