

Step 9 on the Stewardship Well Done Journey is LEGACY

*Engage a professional to utilize your estate planning documents and maximize giving.*

*“What you leave behind is not what is engraved in stone monuments, but what is woven into the lives of others.” – Pericles*

I recently had the opportunity to accompany a colleague on a visit to one of our clients in her home. Her husband had recently passed away and she wanted to make sure her estate planning documents were up to date. Before we got down to business, this sweet lady led us on a tour of her home. As we entered each room, we saw family pictures and learned more about her story – where she came from, what her kids and grandkids were doing, and how she was choosing to honor and remember the life of her husband.

In the course of our conversation, this client made a statement that has stuck with me. She said, “My husband and I will be able to leave a nice inheritance to each of our children. We thank God for His provision and give Him the glory. But He has blessed us beyond what we imagined. I would like to talk about what to do with some of the ‘extra’ blessings we have received.” She then began to tell us of her passion for ministering to children who are part of the foster system as well as single mothers. While no one used the exact word, our entire visit that day was about LEGACY.

Whether we realize it or not, we have all been influenced by someone’s legacy, and we will all one day leave a legacy. In the broadest sense, a legacy is anything handed down from the past. Sometimes a person’s legacy makes a huge impact (Billy Graham, Mother Theresa), but more often, it speaks to a smaller number of people. Sometimes a legacy is tangible (a wedding dress, a photo album, a veteran’s medals), but often it is intangible (a caring spirit, a life of service, a kind word). Your legacy will likely have many facets, including how you have stewarded the resources entrusted to your care.

By simply making it to Step 9 on the *Stewardship Well Done Journey* you are leaving a legacy of financial responsibility to your descendants. You may leave them an inheritance, but more importantly you are leaving them an example. You have said “I love you” by taking the time and effort to develop a life of stewardship and organize your financial life. You have made things easier for your descendants by having documents and provisions in place for after you are gone.

No two legacies are alike. Just as God has given each of us a unique calling and unique gifts, He leads us in different directions regarding our legacy. As you consider the culmination of your *Stewardship Well Done Journey*, what legacy would you like your finances to leave? For some, it may be important to set up each child for financial success or fund higher education for grandchildren. Others may have dedicated a significant portion of their time to a particular cause or ministry throughout their life and want to continue giving after they are gone. It is likely that your financial legacy will harmonize with and reflect other aspects of your overall legacy (love of family, a life of servant leadership, dedication to a specific ministry, etc.) There is no “right” answer to what your stewardship legacy should be, except to listen and respond to God’s leading.

It can be daunting to think about your own legacy. But the earlier you consider it, the more of an impact you can make. And you don’t need to do it alone. As you listen to the Lord’s leading, we would love to become part of your stewardship story by helping you use your resources to maximize the impact of your legacy. There are tools and methods available to help you give to family and ministry with tax-wise

strategies. Or to leave a gift for your children over time instead of in one lump sum. Often clients think they can only benefit family (to the exclusion of ministry) or only benefit ministry (to the exclusion of family) ... but there are many ways to benefit both effectively! You can even use one gift to provide for your family now and a particular cause or ministry later. Does your legacy include caring for someone with special needs? There are specific tools to do that well. Have you ever dreamed of having a “charitable checkbook”? We can help with that, too! As you listen to the Holy Spirit, let us help you build your stewardship legacy both during your lifetime and after you are gone.

*“We constantly pray for you, that our God may count you worthy of his calling, and that by his power he may fulfill every good purpose of yours and every act prompted by your faith. We pray this so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.” – 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12*