



## Our Legacy – Leaving a Lasting Impression

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It is said that first impressions are lasting ones. Studies show that the first 5-10 seconds of any first encounter forms the basis by which others define who we are, and determine what impact we may have upon their lives. Whether intentional or not, when we first meet someone we make an immediate assessment based on what we see and immediately place the person in a certain category.

Although initial impressions can form the basis of our impact on others, actions that others observe over and over again leave lasting impressions as well. Regardless if through a chance encounter or lifelong relationship, we leave lasting impressions throughout our life's journey. When thinking of the story that our lives will tell, what are the things that will best build our legacy? What will ultimately determine the impact of our lives?

A good place to start would be to look at our relationships...

**Luke 10:38-42** *As they continued their travel, Jesus entered a village. A woman by the name of Martha welcomed him and made him feel quite at home. 39 She had a sister, Mary, who sat before the Master, hanging on every word he said. 40 But Martha was pulled away by all she had to do in the kitchen. Later, she stepped in, interrupting them. "Master, don't you care that my sister has abandoned the kitchen to me? Tell her to lend me a hand." 41 The Master said, "Martha, dear Martha, you're fussing far too much and getting yourself worked up over nothing. 42 One thing only is essential, and Mary has chosen it—it's the main course, and won't be taken from her."*

Quite often we become so consumed with ourselves that we miss the significance of impacting the lives of others.

**1 Corinthians 10:24** *"We want to live well, but our foremost efforts should be to help others live well."*  
It is difficult to build a lasting legacy without a commitment to living in fellowship with other people.

## The Fellowship Principle

The dictionary defines fellowship as "friendly association with others."

The Bible primarily uses 2 words that are translated as fellowship...

- The O.T: Rea – a close personal friend.
- The N.T: Koinonia – sharing in common.

God created us with a need for close personal friends and the sharing of common experiences. In fact, the lack of fellowship which God called loneliness was the only thing "not good" in God's original creation...

**Genesis 2:18** *"God said, "It's not good for the Man to be alone; I'll make him a helper, a companion."*

God gave us more than just the gift of marriage to overcome loneliness. He gave us the gift of fellowship.

**John 13:34-35**  
*34 "Let me give you a new command: Love one another. In the same way I loved you, you love one another. 35 This is how everyone will recognize that you are my disciples—when they see the love you have for each other."*

It is, however, entirely up to us whether we take advantage of the gift or not...

We can choose to live in fellowship or we can choose to live in isolation.

What does living in fellowship mean?

Living in friendship.

The Seven Marks of a Real Friend...

1. Real friends are committed.

**Proverbs 18:24** *"Friends come and friends go, but a true friend sticks by you like family."*

2. Real friends are considerate.

**Proverbs 17:9** “Overlook an offense and bond a friendship; fasten on to a slight and—good-bye, friend!”

**3. Real friends are confidential.**

**Proverbs 16:28** “Troublemakers start fights; gossips break up friendships.”

**4. Real friends are candid.**

**Proverbs 27:5-6** “A spoken reprimand is better than approval that's never expressed. [6] The wounds from a lover are worth it; kisses from an enemy do you in.”

**Rules for correcting a friend...**

- Compliment in **public** and correct in **private**.
- Don't **give** what you're not willing to **receive**.
- Remember that **timing** is everything.

**5. Real friends are constructive.**

To “construct” a friend, be a...

- ...**motivator**
- ...**encourager**
- ...**challenger**

**John 14:26**

<sup>26</sup> But the Comforter (Counselor, Helper, Intercessor, Advocate, Strengtheners, Standby), the Holy Spirit, Whom the Father will send in My name [in My place, to represent Me and act on My behalf], He will teach you all things. And He will cause you to recall (will remind you of, bring to your remembrance) everything I have told you.

**6. Real friends are consistent.**

**Proverbs 17:17** “Friends love through all kinds of weather, and families stick together in all kinds of trouble.”

**Romans 8:35**

<sup>35</sup> Can anything ever separate us from Christ's love? Does it mean he no longer loves us if we have trouble or calamity, or are persecuted, or are hungry or cold or in danger or threatened with death?

**7. Real friends are caring.**

**Proverbs 27:19** “Just as water mirrors your face, so your face mirrors your heart.”

Allowing ourselves to **love** and be **loved** in caring friendships provides the biggest opportunity to impact lives.

Why? Because as loving friends:

- You share a common **spirit**.
- You are committed to each other's best **interest**.
- You give of **yourselves**.
- You always direct us toward **God**.

**Exodus 23:9**

<sup>9</sup> "Do not oppress the foreigners living among you. You know what it is like to be a foreigner. Remember your own experience in the land of Egypt.

## *Turning Point . . .*

We all have a legacy that we will leave behind. The best lasting impression we can make is investing ourselves in loving **friendships**.

Then develop those friendships into a "**fellowship**" that is a relationship built not on feeling, but actions of participating in each other's lives.