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The *Power* of
INHERITANCE



George Moore Jr.



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Introduction

THE POWER OF INHERITANCE

One of the most memorable experiences that I had with a group of men was when I asked my Lake County Jail students to imagine that Bill Gates was their father.

You wouldn't believe how almost everyone's countenance changed. The mere thought of being an heir to so much wealth completely changed the atmosphere in that entire room.

There was this sense of invincibility, regardless of where they were located or what they were all currently experiencing, that caused them to perceive that there was power in having that kind of inheritance.



It's amazing how confident and secure a man or a woman will become when they realize that they have access to an endless amount of resources. Knowing that you are an heir of something or someone great can be a game changer.

Unfortunately, in over 20 years of jail, prison and re-entry ministry I've seen one reoccurring theme...

People tend to un-dervalue themselves because something or someone in their lives de-valued them.

In light of recent injustices, many formerly incarcerated people - including myself - can easily feel undervalued and underappreciated based on our past.



Sadly, incarcerated and/or formerly incarcerated individuals are not the only one's who find themselves plagued with that kind of mindset.

God once spoke these words through the Prophet Hosea,

"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge..."

- Hosea 4:6a

He went on to talk about the consequences of "lacking knowledge" but the important thing to note is that the word "knowledge" in this text is not just talking about regular knowledge. This scripture declares that God's people lacked an intimate knowledge of Him! That is why they were suffering.



And here's some truth serum to go along with that revelation...

We all have a tendency to do that.

I can't tell you how many times that I've undervalued my worth simply because I forgot who my Heavenly Father was. But I can tell you that when I finally began to recognize my - *lineage* - my behavior and my lifestyle miraculously made a 180 degree turn for the better.

I believe that our marginalized communities and disproportionate people who feel like they have no voice will rise once they realize that they are part of *A Royal Family*.



Just imagine if today's generation believed the declaration that **"you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light."** - 1 Peter 2:9 ESV

Having an intimate knowledge of how God sees us definitely gives us power over how the world sees us. The Word of God teaches us that "our Father" is bigger than Bill Gates and that our lineage is more valuable than how people treat us in society.

With that being said, let's discover more about our true inheritance.



WHO'S YA' DADDY?

Junior: used chiefly to distinguish a son with the same given name as his father.

I was born a "Junior" but my mother allowed me to legally change my name during my adolescent years. My relationship with my father was strained at the time, and I thought that George was a corny name anyway, so I changed it. It wasn't that my father was a bad man, I just didn't want to identify myself as "George."

In fact, I still have high school friends in California that call me Dante'. I didn't realize the power vested in my birth name.



The name "George" means: *Tiller of soil or*
FARMER

Ironically, that name physically describes the kind of spiritual person that I am. But I was once willing to throw all of that away simply because of the strained relationship that I had with my father.

It's not about our physical names or even about our physical fathers but it has everything to do with our overall identity.

How we chose to identify ourselves or who we choose to identify ourselves with can change our lives forever.



One of the best biblical stories that we can use to illustrate this point is *"The Parable of the Prodigal Son"* in Luke, the 15th Chapter.

Here's a young man who was granted full access to the powerful inheritance of his father but he threw it all away for temporary satisfaction.

In the end, the bible says that **"he came to himself."** But what does that truly mean?

Think of it this way: *He initially didn't realize who he was so he took on the identity of someone of lesser value.*

But eventually he would understand who he was all along.



He was his father's son.

The simple realization of this fact caused him to want to go back to being a powerful "junior" instead of an independent failure.

"he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have more than enough bread, but I perish here with hunger!'" - Luke 15:17b.

When he perceived that he was more than a servant and far greater than the person that he had sold himself out to be, he declared:

"I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you.

- Luke 15:18 ESV



When he finally identified with his father, he was also able to embrace the royal lifestyle that came with his family name.

His father goes on to say that his son was dead and lost but now he's alive and found. Of course his son had not physically died but when he was separated from his inheritance - he was not truly living.

I can honestly say that I've been there and done that.

We all need to identify with our Father in Heaven so that we can truly understand the power of our son-ship here on earth. There's power in our inheritance.



BOAST YOUR BIRTHRIGHT

The saying "*The apple doesn't fall too far from the tree*" has been used to describe both people who have done well and people who have not done so well. But the connotation is still the same; you can't really hide where you come from. And since it will eventually come out, you might as well own it. Own your origin.

I remember hanging out with a popular rapper in Oakland, California. I tried to say "*fasheezy*" which is slang for "for sure" but it came out wrong. I eventually had to own the fact that I had more roots in Richmond, Ca. than in Oakland. It was obvious.



Why didn't I just own it?

I believe that we fail to embrace who we are when we don't truly see the value of where we come from. Another reason that we don't own it, whether we admit to it or not, is that we may be worried about what other people think.

In Matthew 26:73-74, Peter cursed when people recognized who he was. He tried to deny the fact that he was a follower of Jesus because he didn't want people to persecute him in the same way that they were persecuting Jesus - but his speech was too easy for them to identify.



"After a little while the bystanders came up and said to Peter, "Certainly you too are one of them, for your accent betrays you."

- Matthew 26:73 ESV (with emphasis)

Peter tried to deny who he was but they could tell that he wasn't from around there.

Later on, that same Peter was called an Apostle and is quoted as saying, **"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you,** - 1 Peter 1:3 ESV



The Apostle Peter had finally come to the place in his life where he was no longer interested in hiding his origin - he embraced his birthright and invited others to do the same.

birthright: *a right, privilege, or possession to which a person is entitled by birth*

Growing up in church I used to always hear this saying, "*You must be born-again.*" That's some weird terminology until you realize that God literally adopts us into his "royal family" as soon as you receive His Son Jesus as your Lord and Savior. That action alone then grants you rights and privileges that should be embraced.



So how do we "boast our new birthright?"
One way that we can do this is to
recognized the value of it. In Genesis 25, we
see a hungry man named Esau willing to
sale his birthright to his brother Jacob.
Now, his brother Jacob was definitely
deceitful, however he got Esau to give up
something of great value just to satisfy
some temporary discomfort.

**"Jacob said, "Sell me your birthright now."
Esau said, "I am about to die; of what use is
a birthright to me?""**

- Genesis 25: 31-32 ESV (with emphasis)

If Esau would have known what he had, he
would have boasted in his birthright.



LIVE YOUR LEGACY

Legacy: *something transmitted by or received from an ancestor or predecessor or from the past*

We often talk about legacy in terms of what we plan to leave for others as opposed to what has already been left for us. I tend not to focus on that definition of legacy as much because it's hard to leave something for somebody else when we don't even know what belongs to us.

I have spent the better half of my life both learning what God has already placed in me and what He has placed in others.



It is an ongoing journey and lifestyle.

When you study the life of Jesus, you will see that He embraced our Heavenly Father so much so that His journey became alive.

Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’?”

John 14:9 ESV (with emphasis)

He was a walking, talking and breathing billboard of what He and God the Father possessed together. He lived His heir-ship out loud. When you saw Him, you saw God.



Now how do I communicate that to the average thug on the street corner or to the CEO on Wall Street? No one in their right mind will tell you that every time you look at them you see Jesus. No one is perfect and honestly - nobody really wants to be. Yet, it seems like God commands us to be "perfect" if we really want to live His legacy.

**"You therefore must be perfect,
as your heavenly Father is perfect."**

Matthew 5:48 ESV

Let me bring some ease to your mind. The word perfect in this passage refers to "maturity" not sinless perfection. Example: *Give without expecting anything in return.*



Another example, *be kind to the unkind.*

You don't have to be perfect to do that and God is not even requiring our performance. He's telling us that these qualities are already in us. As long as His Spirit lives on the inside of us, all we have to do is live the legacy that we've already inherited. You are what you've consumed.

It has been said that around 18 weeks a baby can already hear sounds in their mother's womb. It has also been said that someone in a coma can possibly still hear you. In both states, what's being heard is critical. What you hear or consume in your soul can either cause you to walk or leave you crippled for life.



Jesus said, "**It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all.** The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life."

- John 6:63 ESV (with emphasis)

Let me just conclude by saying this:
Positive energy won't save us. Our relative's inheritance won't give us new life. But our Godly lineage will always empower us and make us whole. "God's Word" gives us the power that we need to live out our inheritance! His Word is a living legacy. So, if you don't know Jesus and the pardon of your sins, simply surrender your life to Him today by confessing what you believe in your heart - that He is Lord of your life. And start living your legacy!