

American Family Association

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“TO WHOM SHALL I LEAVE MY KINGDOM?”

Once the King of a large kingdom was growing old. He decided that it was time to select an heir from among his four sons, so he called them in one at a time to discuss the inheritance of his kingdom.

When the first son entered the chamber of the King and sat down, the King spoke to him. “My son, I am very old and will not live much longer. I wish to entrust my kingdom to the son best suited to receive it. Tell me, if I leave my kingdom to you what will you give to the kingdom?”

Now this son was very rich. So when asked the question, he replied: “I am a man of vast wealth. If you leave me your kingdom I will give it all of my wealth and it will be the richest kingdom in all the world.”

“Thank you, son,” the King said as he dismissed the son.

When the second son entered, the King spoke to him. “My son, I am very old and will not live much longer. I wish to entrust my kingdom to the son best suited to receive it. Tell me, if I leave my kingdom to you what will you give to the kingdom?”

Now this son was very intelligent. So when asked the question, he replied: “I am a man of vast intelligence. If you leave me your kingdom I will give it all of my intelligence and it will be the most intelligent kingdom in all the world.”

“Thank you, son,” the King said as he dismissed the son.

When the third son entered, the King spoke to him. “My son, I am very old and will not live much longer. I wish to entrust my kingdom to the son best suited to receive it. Tell me, if I leave my kingdom to you what will you give to the kingdom?”

Now this son was very strong. So when asked the question, he replied: “I am a man of great strength. If you leave me your kingdom I will give it all of my strength and it will be the strongest kingdom in all the world.” “Thank you, son,” the King said as he dismissed the son.

The fourth son entered and was greeted by the King in the same fashion as the other three. “My son, I am very old and will not live much longer. I wish to entrust my kingdom to the son best suited to receive it. Tell me, if I leave my kingdom to you what will you give to the kingdom?” Now this son wasn’t especially rich, or smart, or strong. So he replied: “My father, you know that my brothers are much richer, smarter, and stronger than I. While they have spent years gaining these attributes, I have spent my time among the people in your kingdom. I have shared with them in their sickness and sorrow. And I have learned to love them. I’m afraid that the only thing I have to give to your kingdom is my love of the people. I know my brothers have more to offer than I do, therefore I will not be disappointed in not being named your heir. I will simply go on doing what I have always done.”

When the King died the people anxiously awaited the news as to their new ruler. And the greatest rejoicing the kingdom ever knew took place when the fourth son was named by the King as his successor.

Wealth, intelligence, and strength are often noble virtues, but they pale when competing with love.

This is how Paul said it: “These three things remain — faith, hope, and love — and the greatest of these is love. Let love be your greatest aim.”

Don