



REFLECTIONS

September 4, 2011

**To the elders among you... Be shepherds of
God's flock that is under your care, serving as
overseers — not because you must, but because
you are willing,**

1 Peter 5:1-2

Legacy

A large headstone marks her grave in a small town cemetery. The marker tells that Elizabeth Catherine was born October 21, 1857 and died January 31, 1922. Public records disclose her birth place, that she had a loving husband, and that together they had nine children. History has recorded some facts about her life but there are no living memories of her remaining in this world. There are no monuments built in her honor, no public parks bear her name, and there are no schools that memorialize her life. Yet my great grandmother's life was not reduced to a small branch on the family tree. Her legacy still lives though few may ever bother to trace it. Still the nurture she gave her family through the Word still lives and through them her legacy was passed along.

She passed it along through my grandfather, who read the Bible to his family each morning at breakfast. Her legacy was carried on through his generosity with others; it was carried on through his good citizenship and by being a faithful friend. Her legacy became a part of his, and the remnants have made their way through the generations. Though the practice of Bible reading at mealtime has not always been the manner of nurturing, love for the Lord has been passed along.

Living memories of Elizabeth Catherine have now passed away, but the real meaning of her life still lives. She was a shepherd of her family, and through her life and her guidance the love for God was passed on to others. That's the way God designed it. That's the way God planned it. That's the way God wants it to be.

And so the years go by, generation to generation, and with the passing of each generation living memories are erased. One day living memories of our lives will be among those that are gone. The trophies we may have won tossed away, and the material successes we may have enjoyed lost in insignificance. All that remains is legacy.

God asks us to be shepherds of his flock under our care—not because we must, but because we are willing. And what his flock can take away from our lives is love for Jesus Christ.

And that is the greatest legacy we can leave to those we love.

You are the light of the world,

Richard +

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