



## **W.o.W. -- Word Of the Week**

### **Heritage**

**February 2, 2022**

My mother's birthday was 2/2/22. She would have been 100 years old in 2022. She has been gone almost 30 years. I am reminiscing, enjoying a bit of nostalgia. Thinking, reflecting, remembering. My word this week: heritage, clearly a Bible concept, a word used less frequently.

Each of us has a heritage. The word "heritage" may mean something received as an inheritance, but it is also used to refer to things passed from generation to generation. When I think of heritage, I think of family.

A brief introduction: I have a physical heritage that shapes my identity and my understanding of self. In the early 1900s, my family served as forest rangers in northern Wyoming—my grandmother (my dad's mother) remembered serving breakfast to Buffalo Bill Cody when he stayed at the ranger station, which also served as an inn. I have pictures to prove that railroading in northern Wyoming in the early 1900s was difficult—especially in winter. On my mother's side, my story is a history of the Woodbridge and the Dreibelbis clans, with genealogies traced back to 16<sup>th</sup> century Europe. My story includes the fact that my mother's family in the early 1920s moved by covered wagon to New Mexico where the family lived until my mother was 16 and they moved to Arkansas. These and many other stories shape my identity.

My focus today: I have a spiritual heritage. As I think about my mother and contemplate her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday, I am most grateful for my spiritual heritage. My mother was a teacher, mentor, and counselor to many. She was that for me and my sister, and much more. She was the spiritual center of our family. I identify with Paul's words to Timothy: "the faith that first lived in your mother and grandmother." The earliest heroes of my life were my mother and my grandmother (my mother's mother).

I believe our spiritual heritage has much more potential to shape the direction of our lives than does our physical background and history. Tracing our spiritual heritage is a valuable exercise! For me, I am who I am, my identity is primarily shaped, by my spiritual heritage and the spiritual influences that have formed my values, my vision, and my hopes.

I have a future. We all have a future. I regularly say that these weekly words are for this life and also for pointing us to the life to come. Take time this week to think about and trace your spiritual heritage. As you contemplate your spiritual life and think about the promise of Jesus for abundant forever life, please know that I am always ready to share the journey. I am blessed when you contact me and we share life.

One final matter. We have a heritage which we receive; we also have the opportunity to pass on a heritage to those who follow us. Go forth this week with a commitment to helping others receive a rich heritage in Jesus Christ. Put him in your life, and on your lips in every interaction.