

TOBIN BELL

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A FATHER'S LEGACY



Devotional & Study Guide



Foundation

We've all seen the aftermath of earthquakes and the damage that was caused by them. Some buildings crumble while others are left standing. The reason some stand is because their foundation was strong enough to bear the stress of the earthquake. All the buildings were put to the test, but only those with the strongest foundations stood.

In a similar way, all men face stress in their lives. Some men are able to go through it, still standing when it is all done, while others crumble and fall. Standing up to stress means staying faithful to your spouse, being disciplined to go to work each day, working hard, and maintaining a moral and spiritual focus. Crumbling means you take the easy way out, giving up on your marriage, getting drunk or high, or even immersing yourself in pornography to hide from the stress. At some point in our lives, we will all face trials and storms, but my question is, "Will what you are building stand, or will it be washed away by the pressures of life?" The bottom line is what do you believe? And more importantly why?

A Legacy Minded Man, a man of God, is ruled by the book, the bible, the very Word of God! If the Bible is not his game plan for life, then he will fail. The gospel of Matthew speaks specifically about just that in chapter 7:24-27 but raises the question as to whether we have built our house on the sand or the rock.

Think About It

Have you ever taken the time to think about what you believe? I mean what you really believe. What can you do today to get closer to God and find out what He has for you? Don't delay. After all its good for the soul!



Pillar 1: Prayer

Legacy-minded men don't stay stuck in discouragement; they turn their problems into prayers and watch God turn their situation around. Yes, prayer is work. One reason men avoid it is because they perceive prayer as passive. But, when men deliberately engage in times of prayer, they find out that it's hard work, and many of them give up.

Becoming a man of prayer will not happen by accident. It takes training. Just like an athlete working on a physical challenge, prayer is a spiritual challenge that takes much effort. Even though it is hard, it is well worth it. The recipe for spiritual victory always includes prayer.

As men, we face a constant flow of demands, problems, and crisis situations. We have a choice to make—we can tackle these problems in our own strength, or we can pray for God's help. Just like a runner eating plates of pasta before the marathon, prayer is our fuel to keep going.

By establishing the pillar of prayer, you can bring God into every situation you pray about. On your own, you are limited. Prayer invites God's constant presence and infinite power to bear on your problems. It is also a key part of building the other pillars of your legacy.

God created us for his pleasure; he desires a best friend relationship with you. Your time with him brings pieces, parts, ideas and opportunities to be successful in life.

Think About It

What pleasure does God get from us praying?

What practical ways can we make in our hectic, 24/7 lives, to be with Him?

What rewards come from prayer?

Prayer is more than one person talking. What other piece(s) can be a part of prayer?

You make the time for things you have placed as a priority. Prayer is on your list, but what priority have you made it?

Why do we say “prayer changes things?”

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If prayer is both parties talking, it would be a great idea to bring a pad and paper with you when you pray. God loves downloading through thoughts, images and scripture that will lift you, inspire you, and answer you.



Pillar 2: Persona

Persona is our default way of interacting with the world around us. But, oftentimes our default persona is most clearly revealed in times of crisis.

Who are you in those moments? Do you default to anger or confusion, drinking or drugs, pornography or illicit sex? The truth is that without an established character, a good attitude, and a strong inner circle, the survival instinct will kick in and you may find yourself doing stupid things to cope with the pain. If you have the right inner circle and a strong personality, you will default to good character and a positive attitude, dust yourself off, and modify your game plan.

Tragedy and crisis hit all men. Your persona will either rise up to keep you going or crumble under the pressure. The fact is that you will get hit, but the question is, what is your plan when you do? When you squeeze an orange, tomato juice does not come out—only orange juice. It's much the same with all of us—when we are squeezed, the real us comes out.

When Christ walked into your life, his DNA began connecting to your DNA. His life is now growing ever stronger within you. This growth means that you and those around you should notice change in your life. Change that is moving to Christ and away from the old you.

Think About It

How has your persona changed since you started a relationship with Christ?

Can you sense areas that may not have changed yet, but you can tell Jesus is hard at work on them?

What are some of those areas?


If Christ lives within you, what are practical ways you can become more like him?

What are ways you can allow his graces (compassion, favor, forgiveness, kindness, goodness, and love) to shine through you?

What people have noticed about (or been affected by) your persona since you met Jesus?

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The kingdom of darkness is not afraid of Jesus in you, its afraid of Jesus coming out of you!



Pillar 3: Purity

When I was a kid, I told many lies because I wanted to be somebody—somebody I wasn't. When I was small, I was scrawny and was often beat upon. I was taken advantage of. Anybody who has had those experiences knows they play in your head. They make you angry and they cause you a lot of angst in social situations. I handled the angst by lying.

People lie because they want something they don't have or to avoid something that is painful. I wanted to be stronger than I was and I wanted to avoid the pain of being weak and inferior to those around me, so I lied. One of the reasons people lie is because it works—at least for the moment. Just like a house of cards, lies will stand up for a while and look good, but as soon as that first gust of wind hits, they topple. That was my pattern early on—build a house of lies and hope I wasn't around when it crumbled.

Remember, our legacy is our pattern. If our lifestyle is a mess, then our legacy—what we leave for the people who follow us—will be too. We will wake up one day to see our kids repeating or “improving” on our sins, making them worse than ever. In effect, we teach our kids how to sin. As legacy-minded men however, we need to see our own purity as a priority so we can help our kids avoid sin by leaving them a legacy of pure living. This includes matters of integrity and sexual purity.

God desires us to raise us up to his level by giving us his standard for our life.

Think About It

Purity is God's “moving in” system; he moves his furniture in and he moves your things out. What items is God changing on the inside of you?

You no doubt have experienced purity changes within you; how has your family, marriage, and kids reacted to it?

Sometimes we can wrestle with our desires vs. Gods desires within us. What struggles have you had?

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God's desire is to continue to make you, mold you, and disciple you to be more like Jesus. The more we yield to the Holy Spirit, the greater the changes.



Pillar 4: Purpose

Your path and destiny upon the earth are wrapped in two words—divine purpose! You are not an accident, an afterthought, or a mistake. You are part of God's plan.

Three things you can do to help you understand your purpose and achieve it are:

1. Define what you are passionate about. Generally, we are driven internally by a purpose given to us by God. What is that thing that wakes you up at night or the first thing you think about when you get up? Many times, our purpose is connected to what we are most passionate about.
2. Define what you are good at. There is a difference between a hobby and a purpose. Many of us love to do things but may not be the best at them! When you sit down and really look at your talents and abilities, that's where our life purpose is most often seen.
3. What trusted feedback do you regularly receive from others? When we surround ourselves with the right kind of people, they often give us solid feedback on who we really are. I am not saying to listen to everyone, but who do you have in your life that has experience and wisdom. I (Joe) have experienced that when I spend time with the right people, they actually see my gifts in ways, that I did not see in myself. I would not be where I am today without this encouraging feedback in my life.

It is important to have a firm grasp on both our general and specific purpose as we go through life and its many storms. These can act like an internal GPS to keep us going through the ups and downs that we all face. You were crafted for purpose. Identify it and put it to work for God's glory!

Think About It

Divine purpose has tools. What gifts, talent and dreams do you have?

Divine purpose is very valuable. It needs to be protected at all times. Have you had any struggles with who people said you were or weren't?

Have you ever experienced lost hope, lack of purpose, or loss of earthly direction?

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When you turn your life toward God's purpose, your dreams, goals, and desires come alive. You begin to see how important you are in God's eyes.

A photograph of two men standing on a grassy bank next to a calm lake. The man on the left is older, with grey hair, wearing a light-colored long-sleeved shirt and dark overalls. The man on the right is younger, wearing a dark long-sleeved shirt and dark pants, and is gesturing with his right arm towards the water. The background is a dense forest of tall trees, their reflections visible in the still water of the lake.

Pillar 5: Priority

A man who was teaching on priorities had a large jar and several large rocks. He placed five or six large rocks in the jar until no more could fit. Then he asked his audience, “Is the jar full?” and almost everyone shouted “yes!” He smiled and then pulled out a bag of smaller rocks and dumped them in until no more could fit. Then he pulled out a bag of sand and poured that into the jar until it couldn’t hold anymore.

Lastly, he pulled out a jug of water and poured water into the jar until it overflowed. He then paused and asked the question, “What was the point of this example?” The answers began to fly: “You can always add a little more,” “You should never be satisfied with the amount of things you are doing,” and “If you try harder, you can always do more.”

The crowd was pleased with itself until the speaker smiled one more time and said, “You are all wrong—very wrong.” He said, “The moral of this example is this. If you don’t put the big rocks in first, you will never fit them in. You see, we often lose in the areas that matter most because our time and energy are consumed on the little things and keep us from winning when it matters most.”

Many people cringed as they realized this was a picture of their overscheduled, under prioritized lives. Their lives were packed with the small rocks, the sand, and the water—their jars were full, but they were not doing the things that mattered most. Interestingly, you can skip your priorities and still seem “successful” to the outside world.

Priorities are the foundations that your house of life will be built on. They become life-goals that help set your path and direction.

Think About It

What are your top five priorities?

God loves replacing our priorities with his; are there a couple you'd like God to swap out?

What are practical ways you can make your marriage a priority? Kids?

How does your career fit into your list of priorities?

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If you haven't made a list of priorities yet, begin to pray and start writing out one. A great idea is to have a pastor or church leader review it. Where your priorities lie, time and finance will follow.



Pillar 6: Perseverance

In his first letter to the Corinthians, Paul writes, “Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize” (1 Corinthians 9:24). If we are to get the prize, then we have to run like we mean business. Giving up on small obstacles will get us nowhere, but if we persevere, keep our eyes on the goal, and keep running, we can experience that elusive place where success and purpose become one.

Unfortunately, many times we give up just when we should persevere a little bit longer. Paul encourages us, “Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up” (Galatians 6:9). While some of God’s promises are unconditional, many of them give a clear condition that we have to meet. Our side of the deal in this verse is to “not give up.”

Hardship is a part of life. We can wish it were otherwise, but the reality is that we all will face trials in this life. This is why Paul writes in 2 Timothy 2:3–4, “Endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No one serving as a soldier gets involved in civilian affairs—he wants to please his commanding officer.” To leave a legacy, we must endure hardship.

Paul uses the metaphor of the Christian as a soldier who is single-minded in his purpose and does not allow himself to get “entangled” with civilian matters. He is wholly focused on his mission and the battle at hand. Legacy-minded men need that same single-minded focus so that they are able to persevere during hardship.

Perseverance will see you through. Many times the first impulse is to quit and succumb, but perseverance gets you to the other side of that difficulty.

Think About It

Do you still regret something you quit?

Are there things now you're tempted to give up on?

Not giving up sounds great but what are practical steps to keep going?

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Non-enduring tools fail under pressure, but God has formed you as a tool that he can use in difficult situations that will get the job done and bless others.



Pillar 7: Power

Back in 2011, our house flooded from Hurricane Irene. In 2012, Hurricane Sandy hit and we faced the threat of even more flooding. However, something almost worse than flooding happened—the power went out for seven solid days. How do you survive with no electricity for an entire week? Fortunately, we were blessed to have a generator. Unfortunately, when I tried to start the generator, it wouldn't start.

After a round of troubleshooting, I asked a neighbor who is mechanically inclined to take a look at it. He came over, flipped the switch, pulled the cord, and it started right up. I was dumbfounded. I asked him what happened, and he told me, “You never engaged it. You had the fuse set to off.” Many times, when we want to plug into power, we fail to engage; we fail to connect in a way that turns the power on.

I had a generator capable of powering my entire house, but it was not functioning. Similarly, many men have faith in Jesus as their Savior, but his strength is not running their lives. Sin or unbelief is short-circuiting their connection to the power of the Holy Spirit in their day-to-day lives. They are not allowing him to direct and empower every aspect of their lives, which means there is no power. My problem was not in the generator, but in the connection.

There is a great difference between calling Jesus our Savior and calling him our Lord—yielding to his wishes and handing him the keys to your life. This is a tough thing for men to do, but if we could fully understand the power that this generates, then watch out.

Power is summed up easily in the person of the Holy Spirit. The key to our victory is to rely on him for everything!

Think About It

God is still a God of power! What miracles have you seen?

God is love, so His power works towards people. What practical ways can you release His compassion towards people who are hurting?

What are ways you can depend on the Holy Spirit more in your daily life?

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When your strength is gone or feels weak, that's where God's strength takes over.



The Final Word

A legacy-minded man is more concerned with becoming something than he is about checking off a to-do list. He is focused on understanding and not just an intellectual exercise. A legacy-minded man lives in two places at the same time. He gets up each day and fights to win the battle in front of him, but he also gazes into the future and lives in a manner that will build a lasting Christ-centered legacy.

God created you to win. Always remember that you are not in this alone. God is on your side, and so is an army of legacy-minded men. Jesus is the foundation, God's grace is the cement, and the Holy Spirit is the builder within those who rest in Christ's peace. Now that is a team we want to be a part of. How about you?

Life is funny. I often laugh that God has chosen me to speak to men on many of the issues listed in this book. This can be especially humbling because everything I am encouraging you to do, I got wrong at some point in my life. I'm not expecting you to be perfect, and neither is God. This, of course, is no excuse to purposely and repetitively do wrong things. The reality is, in my best efforts I still come up short at times. As a matter of fact, I still have difficulty dealing with things I have done. I know I cannot live in the past, nor can I change it—I can only learn from it.

I want to encourage you that, when you are not perfect, God gives grace. Grace does two things: it covers our mistakes and it also empowers us to do better the next time around. You can't do these things in your own strength—no one can—but you can do all things through Christ who gives you strength (Philippians 4:13). I get better because I refuse to quit and I refuse to settle. I believe you are a fighter too, whom God created to do amazing things. In fact, one of my favorite scriptures captures it best: "Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize" (1 Corinthians 9:24).



3 Takeaways from A Father's Legacy

1. The importance of Fatherhood
2. How the choices you make have consequences on others
3. Your Legacy: what are you leaving behind; what impact are you making on people?

Conversation 1: Sticks & Stones

We've all heard that saying "sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me." I'm not sure who came up with that, but nothing could be further from the truth. As a matter of fact, the reverse may be truer. A broken bone often will mend better with less pain than a broken heart or a crushed spirit caused by disparaging words. And there is no more obvious example than the angry and insensitive words that come from the mouth of a father directed to his child.

As dads, we are entrusted with the physical, emotional, and spiritual welfare of our children. When we disparage the God-given characteristics of our children, we place weights upon the development of their self-esteem, their learning capabilities, and their view toward the world and their place in it.

Men who have abdicated their roles as fathers are the single greatest problem in society today. Conversely, those fathers who have spoken words of encouragement and love to their children, mixed in with some good common sense, have sown into their hearts and minds the necessary ingredients for reaping healthy identities and self-images that have propelled them to success in life.

Notice that discipline and instruction are not associated with getting your kids angry. Just the opposite. God's ways of instruction and discipline are kind and gentle, achieving positive results in the hearts of children as they mature into well-balanced adults.

Basically, what fathers SAY will determine their child's way!

Question: Today, what one thing can you say to your children that will encourage them toward a positive outlook in life?

Conversation 2: Guys Like To Fix Things

Can you think of one thing you can help your child “process” when they are confronted with a life situation that overwhelms them?

Guys like to fix things. We are hardwired to make things right and I'm no exception. But sometimes we cannot find solutions, despite how hard we fight for them.

As a father, how do you respond to that? All I could do was just be there, hold her, and do my best to assure her that despite how “unfair” life may seem to be, I would be there to love her. My role was simply to let my presence somehow absorb her fear and anxiety.

This is why absent fathers leave a gaping hole in how children process what is happening all around them today. Being there is half the battle. The other half is simply (and sometimes silently) loving our children. That's what a father does sometimes. Just be there. And exhibit a type of strength not measured by how much you can lift, but by how much you can share.

Conversation 3: Believe

Proverbs 22:6 asks parents to “train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it.” That means to understand how your child is wired for a direction in life, and not to determine that direction for them. Though my dad did not know it, he fulfilled that verse by really saying, “Son, I believe in the direction you want to take in life and I want you to follow your dream.”

Conversation 4: Who You Are As A Person

Who we are as a person is reflected by how we interact with the world around us. But, who are you in the moment during times of crisis? Do you default to anger or confusion, drinking or drugs? The truth is that without an established character, a good attitude, and a strong inner circle, the survival instinct will kick in and you may find yourself doing stupid things to cope with the pain. If you have the right inner circle and a strong person-

ality, you will default to good character and a positive attitude, dust yourself off, and modify your game plan. Think about areas you need to improve on so that you leave a positive legacy on those around you. Have people noticed a change in your personality and responded to you in a positive manner? Remember, our legacy is our pattern. If our lifestyle is a mess, then our legacy—what we leave for the people who follow us—will be too. We will wake up one day to see our kids repeating or “improving” on our sins, making them worse than ever.

But if our life is aligned properly with our creator then transformation will occur. Why? Because we will understand that a Christ-centered legacy is not something we leave to people, it’s what we leave in them.

LEGACY MINDED MEN Overview

The biggest problem in the world today is not sex trafficking, abortion, drug or alcohol abuse, racism, corruption or even terrorism. Those are merely the byproduct of the real issue: men who have abdicated their role as leaders, husbands and fathers. That **IS** the core issue. **Legacy Minded Men** understands this and therefore exists to transform lives by engaging, equipping & encouraging men to build a Christ-centered legacy. The vision of Legacy Minded Men is to move men from being unengaged and apathetic in their faith to someone who is fully engaged and a man of action. Through our servant-based ministry we come alongside the local church or groups, both small and large, to provide resources to help build, or augment, their men's ministry. If done properly this will not only impact the church/group but the man himself, and in turn his family, workplace and ultimately the community he serves in a powerful way.

We achieve this through the [360 Legacy Plan](#) which draws men in and keeps them engaged. The [360 Legacy Plan](#) provides a powerful hybrid conference, followed by our free [Transformed Discipleship](#) training that culminates in men getting into facilitated [Legacy Groups](#). All groups are managed by the LMM website or app with all materials FREE of charge. Be a part of the solution, visit legacymindedmen.org.

Download the powerful Legacy Minded Men App for devotionals, workshops, trainings, Legacy Lessons and Legacy Minutes. It also provides for personal accountability!

