

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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Grandparents in Our Society

The opportunity for grandparents to have influence in the rearing of grandchildren varies significantly from family to family. It is increasingly evidenced that the great influence of grandparents of other societies and in other times has diminished in ours. This is sad indeed, because our children are the losers and suffer much as the result. While this trend seems to be entrenched, we would be wise to make maximum efforts to place as many roadblocks in the path as possible.

Grandparents' influence is at its greatest during the children's most receptive years. This provides the greatest opportunity for the exercising of life-lasting principles in the child. It also demands that grandparents be alert, or otherwise the opportunities will be lost forever. This period is short indeed and, typically, abates rapidly as the children begin their school years. Sports and friends seem to have increasingly important places in their lives. Grandparents can extend the influential period, to a degree, by being active in the child's school and sports activities; and unless you have tried it, you have no idea how much fun it is! But, let me warn you, it is not for the fainthearted; have a cardiologist check you well before attending their sports activities.

Prior to the industrial age, grandparents enjoyed a more important role in the life of children. Typically, they lived nearby and often on the same farm or in the same small town. Many shared homes with their children and grandchildren. With industrialization of the 1900s, which continues today, patterns and life-styles changed. Distance became increasingly involved as the great separator. Children left the farm and small towns. Separated from the younger family members, the grandparents' influence decreased – often to zero. What a shame! Family relationships became less and less involved and the benefits of experience were lost along with stability, warmth and influence which had served the family so well, making the children respectful citizens. Those destructive trends continue today. The separated families are now more removed from the stable influences. More and more parents leave their children to the care of strangers, day-care centers, or often by themselves without supervision of any type. Mothers are engaged in

secular work on a full-time basis which leaves only a tired shell of an individual with the children (who have been undisciplined all day) in the late hours. Is there any wonder why we have the accelerating family problems? Divorce is now typical, the normal rather than the exception. Children grow up without the benefit of those excellent qualities that grandparents and parents gave them in past times. Single parent homes are increasing which multiplies the problems. A short, telephone call has replaced a grandparent's warm visit; as the condominium or apartment (no children allowed) replaced the farmhouse. The television and VCR have replaced a story well told by the fireplace or on the front porch. Spiritual influence is never extended, as time is consumed in economic matters. Violence of the worst type, nudity and filthy language have replaced the calm, chaste serenity and modest examples of Christ-like lives. Bible study and secular studies have been replaced with violent and lewd movies and music containing ungodly lyrics. We object to Playboy, but we do nothing as little ears listen to the terrible language of many hard rock and country songs.

David had a beautiful grandmother whose name was Ruth. Her example served him well as he became the chosen family's head. Timothy was the "son" of Paul because Lois, a loving grandmother, taught him God's word which resulted in great faith (2 Tim. 1:5). Someone has well said, "The reason fewer children are like Timothy is because there is a great shortage of grandmothers like Lois." How true is Proverbs 17:6 which states, "Grandchildren are the crown of old men."

Grandparents have a role to play in the rearing of children, an important role that *no one else* can fulfill. It is unique. That opportunity is primarily one of example. Children can see a worldly life and be lost; or they can see the Christian life demonstrated by godly grandparents, and their spirits will be filled. The wise man said, "Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it." God said of Abraham, "I know he will command his children and his household after him."

God's plan is for the father to be the head of the house; the mother the keeper of the home; the children to be obedient; the grandparents to be the ever loving, Christ-like source of strength, confidence and example to all and especially to the children. What came naturally in years gone by must in our time be diligently worked at, or we will permit our "crowns" to be arrogant and undisciplined without real value to the losing of their usefulness before God.

Grandparents, who do live near their grandchildren continue to be important in the saving of their families; and what a marvelous experience it is to those who have the blessed opportunity. I love my two, beautiful daughters – perhaps too much; but the love for our four grandsons is beyond description. How terrible it would be to live to see them become

worthless (without God) because of failed opportunities that their grandmother and I could have prevented had we lived before them as examples of righteousness, but did not. Grandparents, you are being watched by young, believing eyes. What is your example? Take advantage of the opportunity you have to show, by your lives, what a “privilege we have in Jesus.” “As a twig is bent, so the tree is inclined.”

And these words, which I am commanding you today, shall be in your heart; and you shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up (Deut. 6:6-7).

- James D. Yates, via *Guardian of Truth*, 6/15/89 [Edited]

Grandparents Are Valuable!

There's no question that grandparents are one of God's greatest gifts to children. Their value as a source of love, encouragement, experience, wisdom, and developmental insight should never be underestimated. No single grandchild is ever aware of the many examples and ways that grandparents provide for their benefit. Can you number the prayers that your grandparents offered for you? Some of us are Christians today because of the teaching, influence, example and prayers of our grandparents. Some of us were introduced to Christ when listening to them read to us from the Bible or taking us to Bible classes and worship with them. I heard of one grandmother who responded favorably to an invitation from a friend to attend worship with her. As a result she obeyed the gospel, became a Christian and taught her family. She now has a large family of Christians, including gospel preachers and elders in the kingdom! God bless her deeds and example! Our hearts should overflow with great thankfulness for people of this godly character!

Make a careful note of Deuteronomy 4:6-9, “So keep and do *them*, [the statutes and judgments of the Lord - GFS] for that is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes and say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.' For what great nation is there that has a god so near to it as is the LORD our God whenever we call on Him? Or what great nation is there that has statutes and judgments as righteous as this whole law which I am setting before you today? Only give heed to yourself and keep your soul diligently, so that you do not forget the things which your eyes have seen and they do not depart from your heart all the days of your life; but make them known to your sons and your grandsons.” Please notice the last word of the quoted verse.

- Gary Smalley

- > "A child needs a grandparent, anybody's grandparent, to grow a little more securely into an unfamiliar world." - Charles and Ann Morse
- > "What children need most are the essentials that grandparents provide in abundance. They give unconditional love, kindness, patience, humor, comfort, lessons in life. And, most importantly, cookies!" - Rudy Giuliani
- > "Everyone needs to have access both to grandparents and grandchildren in order to be a full human being!" - Margaret Mead
- > "Grandparents are a delightful blend of laughter, caring deeds, wonderful stories, and love!"
- > "Grandparents should play the same role in the family as an elder statesman can in the government of a country. They have the experience and knowledge that comes from surviving a great many years of life's battles and the wisdom, hopefully, to recognize how their grandchildren can benefit from this!" - Geoff Dench
- > "Grandparents, like heroes, are as necessary to a child's growth as vitamins!" - Joyce Allston
- > "Young people need something stable to hang on to — a culture connection, a sense of their own past, a hope for their own future. Most of all, they need what grandparents can give them!" - Jay Kesler
- > "Grandparents are a family's greatest treasure, the founders of a loving legacy, the greatest storytellers, the keepers of traditions that linger on in cherished memory. Grandparents are the family's strong foundation. Their very special love sets them apart. Through happiness and sorrow, through their special love and caring, grandparents keep a family close at heart!" - Author Unknown

> "If you're lucky enough to still have grandparents, visit them, cherish them and celebrate them while you can!" - Regina Brett

THIS WEEK'S LESSON: The sermon for Sunday morning is: *Family Relationships!* (Text: Proverbs 23:25).

What Must I Do To Be Saved?

HEAR THE GOSPEL

(Romans 10:14-17; John 20:30-31; Romans 1:15-17)

BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST

(Acts 8:37; John 8:24; Hebrews 11:6)

REPENT OF PAST SINS

(Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; Acts 17:30)

CONFESS CHRIST

(Romans 10:9-10; Acts 8:37)

BE BAPTIZED

(Romans 6:3-4; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; Acts 8:36-39; 1 Peter 3:21)

LIVE A FAITHFUL LIFE

(Revelation 2:10; 2 Peter 1:5-11; John 15:1-8; Hebrews 10:23-25)