

Final Paper

Individual and Family Development

Dr. Wells

Terri Zungre

I was excited to think about what I would want to tell my adult children at my death. Honestly, I have only thought about the subject, but never put my thoughts into words. When you are forced to put your thoughts into words, the process helps to clarify what you believe. If I do not die a sudden death, and have the opportunity to speak these words, I pray these words would be well received by my children.

To my beloved children: I hope you will think of me with fondness, and remember these last parting thoughts. When my father died, I could still hear his words to me from the past, in my head. When I would say to him, "Dad life isn't fair, and I'm mad!" He responded with, "Well, you better get glad again, because you're right, life isn't fair".

I want you to know how proud I am of you. You both love God, and glorify Him in your lives. I raised you to always do the right thing, and you haven't disappointed me. Listen to the Lord, and do what He tells you to do. Pray your way, and always do the right thing.

There has been no greater joy for me in life, than the privilege of being your mother. We all knew this day would come. Death is inevitable. Our Lord has promised death does not get the final word. His word says, "Oh death, where is thy sting? Oh grave, where is thy victory?" (I Corinthians 15:55) and "He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces" (Isaiah 25:8). Even knowing this allow yourselves to time to grieve. We are Christians and have hope, but we still grieve. The Lord has taken away our fear of death by promising in John 14:2 "I go to prepare a place for you". I want you to know I will be there to greet you as you "cross the river". Think of how you came to my house for Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Easter. Remember how I would get everything ready by setting the table, putting up decorations, and busying myself in the kitchen cooking us a delicious meal for us all to enjoy. Think of me that way in heaven, getting everything ready until we can all be together again.

Now, just a few things I want you to think on. Try to always, "prefer one another" in love (Romans 12:10). You only have one sister and one brother, and nothing is more important than your relationship. Nothing should come between you. Your father was tested in this very situation over a large sum of money. Keeping relationships may come at a great monetary loss. Your father counted the relationship with his sister as more valuable, than the loss of the money.

Don't let hurts or disappointment in people become a "root of bitterness". (Hebrews 12:15) Your great aunt Florence was the most bitter woman I have ever met. In her declining years, she spewed bitterness about those who had wronged her. I vowed to never to allow myself to become bitter. Be like your grandfather who chose to forgive. Your grandfather and father have shown by example, what is to be a godly person, always ready to help a person in need. Follow their example.

I want to thank you for giving me three beautiful grandchildren. The joy of motherhood is only eclipsed a bit by being a grandmother. In prep for the parenting class I taught at church, I asked you how we as parents helped you to come to a relationship with God yourselves. You said

that we never compartmentalized Jesus to just on Sundays, but rather, He was a part of our everyday lives. We included Him in everything we did. Do this with your children as well. Your children are your most valuable gift and responsibility to the Lord. Children are always watching and listening. If they see you reading their Bible, then they will understand it is important to read their Bible. If you want them to be kind, let them see you being kind to strangers. How you want them to be, you model before them. Your kids will learn best by you modeling a behavior than by talking about it.

Friendships are another of life's greatest gifts. As you get older, friendships are important to maintain, because your children will be busy with their lives. Friendships become family. Jonathan, I know you suffered a betrayal through friendship. I would encourage you to not give up on friendship. You were responsible before God to love that friend, and you did. You are not responsible for how he took advantage of that love. So, do not worry about unfaithful friends. The love you gave them is all that matters in the end.

We are leaving you an inheritance, but never let your trust be in that. I heard a preacher ask once, "How much money is too much money in a person's life?" The answer was, "Whatever amount replaces trust." You both have proven over and over where your trust remains, and that it is in God alone. It gives me so much joy that neither of you ever gave us as parents a reason not to trust you.

Romans 13:7 says "Give honor to whom honor is due". According to this, everyone doesn't get equal honor. If someone has been good to you or shown you generosity you owe them. You have heard your father say this again and again, so I know this thought is not new to you. And I know you live this way. This is just a gentle reminder to always be grateful for what has been given to you.

Take counsel from those that have wisdom. Your father and I always depended on people for advice, and to bounce things off of, that we considered our counselors. Proverbs 11:4 says, "... in a multitude of counselors there is safety." Proverbs 20:5 instructs that, "Counsel in the heart of a man is deep waters, but a man of understanding will draw it out." Draw wisdom out of the wise people around you.

Work hard, but also take rest. Life is too short; drink it in. Enjoy every moment.

Stand up for what is right, and don't back down. Do not fear man. The only one you have to fear is God Himself. Put God first. He is the one who deserves your awe, respect, and reverence.

Love your spouse with a fierce love that is willing to lay down your life for that person. Submit to one another in love (Ephesians 5:21) Be willing to die to self especially in your marriage where it is the hardest.

Never compromise on principle; always compromise on preference. Give in to the other person's preferences, because we waste too much time fighting over things that don't matter.

Forgive or you can't be forgiven. Remember aunt Florence; unforgiveness hurts you.

True freedom is found in surrender. Remember our stories about Jim Elliott and his famous quote, "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose."

If you are not sure if you should encourage someone, I heard a wise person say, “If they are breathing: they need encouraged.”

If you get a chance to “give a reason for the hope within you” do it. Don’t worry about rejection. Go ahead and share your faith. You only get so many opportunities in life.

Lastly, do what you love and use the gifts and talents the Lord gave you. Looking back, I never regret time I spent in prayer, singing and worshipping the Lord. Do not let the busyness of life rob you of this precious time with your Heavenly Father. It is a way to give back to God and bless Him.

Until we meet again think of me waiting for you, and singing that song I always sang to the grandkids as I rocked them to sleep:

In the Sweet By and By

There’s a land that is fairer than day

And by faith we can see it afar

For the Father waits over the way

To prepare us a dwelling place there

In the sweet by and by.

We shall meet on that beautiful shore

In the sweet by and by

We shall meet on that beautiful shore.