



MAJOR EVENTS THAT CAN CHANGE YOUR WILL

Life is unpredictable and full of changes. But God, in His Word, says, “*I am the Lord, I do not change*” (Malachi 3:6, NKJV)—therefore we need not fear. We can respond to major life events with wisdom and confidence in Him.

Did you know there are at least 11 events that should trigger a careful review of your last will and estate documents? With this in mind, most attorneys recommend reviewing yours every two or three years—especially if you are 55 or over.

While the list below is not exhaustive, it identifies 11 common events that should prompt a review of your wishes.

1. **Marriage/divorce/remarriage.** This could be your own marital status or that of your children or grandchildren.
2. **Death of spouse/child or other family member.** Although the passing of a family member is an extremely difficult experience, it may affect your last wishes. Try to be prompt in reviewing your will.
3. **New baby/adopted child/stepchildren/grandchildren.** You may want to include something in your will for a new addition to your extended family such as a new grandchild or son/daughter-in-law.
4. **Move to another state.** Each state has its own set of estate tax laws. Check with an attorney in your new state to see if a revision is needed.
5. **A change in the status of your relationship with anyone named in your will,** including heirs, beneficiaries, or the executor. A relationship change could include death or a new health condition.
6. **Purchase or sale of the family home** or other significant personal or business asset.
7. **Job promotion** or any other change which significantly increases your estate value.

8. **Retirement, job loss, or disability.** Any significant change in your employment status that changes your income may also prompt a careful review of your assets and their present and future management.
9. **Changes in estate tax laws.** These laws constantly change. Read as much as you can about changes when you hear about them in the news and check with your attorney when you have questions or concerns.
10. **Dependent child(ren) reach age of majority (age 18).** You will no longer need to name a guardian for children once they reach age 18, but you may want to review or reconsider how you remember them in your will as they become adults.
11. **Change in your own health condition.**

As you prayerfully review your will, would you consider including a charitable bequest to further the Gospel long after you are gone? You can leave a gift to your church or the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association. Supporting Kingdom work—until Christ returns—can become an integral part of your lasting legacy.

When you take the time to update your estate plans regularly and after major life events, you'll feel more confident that your wishes will be carried out upon your passing. In addition, when you update your will periodically, there's less likelihood that your family and loved ones will experience conflict over your choices. When appropriate, you may want to share these plans with them—especially your faith in Jesus Christ. This is the most important legacy that you will leave.

In many cases, a codicil, which is a separate document that explains changes to your existing will, may suffice for minor changes. We always recommend that you check with your estate planning professional who will provide the legal guidance that you need.



leaving a lasting legacy

For more information, email donor-ministries@bgea.org or call 1-877-243-2202. As always, we encourage you to consult with your personal financial adviser and attorney.