

What Responsibility Do Grandparents Have for their Grandchildren?

I am convinced many grandparents have been totally absent when it comes to influence in the lives of their grandchildren.

Parents today are so busy and spend little time with their kids. Many parents are also very unstable. The influence of grandparents can have a dramatic impact and is very important.

Grandparents can compliment parents' roles in the life of their grandchildren. I used to spend many hours talking with my grandfather. He and I became close as I could talk to him about anything. He helped build my character. In fact, he was a scout leader and influenced my decision to go into youth work.

My own children loved to spend time with their grandfather when they were young. They loved to eat Grandmother's homemade bread and loved to watch Granddad working in his wood shop.

God told the children of Israel in Deuteronomy 4:9, "Only be careful and watch yourselves closely so you do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them slip from your heart as long as you live. Teach them to your children and to their children after them." In other words, instruct your grandchildren in godly principles.

Grandparents, read to your grandchildren; the Bible would be a great Book to share. Take them to McDonalds. Pray with and for them. If your grandchildren live in a different area, why not have them spend time with you during the summer or during their Christmas vacation. Begin helping them shape their character for life.

The influence you may have can have a lasting impact on them. You could even lead your own grandchildren to the Lord.

Helping Your Children Relate to Their Grandparents and Senior Citizens

Grandparents are very special people. Because of our transient society, children do not have an opportunity to spend very much time with their grandparents. God says in Leviticus 19:32, "Rise in the presence of the elderly."

Parents, encourage your children to send letters, tapes, and pictures of themselves to their grandparents. A phone call can especially be important from a grandchild.

SOME TIPS TO SHARE WITH YOUR CHILDREN:

1. Speak clearly so grandparents who are hard of hearing can understand what is said.
2. Grandparents sometimes repeat themselves so teach your children not to say, "Oh, You've told me that story already."
3. Be a good listener. Grandparents love to talk. Being a grandparent can be very lonely.

I can remember as a teenager going to visit my grandparents after school. I would ask them lots of questions, especially about their past. Grandmother would fix me mile and cookies. Those were special times.

As a family project, may I suggest you take your kids to visit in a nursing home. Take some cookies or flowers to elderly folks in your church. As a youth pastor I would always take our teens Christmas caroling in the homes of our elderly church members or in nursing homes. You cannot imagine what this does for senior adults and the teens.

Our children need to be exposed to their own grandparents and senior adults.

A TEEN QUEST POWER SHEET

Teens & Grandparents

ARE YOU DEVELOPING A FAMILY HERITAGE?

Never in the history of America has she been under attack as she is today. The traditional American family is in the minority. Grandparents are losing their role in society as grandparents.

What can you do to help develop a family heritage? God says in Proverbs 22:1, "A good name is more desirable than great riches."

Talk to your grandchildren about the distinctives and values to which your family is committed. Stress unity in your family: buy shirts that match for the entire family to wear, take lots of pictures and build memories, put together a scrap book of places you go and thing you do.

Research your family history. Many times my wife and I take our kids to the gravesites of their great grandparents. By doing this you are establishing a root system and a family heritage.

Find out the meaning of your family name. Make it a habit to visit your relatives or write them often.

Have a family reunion. Every year the Witt family gets together for a two day reunion. It is one of the highlights of the summer. Cousins, uncles, aunts, nephews and nieces "catch up" on what is happening in one another's lives. We even have a historian who keeps track of all family history.

Let's develop a close knit family. . . a family heritage.

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Grandparents Have Become Primary Caregivers

More than three million children are now living with their grandparents according to the U.S. Census Bureau. That is an increase of almost 40% in the last 10 years. U.S. News and World Report said, "The actual numbers of children living with grandparents may be 3 to 4 times higher." This trend is taking place because of the large numbers of working moms, increase in divorce, and the increasing number of teenage girls who are parents. Parents don't seem to have time they once had to be with their children.

Some 4 % of all white children and 12% of all black children now live with their grandparents and this trend is on the rise.

If you are a grandparent rearing your grandchildren you have the greatest opportunity ever to have a spiritual impact on your grandchild's life. You can be the one who shares Christ with your grandchildren and tenderly leads him to Jesus.

Grandparents can influence their grandchildren greatly, teaching them biblical values and thus instilling patterns of godly living into their lives.

May I suggest you read all you can about today's youth culture from a Christian perspective. Take your grandkids to church where there is an active youth group that teaches biblical principles and challenges teens to live for God. Arrange for your grandchildren to attend a great Christian camp such as the ones we hold at the Teen Quest Ranch in Somerset County.

Most of all, spend a lot of time in prayer. A godly grandparent can make a huge impact in their grandchildren's lives by upholding them in prayer.

It's Important to Hug your Grandchildren

Punishment demands physical expression and so does love. When was the last time you hugged your son, daughter, grandson, or granddaughter? It is so very important to continue physical expression of our love and acceptance of our children by hugging them.

Statistics tell us that little babies would die without cuddling and holding. The expression of a hug is so very important to children and even teenagers.

As I was growing up in my family, we would always greet and part with a hug and kiss. Today, I always greet my sons with enthusiasm and when we part, I hug them goodbye.

Parents and grandparents, we must create an atmosphere of love, enthusiasm, and happiness. When you hug your child or grandchild, you simply reinforce that security he felt as a baby. Begin greeting one another after you've been apart during the day. Say goodbye in the morning with a hug.

Grandparents, you need to remember to always greet your grandchildren with an enthusiastic and accepting hug. Let them know, especially your teenage grandchildren that you love them and accept them unconditionally.

Hugs are important! Make it a habit to hug your children and your grandchildren with enthusiasm.

Teach Your Grandchildren About Your Family Heritage

God says in Proverbs that "A good name is more desirable than great riches". In other words, our family heritage should be treasured.

I do realize there are folks who are ashamed of their family's past history. You may come from a family of drunks, thieves, and immoral lives.

Jerry Falwell relates in his book, "Strength for the Journey" that his family heritage was nothing to be proud of. Yet, in spite of his dad's bootlegging and corruption God reached down and saved Jerry and began a new generation of Falwells.

My parents, brothers, sister, and most of my extended family know the Lord. Several times during the year the Witt family gets together for reunions, parties, and just to have fun together. We instill in our children the importance of the Witt name and its heritage.

Established family traditions are very important character builders for your grandchildren. Begin teaching them about Bible characters who had godly families. Read biographies about famous people. There are good books written about families: from "Little House on the Prairie" to the biography of John Wesley's family.

If your name is not something to be proud of, begin now and say like Joshua "For me and my house, we will serve the Lord."