

Weekly Tip - September 21, 2026
The Exact Words That Open a Legacy Conversation Without Ever Asking
for Money

Good Morning Ministry Leader,

Last week I told you about "legacy silence," the space where a subject everyone thinks about and nobody brings up. This week I want to hand you the words to break it.

National Estate Planning Awareness Week is October 19 through 25. You have three weeks of runway before it arrives, and this is the week we spend it on language, not theory. Below are three scripts you can use as they are or adapt to your own voice. None of them ask for a gift. All of them open a door.

Try This in Your Newsletter or Email

"October is National Estate Planning Awareness Week, a national reminder that only about one in four adults have a current will. If you already have plans in place, we would love to know whether [Ministry Name] is part of that story. And if you do not yet have a plan, this is a good nudge to start one. Either way, we are glad to talk it through. No obligation, just a conversation."

Try This in a Personal Letter to a Long Time Partner

"Dear [Name], I have been thinking about something this month that has nothing to do with this year's budget. It is about the story you will leave behind, long after either of us has stopped keeping track of any single gift. [Ministry Name] has been part of your story for [X] years now. I do not know what your plans look like for the years ahead, and that is genuinely not my business unless you want it to be. But I wanted you to know that if a gift to [Ministry Name] ever became part of how you want to be remembered, we would be honored, and we would steward it exactly as carefully as you would want. No response needed. I just wanted you to know the door is open."

Try This on Social Media

"Did you know only about one in four Americans have a current will? This week, October 19 through 25, is National Estate Planning Awareness Week, a good reminder to make sure your wishes, and your legacy, are protected. Whatever you decide, we hope you take the first step."

Notice what none of these do. None of them say "will you leave us a gift." None of them mention a dollar amount, a percentage, or a specific ask. Philippians 4:17 is the reason why. Paul was never chasing the gift itself, he was chasing the fruit it produced in the giver's own account. Scripts built to extract a gift focus on what the ministry needs. Scripts built to steward a partner well focus on what the partner is already thinking about, their story, their family, their legacy (think Monomyth and the Hero), and simply open a door for the ministry to be part of that conversation if they want it to be.

Call it "invitation, not extraction." One more comparison, because the difference is easy to miss in the moment.

Instead of: "Have you considered leaving us in your will?"

Try: "Have you thought about what you want your legacy to say?"

The first question is about your ministry's future. The second is about theirs. Only one of them belongs in a NEPAW conversation.

Next week, the final tip in this series, I will hand you what to bring and what to say if one of these conversations actually turns into a face to face appointment. That is often where legacy gifts either take shape or quietly stall, and I do not want you walking into that meeting without a plan.

This week, why not try this? Pick one of the three scripts above. Adjust the bracketed pieces for your ministry, and send it, post it, or mail it to at least one group of partners before the month is out. You do not need all three this week. You need one.

Passionately,
Rick

P.S. If you want a second set of eyes on how you are adapting any of these scripts, or want to talk through timing, thirty minutes is yours, no pitch, just strategy. Next week's tip is the one MGOs tend to ask me for the most, so keep an eye out.