

What Will You Share With Your Descendants?

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Ecclesiastes 3 :1-13

*To everything there is a season,
a time for every purpose under heaven:
2 a time to be born, and a time to die;
a time to plant, and a time to uproot what is
planted;
3 a time to kill, and a time to heal;
a time to break down, and a time to build up;
4 a time to weep, and a time to laugh;
a time to mourn, and a time to dance;
5 a time to cast away stones, and a time to
gather stones;
a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from*

embracing;

*6 a time to gain, and a time to lose;
a time to keep, and a time to cast away;*

*7 a time to tear, and a time to sew;
a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;*

*8 a time to love, and a time to hate;
a time of war, and a time of peace.*

9 What benefit does the worker have in his toil?

10 I have seen the task that God has given to sons of men to be concerned with.

11 He has made everything beautiful in its appropriate time. He has also put obscurity in their hearts[a] so that no one comes to know the work that God has done from the beginning to the end.

12 I experienced that there is nothing better for them than to be glad and do good in their life.

13 And also, that everyone should eat and drink and experience good in all their labor. This is a gift of God.

A Time to Joyfully Grow Old

I turned 60 this year, so I've been reflecting on my life a lot. When I was young I could never imagine this stage of life, the idea of "getting old" was so foreign. It still doesn't register mentally, just physically.

We can watch parents and grandparents grow old and pass away, but we still don't quite know what that feels like. At any stage of life we are absorbed in the feelings and experiences of that part of our life – childhood, teen years, going to college, newlyweds, becoming a parent, striving to advance a career, etc. Through all of these phases we learn things, not just external things, we learn life lessons.

One thing I've been thinking about recently is what to do with those lessons. It seems to me that it would be a great waste to take these lessons to my grave. Of course I hope I've grown spiritually through my life's experiences, but maybe they weren't just for me.

Wisdom only comes with age

Many of you are in a similar stage of life, or moving closer to this stage:

- The Empty Nest
- Getting close to "retirement"
- Parents have passed on
- Many friends are dying
- Struggling with an age-related illness
- A spouse becomes unable to work

Everyone will get old eventually. Although some people remain quite mentally and physically active into their later years, you really don't know what might happen, or when. We just know that eventually everyone dies. I went on a graveyard tour recently looking for some of my ancestors, and it was quite sobering. It made me wonder what all these people experienced, what was their life like?

This is what led me to believe that everyone should write (or record) something about their life before they die. It doesn't have to be a book or a movie, just a short reflection would do. You could answer this question: *What is the most important piece of advice you would give your younger self if you could go*

back in time? Or how about this: What would you like your descendants to know about your life?



What good is your wisdom 6 feet under?

No one knows when they'll die, so this applies to young people too. If you're 20, you can share with a younger person something that you went through at their age. Or you can share about your current life with an older person.

Recently my youngest son came to visit and he shared his filmmaking adventures with me. I could see that he was having a great time while going through challenges and learning things. Taking risks, like filming a race on the highway, from the back of a jeep driving 120 mph. Fortunately the driver was also a professional racer. I was entertained, but I was also proud of him and grateful that he shared his experiences with me.

Believe me, the older generation love to hear the stories of young people.

We have to take risks to find out what we're capable of. So we go through life experiencing the good, the bad and the ugly – but it all has meaning. Who doesn't like a tragic love story? We watch movies about the daring and brave, and about people who have survived the most horrific circumstances. Why? Because the triumph of the human spirit is attractive to us. We all want to be victors in the end.

I went to see Dunkirk last weekend, and I encourage you to see it if you haven't. The best part of the movie for me was toward the end, when the older boy shared with the newspaper the story of his friends' bravery and death. His young friend always wanted to do something meaningful, and he died happy because he had done something good.

What's the point of every good movie? Those who are victors are the valiant of heart, not just the ones who survive.



You need to share your story with someone

Everyone has something special they can share, a wisdom nugget, an exciting adventure or a really difficult life lesson.

“If I had only known...I would have done a lot of things differently.” that's a common thought that passes through my mind. Somebody else might have known what you didn't know, but you had to go through stuff to learn what you know now. That's what life is – a big learning experience! You can help someone else with what you've learned.

I recently ran across a book online that was written by one of my ancestors back in the 1800's. He wrote the history of a small town called Derry, where my grandmother grew up. He, and a few others, travelled by horse and buggy throughout southern NH to interview people and do research back to the late 1600's about the settlers of the area. I was so inspired to read my ancestors book, and to learn what life was like back then.

Think about the Bible. How many people's lives have been changed because of what's recorded there. They were just ordinary people like you and me. People going through the various stages of life, but they thought it was worth sharing. Your life is worth sharing too.

The value of our lives comes from what we share, what we give.

We can give in many ways, but as we get older, one of the most precious things we can give is our wisdom and our life experience. Maybe you're not a writer, but you can make an audio or video recording and let someone else write it. History has shown that the written word is lasting. Imagine someone 200 years in the future reading what you wrote, or maybe even 2000 years from now. The wisdom you share might save someone else's life.