



daddy's little girl

MARTIN LUTHER KING'S DAUGHTER, REV. BERNICE KING, EXPLAINS THE IMPORTANCE OF HER DESIRE TO BETTER THE COMMUNITY

I don't think it's wrong for any of us to expect greatness regardless of our background because God didn't put anything other than greatness on this earth; we just haven't discovered it. However, it's difficult growing up in a very famous family that has uniquely been classified as a moral family. The standard that people use is almost impossible for us to rise to; it's frustrating.

I think if God wanted two, three or four M.L. Kings, He would have duplicated that. He would've taken the same exact mold and recreated that—but that's not what

He wanted. Each person has their own calling, expression and unique journey. People forget that my father was raised by two parents; I was raised by one parent after an assassination. Losing a father violently at a very young age affects your experience, so I am processing that in my life and trying to do whatever it is that I am called to do.

I'm somewhat in a transition in my own personal life. [I] was forced [by] my mom's and sister's death to really begin doing some serious introspection about life and what I want my legacy to be.

My goal is not to be remembered as much as it is to make sure people's lives are changed and affected. Now, of course, that usually leads to being remembered, but I'm not setting up institutions or programs to be shrines unto me—[but to] ultimately transform lives and communities in nations across the world. In order to be most effective, it requires personal soul searching. There really is a lack of character in our world, and I have been on a journey to make sure that my character measures up to what I am creating.

The change that President Obama talks about begins with each and every one of us, personally—you're talking about a shift in a mindset. In order for America to get out of this economic crisis, we need to begin to think a little differently. We can't be as selfish and greedy. God gave us this vast resource called Earth, and when He gave it to us, He gave it with more than enough, so the problem is not the resources—it's us. We have to change the way we live.

I have a mission. I have a desire to be a bank, a vessel of distribution of wealth. I don't know how that is going to work out, but that's just my desire. There are many people across this world who will never be able to be financed by banks and investors, but I have this overwhelming desire to be that vessel to ensure people's dreams and their visions of bettering their communities and the world that we live in. I want to be a "social-preneur" because I was raised where serving humankind is how we serve God. You serve your humanity, you serve your community and you give back.

—As told to Dennis Malcolm Byron

As the youngest daughter of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Coretta Scott King, Bernice King stepped out of the shadows of her parents' legacy to become a noted speaker and change-maker herself. She graduated from Spelman College with a Bachelor's in psychology and from Emory University with a Master's of Divinity and Doctorate of Law. In addition to her community works, Bernice is a minister at New Birth Missionary Baptist Church in Lithonia, Ga.