

# Will & Testament

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Last Will and Testament. Power of Attorney for Business. Power of Attorney for Medical. Cremation or Burial? To keep fighting to live or to concede to the inevitable? Who gets what? Who gets how much? This was our week. Shannon and I had our preliminary meeting with the attorney to start the process of drafting these important documents.

We have discussed it for years but have always ended up stuck at the red light of this intersection. We were stuck, but comfortable being there. Avoidance of these necessary decisions was easier than doing one of the most responsible things you can do for your loved ones. As is the case for most people, we just were not ready for the light to change and enter that intersection of discussing our own mortality.

With all due respect to our wonderful attorney, I kind of compare this process to the three reasons I gave up golf. One, it takes too long. Two, I am not good at doing it. Three, it is a lot of money to pay for something that takes too long and for something I am not good at! All kidding aside, it is such an important process that we have waited too long to deal with. It is a huge sense of relief to know that everything is now in order.

As all of us prepare for a busy week ahead, I wanted to share with you the four lessons this process has taught me:

## Make Your Life Count

Someone that betters me and an extremely influential person in my world of public service is our Mayor, Tommy Allegood. I have had the opportunity to craft several presentations with him in our more than twenty years of service together at the City of Acworth. The theme of one of his go to presentations is, "Make it Count." He uses the example of the sands of time in an hourglass. With each passing day, there is more sand in the bottom part of it than there is the top. He encourages his audiences to make what time they have left on earth count. Such a great reminder!

This year I will hit the big 4-0. What some would consider a pretty good gauge of about the halfway point. There is a good book that Tommy put me on years ago called *Halftime* by Bob Buford. A great read for someone at their halftime. Buford says that, "the first half was a quest for success, the second half is a journey to significance."

Thinking ahead to forty can have its depressing moments! As Tommy has always encouraged us, I want to make whatever time I have left count. I want my life to have significance.

## **The Epilogue Is More Important Than the Story**

If we make it count, we will leave a legacy. Community leadership is “the ability and willingness to better others and the world we live in. As a community leader, you will leave a legacy that lives on through future generations. Maybe your journey has not started well. The good news is you can finish well. It is never a bad time to start writing the next chapter.

At the end of most books there is what is called an epilogue. A quick Google search produces this result for epilogue, “a section...at the end of a book...that serves as a comment on or a conclusion to what has happened.” In the world of books, authors write their own epilogues. In life, the people you impact will write yours. Give them plenty of good material to work with and sources to cite!

## **Spend Time with Those That Will Cry at The Reading of Your Last Will and Testament**

My family and I will be heading to St. George Island, Florida this Saturday for some much-needed rest and relaxation. In post 005 *The Bridge*, I shared with you a moment I had last summer as we crossed the 4.1-mile bridge on our return trip home. I spent some time reading through that post this week to get my mind right as we prepare for the trip.

In that post, we discussed the concept of spending time with those that will cry at your funeral. The process of developing the last will and testament made me think deeper than that. As I read through the draft documents this week, it was sobering to think that one day some lawyer will be advising those I leave behind from this piece of paper. My signature will be there, but I will not.

As genuine and authentic community leaders, we will likely have many cry at our funerals. The student who you redirected their life through education, the player that you kept on the straight and narrow so they could play college ball, the employee you developed that went on to pursue his/her dreams as an entrepreneur, or that lost student in your youth group that you led to his/her faith. I could go on and on. You name the scenario in your story.

As community leaders, we are in the business of bettering others in the world we live in, but the most important world you live in is home. That is your family. The ones that will cry when your last will and testament is read. Spend quality time with them.

## **I Have Enough Time to Change the World**

When I catch myself throwing a pity party about not having enough time in the day, I remind myself of something I once heard. I do not recall who said it or where I was when I heard it, but it stuck. You/We/I have the same twenty-four hours in a day as people who

changed the world had. People like Mother Teresa, Billy Graham, Ghandi, and Martin Luther King, Jr. did not get an extra hour in their day because they were special. They made an extraordinary impact with the same hours you are given. We just need to do a better job with the quality of the quantity we are given. If you need some inspiration on making the world a better place.

## **Conclusion**

Most organizations have a mission statement. I heard one time that you should have a personal mission statement too. I have not shared this before today, but my personal mission statement is “to live a life in such a way so that at my funeral my children hear stories of the impact I made on others’ lives they knew nothing about but did not surprise them.” Believe me, I fall short of this daily! I share this with you because if we all strived to fulfill this mission, we could change not just our world, but the entire world.

### **Bonus Conclusion**

Christianity is a big part of the world I live in. This is a big week for Christians. Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ went to the cross on Good Friday to deliver us from our sins. One thing that can get lost in the egg hunts and family get togethers is what happened three days later. He rose again and gave us life.

I share this because at the end of our medical power of attorney it asks for “additional instructions” and leaves a blank. In the case I get to a point where the doctors can no longer improve my situation, the instructions are to make me comfortable and let me move on. Here is what goes in this blank for me. “I am a Christian, have accepted Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior and am confident I know where we I will spend eternity, in heaven.” As Uncle Si from Duck Dynasty would say, “that is a fact, Jack!” I close my eyes here and open my eyes there.

## **Ordinary to Extraordinary Intersection**

Are you making your life count? Did you get off to a bad start? Finish well. Are you spending time with those who will cry at the reading of your will? Will your family be surprised by what they find out from others at your funeral?

### **Bonus Intersection**

If you closed your eyes for the last time here, where would they re-open? Would they?