

OUR LEGACY

PRINCIPLES WE PRAY OUR CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN WILL EMBRACE

One of the greatest gifts we can pass on to you is wisdom on how to live your lives in a way that honors God, blesses others, and makes the best use of the gifts and abilities the Lord has given you. The best source of wisdom is the Bible. We urge you to study it, memorize it, and meditate on it every day. Here is brief summary of some of the main principles we've learned from God's Word, other's counsel, and experience. We've not followed all of these principles perfectly ourselves, but we always found that the more faithfully we did, the better life was (and the more we respected each other).

Love, Dad and Mom

Loving God and His Church

1. The ultimate answer to nearly every question in life is "Jesus." Really.
2. The gospel—the good news that Jesus died to save us from our sins— is the path to life and the key to all these principles.
3. The gospel means not only that Jesus has given us eternal life, but also that he is working in us to make us like him.
4. God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in him (read John Piper)
5. "Sin is what we do when we are not fully satisfied in God" (Piper)
6. Sin, by definition, is stupid
7. God has good plans for your life, even if you can't see them at the moment
8. "God calls us to be HIS people; to be marked by humility, integrity, and simplicity"¹
9. Worshipping God in church every Sunday is one of our highest privileges and joys
10. Be fully engaged in your church and you will be blessed and you'll be a blessing
11. Faithfully participate in a small group where you can learn and grow with others
12. On January 1, start reading one Psalm a day for 5 months and then one Proverb a day for a month; and then start over in July
13. Proverbs, Proverbs, Proverbs: study them diligently and you'll avoid much grief
14. A wise man listens to advice and correction; a fool ignores it
15. The way of the sinner is hard
16. Start each day in God's Word and prayer; your day will go so much better!
17. A disciplined devotional life leads to a disciplined life in general; a sloppy, erratic devotional life leads to a sloppy, erratic life in general
18. "Prayer does not prepare you for the greater works; prayer is the greater work"²
19. If I do not live a life that satisfies God, I will never live a life that satisfies me³
20. Read Spurgeon, Oswald Chambers, Valley of Vision, and other devotional books regularly; it's a shortcut to wisdom
21. The Westminster, Lutheran and London Baptist Confessions and Catechisms are not infallible but they contain a wealth of wisdom; study them regularly
22. We've given you a lot of books over the years; read them someday!
23. There is nothing you can do to make God love you more ... or love you less. Love flows from him because God is love.

Character and Relationships

24. God wants to conform you to the image of Christ; cooperate with him and the process will be faster and less painful
25. You cannot change your character through your own efforts; working harder won't do it; the only way to change in lasting ways is to believe the gospel and ask God to work in you little by little every day
26. If you want to bless your children and see them prosper, fear, love and obey God with all your heart and strength (Deut. 5:29, Ps. 112:1-2, Prov. 14:26-27)
27. It usually takes 21 days to start getting comfortable with a new habit; focus on 2 or three things at a time and you'll be a different person in a year

28. To enjoy close, lasting relationships, always practice the SOG Plan: be Self-aware, Other-aware and God aware
29. It is never too late to start doing what is right
30. Always say and do what you would if your mother was standing beside you and you'll seldom go wrong
31. If you want to grow in character, find the most godly people you can and spend as much time with them as possible
32. Learn from your mistakes and you can convert stupid blunders into growth
33. "Insanity is doing the same thing again and expecting different results" (Einstein)
34. "Where self begins, sorrow begins"⁴
35. Pride is a thief; it can rob you of everything you value (friends, reputation, success)
36. "Be kind, for everyone you meet is fighting a great battle"⁵
37. "A man of integrity walks securely" (Prov. 10:9); integrity means that you speak and act in private exactly as you do in public; your private life is no different than your public life
38. Humility is one of the most appealing, respected and relationship-altering qualities in life; pray for it every day
39. Breathe grace: take in God's love and grace every day and breathe it out by speaking to others only what will honor him and build others up
40. Always look for and draw attention to EGGs (Evidences of God's Grace)
41. Make your word sacred; once you make a commitment, don't let anything stop you from keeping it
42. Follow through, especially when it's hard; you'll eventually earn both respect and success
43. Study every person you encounter and find a way to offer them a word of encouragement; even it's brief, it could make their day
44. Don't use "How are you," simply to say hello; use it as a real question and let people know you really want to know
45. "Affliction is the good man's shining time"⁶
46. Two key questions: Who are you going to follow? How are you going to lead?
47. Your word is one of your most precious assets; fail to keep it and you are poor no matter what else you own
48. Tell one lie and it can take years to regain a person's trust
49. Trust is built by making and keeping commitments, and even more so by suffering and sacrificing for others
50. If you find you can't keep a commitment, go to the other person immediately and appeal for mercy; don't hide or avoid it
51. Always tell the truth, even when it hurts; no matter how much truth may hurt, it's never worse than when you lie
52. Admit it when you're wrong; blaming and excusing only confirms the fact that you're a fool
53. Read the books your Mom and Dad wrote; they actually contain some wisdom
54. Be compassionate; enter into other's suffering and do all you can to help them
55. Two things God can use to make you a very different person a year from now: the company you keep and the books you read
56. Television is one the biggest robbers in the world; it will steal your time, energy, initiative, creativity, purity, morality, and relationships; the more you look to it for comfort and pleasure, the more empty your life will be
57. One way to wean yourself from television is to make a rule that you must read one hour for every hour you watch TV
58. Make sure you have a good purpose for every word you speak; thoughtless words can wear others down, drive them away or do damage that is difficult to repair
59. When you get bucked off a horse (or are defeated in other ways), get right back on
60. Rejoice in other peoples' gifts and success; they'll love you for it and be more inclined to do the same for you

61. Love and respect your parents and you will be successful in all other authority relationships
62. Respect your elders (all those God has placed in authority over you) and you will prosper
63. You never get a second chance to make a good first impression
64. Be tough; no one likes a whiner
65. Plan ahead; it will save you resources, embarrassment and grief
66. Enjoy the outdoors as much as you can; it is one of God's great displays of his glory
67. Stay far away from drugs, cigarettes and excessive alcohol; they will ruin your life
68. Sex is a marvelous gift from God; it's wonderful within marriage but destructive outside of it; pursue purity every day and you will be rewarded with greater love, intimacy, bonding and joy when you marry
69. Do not envy the rich; if you have Jesus, you are already the heir to infinite riches
70. Be a good listener; ask questions, draw others out; it shows you value them
71. Exercise regularly; take good care of your body and you'll enjoy living in it
72. Avoid junk food; it will rob you of your health and energy, clog your veins and put on pounds that are really hard to get rid of

Manners

73. Always use good manners; it shows respect and earns respect
74. Always say please and thank you to both those above you and those below you
75. Most rules of etiquette have a good reason behind them; learn the reason and you'll never forget the rule (e.g., we pass food clockwise because most people like to receive with their left and serve with their right)
76. When you meet someone, look them in the eye and give a firm handshake; this establishes you as a person worthy of respect
77. Be cheerful and give your name when answering the phone; people really appreciate it

78. Let other people talk so you can learn from their experience
79. People will often judge you by the clothes you wear, so dress appropriately, neatly and tastefully when you go out in public
80. Write thank you notes immediately, before you use the gift

Money

81. You'll always have enough if you always spend less than you make
82. Don't spend a dime until you've given at least 10% to the Lord and put 10% into savings
83. Record every dime you spend in Quicken and you'll know where all your money goes (and where the leaks are)
84. Live by a budget, not by what you want at the moment
85. Always maintain a liquid savings account of at least three months fixed costs ... and don't touch it except in true emergencies ... and then replenish it.
86. Start saving early for retirement; putting aside a little each month really adds up
87. Debt is a slave master; flee from it
88. Never buy out of fear or urgency; there will always be another good deal
89. It's not a bargain if you bought something you really don't need
90. Never buy a major item on impulse; wait a few days and you'll often discover you really don't need it
91. Don't guarantee another person's debt (unless you are willing and fully prepared to pay the entire debt yourself)
92. When you start to acquire large, periodic financial obligations (e.g., car insurance), set aside money each month so you'll have the full amount when the bill comes due

Education and Work

93. God made us to learn and grow in knowledge all of our lives, so education is a key to a productive and rewarding life
94. Be a life-long learner; read, read, read!

95. “Do your duty” (R.E. Lee, one of the most respected soldiers in our country’s history)
96. “Resolved, never to lose one moment of time; but improve it the most profitable way I possibly can” (Jonathan Edwards)
97. When you begin a class or a job, work at 110% the first few months; once people label you as an “A” student or diligent worker, that’s how they will tend to see you from then on
98. If you start something, finish it ASAP
99. Identify and do the hardest thing first each day and the rest of your day will be easier
100. Don’t burn daylight (said John Wayne); get up early and get to work—that’s what your competitor is doing
101. Plan your work and work your plan: a key to success and enjoyment
102. Work at least one week (preferably two) ahead; that way you’ll have margin if you get sick or if your computer crashes, or if something really fun comes up
103. Keep a regular sleep schedule; sleep and wake at the same time every day (even weekends) and life is easier and more productive
104. When you have a job, work like you are the boss and the company is yours
105. Never stand around at work; there is always something to do
106. To be a good leader, it’s not good enough to communicate so clearly that you can be understood; you must communicate so clearly you cannot be misunderstood.
107. Always be on time; better yet, early
108. Be a “Can do,” “Yes, if ...” person (not a “No, because...” person) and your boss will respect you and promote you

109. Look for ways to help others succeed, and draw attention to their successes, and you will be more successful yourself
110. You don’t have to be the best compared to others; but always be the best you can be
111. Make your bed (start each day with consistent habits of discipline)
112. End each day with a neat desk and room, and a plan for tomorrow, and you’ll start the next day more easily and cheerfully
113. A neat desk or room is a key to an organized and efficient life
114. If you use something, put it away when you’re done
115. People generally overestimate what they can do in a year and underestimate what they can do in five years

Cars

116. Take good care of your car and it will take care of you (service it regularly)
117. Fill up you gas tank when it gets to half empty; you never know when you’ll need it
118. Don’t look into the headlights of an oncoming car
119. If you start to skid in the winter, just go with it (don’t try to correct); the brake is your enemy on icy roads!
120. Put snow tires on all four wheels in the winter; the small cost can save your life (or at least a few dents)
121. Make sure your car is equipped with everything you may need for an emergency (blanket, first aid kit, flashlight, tire chains, tow rope, jumper cables, tools)

Most important of all: no matter how well or how poorly you follow these principles, Jesus loves you and so do we!

¹ Christ Wright, Presentation at Lausanne III

² Oswald Chambers, *My Utmost for His Highest*

³ Valley of Vision

⁴ Charles Spurgeon, *Morning and Evening*..

⁵ Commonly attributed to Philo of Alexandria

⁶ Edward Young, English Poet