

Lesson 8 The Role of Godly Grandparents

“An old man’s grandchildren are his crowning glory” (Prov. 17:6). This is why grandparents are always bragging about their grandchildren. The Bible says very little about grandparents, yet, we know they had a big impact on children in biblical times. In those days, grandparents lived in the same home with their children and grandchildren. They were respected for their age, position and wisdom. They watched children when parents were gone and did house chores when they could. Grandparents were constantly imparting their knowledge and wisdom to their grandchildren. This was the biblical family at its best.

However, our modern society generally has divided grandparents from grandchildren because of the extended family. Our mobile, transient culture divides families instead of bringing them together. It is much more difficult to be a grandparent today but it is not impossible. Praise God for the telephone, automobile, computer, airplane, video camera and the postal service, which makes distance seem a little shorter.

If you are a grandparent who has your grandchildren close by, be sure and thank God for this marvelous blessing.

Duties and privileges of grandparents have not changed in 2000 years but the means of accomplishing a relationship with grandchildren has changed. The greatest responsibility of a grandparent is to give the grandchildren a spiritual heritage, to give them years of spiritual wisdom based on life, not books, and to give the grandchildren assurance that old age is part of God’s plan for one’s life.

IN-LAW RELATIONSHIPS

Relationship with Sons and Daughters-in-Law

It is the duty and responsibility of grandparents to have a positive and close relationship with their sons and daughter-in-laws. Grandparents will never have the kind of relationship with grandchildren they desire unless there is harmony with in-laws. Mothers and fathers who do not get along with in-laws will overtly or covertly poison grandchildren towards their grandparents. There are multitudes of moms and dads who do not even speak with in-laws and this spells disaster for the grandchildren.

Relationship with Son’s and Daughters-In-Law’s Parents

Grandparents should also work very hard to know and have a relationship with the parents of their sons and daughter-in-laws. There may come a time when both sets of parents will have to pull together to help their children’s marriage and preserve their relationship with the grandchildren, especially when a divorce occurs or death of one of the parents or financial problems hit a family.

GENERAL RELATIONSHIPS

Know Your Grandchildren.

Make sure your grandchildren know you. Distance does not make the heart grow fonder. Spend time with your grandchildren. Use the phone regularly, send pictures to remind the children you do exist. Plan to see your grandchildren as much as possible.

Several years ago we called my son Mark and his five-year-old daughter answered the phone. Carol and I identified ourselves and had a sweet talk. Then Carol asked Kasey if we could speak to her dad. She put down the phone and said, "Daddy, Grandma Carol and Uncle Jack are on the phone." Mark picked up the phone and said, "Dad, you have been away too long!"

Teach Your Grandchildren

When you are with your grandchildren, leave them the general wisdom and talents you have accumulated over the years. Teach the kids how to build things, fix things, how to do sports, how to read books or study. Grandparents have years of life experience, which no book can teach and they should leave this knowledge with their grandchildren.

Leave an Inheritance to Your Grandchildren

Grandparents are not only to leave a spiritual inheritance for their grandchildren, but also a physical one. It is recommended in the Bible that financial wealth should be left to children and to the children's children. *"A good man leaves an inheritance for his children's children."* (Prov. 13:22). In our day when accumulation of money is so difficult, it is very important to help grandchildren get a start in life if we are able to do so.

SPIRITUAL RELATIONSHIPS

"But from everlasting to everlasting the Lord's love is with those who fear him, and his righteousness with their children's children—with those who keep his covenant and remember to obey his precepts" (Psa. 103:17-18). "I have been reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also" (2 Tim. 1:5).

Pray for Your Grandchildren.

Grandparents are to pray for their grandchildren. Perhaps they have more time than their parents to pray. Prayer can be effective for grandchildren whether they live next door or in a foreign country. Most Christians underestimate the power of prayer.

Leave a Spiritual Heritage for Your Grandchildren.

Grandparents can give grandchildren a wonderful Christian heritage. They should be committed to direct communication with the grandchildren about the things Christ has taught them through the years. Godly grandparents can make a huge impact upon children for Christ and His kingdom. Sometimes grandparents can share with their grandchildren things the parents cannot say or may have difficulty sharing.

Grow Old Graciously in Christ before Your Grandchildren.

It is the responsibility of grandparents to show the grandchildren how to grow old graciously in Christ without griping, complaining or bitterness. The grandchildren will have a whole different perspective about growing old if they have grandparents who are living positively for Christ.

Die in Christ Before Your Grandchildren.

Grandparents have the responsibility to show the grandchildren how to die in Christ. Most likely the first death of a loved one for a child will be a grandparent. Grandparents can talk about death to the kids explaining how Christ died for sins and was resurrected from the dead to give us eternal life. Grandparents can communicate that they believe in the resurrection of the dead unto eternal bliss and that the sting of death is lessened by a personal, living faith in Christ. Children need to know that grandparents are anxiously waiting to see Christ face to face. This is the time for grandparents to talk to children about dying grace and the sufficiency of Christ to take them through the last earthly event and be victorious over the last enemy—death!

For me the ideal way to die would be in my home with all my family—children and grandchildren gathered around the bed talking of Jesus, quoting verses, and singing hymns. It probably won't happen that way but I wish it would, yet however it happens, I want my life and death to be a testimony to my grandchildren.

CONCLUSION

My closing words to grandparents are that in life, in old age, and in death, you must turn completely to Christ, who will give you the grace, the strength and power to live and die for Him. Only Christ can grant you the ability to live and die.

As grandparents, your motto should be that of the Apostle Paul who said, ***“For to me to live is Christ and to die is gain” (Phil. 1:21)***. And that attitude should be reflected to your children and your children’s children.