

# Ethical Will

An ethical will is a personal document you create to communicate your values, experiences, life lessons and family heritage to your loved ones. Unlike a legal will which focuses on passing along your physical assets, property and items of monetary value, an ethical will serves to share guiding principles, memories, spiritual values, stories of personal faith, family objects with personal (but not necessarily monetary) value and future wishes for your family.

## Sample of an Ethical Will

*Dear Children,*

*A passage from Psalm 16 resonates with us. It says, "The lines have fallen to me in pleasant places; yes, I have a good inheritance." That verse prompted some heart-stirring conversations that we'd like to share with you.*

*We are thankful for the "good inheritance" we have received from God. As we grow older, we want each of you to know how much we love you, and deeply appreciate the many ways you have enriched our lives. And we want you to know that the greatest pleasure you could give us is to pass on to your children, as we have tried to do with you, that same commitment to live all of your life as service to God.*

*We see our will as an ongoing testimony of our love for our God and for you, and that is reflected in the way we have divided our estate among you and the ministries we love. We hope that when the time comes, someone would read Psalm 16, as an encouragement for our family to continue serving our God with gladness for generations to come.*

*We love you,  
Mom and Dad*



**It's Not  
Transactional  
It's  
Meaningful**



# Writing an Ethical Will

Because an ethical will is not a legal document, and is not made for the purpose of distributing assets, the content and form is up to you. Here are four themes you may wish to cover:

**Beliefs and Values.** What do you believe? What are your guiding principles when it comes to marriage, raising children, church and ministry, handling money, etc.?

**Life Lessons.** What were some of the defining moments of your life, and what did you learn from them? What experiences and people are you most grateful for? Think of significant events, moments and experiences in your life. What would you like your loved ones to know about your hopes for their future?

**Personal Feelings.** How can you communicate love to them? In other words, how have they impacted your life in a positive way? Is there anyone you owe an apology or confession you've never been able to communicate? An ethical will can be a powerful place to share these feelings.

**Message of Hope.** What are some of the most meaningful passages of Scripture to you? What message of hope and encouragement do you wish to leave to your family and friends?

**For a worksheet to help you get started, visit [christianwill.org/mercysupport](http://christianwill.org/mercysupport)**

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