

CREATING A LEGACY

Creating a Legacy of Remembrance

Joshua 1–4



LET'S BEGIN HERE

We all leave a legacy. It may be a good one, it may be a poor one, but without a doubt, we leave a legacy. Our legacy may not have the breadth of a George Washington, whom Americans call the Father of Our Country, or a Mother Teresa, the founder of the Order of the Missionaries of Charity, a Roman Catholic congregation of women dedicated to helping the poor. But to those whom our lives may touch, our legacy will be just as monumental. The legacy we leave will be inescapably vital to the next generations.

Legacies don't just happen. They don't fall out of heaven, materialize in the middle of our living rooms, or appear on our doorsteps accompanied by a knock and a note. Legacies *are created*. They require thought, preparation, and action. What we do today becomes our legacy tomorrow — either positive or negative.

However, a legacy finds its birth in the most unexpected place: the past. *Creating a legacy begins with looking back on where we came from and how we became who we are.* That's the purpose of this first message: creating a legacy of remembrance.

What kind of legacy for tomorrow are you creating today?

When the next generation looks back on your life, how will they remember you?

Will your children and friends remember you for having mentored them by etching your affirmations in stone and writing your criticisms in dust?

Such mentoring represents a fabulous legacy to leave behind.



LET'S DIG DEEPER

1. God Wants Us to Remember

You may sometimes hear people talk about “forgetting the past” and “moving on.” Schools and churches celebrate anniversaries and recount their beginnings, the struggles they endured, and accomplishments they experienced, while some grumblers may fold their arms, yawn, and complain that these churches and schools need to get over the nostalgia and focus on the future.



Quotable

Legacy isn't about us. It's about God working through us for His glory, not ours.

— Charles R. Swindoll



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Joshua 1–4

There's just one problem with shunning our heritage or cutting a new path that's as different from our past as night is from day: God wants us to remember. Having traveled with the Israelites in Sinai for years, Moses told them to remember four things, each of which remains pertinent for us today.

First, they were to remember the *way of God* (Deuteronomy 8:2). Moses also told the Israelites not to forget the *Word of God*: “Beware that you do not forget the LORD your God by not keeping His commandments and His ordinances and His statutes which I am commanding you today” (8:11). The third thing Moses told the people to remember was the *wealth of God* (8:18). Finally, the Israelites were to remember the *wrath of God* (9:7).

2. God Wants Us to Turn the Past toward the Future

People forget. We forget names, dates, facts, and details. We also forget both painful and pleasurable experiences. Without reminders, those life-changing acts of God can be lost both to us and to future generations. This human forgetfulness is compounded in times of transition—especially times accompanied by crisis or conflict, but it's just at those times that we need to remember.

Creating a legacy is not about us; it's about God working through us in amazing, unexpected ways, and passing His story on to others who will experience the same presence and provision of God in their own lives. Creating a legacy is the old, old story of God, retold and relived by each new generation of men and women.

3. God Wants Us to Leave a Lasting Legacy

Times of transition always bring challenges, and for the Israelites the biggest challenge they faced as they began their conquest was the Jordan River. However, what appeared to be an obstacle to them was an opportunity for God to demonstrate His presence. The new generation of Israelites that had heard the story of the Red Sea were given a reminder of God's miraculous power.



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Joshua 1–4

So upon leading His people into the Promised Land, God told Joshua to send a man from each of the twelve tribes to gather large stones from the bottom of the Jordan River to construct a memorial of God’s mighty deeds (Joshua 4:6–7). That monument of stones was to be a tangible, unmovable, and physical reminder of God’s presence and miraculous provision—a legacy to pass on to future generations. The book of Joshua gives three reasons for setting up the stones of remembrance on Jordan’s western shore.

First, the memorial stones were *to inform the children of God’s miraculous work* (4:6–7, 21–22). Second, the stones of remembrance were *to instruct all the nations* (4:24). Third, the monument was built *to instill a deep respect and reverence for God* (4:24).



LET’S LIVE IT

Today people are surrounded by memorials that remind them of their past. War memorials tell not only of sacrifice, honor, and bravery, but they also point to the pain, suffering, and loss that accompany times of national trial and triumph. Portraits, photo albums, and home videos chronicle special events such as weddings, birthdays, and anniversaries, and we return to these artifacts to relive the joyful moments of life. These tangible reminders are meant to do more than simply help us to dwell on the past. They’re meant to equip us for the future. This message should remind us, then, of two important truths:

- First, *individually, each of us has stones of remembrance that we need to gather and erect into memorials.*
- Second, *collectively, each of our churches has stones of remembrance that are visible reminders of God’s hand.*

What are some specific stones of remembrance you have in your life? What stones does your church have?



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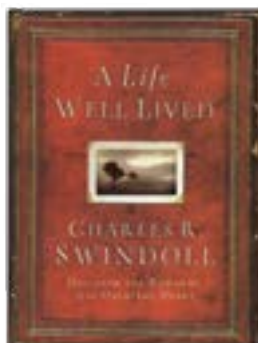
Creating a Legacy of Remembrance
Joshua 1-4



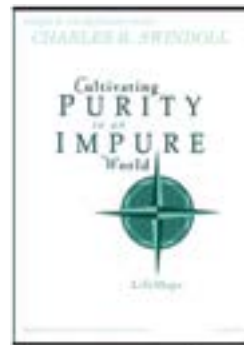
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