IN ALL SEASONS - Episode 9 - Leaving a Legacy

Welcome to **IN ALL SEASONS**. I am Beverly Flanagan, your host on this podcast, for women like me, who love the Lord, in the second half of life.

We return to our perpetual question: How does **LIVING WISELY, AGING WELL** relate to our purpose in life? As women? As Christian women?

In this episode of **IN ALL SEASONS**, we are going to talk about how does **LIVING WISELY, AGING WELL** relate to a **LEAVING A LEGACY**? What is a Legacy"? How do we know what it is? And how do we create one? And not merely our financial legacy, which is important, but also our values, to those we leave behind. Our stories, our desires to make a difference through our finances & our values. How do we want to be remembered? How do these topics relate to our beliefs as Christians? As women? As Christian women?

Many of us think “legacy” is only for the wealthy or powerful. But everyone leaves a legacy, whether good, bad or a mixed bag, because legacy is a reflection of how you live. We can choose what kind of legacy we aim to build for the next generations.

Inheritance and heritage are important themes throughout the Bible, important in both old and new covenant theology. And legacy is related to these concepts.

Legacy focuses on what will endure. It’s about passing on things of lasting value to those who will live on after us. Legacy involves living intentionally and aiming to build into the next generations for their success. The next generations can be our children, our churches, and our communities.

Instead of having nothing to say on the subject, the Bible informs our idea of legacy, as we ask, “What is most significant to pass on to future generations, and how should we go about it?”

My legacy will continue after I’ve moved onto the next life. I will be remembered for my attitude, presence, words, and actions that left a pleasant fragrance or putrid

stench. In order to establish a great legacy, there needs to be an intentional effort every day with the help of the Holy Spirit.
There are 10 things for which I want to be remembered by my family, friends, and co-workers:

#1) Legacy of joy in the midst of difficulty

"Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance" (James 1:2-3).
In this life, we are going to have troubles even when we aren't the instigators of it. Rather than attempting to live a trouble-free life, it's much better to expect bumps in the road and dig deep in our spirit to find joy in the midst of it. There's joy that comes from knowing that God is in control of every single situation in our lives.

#2) Legacy of receiving and giving grace

"By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as a wise builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should build with care" (1 Corinthians 3:10).
God gives us great grace to accomplish His will right where we are. Being on the receiving end of undeserved grace and mercy makes it easier to pass it on to others. Giving grace is the ability to release our loved ones to experience everything God has created them to be and allowing them to make mistakes along the journey without being condemned.

#3) Legacy of encouraging and inspiring others towards greatness

"But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called "Today," so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness" (Hebrews 3:13).
There's always something to bring people down—a discouraging word, a disapproving look, or disrespectful actions. Sometimes we have to bring the joy with us when we show up in the home, work, church, or community. Great personal joy happens within us when other people are inspired by our words and actions.

#4) Legacy of giving my time, treasures, and energy for kingdom work

"But since you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in the love we have kindled in you—see that you also excel in this grace of giving" (2 Corinthians 8:7).

As believers in Christ Jesus, our legacy should be one of incredible generosity of our time, money, and energy. We are promised by God that He will supply all our needs and grant our desires according to His will. Our legacy is bolstered when we live unhindered by selfish ambition or hoarding earthly treasures for ourselves.

#5) Legacy of modeling forgiveness

"Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you" (Ephesians 4:32).

It's much easier to talk and think about forgiving others than actually doing it. However, God gives an incredible freedom to those who choose to forgive those who've offended them. Christ's sacrifice at the cross is most modeled when we forgive as He has forgiven us.

#6) Legacy of unconditional love for my family and friends

"Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins" (1 Peter 4:8).

Many of us grow up believing that people love us when we do something worthy of their affection. However God has called us to love unconditionally as He has loved us. Through His grace, the legacy of agape love can reach throughout many generations of family and friends.

#7) Legacy of leading and discipling people to Christ

"Because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well" (1 Thessalonians 2:8).

It's easy to take for granted the amazing gift of salvation given from God the Father through Jesus Christ. Yet every time I share the gospel and witness a transformed life—I'm more determined to reach out to the lost. It takes time and effort to disciple

people in Christ, but God gives us the wisdom and strength when we trust in His direction.

#8) Legacy of hearing and doing God's word

"Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says" (James 1:22).

If I could choose, I would rather leave a legacy of doing God's word rather than just sitting around accruing knowledge about it. God's word is a powerful motivator to get us moving in the right direction. However it's only possible when I surrender my inability in the flesh and trust the Lord to give me what I need to follow through.

#9) Legacy of doing good and productive work

"Their work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each person's work" (1 Corinthians 3:13).

I've gained much satisfaction from giving my best in the work God has given me to do. It isn't always easy and sometimes I'm tempted to quit. However through perseverance and strength from the Holy Spirit, I've accomplished my goals and aspirations in the different seasons of my life to give a good day's work in and outside of the home.

#10) Legacy of looking towards my heavenly home

"But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, where righteousness dwells" (2 Peter 3:13).

If there was only one legacy I could leave—it would be the hope I have in Christ for eternal life. Every day I must live as if it were the last one on this earth considering the question: what would I bring to heaven? The answer: nothing, except what I did in the name of Jesus leading towards heavenly riches.

What's your Legacy?

Everyone leaves a legacy whether they plan to or not. Everything we say or do leaves the imprint of our lives on those around us. As long as there is breath in your body, there's an opportunity to leave a rich legacy of hope. Start your legacy list today and begin to live in the fullness that God created you to experience.

Because we all leave some kind of legacy, some kind & footprint, to all those who know us, this is NOT just for those who have children, or those who have material wealth. And if you were with us for Episode 3 of IN ALL SEASONS, we talked about some mature women in the Bible & their legacies: Sarah's was Spiritual Motherhood, Naomi's was Mentoring, Elizabeth's was Faith, & Anna's was Devotion. What are we leaving behind us, in our homes, our families, our churches, our workplaces, our communities?

Important as it is to plan for our material & digital possessions, it is just as if not MORE important to plan for our spiritual possessions. And what IS our spiritual possession? How we were raised, who came before us, how it shaped us for life. Our faith, our experience of living that faith in our lives, our values, our struggles, and our personal relationship with God and how that played out in everything we did & every decision we made. Even when we were wrong, and went astray, is important in letting those we know how we were affected by our mistakes & poor choices, our sins, and our reclamation. How did we get off the Narrow Path, and more importantly, how did we get back on?

There are three recommended ways to express our legacy:

We can creative an ETHICAL WILL, also known as a LEGACY LETTER. These are are not written by lawyers, but by you. They can include life lessons, values, blessings and hopes for the future, apologies to those you fear you may have hurt or gratitude to those you think you have not thanked enough. Traditionally, they were letters written by parents to children, to be read after death. But even if we do not have children they can be written to friends or other family members.

You don't have wait until you are on your deathbed to do this. As soon as you articulate your values, suddenly you start to live your life more intentionally. Especially if you share it. Live your life as you wish to be remembered. Legacy letters can help with making amends, addressing regrets and healing relationships. Remember, this is not for ourselves alone, but to help others and ultimately to bring Glory to God!

If you don't feel capable of writing your LEGACY LETTER yourself, you can use an online template, take a workshop, read a book about it or work with a professional writer.

A related option is to create A LIFE REFLECTION STORY, which is not a lengthy memoir or autobiography. It is a continuum of short stories and reflections to share the life lessons, wisdom and inspiration gained from the experiences of living your life so far. It too can help you live more intentionally by defining your life purpose and direction. What is the purpose of life reflection?
We gain a greater sense of purpose and direction for living our own life when we reflect upon our past, and we help shape the path for our loved ones as they find meaning and inspiration from our footprints.

Yet another option is to create A MAKING A DIFFERENCE PLAN, an intentional plan to help you positively impact the people and causes you care most about by focusing your time, talents and resources. You will learn how to go beyond being charitable and create a legacy of generosity by aligning your actions with your own passions and vision.

In addition to these three, there are DIY books & scrapbooks available, in which mementos and photographs can be kept and passed on to others. There are professionals available to help with autobiographies & life stories, usually called Personal Historians. Sometimes workshops are offered through Senior Centers & community gatherings. It does NOT have to be burdensome or complicated, and it gives a sense of completion for the one creating it and for the one receiving it.

A **legacy** can be accomplished through intentional giving at death, but more significantly through living an intentional life. I want to leave you with this song, or at least the lyrics to this song, which give us a sense of the WHY & the HOW:

FIND US FAITHFUL

We're pilgrims on the journey
Of the narrow road
And those who've gone before us line the way
Cheering on the faithful, encouraging the weary
Their lives a stirring testament to God's sustaining grace

Surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses
Let us run the race not only for the prize
But as those who've gone before us
Let us leave to those behind us
The heritage of faithfulness passed on through godly lives

CHORUS:
Oh may all who come behind us find us faithful
May the fire of our devotion light their way
May the footprints that we leave
Lead them to believe
And the lives we live inspire them to obey

Oh may all who come behind us find us faithful

After all our hopes and dreams have come and gone
And our children sift through all we've left behind
May the clues that they discover and the memories they uncover
Become the light that leads them to the road we each must find

This is Beverly Flanagan, signing off for today, and thank you for joining me on **IN ALL SEASONS,** for women like me, who love the Lord, in the second half of life!