

HOW TO PASS THE BATON SO IT MAKES IT TO THE FOURTH GENERATION

Pt. 4, tape 5 of 5

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I. THE FATHER'S PART IN HANDING OFF THE BATON

A. Traditions Are the Key

B. There are six principle ways to ensure the Heritage baton gets passed, and continues to be passed to the third and fourth generations.

#1: Pass on a Spiritual Legacy

#2: Passing On An Emotional Legacy

#3: Passing On A Social Legacy

#4: Passing On A Clearly Defined Vision Of Manhood

a. The Fourth principle in passing on a legacy or heritage, which we have metaphorically referred to as a baton or torch to our children and beyond, is a clearly defined vision for Biblical manhood and womanhood. I am currently using Robert Lewis's four factors for becoming a man¹ in our church because they so clearly portray the Biblical characteristics of maturity and godliness. I did, however, add a fifth one, which Lewis covers in his book but not as one of the four factors (transcendent cause). The 5 factors that undergird and clearly define the vision of authentic Christian manhood are:

- i. **Rejects Passivity** (encourage your children to take the initiative, especially in matters of right and wrong)
- Counters the sin of Adam – Genesis 3:6
 - Why does the bible command men to do such things as love their wives, be morally pure, lead other men to be godly and build God's Kingdom? It is because men have been passed a fallen nature that actually tends to shy away from their moral responsibilities.
 - Yale scientist Stephen Clark reported: "Men have a natural tendency to avoid social responsibility."
 - It is a fact that that a vibrant, forceful, enthusiastic and passionate biblical vision of true manhood will, if brought forth consistently,

¹ Robert Lewis, RAISING A MODERN DAY KNIGHT

and modeled consistently by the men in the church, counter the pattern of moral passivity in men.

- As it stands today, our society needs men who will stand for moral absolutes.
- Jesus initiated! He wept some, and he whipped some. He wasn't just filled with sympathy over the plight of the weak, needy, and leaderless. Over and over the Bible records for us how our Lord was "moved with compassion" and intervened in the affairs of men.
- He refused to stand idly by, or turn away, when sin and evil encroached upon his world. Jesus Christ, whom the Bible calls the second Adam, was spiritually and socially aggressive, and He has passed on His nature to every one who has believed on Him unto eternal life.
- Robert Lewis has said that we can see more manhood in the manger of a Jesus than in the garden with Adam.² In that little shelter for animals, Jesus willingly was born into poverty, willingly leaving His Father's throne and all the rights and privileges of being the second person of the trinity, refusing to stand idly by in the comfort zone of his heavenly throne room, but took on himself flesh and blood and the role of a servant, even to the point of sacrificing his mortal life to solve the problem created by sin.
- And the Bible commands us to have the same attitude in us that was in Jesus (Philippians 2:5-8)
- We want to pass on to our sons and daughters the conviction that real manhood begins with a decision to reject social and spiritual passivity in a society where doing nothing, saving yourself, hesitating, analyzing, etc, is the more comfortable and safer option.
- We want our daughters to be so in tune with this that they find themselves sickened and nauseated by passive masculinity that lacks conviction and passion and decisive action.
- We want to pass such a legacy of manhood to our sons, that they both have eyes to see the world around them and the suffering and need that is there, and the moral fortitude and courage and valor to step toward with a mind to redeem and restore. (Ben; Shakinah; Nic)

- ii. **Accepts Responsibility** (you need to allow your children to grow up and handle their responsibilities, and master new challenges without rescuing them every time; what they start, make them finish without help or rescuing; if they break something or spill something, make them pick up the mess and pay for what they break; create age

² Ibid, p. 53

appropriate standards of responsibility, call them to commitment in those areas, and then hold them accountable to follow through)

iii. **Leads Courageously** (don't expect others to be self-motivated; lead them; call them to commitment; not all are called or gifted to be visionary leaders. Some do best when they are part of a team and come alongside of a visionary leader and help bring his vision to fruition. Still, they are leading in their god-given area every time they roll up their sleeves and take initiative to bring a thing together)

iv. **Competes for a heavenly Reward** (this includes earthly benefits along the way, like an honorable name, respect and admiration of your wife and children, children who bring honor to you and your wife and Christ's church, the respect of other's in your community, innumerable experiences of God's blessings in your life, and a growing satisfaction about your life)

- **Hebrews 11:24-26**

²⁴By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. ²⁵He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time. ²⁶He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward."

- **Hebrews 12:1-2**

¹Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. ²Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. ³Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart."

- **John 10:10**

¹⁰The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full."

- **1 Corinthians 2:9**

*"Eye has not seen, nor ear heard,
Nor have entered into the heart of man
The things which God has prepared for those who love Him."*

v. **Embraces the Transcendent Cause** (the big picture; the chief thing; the best thing)

- According to Robert Lewis, the one thing that is missing in most men's lives today is answered in three

words: ***a transcendent cause***. The way to transcend the spirit-depleting lie that tries to tell us that our lives are irrelevant is to live and behave consistently, and according to **a transcendent code of conduct** as we compete for a heavenly reward. This will ensure that what you do will live beyond the moment, and survive you well into the next three to four generations. Remember: it isn't how well you start, but how well you finish the race that matters. It should be the goal of every man and of every husband and father to finish well, and leave a legacy to their children of finishing well.

- Lets face it, nothing wears a man's identity down more than mediocrity, and low expectations. Greatness and valor need to be called out of a man.
- So much of our lives are lived doing common, ordinary things. Day in and day out. From sun rise to sunset. Our weekly schedule does anything but stir up in us a sense of high purpose.
- Ah but you see, a transcendent cause is exactly what men need to summon them to something more noble and higher than mere day to day existence.
- A transcendent cause is a purpose or a mission that lifts us above and beyond ourselves. It stirs the passion in us to sacrifice ourselves in order to contribute to something bigger than ourselves.
- It is not something we do in addition to everything else, but it is the one factor that motivates and gives impulse and impetus to everything else we do.
- It is the launch pad from which we spring into action, and the garage into which we park the completions of what we do and who we are.
- Many launch out like a rocket to do something noble and worthwhile only to burn up as soon as they hit the ozone. In other words, many start well but unfortunately, only a few finish well. Few compete in the race to the point where they are able at the end to park the car of perseverance, endurance and integrity into the garage of legacy and heritage.
- If we are going to finish strong, men, we must discover and commit ourselves to a life focus. We must be about doing what we were put on the planet to do.
- Whatever you think you might have been before you became a father biologically or through adoption, once you assumed the role of fatherhood, being a

committed and involved father became the one principle thing by which you will be defined within the parameters of success or failure by the people who matter the most to you: your wives, your children, and Almighty God.

- And remember this: someone said that **the thing that most gets in the way of greatness is being content with being good at something**. I'm not interested in helping mediocre dads or poor dads become good dads. I want coach you to be great dads.
- Knighthood is not achieved by those who compete for what is good, but for what is great; not for what is better, but what is best; not for other things, but for the one thing. Could it be that the greatest enemy you facing in becoming a great dad is that you are content at being a good dad? Think about it a second.
- Let me tell you a story from one of the Gospel of Luke. Jesus was invited to a banquet held in his honor at the home of his close friends, Mary and Martha. Martha had become perturbed at her sister, Mary, who, while Martha was frantically trying to prepare for her dinner guests, had chosen to attend an impromptu Bible study Jesus was conducting.
- So Martha complained to Jesus about Mary. Follow me? When comparing Mary to her sister Martha, Jesus told Martha that she was anxious and preoccupied with things that didn't matter in the wide scheme of things. But Mary, who had ignored the hustle and bustle of meal-making and table-setting, had been preoccupied by what Jesus was teaching.
- Luke tells us Mary had been sitting at Jesus' feet listening to every word He spoke.³ Martha, on the other hand, was distracted from what Jesus was saying for reasons I've already mentioned.
- Which one of these endeavors was the most important thing, do you think? It's obvious isn't it? Yes, people were hungry and needed to eat. But Jesus had taught that people didn't subsist on bread alone, but had a greater need: to listen and obey every word that God spoke to them.⁴
- Jesus brought home His point by telling Martha that, while she had allowed herself to be distracted by

³ Luke 10:39

⁴ Matthew 4:4-5

worrying about secondary issues, **“only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better...”**⁵

- Men, have you chosen what is better? The apostle Paul said **“... one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.”**
 - Every man needs to properly ascertain what the “one thing” is. It should be the thing that defines him more than his defining it. It needs to be something that transcends him and the world. It must transcend his children and their children, etc...
 - A transcendent cause gives meaning and direction to our life, and the living out and the spending of our lives.
 - A transcendent cause involves us in things that are truly heroic, timeless, and supremely meaningful and enduring.
 - A transcendent cause is not just the imparting of financial and business savvy, but the teaching, modeling and imparting of moral underpinnings that determine how a person handles themselves financially and in stewardship.
 - A transcendent cause is not merely training our children to be socially successful, but to live both domestic and spiritually significant lives.
 - A transcendent cause demands that we not just give to our children the good things, but the best things. The one thing.
- b. Once a Father internalizes these principles for authentic Biblical Manhood, he must begin outlining how he will pass these values to his children. We have already talked at length about the need for a father to embrace the process of knighthood and the need to incorporate a knight’s code of conduct in his own actions and behavior. Like everything else we intend to continue to be passed on, these 5 factors need to be modeled, caught and taught in the moment, as life happens.

#5: Incorporate Ceremony, Rites of Passage, meaningful Symbols and Heraldry

- a. The fifth principle that will help ensure your philosophy of Biblical manhood is passed down to your future descendants, is to incorporate Rites of Passage, which

⁵ Luke 10:41-42

include the use of Heraldry, symbols, meaningful jewelry, formal ceremony, creeds and crests, and a celebratory feast. These are important mostly because they help the individual **remember** the time, place and people involved in the rite of passage. They also have a **sealing** influence on both the individual going through them, as well as the participants who witness the event. Again, Deuteronomy 6 agrees with this concept (spikes on an etc)

- b. Such ceremonies are common in our church, and I have to tell you, they are the highlights of my ministry. I have witnessed on many occasions, a tangible physical change come over a teenager on their rite of passage ceremony, where boys are presented with an actual fighting sword of their choice, and girls - some other significant piece of jewelry appropriate as a symbol for the sealing of the occasion and it's emphasis.
- c. As the charges and Troths of the Rite of Passage ceremony are read, and they answer in the affirmative each charge, a look of determination comes over these kids. With their eyes set, they obviously take such moments seriously because they have paid a price for the right to be acknowledged. They have embraced the proverbial truth "humility comes before honor."⁶ On almost every occasion, since starting the process of knighthood in our church many years ago, I have seen our philosophy of bringing our children to early maturity take place. It is amazing the depth of devotion and the severity of faith and discipline that these kids have.
- d. Such rites of passage are needed today to **mark the passages** of time between childhood, through adolescence and into adulthood. And these ceremonies must be done in such a way that they will never be forgotten. Keep in mind that ceremonies and rites of passage are supposed to be adequately costly and well planned if they are to be both memorable and valued. The costliness of them points to both the value of the person being honored, their accomplishments, their uncommon commitment to moral and spiritual excellence, and the seriousness of what is being conferred and bestowed upon them.

⁶ Proverbs 15:33b

- e. Each family will of course, have to determine what they can afford to spend on each occasion, but with the view that **the cost involved attaches value to the person and calls attention to the honor due them for their accomplishments.** To not take the necessary time to adequately plan on and budget for such important events is to inadvertently say to your youth that he/she and it, the ceremony and rite of passage, aren't very valuable to you.
- f. The signet ring, the hoopa (a canopy of blessing and tradition) and coronet, as well as cedar chests, serve as lasting symbols that outline one's legacy and pass it on.

#6: Be Part of a Fraternity of Like-Minded Men

- a. Every man needs to align himself with a band of brothers, a fraternity or community of godly men.
- b. Listen dads, if your boy is to become a real man, and your girl a real lady, you are going to have to enlist the help of a community of men and their wives.
- c. It's one thing for our children to hear their dad talk about a weighty subject; it's another thing for them to hear the same subject shared among a group of like-minded Christian men and women.
- d. A synergism of values and depth takes place amongst a round table of Christian men.
- e. A community of men expands the spiritual and moral resources of our children.
- f. There is great security and assurance in knowing my sons can seek out other Christian men in this church and share their struggles and successes with them, and hear from them the same godly counsel they would hear from me.
- g. This comes about when people are willing to align themselves with shared values, vision, and practices.
- h. Many of us as families have been bonded together through the mystical power of ceremony and rites of passage and taking part in mentoring each others children.
- i. You cannot build a godly enduring legacy alone. God never meant it to be done alone. Lets do it together. (our family's coat of arms)
- j. By incorporating these six principle ways of passing the baton, including the passing down of spiritual, emotional and social legacies, and of a clear vision for manhood, incorporating the concept of the trial by ordeal, as well as the signing and sealing of all these things in various and

sundry rites of passage and the giving of those symbols and regalia appropriate to the honor bestowed, including family crests and signet rings, etc, you will insure that your legacy makes it to your great great-grandchildren.

- k. It has been said that the most important gift we can give our children are roots and wings. Roots give them stability and a sense of where they came from and who they are. Wings give them the freedom to exercise themselves according to what they have learned. If we give them roots but no wings, they will never reach their full potential. If they are given wings but no roots, like Icarus, they will fly too close to the sun, and plummet back into the lethal waves of spiritual and personal mediocrity.
- l. They need both roots and wings to become mature adults. Mature adults, by the way, accept the legacy of their father, and that there is something bigger than themselves that they are a part of; something bigger than themselves that is leading them and guiding them and helping them find meaning in life. They need not ever find themselves questioning who they are or what they are here for. This is why the golden ring that the blue knight is bestowed with, along with his family's crest engraved on it, is such an asset (not to mention the family crest itself) in passing something tangible and meaningful down the family line to the third and fourth generation.
- m. More than one person has called the game of life a race. It was a favorite metaphor of the apostle Paul. In Philippians 3 he wrote

⁷But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ ⁹and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith. ¹⁰I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, ¹¹and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead.

¹²Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. ¹³Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to

have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, ¹⁴I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

¹⁵All of us who are mature should take such a view of things.”

n. He wrote in 1 Corinthians 9

²⁴Do 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. ²⁵Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. ²⁶Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. ²⁷No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.”

- o. The gold signet ring given to young men upon graduation from college or trade school is a companion to the gold sewn crown on a field of blue, representing the transcendent cause and the competing for a heavenly reward. We want our young men to run like Paul did, and like our Lord Jesus Christ did. We want them to finish strong. Finishing is the idea. Finishing is the chief goal of the Christian Olympian. It is what motivates us to continue in the race. It is what makes the long marathon race of life, the day-to-day routine, the hardships, the disappointments, the sufferings and misunderstandings, all worth it. In Christian theology, Jesus already ran the perfect race and won first prize. He cleaned out the trophy case. Our race is a race won only when we finish strong. Our prize is the consolation prize. We run to win the bragging rights of those who make it to the finish line.
- p. Using the analogy of the relay race in this sermon series that started on Fathers Day has reminded me of the 1968 Olympic Games that were held in Mexico City. Incredible athletes turned in many unusual performances
- q. Remember Mark Spits? He captured 7 gold medals in the swimming events. World records fell like autumn leaves on a windy October day. It seems like every Olympic has a few human dramas that serve as examples for the true meaning of sports and competing, and doing your best among the best, and this one was no exception.

- r. One memorable moment came during the Olympic marathon. The winner of the marathon had already been declared hours earlier. Only a few spectators still remained, cheering on one lone runner as he pressed on to finish the race. His name was John Stephen Akwari of Tanzania. He didn't run, but hobbled, wincing in excruciating pain with every step, his leg bloodied and bandaged, as he finally entered the far end of the huge Olympic stadium. As he crossed the finish line, the tiny crowd of spectators roared out its appreciation.
- s. During the interview afterward, a reporter asked him why he did not give up the race; why did he continue to run knowing he had no way of winning it. The runner seemed confused by the question. Finally he answered, "My country did not send me to Mexico City to start the race. They sent me to finish it."
- t. Our generation and those that come after it must finish strong. We must successfully hand off the baton of faith in Christ to our children in such a way that it makes it to the third and fourth generation. Christ died to men of God out of us. He finished his race, but left some unfinished business for our generation, and if Jesus carries, the next generations to finish.
- u. Jesus didn't give his life so that we might merely put on a uniform and warm up. He wants us to run in such a way as to win that consolation prize. We need to add to our faith endurance. This is not a sprint, it is a marathon. And we must train our children for this race of life, by successfully passing on the baton of legacy and heritage in such a way, that they and their children's children after them, may not merely start the race but finish it.