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# INTRODUCTION

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“WHEN JESUS KNEW THAT HIS HOUR HAD COME TO DEPART OUT OF THIS WORLD TO THE FATHER, HAVING LOVED HIS OWN WHO WERE IN THE WORLD, HE LOVED THEM TO THE END.”

*-John 13:1*

LET US ASK YOU SOMETHING.

Who do you love?

Maybe a child, spouse, or partner comes immediately to mind. Maybe you envision siblings, nieces and nephews, or dear friends. Take a minute to consider your family, blood-related or not. Who would you do absolutely anything for if you were able?

If you only take one thing away from this book, take this:

Those people you love? Relational estate planning is about them.

It's about protecting them, caring for them, and guiding them, even when you are gone. It's about easing their pain, relieving their burdens, and helping them grieve after your death. It's about passing on what is truly important - your values, beliefs, and purpose. It's about encouraging those you love, motivating them to live well, and strengthening them to deal with life's difficulties.

Believe us, we've seen relational estate plans affect families in incredible ways time after time.

We've seen a father use his relational estate plan to reach from the grave and not only pay for his children's college education, but motivate them to study hard and finish school.

We've seen a wife use her relational estate plan to provide care and community for her disabled husband after she was gone.

We've seen parents use their relational estate plan to bring their adult children together after their death with annual family reunions.

We've seen a sister use her relational estate plan to reach out to her estranged siblings one last time and tell them how deeply she cared.

We've seen grandparents use their relational estate plan to keep telling their grandchildren how much they loved them, long after they'd passed.

These stories and many more are why we've completely changed the philosophy behind what we do from traditional estate planning to relational estate planning. Where traditional estate plans focus primarily on you and on controlling your assets, a relational estate plan focuses on those you hold dear and on contributing everything you can to their well-being.

Ironically, even though relational estate planning is about others, it will bring *you* confidence to about the future. Think about it. How would you feel if you knew that, regardless of what's going to happen to you, you had done everything you could to help your loved ones lead fulfilling and purposeful lives? We can tell you from experience with our clients that it brings a wonderful sense of assurance and peace.

But we won't lie to you; if you're looking for the easiest, most

convenient way to get your affairs in order, relational estate planning isn't for you. It requires physical, mental, and emotional work. It is self-sacrificial by nature, because it's for other people. But it will reward you deeply with the peace of mind that you've done everything you can to meet their needs and ensure they have what it takes to live well.

It gives you the gift of being fearless as you face leaving those closest to you, having loved them to the end.

