

# ONE BIG LEGACY MYTH

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If I “do life right,” parent brilliantly, and disciple intentionally; my kids and the people I care most about will take hold of what is good, true and right. Or alternatively; if I screw up on occasion, I will have doomed my kids and the people I influence to fail. Those thoughts *can* be true in some situations.

*"He who walks with the wise becomes wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm."*

— Proverbs 13:20

When Brandon and I got married he knew I didn't cook. Like ever. The cupboards in my apartment consistently contained cereal, and tortillas; and my fridge had milk and maybe, *maybe* some chicken. This was totally fine with me... until I met Brandon. In retrospect, he was probably flabbergasted. I remember mentioning we could go to Chili's one night and after his response I promptly labeled him a food snob. He had a palate that kings and princes could contend with, and somehow he decided to marry me. Here's the thing — it has rubbed off. I absolutely cannot appreciate some of the food I once found decidedly delectable, and I cook pretty decent food 5 nights a week. Do not ask me to top Rachel Ray, I cannot; and yes, you can ask me exactly what's in my recipes because I MUST follow it to the T. It is not my nature to creatively whip something profound up in the kitchen — but I have clearly been influenced.

**There is truth to the power of influence.** But the original statement is far from foolproof and in fact a dangerous and prideful myth to claim. While we can absolutely influence and be influenced; the problem is that we cannot take full credit for that which we cannot control. Unlike formulas and robotics, there is a little something that we must consider as we introduce truth and life as it is being caught called *free will*.

**For a legacy to continue it must be *caught*. The tricky part is that this also means someone else with *free will* gets to decide whether they accept it or reject it.** There is an amount of influence in certain circumstances that we have to sway the odds in favor of a successful catch, but the reality is there is a portion of the result we cannot control.

Look at Jesus. Living fully man and fully God, lived a perfect life and was 100% on mission. He knew his purpose and made a historically impactful splash when he began his ministry. I think it's fair to say there is nothing he needed to change about his approach; and yet, not everyone accepted what he said to be true. If this was true for Jesus, who was perfect, how much more true can that be for us?

*"Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing."* —Matthew 23:37

It's like throwing a football. (don't laugh, I realize I know nothing about football... but pretty sure I can't screw this one up — I already asked my football expert friend to make sure). When the quarterback makes a pass their job is to throw with skill and accuracy (right?!), so that the receiver is optimally set up for the best possible outcome — catching the ball. But ultimately, the quarterback cannot control whether or not the ball finds its mark or slips through the receiver's fingers. The receiver must catch it.

Or consider this; if I want my child to eat a good meal (admittedly way more experience here than football) I have some choices about influencing a response. I can send him out the door hungry and tell him to go find some food and eat it. Or I can carefully prepare a meal, set it before him at the table and give him a fork. Odds are, he's more likely to eat well when I make it easy for him to bring the fork to his mouth with food on it. I want to make it easy for him to make a good decision; to receive what he needs. **Because I love him, I will do all that I can to sway the odds in his favor. But he has to ultimately choose what he wants to do with what I present.**

This can be the *greatest pain* a parent feels when they consider their child (because dang it, we can't control their decisions); and alternatively the same truth can be a tremendous relief — because ***sometimes you need to be the first to make a change.*** You get to control what you claim and pass along *even though* you are impacted by what touched you. **Legacies can shift. Some of the strongest, boldest people I can think of overcame a difficult upbringing and defied odds by becoming something completely counter to that which they were set up for.** They shifted the course of their family's legacy for their own children and grandchildren.

I think it's wise to keep in mind that while legacies are powerful — the fingerprint you make with your life is significant; we please God by living in obedience to him. Lives are changed when we do this because the people who are eager receivers around us will catch hold of the power of truth and love and we don't have to do anything to manipulate that. It is the natural result of a life lived in submission to God's leading.

*"If you love me, you will obey what I command."* — John 14:15