



WHYZMEN • REWIRE RETIREMENT • SESSION 14

Legacy & Letters

The letter you write and the letter you are

Participant Guide

“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

BRING THIS MORNING

Your First Steps Card • your Tuesday page • your Charter at a Glance (filled in; you hand it in at Session 15) • Appendix A • Life Lessons (if written) • a photo of one person you would write to

Monday, March 15, 2027 • 9:00–10:30 AM • New Community Church

Wise Men Still Seek, Knowing Their Why's

This Morning

At harvest, a good farmer keeps back his best seed. Not to eat, but for a planting he may never see. In January you 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 you save the seed.

Nothing to plan. Nothing to fix. This morning you write **one page, by hand, to one person**. Nothing else is due today.

Move	Min	What happens
1 • Tend the trellis	12	Your Rule, your experiment and your triad project, reviewed with your triad. Then a look back at your Knapsack.
2 • Save the seed	8	The letter you write and the letter you are.
3 • A man who has done it	10	One of us who has already written to his grandchildren. Then Dave reads a paragraph.
4 • Three shapes	8	A letter, a story, a spiritual testament. Three tests for rereading.
5 • Write one thing	25	Silent. One name, one memory, one page.
6 • One paragraph aloud	15	In your triad. Passing is always allowed.
7 • Before next Monday	12	The homework floor, and a blessing.

Where this morning sits

January • S9	March • S12-13	This morning • S14	Next Monday • S15	April • First Fruits
Harvest the first half	See it, choose it, start it	Save the seed	Witnessed, blessed, sent	A dinner, with wives

1

Tend the Trellis

9 minutes • with your triad • your First Steps Card in hand

A Rule of Life is a trellis, not a cage: a frame the vine grows along. Every gardener re-ties the trellis in spring. A practice that quietly died is information, not failure.

Practice of the Week: one moment with “Keep a small promise.”

	You	Your brothers ask
1	Read your four rhythm lines, word for word.	“Can you really do this in two minutes?”
2	Your experiment: planned, started, or done?	“What surprised you?”
3	Your triad project: the date and the convener.	“Who sends the first text?”

What I am re-tying (a rhythm made smaller, a date confirmed):

THE KNAPSACK • YOUR HARVEST: WHAT YOU CARRIED WELL

Look back. What did your good Knapsack choices make possible? **What you set down:** what freedom came from letting go? **What you carried:** how did those few things anchor you through the climb? **What grew:** what did your wife, kids, grandkids, or community receive?

The Knapsack was never about carrying everything. It was about carrying what matters.

2

Save the Seed

8 minutes • teaching

“So the next generation would know them, even the children yet to be born.”

PSALM 78:6

Legacy is not the fruit you eat. It is the seed you hand forward.

You are a letter

Paul told the Corinthians that they were his letter, written on hearts and read by everyone, and not written in ink. You have been writing that letter since the day you were born. The people you love have been reading it the whole time.

The letter you are	The letter you write
The photograph. Written since the day you were born. Read by everyone.	The caption. One page. One person. This morning.

A caption without a photograph is a sermon. A photograph without a caption is often misread.

Why letters last

“I love you all.”	“The morning we fixed the bike chain in the rain.”
True. Forgettable. Anyone could say it to anyone.	Kept for fifty years. Only one man could write it, to one boy.

Meaning, love and God are all met in the particular: not love in general, but this boy, this bike, this rain. So are letters. **One name. One memory. One morning.**

Let your life speak

“Before you tell your life what you intend to do with it, listen for what it intends to do with you.”

Moses said the teaching happens “when you sit at home and when you walk along the road” (Deuteronomy 6:7). Not from a lectern. Legacy is passed on in ordinary moments; the letter only puts a caption on what the road already taught.

“Let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.”

1 JOHN 3:18

3

A Man Who Has Already Done It

10 minutes • listen

One of the men in this room has already written a letter to each of his grandchildren. He will tell us why he wrote, how he started, and what happened after. Then Dave reads one paragraph of his own letter to a grandchild.

One thing I heard that I want to remember:

4

Three Shapes, Not Three Templates

8 minutes • the shape is ours; the sentences are yours

Here are three shapes. None of them comes with sentences, because the only sentences worth writing are ones only you could write.

	A Letter • §4.1	A Story • §4.1	A Spiritual Testament • §4.1
The shape	One memory • what I saw in you • one hope • a blessing	A year • a place • what happened • what it taught	What I believe • how grace found me • what I hope for you
A model	2 Timothy: an old man writing to a younger one	Psalm 78:4: “We will tell the next generation”	John 14:27: “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you”
Good for	A grandchild, a son or daughter, your wife, a younger man	Children too young for a letter; anyone who asks “what was it like?”	This week: this or a letter. One page. Shared at Session 15

STUCK? START A GRATITUDE LEDGER

The Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius opened his private notebook, the *Meditations*, this way: from my grandfather I learned this; from my mother, that. The legacy you received, written down, often becomes the legacy you hand on.

From _____ I learned _____.

The spiritual testament

For three thousand years, fathers have written down not what they owned but what they learned. The Hebrew name for it is *tzava'ah*, the ethical will. Jacob blessing his sons (Genesis 49), Moses' farewell, David's charge to Solomon (1 Kings 2): it is a Jewish gift the church inherited, and it is our Scripture too.

"You do not support the root, but the root supports you."

ROMANS 11:18

Written as a Christian, it has six parts. Take them in any order.

	The six parts
1	What I believe, and in Whom
2	How grace found me: one story, including a failure
3	What I learned, and what it cost
4	What I ask forgiveness for, and what I have forgiven
5	What I hope for you
6	My blessing, and my hope of seeing you again

Notice part 2. A testament that only says *be good the way I was good* points to the man. A Christian testament points past the man to Christ. And notice part 6: the hope of seeing them again is the resurrection.

IF THEY DO NOT SHARE YOUR FAITH

Write testimony and love, not argument. Tell what happened to you. Faith cannot be handed down like the family silver; it can only be shown.

Three tests for anything you write

Test	Ask
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? The story carries the lesson better than the lesson does.
3 • Blessing	Does it leave them freer, not obligated?

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

5

Write One Thing

25 minutes • silent • by hand • don't edit

Step	
1 • Choose a name	Look at the photo you brought. One person, not “my grandchildren.”
2 • Choose a memory	One morning. One place. One thing that happened.
3 • Write	A letter or a story. By hand. Don't edit. Don't reread until time is called.

Use the good paper on the table for the page you will give. Use the lines below if you would rather draft first.

If the page stays blank

- When did I first see who you are?
- What were we doing the day I was proudest of you?
- What do I hope you remember about us?
- What did it cost me to learn what I want you to know?
- What happened just before this photo was taken?
- From ____ I learned ____.

NO GRANDCHILDREN?

Write to a niece or nephew, a mentee, a younger man at church, or the next WhyzMen cohort. Everyone hands something forward.

The name:

The memory (one morning, one place):

Draft

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

[illegible]

6

One Paragraph Aloud

15 minutes • in your triad • about 5 minutes each

The reader	The listeners say only
Reads one paragraph of the letter or story 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 I heard you value was ____.” No praise of the writing. No edits. No advice.

What my brothers heard me value:

This week: one letter or the testament. One paragraph at Session 15.

This morning was a rehearsal. Someday, read this to the person it's for.

7

Before Next Monday

the floor, not the ceiling

	Homework	Where it goes
1	§4.1 One letter or a one-page testament. Start with your Legacy sentence: “I hope ____ will carry ____.” Then finish this morning’s letter, or write the testament (worksheet 2). Circle one paragraph to read aloud next Monday. Then copy your Legacy sentence onto your Charter at a Glance; add your Legacy sentence (§4.1) to it this week, then hand it in when you arrive at Session 15 — or email a photo by the Saturday before. About 60 min.	Charter §4.1
2	Print your Charter (the Core, §1.0–§4.1) and bring it next Monday. We sign it together. About 10 min.	The whole Charter
3	90 seconds for Session 15: one insight, one improvement, or one rule of life you now live. Write it, then say it aloud once, timed (worksheet 3). About 15 min.	This guide
4	Practice of the Week: Say the blessing , once this week. Bring one moment (below). Inside your week.	Your card • Toolkit 3 • Speak Truly & Encourage

About 85 minutes this week. Bring your whole Charter next Monday, printed. We sign it together. **Optional • Going Deeper, only if it calls to you (not counted):** more letters and stories (Appendices I and J), the full ethical will (Appendix K), and the books and shorter readings below. Letters have no deadline. When one is ready, don’t mail it. Read it to them, face to face.

Readings for this week

- **Required:** Nothing required. Write the letter.
- **Books (optional):** *So That Your Values Live On*, Jack Riemer & Nathaniel Stampfer · *Ethical Wills*, Barry K. Baines · *Letters to My Son*, Kent Nerburn
- **Shorter readings (WhyzMen):** Writing an Ethical Will and Letters to Those I Love, the longer read (about 25 min, in your folder) · Appendix K · The Ethical Will, in your Charter (about 8 min)

PRACTICE OF THE WEEK · SAY THE BLESSING

How: Tell someone, specifically, what they have meant to you. From the Toolkit: 3 · Speak Truly & Encourage. Rooted in: Legacy & Letters.

Tried it this week ☐ · **Bring one moment to the room.**

1 • My Legacy Sentence (§4.1)

One sentence, at the top of §4.1. Not a paragraph.

I hope _____ will carry

2 • My Letter or Testament (§4.1)

One page, one of two: finish this morning's letter on the good paper, or write the testament here. One true sentence under each part is already a testament. If one page is not enough, Appendix K has room to grow, with prompts under seven movements.

1 • What I believe, and in Whom

2 • How grace found me (one story, including a failure)

3 • What I learned, and what it cost

4 • What I ask forgiveness for, and what I have forgiven

5 • What I hope for you

6 • My blessing, and my hope of seeing you again

Before you bring it: read it once with the three tests. **Particular? Story, not sermon? Blessing?** Then circle the paragraph you will read aloud next Monday.

3 • My 90 Seconds for Session 15

Choose one. Ninety seconds is about 200 words spoken slowly. Write it out, then say it aloud once at home, timed.

	Choose one
☐ One insight	Something I now see about myself, my life or God that I did not see in November.
☐ One improvement	Something I am doing differently, and what it has changed.
☐ One rule of life I now live	A rhythm from my First Steps Card that has held, and why.

My 90 seconds, written out:

Keep Writing: My Letters Ledger

The best letters may be written years from now. Keep a list. Add a name whenever a face comes to mind. A letter given while you can watch it received is rarely regretted.

To	The memory	Letter, story or testament	Written	Given

*“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.”*

PSALM 71:18

Go and write. The seed is in your hands.

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