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The Season of Grandparenting



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The Season of Grandparenting

Grandparenting is a wonderful season of life. Realizing your children have now been blessed with children of their own and seeing a heritage passed on is truly remarkable. Though children are no doubt a blessing, they can sometimes seem like more of a blessing in short spurts. This is one of the reasons it is so great to be a grandparent. The following humorous saying might relay it best – *“I’ve seen the lights of London and I’ve seen the lights of Rome but prettiest light I ever did see was the light of my son taking those kids back home.”* Children bring so much life, energy and hope into our world. Their energy never seems to run out, and when they slow down enough to share their perspective it often makes us smile. Parents and grandparents alike have been given the great privilege of watching and encouraging children as they grow and mature over their lifetime.

Ideally, parents and grandparents are able to work together in a way which points a child toward Christ. As we endeavor to be faithful to the roles God has given us, both parents and grandparents are called to “make disciples.” We plant, water, and trust a good and gracious God to bring forth fruit in His time and manner. In this common goal of discipleship making, God has given grandparents a different responsibility than parents. We will seek to give some thought to aspects of how a grandparent can point grandchildren to Christ.

Psalm 78:5-7 “For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children: That the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children: That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments:”

Model

Children need adults modeling truth into their lives. As a grandparent, you get a seat at the table of your grandchild’s heart. Parents have been given the primary responsibility of raising a child. A grandparent’s primary role should be one of support. Supporting not only the parent as they model and instruct their children towards Christ but also supporting the grandchild through correction and growth. Coming alongside the parent to encourage and following their lead is an enormous blessing you can provide your children. You may not hear words of appreciation or praise as often as you deserve, but know your role is greatly needed and appreciated. Whether your grandchildren are 3 or 30, you have the ability to impact their lives through what you do, say, and pray.

How do you want to be remembered by your grandchildren? *Proverbs 22:1* encourages us to pursue a “good name” and “loving favour” rather than riches. Be someone your grandchildren can emulate. As you grow in the Spirit, model for your grandchildren what it looks like to be Spirit-filled. Give them a vision of what it looks like to be full of love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance. While you are not called to be the primary spiritual authority of your grandchildren, you can however, have a significant role in modeling and teaching biblical truth.

Teach

Most grandchildren are not going to be interested in you teaching them geometry. However, they might enjoy being taught why you plant the flowers the way you do or how you cleaned the carburetor to the lawn mower. Grandparents have the benefit of years of wisdom and experience and thus have many things to teach and engage your grandchildren while simply working outdoors or baking cookies. This is a great way for grandparents to participate in the instruction of *Deuteronomy 6:6-7*. “*And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.*”

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Let your grandchildren see through your eyes by sharing what you experience when you see a rainbow in the sky or the grass turn from brown and lifeless to green and lush. Let them remind you of the wonder of these things while you connect their wonder to an awesome God in whom they can trust.

Relationship with Children

One of the most important things you can do as a grandparent is build or maintain a strong relationship with your child. Start by considering the status of your current relationship. If you have a strong relationship with your child, rejoice and consider what has been helpful up until this point while encouraging similar discipleship between your child and grandchild. Consider communicating to your child that you appreciate them and your relationship. If you have a strained relationship with your child, consider what you can do to begin rebuilding the relationship. The first step in this process will be to prayerfully consider what you are doing to contribute to the relationship strain. Talking with someone you trust can help sort through what changes you need to make to strengthen the relationship with your child is also encouraged.

Your life experience gives you much wisdom which your child would likely benefit from. However, often children are not always open to receive your wisdom. Be patient and work hard to listen rather than only instruct your child who is continually growing in their role as a parent. Young parents will often need you to listen and understand their frustration before they will be ready to hear your ideas.

Have Fun

Make your home a place your grandchildren enjoy. This doesn't mean you have to build a theme park in your backyard or remake your pantry into a candy shop. Instead, give your grandchildren focused attention and seek to enter into their world. One great way to do this is through interactive activities with your grandchildren. Play a game, tell a story, fix a bike together or drive to the local donut shop. Ask them to show you how they communicate with friends via technology. Use these moments as an opportunity to laugh rather than only correct. Children, young children especially, have such a great way of finding joy and pleasure in even the simplest things. Fun interactions with children when they are young will develop fond memories which can help facilitate laughter and the opportunity to speak into their lives at later points. As children grow they are often more open to input from someone other than Mom or Dad. Who better to give that input than Grandma and Grandpa?

Matthew 19:13-14 "Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put his hands on them, and pray: and the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven." These verses paint an amazing picture of Jesus' desire to be around children. He enjoyed their company, and we can assume they enjoyed His. Be someone your grandchildren want to be around. Laugh, smile and enjoy the sense of wonder children have. Children see things we daily overlook. Help your grandchildren connect these blessings back to our Creator God.

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Finish Strong

None of us know when we will draw our last breath, but we all know one day we will pass from this life into eternity. Above all else, finish this life strong by keeping your faith and hope in Jesus. Children need grandparents who are living a focused life for Christ. It is so easy for the struggles of this life to shift our focus. Showing the next generation(s) what it looks like to grow in the faith of Christ throughout life is a powerful testimony. Be willing, by God's grace, to model this example of continual living and growing in the love of the Savior. Testify to your grandchildren, as David did toward the end of his life, *"Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things."* (Psalm 72:18) Let this testimony have an impact for many generations to come.