



WHYZMEN • FACILITATOR GUIDE • SESSION 14

Legacy & Letters

The letter you write and the letter you are

North star: he walks in with a First Steps Card and a Tuesday page. He walks out having written one page, by hand, to one person, and having heard his brothers name what that page values.

“You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, known and read by everyone ... written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God.”

2 CORINTHIANS 3:2-3

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Monday, March 15, 2027 • 9:00–10:30 AM • New Community Church • Wise Men Still Seek, Knowing Their Why's

Session Overview

Purpose

Session 14 is the step every farmer knows. Before the harvest is eaten, he keeps back the best seed for a planting he may never see. In January the men harvested the first half. In February they named their mission. In March they saw the life they were made for, then chose it and started it. This morning they save the seed: one page, by hand, to one person.

The teaching spine is one image. **The life is the photograph; the written letter is the caption.** A caption without a photograph is a sermon. A photograph without a caption is often misread. The men have been writing the first letter since the day they were born, and their children have been reading it the whole time. This morning they write the caption.

Nothing is planned or fixed this morning. The session is built to show before it tells: a man from the cohort who has already written to his grandchildren speaks first, then you read a paragraph of your own. Only after that do the men see the shapes, and then they write.

Session outcomes

- Every man has re-tied his trellis: his Rule read aloud, his experiment reported, his triad project date confirmed.
- Every man has heard a letter-writer before he was asked to write, and has seen three shapes (a letter, a story, a spiritual testament) without being handed a single sentence.
- Every man has written the first page of **one** letter or story, by hand, to **one** named person, in 25 minutes of silence.
- Every man has read one paragraph aloud (or passed) and heard two brothers say what they heard him value.
- Every man knows the homework floor: one letter or a one-page testament with the Legacy sentence (§4.1), his printed Charter, and his 90 seconds for Session 15.

TIMING SPINE • 90 MINUTES • POST IT BESIDE THE TIMER

Clock	Move	Min	Slides	Guide page
—	Open before the clock: welcome, the path	—	1-2	Cover • This morning
0:00	1 • Tend the trellis: practice check-in and Rule review in triads	9	3	Tend the trellis
0:09	Knapsack callback: your harvest, what you carried well	3	4	Tend the trellis (sidebar)
0:12	2 • Save the seed: the caption and the photograph	8	5-8	Save the seed
0:20	3 • A man who has already done it, then your paragraph	10	9	The witness

Clock	Move	Min	Slides	Guide page
0:30	4 · Three shapes, the spiritual testament, three tests	8	10–12	Three shapes · Three tests
0:38	5 · Write one thing (silent)	25	13	Write one thing
1:03	6 · One paragraph aloud, in triads	15	14	One paragraph aloud
1:18	7 · Before next Monday; readings; practice of the week; Psalm 71:18	12	15–18	Before next Monday

READ THIS BEFORE YOU PLAN ANYTHING ELSE

The slot is exactly ninety minutes and there is no float. **Never cut the 25 minutes of writing, and never cut One Paragraph Aloud.** Everything else can bend. If you are behind at 0:30, the three shapes go to five minutes (walk the cards, skip the testament detail; it is in the guide). If you are behind at 0:20, the witness questions go first.

The deck (r2_1, carried into r3) adds a knapsack look-back (slide 4, 3 min) between Move 1 and the teaching. Its three minutes come out of Move 1: the triads get 9 minutes and there are no plenary words. That keeps every clock printed on slides 5–15 true. Deck r3 corrected slide 3 to 9 min. Deck r8 follows Charter v12: the letter, story and testament all sit in §4.1 (one letter or a one-page testament, with the Legacy sentence), and the learning line sits in §3.2.

The whole session is written for one kind of man: the one who has spent forty years giving advice and will slide into it the moment he picks up a pen. Every move protects him from that slide. Show before you tell. Give the shape, never the sentences.

THE SINGLE POINT OF FAILURE

The witness. Move 3 depends on the cohort man who has already written to each of his grandchildren. Ask him in person at least two weeks ahead, confirm the Wednesday before, and have a fallback: if he is ill or declines, you read your paragraph first and then read a short passage from a real historical testament (1 Kings 2:1–3, David's charge to Solomon). The session still works. It just works better when the example sits in the chair next to the men.

Before the Morning

Cards and tools this session: C1 and T4 come back. The men read their four rhythm lines from C1 (the review promised at Session 13), and the triad review of each man's Rule is T4's first use. Point once to optional H2 · Grandkids and Teens for the man writing to a grandchild. No card comes out.

When	What
Two or three weeks ahead	Ask the letter-writer privately to be the witness. Five minutes, three things: why he wrote, how he started, what happened after. One paragraph of a letter if he is willing, never a whole letter. Allow two minutes of questions. Tell him you read after him and that there is no commentary on either.

When	What
Session 13 sending	Session 13's homework slide now carries the bring list: the First Steps Card, the Tuesday page, the Charter at a Glance (filled in; not collected today), Appendix A · Life Lessons if he has written it, and a photo of one person he would write to. Session 13 now names all of them.
The week before	Write your own letter to [FILL IN: which grandchild]. Choose the paragraph you will read. Rehearse it aloud, timed: under two minutes. It should pass the three tests (particular, story not sermon, blessing) — the men will be checking.
Wednesday before	Confirm the witness. Ask him one question only: "What happened after?" That answer is what the men will remember.
Saturday before	Text the cohort: <i>"Monday: First Steps Card, your Tuesday page, your one-page Charter at a Glance (filled in), Appendix A if you wrote it, and a photo of one person you would write to. We'll bring the paper and pens."</i>
Friday: print and gather	Participant Guide r8, one per man, grayscale-safe. Good paper: two or three sheets of heavier cream stationery per man, plus envelopes. Pens that write well (not ballpoint giveaways). A box of tissues on every table. Prompt cards if printed (see Materials).
Day of	Triads seated together from the start; Move 1 and Move 6 are both triad work. No laptops on the tables. Timer visible. TV hookup tested. Pray for each man by name, and for the person he will write to.

MORNING LANGUAGE

This cohort meets at nine in the morning. Say "this morning," never "tonight."

Open before the clock (slides 1–2)

Welcome each man by name as he arrives. Check that he has the things on slide 1; a man without a photo can use one on his phone or simply picture the face. Do not collect the Charter at a Glance this morning: the Legacy line is written this week. Each man hands it in at Session 15 arrival or emails a photo by the Saturday before; the Saturday emails are what put it in the pastors' hands ahead. Then slide 2, the path. Point along it; do not narrate every stop.

WHAT YOU SAY

"Last Monday you chose and started. This morning is different. Nothing to plan, nothing to fix. This morning you write one page, by hand, to one person."

"In January we harvested the first half. In February you named your mission. This month you saw the life you were made for, then chose it and started it. This morning is the step every farmer knows: before the harvest is eaten, he keeps back the best seed for a planting he may never see. Next Monday you are sent. In April, after Easter, First Fruits, with your wives."

The subtitle is the whole session: the letter you write, and the letter you are. The men will spend 25 minutes on the first. They have been writing the second since the day they were born.

1

Tend the Trellis

0:00 – 0:12 • 12 minutes (9 triads + 3 knapsack) • Slides 3–4 • Triads

This is the review promised at Session 13. The men read their four rhythm lines from the First Steps Card, then report the experiment and confirm the triad project. It is a check-in, not an audit. The trellis image carries it: a Rule of Life is a frame a vine grows along, and every gardener re-ties the trellis in spring. It is also the first use of the Stay on Your Side of the Net half-page handed out at Session 13: a brother says what he saw and what it did in him, never what he thinks the man meant.

Practice check-in first

Slide 3's bottom line: "Practice of the Week: one moment with 'Keep a small promise.'" To save minutes, take it inside the triads as each man's first sentence, before his Rule. One moment each, no commentary.

WHAT YOU SAY

"Tell us one moment with this week's practice: Keep a small promise."

Three questions, in order

1. **Your Rule.** He reads his four rhythm lines. The listeners ask the Session 13 question: *"Can you really do this in two minutes?"* If a rhythm needs twenty minutes, it will die the first busy week. Make it smaller.
2. **Your experiment.** Planned, started, or done? Plus one surprise. *"Here's what I learned"* counts as a result.
3. **Your triad project.** Confirm the date and the convener. *"Who sends the first text?"*
4. **Then, hands up from the front (about 30 seconds, inside the 9): "Before Friday" — done? (Session 13 named it as the floor; this is where it is checked.) First step of your experiment? First Steps Card copied into §3.1 and §3.2? Charter at a Glance filled in? The slide's last line carries all four.**

WHAT YOU SAY

"Read your four lines out loud, word for word. Your brothers get one question: can you really do this in two minutes? Brothers, stay on your side of the net: say what you saw and what it did in you. Then your experiment: planned, started or done, and one thing that surprised you. Then, as a triad, say the date of your project and who sends the first text."

WATCH FOR

The man who apologizes for a practice that quietly died. Say: *"A trellis gets re-tied every spring. That is not failure; that is gardening."* Then ask what the two-minute version would be.

The man who turned his experiment into a program. Make it smaller. One lunch, not a lunch series.

The triad with no date. Do not let them leave Move 1 without one, even a provisional one. Dates are what turn intentions into actions.

Bell at 8 minutes; call time at 9. Slide 3 now prints 9 min; the three minutes after it belong to the knapsack look-back, so there are no plenary words from the triads this week. Then go straight to slide 4.

Slide 4 • Your Harvest: the Knapsack look-back (3 min)

The Knapsack callback, in plenary, after the triads and before the teaching. Walk the three cards in one breath each: what you set down (freedom), what you carried (anchor), what grew (fruit). The Participant Guide has the three questions in a sidebar under Move 1.

WHAT YOU SAY

"Look back across the climb. In November you packed. In Session 3 you set down losses. In Session 13 you chose the essential few. What did those choices make possible?"

Close: "Constraint didn't limit your legacy. It made it possible. That's what you write today."

2

Save the Seed

0:12 – 0:20 • 8 minutes • Slides 5–8 • Teaching

Eight minutes across four slides. Keep it moving; the writing is the session. Each slide has one sentence that has to land. Say that sentence slowly and let the rest go quickly.

Slide 5 • Save the seed (2 min)

WHAT YOU SAY

"Every farmer who ever lived knew this. When the harvest comes in, you do not eat all of it. You keep back the best seed. Not the leftovers; the best. And you keep it for a planting you may never see."

"That is what legacy is. It is not the fruit you eat. It is the seed you hand forward."

Psalm 78:6 is the elder's charter: *so the next generation would know them, even the children yet to be born.* Say: *"Some of you will write this morning to a grandchild who cannot read yet. That is exactly who Psalm 78 had in mind."*

Slide 6 • You are a letter (2 min) — the spine

WHAT YOU SAY

"Paul told the Corinthians they were his letter, written on hearts, read by everyone, and not written in ink. Every man in this room has been writing that letter since the day he was born. His children have been reading it the whole time."

"So why write anything down? Because the two work together. The life is the photograph. The written letter is the caption. A caption without a photograph is a sermon. A photograph without a caption is often misread."

This is the spine of this morning and of next Monday. Say the caption line slowly and let it sit for a full breath before you click.

Slide 7 • Why letters last (2 min)

The particularity slide, a callback to Sessions 2 and 3: the ultimate is only accessible in the particular (the slide's wording, credited "after Burnett & Evans"). Ask the question and **wait for an answer from the room** before you give yours.

WHAT YOU SAY

"Here are two sentences a grandfather might write. Which one does a grandson keep for fifty years?"
[Pause. Let them answer.]

"The first is true. It is also forgettable, because anyone could say it to anyone. The second could only be written by one man to one boy. That is why it lasts."

"God does not love in general either. He calls Samuel by name, twice. Meaning, love and God are all met in the particular. So are letters."

The instruction that comes out of this slide, and that you will repeat at Move 5: **one name, one memory, one morning.**

Slide 8 • Let your life speak (2 min)

WHAT YOU SAY

"Parker Palmer borrowed an old Quaker saying for his title: let your life speak. His point is that a calling is heard before it is chosen. Legacy works the same way. Before you write what you want your life to say, listen to what it has already said."

"And notice where Moses says the teaching happens: at home, and along the road. Not from a lectern. The present moment is where legacy is passed on. The letter only puts a caption on what the road already taught."

Close with 1 John 3:18, *not with words or speech but with actions and in truth*, then go straight to the witness. Do not add commentary. The irony is deliberate: a session about not preaching must not end its teaching block with a sermon.

3

A Man Who Has Already Done It

0:20 – 0:30 • 10 minutes • Slide 9 • Witness

Show before tell. This is the Demonstrate, Don't Preach principle sitting in a chair. Introduce the witness in one sentence and sit down.

WHAT YOU SAY

"[FILL IN: witness's name] has already written a letter to each of his grandchildren. I asked him to tell us three things: why he did it, how he started, and what happened after."

Minutes	What happens
5	The witness speaks: 1. Why I wrote. 2. How I started (the first sentence is the hardest). 3. What happened after , if any grandchild or child responded. One paragraph of a letter if he is willing. Never ask for a whole letter.
2	Questions from the room. Take two at most. If a man starts to tell his own story, thank him and say "hold that for the page."

Minutes	What happens
2	You read one paragraph of your own letter to [FILL IN: which grandchild], the same way you read your Tuesday page at Session 12: no preamble beyond “here is mine,” no commentary afterward.
1	Ten seconds of silence. Count them. Then click to slide 10.

WHY YOU READ SECOND

The witness shows that an ordinary man in the room has done it. You show that the facilitator is doing it too, and that it is a paragraph, not a book. Your reading is also your own homework: the program is being run by a man who is doing the program on himself. Read it plainly. If your voice catches, let it; that is part of the lesson.

IF THE WITNESS CANNOT COME

Read your paragraph first. Then read 1 Kings 2:1–3 aloud as the historical exemplar: *“I am about to go the way of all the earth,” he said. “So be strong, act like a man, and observe what the LORD your God requires ...”* Name it in one sentence: “A father to a son, three thousand years ago. Men have been doing this for a long time.” Then go to slide 10.

4

Three Shapes, Not Three Templates

0:30 – 0:38 • 8 minutes • Slides 10–12 • Models

The rule for the whole morning: **we give you the shape, never the sentences.** A template produces fifteen identical letters and a grandson who can tell. A shape gives a man a place to stand while the words come from the memory he chose.

Slide 10 • Three shapes (3 min)

Walk the three cards in one breath each. Point to the Charter section on each.

Shape	Charter	The shape (not the words)	Model
A Letter	§4.1	One memory • what I saw in you • one hope • a blessing	2 Timothy: an elder to a younger man
A Story	§4.1	A year • a place • what happened • what it taught	Psalm 78:4: “tell the next generation”
A Spiritual Testament	§4.1	What I believe • how grace found me • what I hope for you	John 14:27: “Peace I leave with you”

If you want one more line on 2 Timothy, use 1:5, which was written for this room: *“I am reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice.”* Paul names two women by name, three generations deep. That is a letter.

The gratitude ledger is the on-ramp for the man who freezes. Marcus Aurelius opens his *Meditations* with it: from my grandfather I learned this; from my mother, that. The legacy a man received, written down, often becomes the legacy he hands on.

Point the men to the *Three shapes* page and the *If the page stays blank* prompts in their Participant Guide.

Slide 11 • The spiritual testament (3 min)

WHAT YOU SAY

"The ethical will is a Jewish tradition the church inherited. Jacob blessing his sons, Moses' farewell, David's charge to Solomon. It is our Scripture too. Paul tells Gentile believers, 'You do not support the root; the root supports you.'"

"Our version has six parts. Notice the second: how grace found me, including a failure. A testament that only says 'be good like I was good' is legacy as works. A Christian testament points past the man to Christ."

"And notice the last: my hope of seeing you again. That hope is the resurrection."

Say plainly: "This week you write one thing: finish this morning's letter, or write this testament. You share one paragraph next Monday, not today."

A CAUTION TO SAY GENTLY FROM THE FRONT

Some men will be writing to children or grandchildren who do not share their faith. Say it before they write, not after: *"If the person you are writing to does not share your faith, write testimony and love, not argument. Tell what happened to you. Faith cannot be inherited like the family silver."* Some of the men in this room carry a quiet grief about exactly this. Do not make it heavier.

Slide 12 • Three tests (2 min)

Same family as the Life Lessons tests (Price, Forty, Outcome). Name each in one sentence.

1. **Particular.** Could only you have written this, to only this person? If it could be a greeting card, it is not done.
2. **Story, not sermon.** Does it tell what happened, rather than what to do? Men who spent forty years giving advice will slide into advice. The story carries the lesson better than the lesson does.
3. **Blessing.** Does it leave them freer, not obligated? Ethical wills can turn into control from the grave. A blessing releases.

WHAT YOU SAY

"These are for rereading, not for the first draft. First draft: just write."

5

Write One Thing

0:38 – 1:03 • 25 minutes • Slide 13 • Silent • NEVER CUT

This is the session. Everything before it was preparation; everything after it is receiving. Say the instruction once, then sit down and write yourself. The men will watch whether you mean it.

SAY ONCE, THEN SIT DOWN

"Choose a name first. Then a memory: one morning, one place. Then write. A letter or a story. This week you finish one letter or write the testament; not this morning. If you are stuck, start a gratitude ledger: from ___ I learned ___. Do not edit. Do not reread until I call time."

Clock	What you do
0:38	Instruction, once. Hand out the good paper. Pens, not laptops: handwriting is part of the gift.
0:41	Watch the first three minutes. A man who has not started is usually choosing between two names. Whisper: <i>"Pick the one you thought of first."</i>
0:45	Circulate once, quietly. Do not read over shoulders. A man staring at a blank page gets one whispered question from the prompt list: <i>"When did you first see who this person is?"</i>
0:50	Sit down and write your own. The room should be silent except for pens.
1:01	Two-minute warning: <i>"Finish the sentence you are in."</i>
1:03	Pens down, finished or not. Unfinished letters read fine.

WATCH FOR

The man who writes a sermon. You will see it from across the room: no names, lots of "always" and "never." Walk over and ask quietly, *"What were you two doing the day you saw this in her?"* Then walk away.

The man who writes to everyone. "To my grandchildren" is a speech. Ask him to pick one face.

The man with no grandchildren, or no children. The alternate path is on the slide: a niece, a mentee, a younger man at church, or the next WhyzMen cohort. Everyone hands something forward. Say it to him privately if he looks stuck, not to the room.

The man who is writing to someone who has died. Let him. A letter to a father who never blessed him is still legacy work; it may be the letter that frees him to write the next one. Note it for a follow-up call.

6

One Paragraph Aloud

1:03 – 1:18 • 15 minutes • Slide 14 • Triads • NEVER CUT

About five minutes per man. Each man reads one paragraph of what he wrote this morning. Not the whole thing. Passing is always allowed; a man who passes says one sentence about what it was like to write.

WHAT YOU SAY

"Pick one paragraph and read it. Just one. Your brothers say one thing only: 'What I heard you value was ____.' No praise of the writing. No edits. No advice. If you would rather not read, say one sentence about what it was like to write. That counts."

This is the discipline from Sessions 8 and 9: evidence, not admiration. *"That was beautiful"* is admiration, and it closes the moment. *"What I heard you value was the time you spent, not the money"* is evidence, and a man can write it down. Coach the sentence once before you release them.

Then name what this is. Say it once as the triads start. The research behind it (Seligman's gratitude visit, via the Heaths) is in the Kitchen. Keep the names off the screen and out of the room.

THIS IS A REHEARSAL

"Someday, read this to the person it's for."

WATCH FOR

Tears. Do not rescue. Hand him a tissue and wait. A man who weeps reading a paragraph to his grandson has just discovered what the paragraph is worth. The two brothers beside him will take their cue from you: stillness.

Praise in disguise. “Your grandson is lucky to have you” is kind and it is not the sentence. Light touch: “What did you hear him value?”

The editor. “You might want to add...” Stop it gently: “No edits this morning. Just what you heard.”

The man who reads his testament. It is not read today. Next Monday each man reads one paragraph of his letter or testament, after a week with it.

7

Before Next Monday

1:18 – 1:30 • 12 minutes • Slides 15–18 • Sending

Read the floor, not the ceiling. Three items on the slide, each with its minutes, plus the practice: about 85 minutes this week. Say each item in one sentence and point to the page in the guide. The Charter at a Glance rides inside item 1: once the Legacy sentence is written, it goes onto the Glance, which comes in at Session 15 arrival or by email the Saturday before; the First Steps Card was copied into §3.1 and §3.2 last week. The experiment, the Rule and the triad text keep running, but they are no longer counted as homework. Optional, not counted: more letters and stories (Appendices I and J), Appendix K, Riemer & Stampfer, Baines.

#	Homework	Where it goes	What you say
1	§4.1 One letter or a one-page testament, with the Legacy sentence (60 min)	Charter §4.1 • Appendix K, optional	<i>“Start with the sentence: I hope ___ will carry ___. Then finish this morning’s letter, or write the testament. One page. Circle one paragraph to read aloud.”</i>
2	Print your Charter, the v12 Core (10 min)	Bring to Session 15	<i>“Bring the whole Charter next week, printed. We sign it together.”</i>
3	90 seconds for Session 15 (15 min)	Participant Guide	<i>“One insight, one improvement, or one rule of life you are now living.”</i>
4	Practice of the Week: Say the blessing (inside the week)	Slide 17 • Toolkit 3 • Speak Truly & Encourage	<i>“Tell someone, specifically, what they have meant to you.”</i>

WHAT YOU SAY

"Letters and stories have no deadline. Some of the best ones will be written years from now. But when one is ready, don't mail it. Sit down with them and read it aloud, face to face. This morning in your triad was the rehearsal."

The slide's footer says it in one line: "Letters have no deadline. When one is ready, don't mail it. Read it to them, face to face."

"Bring the whole Charter next week, printed. We sign it together."

ABOUT THE TESTAMENT AND APPENDIX K

The six-part shape on slide 11 is the floor: one page. Appendix K (Ethical Will, Expanded) is the room to grow into, with seven movements and prompts under each. Tell the men: *"If one page is not enough, Appendix K is waiting. If one page feels like too much, write one true sentence under each of the six parts. That is already a testament."*

Readings (1 min, slide 16)

Point, don't teach. Nothing is required: "Write the letter." Name Going Deeper once, lightly. Slide 16 now has two cards. Books: So That Your Values Live On (Riemer & Stampfer), Ethical Wills (Baines) and Letters to My Son (Nerburn). Shorter Readings: Writing an Ethical Will and Letters (the longer read, about 25 min) and Appendix K, The Ethical Will (in the Charter, about 8 min). If a man asks where to start, point him to Appendix K: it is already in his binder.

Practice of the Week (1–2 min, slide 17)

Read the practice: Say the blessing. Name its skill and section: "It is section 3, Speak Truly & Encourage, in your Toolkit — the card is the menu, the Toolkit is the kitchen." Then one minute, in pairs, right now: Tell the man beside you, specifically, what he has meant to you in these weeks. Then swap. Out of time? Each man names the one person he will try it with this week. The tracker is weekly, not daily: "Tried it this week ☐

" and one moment line on the card. Rooted in this morning's letters, spoken aloud. Use the three tests: particular, story not sermon, blessing.

WHAT YOU SAY

"Tell someone, specifically, what they have meant to you. One minute now: try it once on the man beside you."

Session 15 opens with it. Slide 3 there asks for "one moment with last week's practice, 'Say the blessing.'" For many men it will be a sentence from this morning's letter, said out loud to someone.

Benediction (slide 18)

Read Psalm 71:18 slowly. *"Even when I am old and gray, do not forsake me, my God, till I declare your power to the next generation, your mighty acts to all who are to come."* Then the last line of the slide, and stop:

LAST WORDS

"Go and write. The seed is in your hands."

Dismiss without announcements; they were on the last slide.

The Facilitator's Kitchen

Frameworks below the waterline. Not for the room, not for the participant guide.

Why the caption and the photograph

The risk in a session titled *Let Your Life Speak* is that it becomes a sermon about not preaching. The fix is structural, not rhetorical: men **show** before anyone **tells** (the witness, then you), and the writing is always **particular** (one name, one memory). The caption image does one more job. It frees a man who fears his life has not been good enough to write about. The letter does not have to be a better photograph; it only has to help the reader see the one that is already there.

Why one name and one memory

Bill Burnett and Dave Evans's point in *How to Live a Meaningful Life* is that ultimate things are met only in particular ones: not beauty in general but this sunset. The same holds for letters. The men met this at Sessions 2 and 3; slide 7 is its payoff. William Zinsser's advice in *Writing About Your Life* is the craft version: write small, and the reader will supply the large. Kent Nerburn's *Letters to My Son* is the best single model of a father's voice that is particular without being preachy, if a man asks what to read.

Notice the moment, mark the moment (the gratitude visit)

Slide 14's rehearsal line and slide 15's footer ("When one is ready, don't mail it. Read it to them, face to face.") come from Martin Seligman's gratitude visit: write a specific letter of thanks to someone who mattered, then read it aloud to them in person. In his studies it gave the largest happiness boost of any exercise he tested, and the boost lasted about a month. Chip and Dan Heath retell it in *The Power of Moments* (2017). Combine, don't contrast: Burnett and Evans teach the men to notice the particular moment, and the Heaths remind them they can also mark one. The tension between the program's ordinary Tuesday and the Heaths' peak moment stays here, below the waterline: the letter is written from ordinary mornings and delivered as a peak. It works for the same reason particularity works: one person, one moment. Keep all three names off the screen and out of the Participant Guide.

Why 25 minutes, silent, by hand

James Pennebaker's expressive-writing studies (beginning with Pennebaker and Beall, 1986) had people write about meaningful experiences for about fifteen to twenty minutes on a few consecutive days, and found measurable benefits for the writers themselves. Twenty-five minutes gives the men time to get past the first, careful paragraph into the true one. Handwriting is a design choice, not a research claim: a handwritten page is an object a grandchild can keep, and it slows a man enough to stop him editing as he goes.

The ethical will, written as a Christian

The *tzava'ah* (Hebrew for ethical will) is a Jewish practice with roots in Scripture both traditions share: Jacob's blessings (Genesis 49), Moses' farewell in Deuteronomy, David's charge to Solomon (1 Kings 2:1-4), and God's purpose for Abraham, "so that he will direct his children and his household after him" (Genesis 18:19). Jack Riemer and Nathaniel Stampfer's anthology, *So That Your Values Live On*, is the best collection

of real examples; Barry Baines's *Ethical Wills: Putting Your Values on Paper* is the best process book. Credit both openly. Six cautions shape the Christian version:

Caution	What it means in the room
Grace, not obedience	Copied directly, many wills slide into “be good the way I was good,” which is legacy as works. The Christian testament is testimony: what God did in me. Willard (S13): grace is opposed to earning, not to effort.
Blessing, not binding	“I command you” becomes control from the grave. Paul’s model: “Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ” (1 Corinthians 11:1). The Blessing Test guards this.
Faith is not inherited	God has no grandchildren. Letters to unbelieving children are testimony and love, not argument. Said gently from the front at slide 11.
Hope beyond death	Many Jewish wills say little about an afterlife; the resurrection is central for Christians. Part 6 ends with “my hope of seeing you again” (1 Thessalonians 4:13).
Honesty about failure	Keep the forgiveness asked, and add forgiveness received and extended. Paul as “the worst of sinners” (1 Timothy 1:15) is testimony, not self-pity. That is why Part 2 includes a failure.
Don’t Christianize their texts	If you quote a Jewish will, quote it as Jewish. Never edit it to sound Christian.

Christian models, if a man wants more

- **John 13–17**, Jesus’ farewell discourse, the greatest spiritual testament ever spoken, with its bequest: “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you” (John 14:27).
- **2 Peter 1:13–15**, a purpose statement for the whole genre: “so that after my departure you will always be able to remember these things.”
- **Acts 20:17–38** and **2 Timothy 4**, an elder’s goodbye, with tears.
- **Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s letter from prison** for the baptism of his godson, May 1944: blessing a child he might never see grow up.
- **Old English will preambles**. For centuries, wills opened by commending the soul to God through Christ before any property was named. The Christian spiritual testament is a real tradition, not a borrowed one.
- **Benjamin Franklin’s Autobiography** began as a letter to his son (“Dear Son,” 1771). A neat historical exemplar for the man who thinks a letter is too small a form.

How the slide-11 shape maps to Appendix K

The deck gives a six-part shape for the one-page testament; Appendix K offers seven movements for the man who wants to go further. They agree. Use this table if a man asks which to follow: the six parts are the floor, the seven movements are the room.

Slide 11 • six parts (one page)	Appendix K • seven movements
1 • What I believe, and in Whom	Movement 2 • What I Have Come to Believe
2 • How grace found me: one story, including a failure	Movement 5 • Stories I Want Carried (with Movement 4)
3 • What I learned, and what it cost	Movement 3 • What I've Learned (fed by Appendix A • Life Lessons)
4 • What I ask forgiveness for, and what I have forgiven	Movement 4 • Where I Fell Short
5 • What I hope for you	Movement 6 • My Blessing Over You
6 • My blessing, and my hope of seeing you again	Movement 6 with Movement 7 • How I Think About the End
— (not in the one-page shape)	Movement 1 • Where I Came From

Brooks, and the eulogy virtues

David Brooks's distinction between résumé virtues and eulogy virtues is already in the program. The ethical will is a man writing his own eulogy virtues while he can still live them. If a driven man asks what the point is, that is the one-sentence answer.

What waits for Session 15

The spoken blessing (Genesis 48; Numbers 6:24–26; Smalley and Trent's five elements in *The Blessing*) belongs to the commissioning, not here. One paragraph of the letter or testament, the §3.2 learning line and the Unfinished Shelf all come next Monday. Keep this morning to one thing written and one paragraph heard.

Sourcing notes

- *Let Your Life Speak* (1999) is Parker Palmer's. The particularity teaching is Burnett and Evans's. Keep the two attributions separate on the slides and aloud.
- Palmer is on screen (slide 8) by design; in participant print his name appears once, with the quote. The program's curator posture applies: the insight, not the whole author.
- Do not use "Preach the gospel; use words if necessary." It is widely attributed to Francis of Assisi and does not appear in his writings. 1 John 3:18 says the same thing with better sourcing.
- "All you have to do is write one true sentence" (Appendix K) is Hemingway, from *A Moveable Feast*.

The Watch-Points

When	Who	What it means
Tend the trellis	The man who apologizes for a dead practice	Re-tie, don't repent. Ask for the two-minute version.

When	Who	What it means
Save the seed	The man who says “my kids know I love them”	True, and the reason the caption matters. Do not argue; the witness will answer him.
Write one thing	The man with a blank page at 0:48	One whispered prompt. If still blank at 0:55, suggest the gratitude ledger.
Write one thing	The man writing to someone who has died	Let him. Note it and call within the week.
Write one thing	The man writing to an estranged child	Tender ground. Do not ask about it in the room. A private word after: “Would it help to talk about when to give it?”
One paragraph aloud	The man who weeps	Tissue. Wait. No rescue. The triad takes its cue from your stillness.
One paragraph aloud	The man who passes	His sentence about what it was like to write counts fully. Check in with him this week.

Post-Session — Same Day

- Text the cohort once from your own number before evening. One sentence: “Whoever you wrote to this morning is a richer person than they know.”
- Thank the witness in person or by phone the same day. Ask whether he would do the same for Cohort 2.
- Note the watch-point men. Call anyone who wrote to someone who has died, or to an estranged child, within the week.
- Text the cohort on the Thursday before Session 15: “Email a photo of your Charter at a Glance, Legacy line included, by Saturday, or hand it in Monday.” Forward the Saturday photos to the pastors that weekend.
- Confirm Session 15 logistics: the pastors, the room for commissioning, printed Charters, and the First Fruits invitations.

Appendix A — Scripture

Reference	How it is used
2 Corinthians 3:2–3	The spine. “You yourselves are our letter ... written not with ink.” Cover and slide 6.
Psalms 78:4–6	Save the seed: tell the next generation, even the children yet to be born. Slide 5; model for the story shape.
1 Samuel 3:10	God calls Samuel by name, twice: love meets us in the particular. Slide 7, spoken.

Reference	How it is used
Deuteronomy 6:6–7	Teaching at home and along the road, not from a lectern. Slide 8.
1 John 3:18	Not with words or speech but with actions and in truth. Slide 8.
2 Timothy 1:5; 4:7	An elder to a younger man; Lois and Eunice named. The letter shape.
John 14:27	“Peace I leave with you.” The spiritual testament’s model.
Romans 11:18	“You do not support the root, but the root supports you.” The Jewish gift the church inherited. Slide 11.
Genesis 49 · 1 Kings 2:1–3	Jacob’s blessings; David to Solomon. Historical testaments; 1 Kings 2 is the fallback exemplar.
Psalm 71:18	Benediction. “Till I declare your power to the next generation.” Slide 18.

Appendix B — If You Are Running Late

Cut in this order. Never reverse it.

Cut	Saves	What it costs
Knapsack look-back to one card: What grew, then the close	2 min	The set-down and carried cards. The men met both at Sessions 3 and 13.
Witness questions (take none)	2 min	Little. The three things he says are the lesson.
Slide 8 to one line: 1 John 3:18 only	1–2 min	The Palmer frame. The caption line on slide 6 carries it.
Three shapes to 5 min: walk the cards, point to the guide for the testament	3 min	The testament explanation, which the men meet in the guide and Appendix K this week.

Never cut the 25 minutes of writing, and never cut One Paragraph Aloud. If you must, take time from the teaching, never from the pens.

Appendix C — Recovery Prompts

If a man cannot start writing

- “When did you first see who this person is?”
- “What were you two doing the day you were proudest of them?”
- “Look at the photo. What happened just before it was taken?”
- “Start the gratitude ledger: from ____ I learned _____. Write three lines and see where it goes.”

If a man is writing a sermon

- “Where were you standing when you learned that?”
- “Tell her about the day, not the lesson. She will find the lesson.”

If a triad stalls in Move 6

- “Which word in his paragraph did he slow down on?”
- “What did he choose to remember, out of everything he could have?”

Appendix D — Homework and the Charter

Charter	What	When
§4.1 Legacy sentence	One sentence at the top of §4.1: “I hope ____ will carry ____.” (It also goes on the Charter at a Glance.)	Due Session 15
§4.1 One letter or a one-page testament	Begun this morning if he wrote a letter; or the six-part testament. One page.	Due Session 15; one paragraph shared in triads
Appendices I & J · Stories and Letters	More stories for grandchildren, more letters. Optional.	No deadline; through First Fruits and beyond
Appendix K · Ethical Will, Expanded	The full ethical will, seven movements. Optional.	No deadline
§3.1 · §3.2 from the First Steps Card	Copied at Session 13 and checked this morning. Charter at a Glance: assigned at Session 13, Legacy line added this week, handed in at Session 15.	Done before Session 14
The Charter Core, printed	§1.0–§4.1, printed and brought.	Session 15, signed and witnessed

The homework floor is one letter or a one-page testament, with the Legacy sentence (§4.1). Everything beyond that (Appendices I, J and K) is gift, not requirement.

Materials Checklist

- Participant Guide r8, one per man, grayscale-safe
- Good paper: two or three sheets of cream stationery per man, plus envelopes
- Good pens. A man who forgot his photo can use one on his phone
- Tissues on every table
- Your letter, clean, with the paragraph marked
- The deck r8 (18 slides, Session_14_Legacy_and_Letters_r8.pptx) on the TV via HDMI; timer visible
- Appendix K copies for men who want the expanded version
- **Legacy Forms Menu and Prompt Deck: removed (Oct 24). The Participant Guide pages Three shapes and If the page stays blank do the job.**

Sources: Sessions 14–15 Planning Note r1 (September 23, 2026); S14–S15 Build Notes (September 24); Session_14_Legacy_and_Letters_r3.pptx; Appendix K · Ethical Will, Expanded; S13 Design Brief r2. Burnett & Evans, How to Live a Meaningful Life; Palmer, Let Your Life Speak (1999); Riemer & Stampfer, So That Your Values Live On;

Baines, Ethical Wills; Zinsser, Writing About Your Life; Nerburn, Letters to My Son; Pennebaker & Beall (1986); Marcus Aurelius, Meditations, Book 1; D. Brooks, The Road to Character.

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