



with Berni Dymet

How to Leave a Lasting Legacy of Love

When you're long gone, what sort of legacy do you want to leave behind? Are you living the sort of life that will leave that legacy ... or not?

christianityworks

how to leave a
lasting legacy of love

by berni dymet



Published by Ark House Publishing
© Berni Dymet
1st edition - Published 2013

Except where otherwise indicated in the text, the scripture quotations contained herein are from the New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright 1989, by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Cover design: Mariah Reilly, Sydney Australia

We gratefully acknowledge her creative contribution of the cover design of this book.

Printed by: Creative Visions Print & Design, Warrawong, NSW, Australia

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means - electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise - without prior written permission.



For more information:
www.arkhousepress.com/au/

CONTENTS

- | | |
|--|----|
| 1. Planting seeds today | 1 |
| <i>Life Application - Planting seeds</i> | 10 |
| 2. Choosing your investments wisely | 13 |
| <i>Life Application - Jesus as our model</i> | 22 |
| 3. An eternal harvest | 25 |
| <i>A time to pray</i> | 32 |

PLANTING SEEDS TODAY

What would you say to a farmer who wakes up one day around harvest time, walks out into his empty field and complains that there's no harvest, when, all along, he'd never sown the seed. That would be crazy. Right!

Now, I'm no farmer, I'm not even a particularly good gardener, but I'm smart enough to know that unless the guy plants some seed, he's not going to see any sort of harvest. In fact, the only thing he'll see is an empty field covered in weeds.

He may be dejected. He may be upset that there's no harvest, But what can he expect

when he didn't plant any seed! It's quite obvious. And yet all too often we live our lives on the very same, equally ridiculous basis. We wonder why our relationships aren't producing a harvest.

We want our relationships to be rich and fruitful; we want them to be rewarding. We want relationships to be fun, as well as being strong and supportive. But all those desirable attributes of relationships don't automatically happen. They require investment. They take effort. And if your relationships aren't all that you want them to be, then maybe, just maybe, it's time to clear the weeds and plant a seed.

I've called this booklet *How to Leave a Lasting Legacy of Love*. A bit of a mouthful, but I guess you get the point. We all want to leave something good behind. We want to leave a legacy of love in the lives of our children, and their children; in the lives of our friends, even our work colleagues and our acquaintances.

I hope that when I'm gone, some of the many people who have, over the years, listened to these radio programs, will have a much better

life, because of what I did. I hope my children carry forward the values that I imparted to them – decency, integrity, kindness – and hand them on to their friends, and their children.

We all hope those things, and yet, all too often we don't build and nurture the sorts of relationships that allow that to happen. When you think about it, by and large, we only really allow ourselves to be influenced deep down by people we respect and trust. If we don't trust them, why would we listen to them? If we don't respect them, why would we take on any of their values? It makes sense.

I want you to think right now about a relationship that's important to you but isn't quite what you want it to be. This is a relationship that really, really matters, and yet, it's not as healthy as it should be. Do you have that person's face pictured in front of you? Now, what do you do with that relationship?

One of the options is to run away. That's a distinct option if the relationship is causing you pain or if you're just not quite up to working on it at the moment. Sometimes, what we want

to do is give up because the circumstances are against us. I'm sure you know exactly what I'm talking about.

I want to share with you a story of a man who wanted to run away from something, from a situation, but instead he stayed amidst his difficult circumstances and did something very, very important. Have a read of this story:

Now there was a famine in the land, besides the former famine that had occurred in the days of Abraham. And Isaac went to Gerar, to King Abimelech of the Philistines. The Lord appeared to Isaac and said, "Do not go down to Egypt; settle in the land that I shall show you. Reside in this land as an alien, and I will be with you, and will bless you; for to you and to your descendants I will give all these lands, and I will fulfil the oath that I swore to your father Abraham. I will make your offspring as numerous as the stars of heaven, and will give to your offspring all these lands; and all the nations of the earth shall gain blessing for themselves through your offspring, because Abraham obeyed my voice and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws."



We want to leave a legacy
of love in the lives of our
children, and their children; in
the lives of our friends, even
our work colleagues and our
acquaintances.

.....

how to leave a lasting legacy of love

So Isaac settled in Gerar. When the men of the place asked him about his wife, he said, "She is my sister;" for he was afraid to say, "My wife", thinking, or "else the men of the place might kill me for the sake of Rebekah, because she is attractive in appearance". When Isaac had been there a long time, King Abimelech of the Philistines looked out of a window and saw him fondling his wife Rebekah.

So Abimelech called for Isaac, and said, "So she is your wife! Why then did you say, She is my sister?" Isaac said to him, "Because I thought I might die because of her." Abimelech said, "What is this you have done to us? One of the people might easily have lain with your wife, and you would have brought guilt upon us." So Abimelech warned all the people, saying, Whoever touches this man or his wife shall be put to death.

Isaac sowed seed in that land, and in the same year reaped a hundredfold. (Gen 26:1–12)

I shared that story because it includes three very important lessons about planting seeds. The first one is about the famine – adversity.

When a relationship is going through a difficult time our natural reaction is inevitably to run away; to withdraw. One of the things that we so often want to do is to crawl into a cave and hide from it; anything, just to get away. The last thing we think of doing is being proactive and planting a seed.

Think about that difficult relationship I asked you to picture earlier. Over the past weeks and months, what have your thoughts been about that relationship? Have you been thinking about how you can get out of the situation, or how you can make it better?

The second lesson is that Isaac, like his father, Abraham, was far from perfect. He repeated his father's mistake by lying about his wife and putting her into danger. Sometimes, we think we have to be perfect to sort things out. Far from it! You and I will never be perfect, and if we wait until we are perfect before we work on a relationship, then we never will.

And the third lesson is about planting seed in the middle of the famine – the most counter-

intuitive thing you can possibly do. Yet Isaac sowed seed in that land and in the same year reaped a hundredfold.

If you want to improve a difficult relationship, then be prepared to plant a seed in a time of adversity, because chances are, you'll reap a hundredfold in return. What does it look like to sow seed into a relationship?

Let's imagine that your relationship is with a teenaged son; he's causing you all sorts of trouble and you just don't know what to do. He listens to all this weird music; he's into all these things that don't make sense to you. How do you sow seed into his life to produce a hundredfold harvest? Well, it's time to clear away the weeds and get interested in the things that he's interested in.

Ask to listen to some of his music. Show interest. Ask him who the band is, what they're singing about and why he likes their music. Maybe he's into Facebook and you're a complete novice. Ask him to show you how to set up an account and how to use it. Or, maybe he's

done really well at something and its time for you to celebrate with him.

Try entering into his space, listening to him, getting interested in the things that he's interested in ... and that's just the beginning. Each one of those is like planting a seed. It's a seed that says you care; it's a seed that says 'I love you'; and, my friend, it's a seed that will bear fruit; it's seed that will deliver a harvest.

If we want to leave behind a lasting legacy of love then we need to deal with those difficult relationships – proactively, positively. And that means, quite simply, being prepared to plant seeds even during times of adversity; especially during those difficult times, because that's the sort of seed that's going to deliver the sort of harvest that we're looking for – a lasting legacy of love. Otherwise, we're just like that crazy farmer who expected a harvest, without planting any seed.

LIFE APPLICATION

Planting seeds

So, let's just have a think about your most important relationships – the people who really matter to you. Which one or two of these are you struggling with?

Here are some practical things for you to consider:

1. How may that person have hurt you?
2. Are you prepared to forgive them?
3. What is the thing about that relationship that is causing you pain?
4. Are you part of the problem?
5. If so, what can you do to become part of the solution rather than part of the problem?

6. What is one positive thing that you can do to plant a good seed into that relationship?

.....

CHOOSING YOUR INVESTMENTS WISELY

I have a question for you. You have \$100,000 to invest and three choices:

Option 1 – put it in an interest bearing deposit with a bank.

Option 2 – invest it in a blue chip stock that's been performing handsomely over the past 3 years.

Option 3 – invest it in a company that looks like it's about to go under.

Which one will you choose? Don't worry; I'm going to give you just a little bit more time to consider your investment options. We've been looking at living the sort of life

that is going to leave behind a lasting legacy of love. As our lives here on this earth draw to an inevitable conclusion, what we leave behind for those for whom we really care, starts to matter more and more to us.

The important things start getting really important, the shorter our time on this planet becomes. Problem is, it's right now that we need to be doing the sorts of things, planting the sorts of seeds that are going to leave behind that legacy of love. It's no good leaving it until it's too late.

What, then, do we need to do now? What seeds do we need to plant now? Who do we need to invest in right now so that when our days on this earth draw to a close, we will really be at a place where we know that we're leaving that legacy of love behind us?

So, how are you going on your investment question? Still struggling with it? Well here it is again.

You have \$100,000 to invest and three choices:

Option 1 – put it in an interest bearing deposit with a bank.

Option 2 – invest it in a blue chip stock that's been performing handsomely over the past 3 years.

Option 3 – invest it in a company that looks like it's about to go under.

Which one will you choose?

Now if we were talking about a real \$100,000, the answer is obvious. You'd pick between the bank account and the blue chip stock, depending on the degree to which you're a risk taker. In fact, what I would probably do is, to split 40% each to the bank deposit and the blue chip stock, and I'd take 20% and buy a CFD or a Contract for Difference – that's a stock market device that allows me to win if the stock of a company falls and put that on the struggling company.

Now, take that same investment question and apply it to the relationship in which you plan to invest. Let's draw a relationship analogy. For the time and effort that you have to invest in relationships, you can choose between:

Option 1 – A rock solid relationship,

Option 2 – A slightly higher risk relationship but one that offers greater returns, or

Option 3 – A struggling relationship that looks like it's going to fail.

Now, in which one of those are you going to invest? I know what you're thinking. Right now, no doubt what's going through your mind is, 'Hang on a minute, the criteria I applied to the financial investment quiz do not apply to relationships.' And you're absolutely right.

Because if the struggling relationship that's about to fail happens to be your marriage, or a relationship with a difficult child there's every chance that you're torn between two alternatives. On the one hand, you want to throw everything into this relationship; on the other, you want to run a million miles from the relationship because it's tough and it's hurting you.

Some people make the decision to pull the plug on their marriage and invest in a more pleasant relationship – an affair perhaps. Others will go down with the ship fighting to the

last to save a marriage or a child, because the main criterion in choosing the relationships we invest in, is not the return, it's how important those people are to us.

There is not a single person on this earth who is more important to me than my beautiful wife. I love her dearly – and if I had to, if she needed me to, I would abandon every other relationship, in order to save her.

So why are we talking about this stuff? What's the point of these tough questions? Simply this: the sad truth is that a good percentage of people are so busy, or tired, or jaded, that they don't invest in any relationships. It's like taking their \$100,000 and stuffing it under the mattress.

Some people never make the decision to invest in any relationships, or when they do, they do it half-heartedly. They go for the return that they get out of it, rather than how important that person is, or should be, to them. If you and I want to leave behind a legacy of love, then we need to invest in relationships. We need to be deliberate about choosing the relationships we

invest in. And like any investment portfolio, there is going to be a spread of different types, with different risk/return profiles.

A man whose marriage is struggling should throw all of his emotional energies into investing in his marriage. I remember hearing a man once speak of the last time he sat and talked with his grandfather in hospital just before he passed away. He said, “Grandpa, what’s the one thing that your most proud of in your life?” The Grandfather got a tear in his eye, and he answered, “Oh, that’s simple. Growing old with the mother of my children.”

That’s a powerful answer, wouldn’t you agree? To any man or woman whose marriage is struggling, I want to implore you to invest all that you have in rebuilding your relationship – investing in that company that looks like it’s about to go under.

It may be that you save your marriage; it may be that you don’t, but I guarantee you that in the long run, whichever way it turns out, you won’t regret having given it your all.

I want to encourage you too, to invest in a handful of good friends. Some will give you more than you give them, with others, it will be the other way around. But friends – friends are invaluable. Choose them wisely.

I also want to encourage you to invest in some people who have nothing to give you, but who desperately need the help and love and care and concern of someone like you.

And finally, please ... please ... invest in some young people, at home, at work, in your local community group and become their mentor. Hand on your wisdom and skills as you pull alongside them, and make them much greater than they could ever have been without you. If you want to leave a legacy of love that lasts well beyond you; that ripples out from you and down through the generations, then what you need to do now, is to start your relationships investment portfolio.

Jesus is a great example of this. He had thousands of disciples who followed him around. Often when you read about the Disciples in

the Gospel accounts of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, the writer is talking about this wider group.

But Jesus, out of all the thousands available, selected only twelve to be his closest friends. They were mostly uneducated bumpkins. Fishermen. Tax collectors. Not the educational elite from Jerusalem, but the flotsam and jetsam from the villages of Galilee:

Simon (whom Jesus named Peter); James the son of Zebedee and John the brother of James; Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Cananaean, and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him. (Mark 3:17-19)

Those men, when you read about them, so often got things wrong. They made a hash of things. They argued. Judas stole from the money that belonged to the group. They tried to out-do each other. Jesus chose imperfect people and He built close relationships with them. And it's on their shoulders that His Church, worldwide, stands today.

From the investment that Jesus made in those twelve, has grown a massive, global church. Jesus' investment in his relationships with those men has left the most amazing legacy of love that has rippled down throughout the ages.

He was so often frustrated with them. They so often fell short of his expectations, and yet his twelve-fold relationship investment portfolio has returned more than anyone could ever have imagined.

LIFE APPLICATION

Jesus as our model

Here's the really interesting thing about the relationship between Jesus and his Disciples. He led them, He instructed them, and at times He admonished them. In other words, sometimes his relationship with them involved some 'tough love'.

Choose one of the four Gospels – Matthew, Mark, Luke or John. Scan through them and each time there is an interaction between Jesus and the twelve Disciples, have a read, and write down what you learn from Jesus about how He sowed good things into the Disciples' lives.

When you're done, review your insights.
What have you learned from Jesus as your relationship model?

.....

AN ETERNAL HARVEST

The whole point of sowing seeds is that eventually they yield a harvest. That's what we know, and that's precisely what Jesus taught in the parable of the sower. It may be quite a familiar parable, but let's look at it again:

That same day, Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. Such great crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat there, while the whole crowd stood on the beach. And he told them many things in parables, saying: Listen! A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seeds fell on the path, and the birds came and

ate them up. Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and they sprang up quickly, since they had no depth of soil. But when the sun rose, they were scorched; and since they had no root, they withered away. Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. Let anyone with ears listen! (John 13:1–9)

Now the part of that parable that you normally hear people focussing on is where the seeds fell and what that means. That's fine, when the disciples asked Jesus to explain this parable to them, and that's what He told them about. But I particularly want to focus on the harvest bit at the end, and how the harvest is achieved.

Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. (John 13:8)

But where did the harvest come from? It came from those people in whom the seed (which, as Jesus later explains to His Disciples



The whole point of sowing
seeds is that eventually they
yield a harvest.

.....

how to leave a lasting legacy of love



The best seed of all that we
can plant into someone's life
is the Word of God

.....

how to leave a lasting legacy of love

is the Word of God) fell in good soil and took root and brought forth grain.

The best seed of all that we can plant into someone's life is the Word of God. Okay, in a difficult relationship, the place where we sow may not, at first, appear to be good soil.

But we don't know what God is already doing in that person's heart. When the other party experiences the Word of God through our lives and how we treat them, the most amazing things start to happen as the Spirit witnesses His love and His truth to them.

The return on one seed is massive – one seed in such a person yields a hundred, or maybe sixty or at the very least ... thirty times the love and goodness that we have shown to them, in the midst of that difficult relationship. How does that happen? Well, it's as natural as a farmer sowing wheat. When the Word of God takes root in our hearts, it produces an abundant harvest.

Here's what I, all too often, observe. Well-meaning Christians who think that impacting

people's lives is all about working hard. Now to be sure, it involves hard work and, as we've seen, sacrifice. But that work and sacrifice flow out of us naturally, willingly, joyfully when they come through the Word of God, which, empowered by the Holy Spirit, has taken root in our hearts.

Think about it: the farmer may well sow, weed, fertilise, but who gives the growth? Who turns that one seed into a wheat stalk with 100 grains? Not the farmer! God does, nurturing the seed with sunshine and rain. And so it is with us. The more we absorb God's Word, the more He transforms our lives through His Spirit, the more fruit we are going to produce; the more of a harvest we are going to see, because it's His harvest, not ours.

Only God – by His Spirit and His Word – can produce an abundant, eternal harvest. Only God can win souls and transform lives. Our role is to live in a close relationship with Him; to be one of His vessels, pure, clean and holy, ready to do His business of winning souls and transforming lives. And the time to start is

not next week, or next month or next year, my friend. The time to start is now! Here and now. That's exactly what Jesus said:

Do you not say, 'There are yet four months, then comes the harvest'. Look, I tell you, lift up your eyes, and see that the fields are white for harvest. (John 4:35)

I want to encourage you today to live a life that is close to Jesus, transformed by Jesus, full of His radically sacrificial, unconditional love. The sort of love that is prepared to lay down your own life for others. Because my friend, God means to use you, to sow the seeds that are going to make an eternal difference. With all my heart – this is what I know: that's what it means to live the sort of life that is going to leave a lasting legacy of love.

TIME TO PRAY

A closing prayer

I know ... I know that it can be tough to love imperfect people. And some of those reading this booklet may be in a place of abuse or oppression. In those cases, some 'tough love' is required. If you undertook the little exercise at the end of Chapter 2, you'll have seen that Jesus sometimes exercised that sort of love with His disciples.

But an amazing thing happens as we draw close to Jesus. He gives us the strength and the wisdom to love the unlovable, in just the right way. Not as a victim, but in His sacrificial power.

It is precisely that sort of love, the sort that lays down its life for another, that Jesus taught us to have. It is precisely that sort of love that He lived out – died out – on the Cross. And as difficult as that sort of love can be sometimes, it is the Presence of God, by His Spirit and His Word in us, that gives us strength and healing.

Father God,

I pray for each person who is suffering in order to love someone with Your love. I pray for each person who feels damaged and lost in the midst of love that is so painful. I pray that Your Word today would be the beginning of a miraculous work of healing in them.

Thank you, Lord that even You struggled and suffered emotionally in the Garden of Gethsemane on the night before You were crucified. May Your example, Your love and Your healing do a mighty work in each one of us today and for ever more. In Your mighty name, the Name of Jesus, we pray.

Amen.

.....



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Berni Dymet is a contemporary Christian communicator with a passion for sharing the Good News of Jesus right into the middle of life. He comes from the perspective that this Christianity thing - it isn't just a faith that lives in our heads or even our hearts, but that it actually works right here in the middle of our lives.

Christianity actually works when we dare to accept Jesus Christ into our lives!! Not just as Saviour, but also as Lord.

Millions of people around the globe tune into Berni's radio programs each week. The Lord has given him a special gift for sharing the Gospel in a truly practical way. In a way that really connects into the hearts and lives of real people in real places, transforming their lives. That's what the ministry of Christianityworks is all about. Leading people into a dynamic relationship with Jesus Christ.

But Berni's passion, his enthusiasm and his insights into the day to day realities of life are simply tools in God's hands. The real change agent is God Himself.

And to Him - and Him alone - be all the glory.

.....

Christianityworks

Australia:

PO Box 1729 BONDI JUNCTION NSW 1355
p: 1300 722 415

United Kingdom:

PO Box 201 CHESSINGTON KT9 1RH
p: 0800 078 6565

India:

PO Box 1602 SECUNDERABAD - 500 003
Andhra Pradesh
p: 91-9866239170
e: ekommu@christianityworks.com

w: christianityworks.com
e: info@christianityworks.com

How to Leave a Lasting Legacy of Love



berni dymet

One day each of us will breathe our last breath and ... that will be it, for this life on this earth. Sadly, some people will look back on a wasted life. Because, in our heart of hearts, what we really want to do is to leave behind a legacy. Something that lives on beyond us – and a good one at that. What we really want to do is to leave behind a lasting legacy of love.

Question is – what sort of life are we living now? And is it the sort that will achieve that goal? Join Berni Dymet in this booklet as He opens God's Word to discover how to live the sort of life, that's going to leave a lasting legacy of love.



christianity**works**

Australia | PO Box 1729 | Bondi Junction | NSW 1355 | 1300 722 415
UK | PO Box 201 | Chessington | KT9 1RH | 0800 078 6565

www.christianityworks.com