

# Currents

FAMILY NEWSLETTER

10.2011

## Living a Legacy

Christ gave us a treasured legacy of grace, righteousness, and freedom—and through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, we pass it on!

Tough Topic: Broken Legacies

Remembering

Tasty Autumn Traditions



# Living a Legacy

Shiloh's father mentioned his Bible was coming apart. Knowing her dad loved to make notations within its pages, she suggested getting it rebound. "It's been rebound four times, Sweetheart," he replied. "The pages are so brittle from the oil on my fingers that they're crumbling."

Shiloh marveled at the legacy left her. Not only had her dad earnestly sought God, but his kindness, perseverance, and gentle admonitions to trust the Lord showed his children that what he read became a part of who he was.

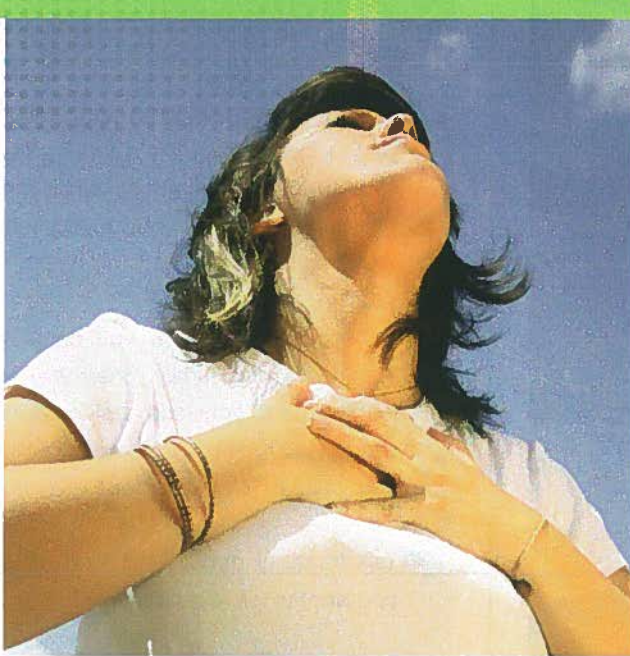
Shiloh's dad wasn't perfect. Still, she never doubted the priority of her father's faith and often sought his patient counsel, knowing he would direct her focus back to God.

Each of us has a legacy from our parents and grandparents. We also leave a legacy for our children—for better or worse. What legacies have you received? Is there a legacy you're determined not to pass on? What one legacy do you most want to give your kids?

As Christians, our hearts echo the cry of Jon Mohr in his song "Find Us Faithful": "May all who come behind us find us faithful." Still, if left up to our own efforts, these inspiring words are little more than a good (but futile) sentiment.

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from our parents and grandparents.*

The good news is that God doesn't leave us on our own to forge a godly legacy for our kids! It's the Holy Spirit who empowers us to live our faith. We share in the legacy of Christ who gives "God's abundant provision of grace and ... the gift of righteousness" (Romans 5:17). By looking to His Holy Spirit to lead us, we receive God's wisdom and power. He picks us up when we fall, changes us from the inside out, and enables us to live so that we, like Shiloh's dad, leave behind a legacy that points our kids to Jesus.



### Keeping Company with Jesus: Remembering

"Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly."  
—Matthew 11:28–30 (THE MESSAGE)

Part of learning the "unforced rhythms of grace" is remembering who God is and how He works in our lives. As we focus on how He moves, it builds our faith and we learn to move alongside Him, living "freely and lightly."

People have practiced the art of remembering God for centuries. The patriarchs often piled stones on top of each other when God moved on their behalf. The stones served as reminders of God's involvement in their lives.

What does remembering God look like in your heart?

When God set the Israelites free from captivity in Egypt, He taught them to observe the Passover, a remembrance the Jewish people still practice today. It's from this sacred ceremony that Jesus established the communion table, reminding believers that He's the Passover Lamb who leads us away from captivity to sin into forgiveness and freedom.

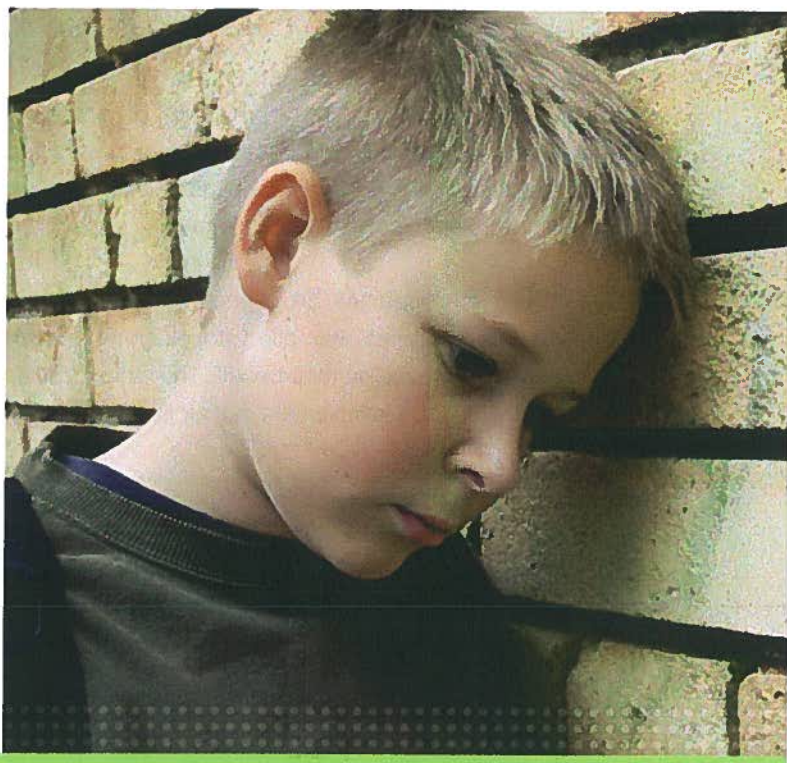
What does remembering God look like in your heart? How about in your family? It can be as simple as thanking God for His provision at the dinner table or whispering a blessing over your child, reminding her of God's constant presence.

## EXPERIENCING IT WITH YOUR FAMILY

Decorate a shoe box with your **Early Elementary** child and call it your family "Look Back Box." Periodically place into it items from nature, family keepsakes, or anything that reminds you of God's goodness. You could also create thank you pictures or cards to God and add those. When you place a new item into the box, talk about what God did and remember to thank Him for His care! Consider emptying the box at Thanksgiving in a special remembrance.

The **Elementary** years are often transitional times when school becomes more difficult and kids take on more extracurricular activities. Remind your child that God took time to rest and celebrate His accomplishments. Encourage downtime. Talk about all your child accomplished that day and remember God, thanking Him for being a part of every task. Consider taking an afternoon on the weekend for resting and remembering.

Who has left a godly legacy in the life of your **Preteen**? Help your preteen prepare questions for grandparents or family friends who love God. Ask these people to talk about why they believe in God and to share their conversion stories. Ask them what things God has done that they want to remember forever. Consider putting their answers on a video recording as a family keepsake. Let your child record your answers too!



## Tough Topics :: Broken Legacies

We love stories of parents who pass on rich legacies of faith to future generations. But not everyone has parents who are believers—and even those who do may have suffered at the hands of family. What do we do with our broken legacies—fragmented relationships, divorce, abuse, and abandonment? How do we process the negative legacies of our parents—or our own poor choices?

It's critical to remember that all have sinned and fallen short of God's glory (Romans 3:23). Even good people are flawed. Jesus tells us to forgive those who hurt us (Matthew 6:14). Sometimes forgiveness restores relationships; other times it simply restores our heart. There are times we must draw uncomfortable boundaries with others so we can break bad cycles and begin afresh, but we do so with a heart cleansed by forgiveness that invites the Holy Spirit to heal us. We may walk through a season of grief to mourn broken legacies, but while weeping lasts for a night, joy comes in the morning (Psalm 30:5). God never leaves us alone and broken. Throughout Scripture He repeatedly promises to heal us. He's not only the author of our faith but the One who finishes the good work He starts. He puts our feet upon a new path and remakes us to live the legacy of His Son (Romans 8:28–29).

## ✓ Practical Tips

- ✓ Many families pass on food traditions as part of their legacy. As a family, create a meal made up entirely of family recipes. When you serve, talk about your relatives and their legacies.
- ✓ Tell your children how you came to be a part of God's family. Share the events leading up to your conversion as well as where God is leading you now. Encourage your child to share his story!
- ✓ Talk together about what kind of legacy you want to leave as a family.

## Prayer Prompts

Our legacy is how we're remembered. Praying together about God's legacy helps the family process its own.

Notice fall colors as you take a walk. Collect leaves. Each time you pick up one, thank God for one of His creations.

Note the sound of leaves or grass crunching underneath your shoes. Sounds can be beautiful or ugly. Discuss the typical sounds heard in your home. Which are enjoyable? Which aren't? Ask God to teach you sounds that leave good memories for those who hear them.

At home, gather over cups of hot apple cider. Put a leaf underneath a piece of paper and color lightly to make a beautiful leaf design. Make several and label each with a characteristic of God. Thank Him for each attribute remembered.

## An Autumn Legacy: Apple Cake

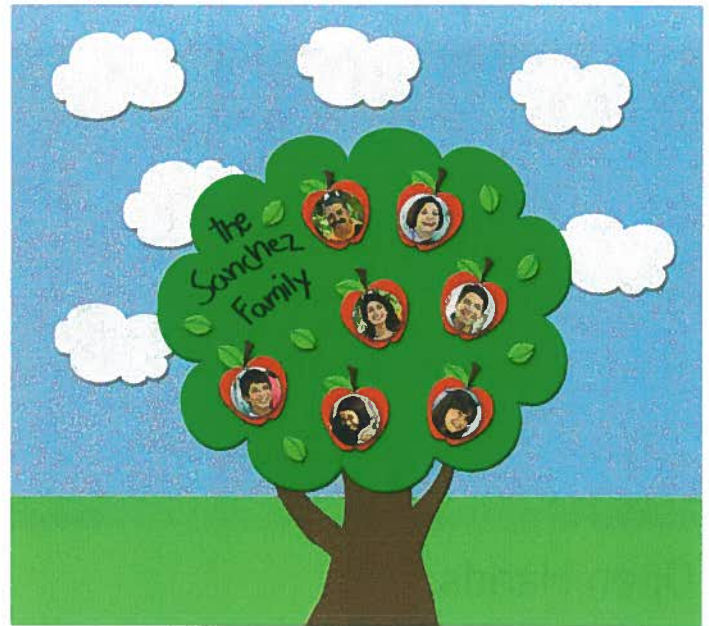
Apple cake has been an autumn tradition in many families for generations. If you live near an orchard, consider taking your kids to pick the apples you'll use. At home, invite your children to help peel them. (Even second or third graders can handle a potato peeler, and it's a good skill for them to develop!) Let them help you measure and mix the ingredients for this seasonal delight. It just might become a legacy in your family.

### Mix together:

- 1½ cups sugar
- ½ cup vegetable oil
- 2 eggs
- 4 cups peeled, cored, and diced apples
- 2 cups flour
- 1 tsp salt
- 2 tsp cinnamon
- 2 tsp baking soda
- 2 tsp real vanilla
- 1/2 cup raisins (optional)

Pour into greased 9" x 13" pan. Cook at 350 degrees for one hour.

Serve hot by itself, with ice cream, or with real whipped cream. (For whipped cream, blend heavy whipping cream, a dash of vanilla, and ¼ cup of sugar [or less] until the cream makes ridges.)



## Our Family Tree

Explore your family legacy with this fun project.

Before you start:

- Collect red and white construction paper, pencils, colored markers, glue, scissors, and four large pieces of posterboard (blue, brown, light green, and dark green).
- Decide which family members you'll feature. Make apples from the red construction paper for each person. (For a free apple template, click on the Resources tab under Family at [rio.davidccook.com](http://rio.davidccook.com).)
- Collect photographs or draw pictures of each family member to glue on the apples (or print their names).
- If your children are young, cut a trunk from the brown posterboard and a green, leafy top from the dark green posterboard. Cut the light green posterboard in half for grass. If your kids are a little older, let them create these parts themselves. Then add additional decorations such as leaves, clouds, bugs, etc.

Assemble everything by gluing the light green posterboard to the bottom of the blue posterboard and then making the tree from the other posterboard pieces. Glue the apples on the tree, with pictures of the older generations near the top of the tree and the younger near the bottom. As you glue, pause to remember something good about that person, and thank God for him or her.



## Open Hands: A Legacy of Serving

A legacy of service begins at home. Yes, it's true that sometimes it's easier to serve in other places. After all, it usually results in more pats on the back. But serving isn't about looking or feeling good. It's about living Jesus' legacy. Though He was God, "he gave up everything and became a slave" (Philippians 2:5-7, CEV).

How can we build a legacy for our kids (and future generations) that's defined by Jesus' compassionate love, especially on those days when we're running on fumes?

## Putting It into Action

- When you feel too weary to serve your family, refresh your heart and theirs by worshipping aloud. Worshipping God can energize you again.
- Model servanthood and show your child find ways to serve. Point out needs she can meet. If she does something without being asked, thank her. Address bad attitudes, and encourage your child to go to Jesus for strength when serving is difficult.
- Show what serving outside your home looks like. Help stack the chairs after an event at church and encourage your children to help. Or, together return your neighbor's trash can after trash pickup day.

## Family Story: Leaving a Legacy of Sacrificial Love

"I'll miss you, Daddy, but you're in my heart," my four-year-old said as I hugged her on the way out the door.

It was one of the sweetest things she has ever told me. But more than a tug at the heartstrings, it was much-needed confirmation that the choices my wife and I have made over the past four years haven't been mistakes.

Currently we live in my grandmother's basement with our two daughters. We do so by choice. My wife or I could choose to work more hours away from our home, thereby easily affording our own house. But we've decided to be there to raise our children, to teach them what we can about faith and love.

I've struggled with this decision, mostly in comparing and contrasting my life with that of my father. A man of achievement, he was able to provide his family with a home and much more. Yet I don't recall ever having such a close relationship with my father that I felt I carried him "in my heart." His pursuit of the "better life" left him emotionally unavailable. As a result, the legacy left to me was one of distance.

Hearing those sweet words from my daughter's lips tells me we're imparting a much different legacy to our children, one that can be summed up in a simple but powerful message. A message spoken less and less frequently to the children of our materialistic and self-absorbed culture. The message that Jesus shouts to us from the cross: I love you, and you're worth the sacrifice!

Joshua DeLong, Thornton, Colorado

Want more family stories?  
Check out the family blogs at [rio.davidccook.com](http://rio.davidccook.com)!