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Legendary

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IF IT COULD SPEAK, the old oak could tell stories. Of animal lives, of passing folk, of seasons and years. It did speak, in a way, each summer stretching its limbs further than it ever had before, leaning into the wind when the storms blew, and shedding acorns now and then. All its knots and ridges spoke as well, not worthless marks on its perfection but memories stored of how it'd lived. Of children that'd climbed it. And insects that'd bored in, only to be removed by birds searching for another meal that day. At its base, its roots lifted from the soil and tucked back in, there was more of the story of time's passing. Backed away from it, where the road passed by, it looked weathered, aged, but that said more to the viewer than a thousand poetic lines. The tree's story was in the viewing, in the study of ages past, was found in its beginning and in its ability to last. The day came when the tree had finally reached its end, the buyer of the land decided to remove it, but he paused there with the equipment at hand. Many times he'd driven past it, many times he'd seen the sunshine through its leaves, as a boy, as teen, and now as the one who would take it down. "Are you ready?" asked the workman, standing on his left, and he nodded, though with the noises in his head, what he saw was not the ending at all but the future in the ones that he would plant.

King David had many sons, which sounds like an old Sunday School children's song, but upon his bed, too cold to warm himself, the one he gazed at

who would carry on his legacy was Solomon. It does not say his feelings, but they are reflected in the proverbs King Solomon has written, of the value of his father's wisdom and his mother's loving hand. David asked to build a temple to honor the God of Israel, but God had said it would come from Solomon in a time of peace and not of war. A grand edifice like Solomon would erect would be talked of forever, of the wealth of it, of the glory both in its appearance and the God that filled it. Yet, the wisdom Solomon gained from what his father asked of him held no monetary value but spoke of justice and fair judgment, of discretion and knowledge. Of actions correctly acted upon and words correctly spoken. There lay King David, who'd stood on the battlefield and defied Goliath, I come at you not with a sword and a spear but in the name of the God of Israel. David, who'd run from Saul, this way and that, and in one moment, had an opportunity to deal with him for good but because of God's anointing on Saul as king, he had refused to his own consternation. David, who'd taken Bathsheba in the greatest mistake of his life but had gained Solomon in the forgiveness, a son who would go on to become legendary.

Our lives are made up of days and years, of things we've chosen, of those we should not, but at the end of them, with most of them behind us, what we cling to is *the younger generation* whose bright faces stare back at us. We are trees whose branches hold memories, we are a king who gazed up at his son, and said, "Be strong and keep walking after God. Keep his statutes. Keep His commandments and His testimonies, that you may prosper in everything you do. That the Lord may

(Continued from "Legendary")

continue in His word concerning me, saying 'If thy children take heed to their way, to walk before me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul, there shall not fail thee a man on the throne of Israel.'"

That man was Jesus Christ, the King of Kings who holds the throne of Israel forever. And for us, we do good to take heed to these same words. Because from us, after us, in those shining faces are students, parents, leaders. Acorns barely planted at

the base of a road we've walked upon, who need all the guidance the older generation can give them. Of what to do and what not to do, of what we did do and, sometimes, what we shouldn't have.

But most of all, that in all of it, when our roots have been dug up and the stump ground down, when the new has been planted beneath the same blue sky, that it is the God of heaven who enabled us to survive it and live a long life of satisfaction, forgiven, valued. In those that follow us, who remember us, blessed.



A Parent's Legacy

Becky Combee

I love the words of the apostle Paul to the church at Rome. "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved." Although Paul was speaking of his Jewish brethren, I believe it is the desire of every God-fearing parent. We want our children to know God and to live continually in His will.

As young parents, Wayne and I wanted nothing more than to see Joel and Suzanne love God with all their hearts. We didn't want them to yield to the world's folly or the devil's confusion. But how is this possible? What is our part?

In time, we chose to go to a class given by a very wise doctor. To this day, I remember his advice and how the Lord dealt with us. The doctor counseled everyone to make their children independent. As I listened to him, my heart added to his advice saying, "and make them dependent on God." Our children must be dependent on God. They can live successfully only by following God's heart.

As parents we must *train up our children* in the way they should go!¹ This is the Word of the Lord from King Solomon whose wisdom shook his world. Many years later, the apostle Paul writes Ephesians 6:1, "Children, obey your parents." This places a responsibility on every parent to walk with the Lord and represent the fullness of His Word.

We always had devotions with our children at the supper table. When they became bored and restless, we put them in charge. It worked very well for us. One evening, the glory of the Lord

descended in such abundant measure that they both crawled out of the dining room. What precious memories!

Nobody is perfect! I'm sure I don't have to tell you that! When we make a mistake, we may not want to humble ourselves and ask for forgiveness, but it is the right thing to do. We certainly can't teach the great commandment of love if we do not practice it. Jesus said the first of all commandments was to love the Lord our God.²

We used to sing the old song, "Let Others See Jesus In You."³ In verse two we read, "Your life's a book before their eyes, they're reading it through and through." This is true of all relationships, especially family relationships. Our children see us, learn from us, and follow us. We must be an example. God's love must rule our lives.

We are never alone. God is always with us, teaching us and guiding us as we seek to be His ambassador in our families. He is in every home as we open our hearts to Him. God does not forsake us. You may be a single parent, but you can depend on God to teach and guide by His Spirit. He is more than enough.

Walk with God. Talk with Him. He loves children. He loves YOUR children and there is no challenge that overwhelms Him. Every difficulty can become the platform of success if we follow Him. If we walk in His Word, we will hear His voice and every dilemma that rises to a mountainous height will be brought low, and all the crooked places will be made straight.⁴

Trust God! Pray and obey! Your children are God's legacy to a lost world! They are the world's inheritance. Teach them and rejoice!

¹Pr 22:6 ²Mk 12:29-30 ³By B.B. McKinney ⁴Lk 3:4-5