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Grandparents' Role in the Family
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GRANDPARENTS' ROLE IN THE FAMILY

I. There is not a great abundance of Scripture on this.
   A. But like the day of the Lord's Supper—
      I've got 1 more for Sunday than anyone else has as an example of another day.
   B. Even one Scripture commands attention.
   C. O.T. "Children's children are the crown of old men & the glory of children are their fathers" (Proverbs 17:6).
      1. Thus I can tell you about my crown.
      2. 4 Jewels--Matthew, Marthie, Seth and Catherine.
      3. No lectureship could thus equal a subject of this importance.
   D. Seriously--why is this passage so important?
      1. Children & grandchildren preserve our name--our task is to see they are not ashamed of it.
      2. They give us a great incentive to behave & set proper example--soul of no one more precious than our own flesh and blood.
      They are the hope of a better tomorrow--we give them advantages we never had--we expect much from them--else why call them "seed."
      4. It shows we've lived awhile.
         a) Jacob unexpectedly saw Joseph and "thy seed also."
         b) David "saw" 17 generations follow him to throne--do you know of any other King with such longevity?
5. Mutual joys are born. (We like to tell our stories--Sis. C & her visit with Ann--sing or not--NOT!)

6. We need mutual support. Nothing finer than this "heritage of the Lord" (Ps. 127:3).

7. Nothing higher than to bring up children in the nurture & admonition of the Lord.

Gen. 18:19 "For I know him, that he will command"

Ruth 4:5 "Then said Boaz, what day thou buyest

a) Callie Mickey quote.

b) N.T. Lois & Eunice.

2 Tim. 1:5

(Do you think Timothy would have been all he was in the absence of unfeigned faith of parents & grandparents?)

II. Now Some Specifics

A. How would you define a grandparent?

1. 3rd grader story.

2. Another has said, "Grandparents are similar to a piece of string--handy to have around and easily wrapped around the finger of grandchildren." For still another, "Grandparents are something so simple even a child can operate."

3. Lest someone think grandparenting & dotage are inseparably joined, let me tell you of one enterprising grandmother. She received all the Trick or Treaters at Halloween--she gave them something very special. It was
a whole bevy of homemade treats, wrapped in cellophane, orange mind you, and tied with a black ribbon. Attached was this note: "Grandmotherly, cookie-making type, will babysit, in this neighborhood, for a reasonable fee."

B. Do we discipline?
   1. Sis told Mo, "Daddy actually raised his voice" when Matthew kept yelling in the car on our return from ocean.
   2. Poem on Junior.
   3. On the other side of the ledger, B. Bader had this in the Wall Street Journal, "The quickest way to discover that spanking children is unnecessary is to become a grandparent."
   4. For the 49 million of us USA citizens with 3.4 grandchildren, our discipline role is commanding. One woman put it this way about her misbehaving child, "I don't know what I'm going to do with her. The only way I can make her behave is to threaten to take away her grandmother."

C. Count our blessings.
   1. Well, let's close by counting our blessings. Kernan wrote, "Just about the time a woman thinks her work is done, she becomes a grandmother." It is glorious that tomorrow needs me.
I'm permitted to join the SOGPIP club--"silly old grandparents with pictures in their pockets."

One found this blessing. "One of the nicest things about growing old is that you find your children crossing the generation gap to your side."

But I love the story of the grandmother rehearsing for her granddaughters her life on the farm. She told of tire swings from the huge oak, a pony to ride, a haystack to slide on, skating on a frozen pond and snow cream with real cream. Wide eyed the child listened and said, "I sure do wish I had met you sooner."

We cast a long shadow, Grandfolk.

Balswick/Balswick in their book, The Family, page 68, wrote these words: "Research indicates that regardless of whether we agree with the way our parents handled their marriage or parenting responsibilities, when a similar situation arises in our own family, our spontaneous reaction will be to behave exactly as our parents did. The young wife who witnessed her mother's temper whenever her father was running late for an occasion is determined that she will give her own husband the benefit of the doubt rather than lash out in anger. However, when a similar situation arises, she may scold..."
her husband before he has a chance to explain his tardiness. The husband who may think that his father was less than considerate in not calling home when he knew he was going to be detained, nevertheless himself forgets to call his wife."

2. Modern Maturity, in their December-January '91 issue, had an article on defining the role of grandparents. (Really the children did it earlier in these statements:)
"They're warm when I sit on their laps." --Charles, 7
"They have all their teeth."--Hugo, 8
"They taught me how to walk on stilts."--Amanda, 10
"They're mine and not everybody else's."--Chris, 10
Their article began with these words: "Happiness is being a grandparent. That simple statement, broadcast from countless license plates across the country, reassures us that for many older Americans grandparenting is everything it's cracked up to be. A special time of joy and pride; a chance to shamelessly indulge our children's children as we never could or would have indulged our own. But if times have changed since we were young parents, they've changed even more since we were kids. Today's grand-
parents are younger, healthier and more involved than any before. As a result, an increasing number of us are undertaking unexpected, and often very difficult, roles far removed from the stereotypes of our youth."

Finally, let's go to a grandmother and read what she wrote about "Mother's Day."

"With Mother's Day drawing near I was quite taken with a bumper sticker that I observed just the other day. It read--'Motherhood; The noblest profession.' Being a Mother, I was in complete agreement with this statement.

As time passes, most Mothers have a way of becoming Grandmothers. I am enjoying this stage along with a great many of my peers and take a great interest in the different versions of why being a grandmother is so grand.

Most often, there's the thankfulness of missing the 2 A.M. feedings and just having them for short periods to play with and spoil. There's all this wisdom that we have garnered through the years of How-to and How-not-to do things that we are compelled to pass on to our children. There's being able to have them when they're well and happy and give them
back to their parents to handle all the ills and broken bones.

All of these things are very true, and I, too, enjoy that part of being a grandmother. But the greatest part of all is seeing the love that your child has for their children; and knowing that they can at last realize how completely they have been loved. Being a grandmother is love come full cycle. I'm thankful I've been allowed the privilege."

3. Bill Adler has his little book Dear Lord. In it is recorded 7-year-old Caroline's prayer. It went like this: "Dear Lord, Bless this house. And all who live here. Bless this house, and my grandmother who used to live here and now is in Heaven, I think."

4. DA signal on Sunday sweetest sound—thank God they answer a higher call—they are worshipping.

DLU Lectures – 6/11/91
Yellowstone Bible Encampment, Pray, MT—8/15/94
Granny White VBS – 7/12/95
"They Don't Make Grandmas and Grandpas Like That Anymore"

The last terrific grandmas died just before the war. Well, not exactly.

But there does seem to be an idea that grandparents of a previous generation captured a special quality that is hard to duplicate in our day. That's not true—but grandparenting has changed some.

In those "olden days," grandparents were general practitioners. Grandpa could shoe a horse, crank a Model-T, build a barn, plumb the house, catch the biggest lunker in the lake, and discuss world politics—all in the same week. Grandma could fashion a formal for her daughter, put up four dozen quarts of peaches, help the milk cow deliver a calf, tack up a starburst quilt, whip up a batch of fudge, and sing all the words of the "Hit Parade's" top ten songs—all in the same day.

Nowadays we tend to specialize. Grandads are vice-presidents of something, or they're the line supervisor, or they own a mini-mart. Grandmas are busy selling real estate, or running the dress shop, or taking a case to court.
"The few sociological studies of American grandparenting indicate that, while other relatives have become less important to the contemporary family, grandparents have become more important. Since families now have fewer children, grandparents can concentrate attention on three or four grandchildren. And we live longer today than formerly, so we have more time to be grandparents. In fact, your chances of surviving to hold your great-grandchildren are good.

Like most people, you probably experience feelings of renewal and family continuity. Many people also feel a sense of fulfillment. However, for almost 30%, the grandparent role has only remote significance. American styles of grandparenting have been fairly well classified. About a third of both men and women act formally in the grandparent role. They neither interfere in the parenting of the child, nor offer unsolicited advice, but still remain concerned. Almost 30% of grandparents report playful relationships with their grandchildren. A few grandmothers, and even a few grandfathers, serve as surrogate parents. This role is most commonly assumed when an older woman is helping a working daughter take care of the children. A small minority of grandparents, who see their role as authoritarian, emphasize power and control. From 20 to 30 percent of American grandparents remain distant and uninvolved in their grandchildren's lives.

(OVER)
For Naomi, being a grandparent meant renewal and continuity of the family. It also meant becoming a part of a loving, caring relationship, beneficial to grandparent and grandchild alike. The neighbor women, expressing their pleasure and best wishes to Naomi, gave the child his name. 'Obed, obed--obed,' or as we might say it in our language, 'Servant, little servant--little sustainer.' That was his name. He was to be the sustainer of his grandmother as long as she lived. The role, however, was reciprocal. Benefits accrued also to the grandchild. Naomi took the child and became nurse to him. Just as she had instructed the Moabitess maiden Ruth in the law and love of her God, Naomi loved and taught her grandchild. That holy teaching and that righteous life which had so influenced Ruth, were now transmitted to Obed. The family continued knowing and loving God. 'Obed was the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of David' (Ruth 4:21). And David was the ancestor of your Lord and mine."

--Callie Mickey

21st Century Christian
THIRD GRADER STORY

"A Grandmother is a lady who has no children of her own; she likes other people's little girls. A Grandfather is a man grandmother. He knows about fishing and tractors, and things like that.

Grandmas don't have to do anything except be there. They are old, so they shouldn't play hard or run. It is enough if they drive us to the market where the pretend horse is, and have lots of dimes ready. Or, if they take us for walks, they should slow down past things like leaves or caterpillars. They should never say 'Hurry up.'

Usually they are fat but not too fat to tie their shoes. They wear glasses and funny underwear. They can take their teeth and gums off.

It is better if they don't typewrite or play cards, except with us. They don't have to be smart, only answer questions like, 'Why do dogs hate cats?' and 'How come God isn't married?'

They don't talk baby talk like visitors do because it is hard to understand. When they read to us, they don't skip or mind if it is the same story again.

Everybody should try to have one, especially if you don't have television because Grandmas are the only grownups who have time."
Junior bit the meter man;
Junior hit the cook!
Junior's "anti-social" now (according to the book)

Junior smashed the clock and lamp;
Junior hacked the tree!
(Destructive trends are treated in Chapters 2 & 3)

Junior threw his milk at Mom;
Junior screamed for more!
(Notes on self-assertiveness are found in Chapter 4)

Junior tossed his shoes and socks out into the rain,
("Negation", that is normal; disregard the strain)

Junior set Dad's shirt afire;
whittled Grandpa's pine;
(That's to gain attention, see page 89)

Grandpa seized a slipper and yanked Junior across his knee.
(He's read nothing but the Bible since 1893!)
We surveyed dozens of kids with the question, “How are grandmas different from mothers?” and, “How are grandfathers different from fathers?” The answers tell the story.

Grandmas . . . always give you things
hug too much
like for you to eat a lot
accept me just like I am and never ask, “Why in the world did you do that?”
are harder to explain things to
like to smooch
say things like “A few cookies before dinner won’t hurt anyone”
believe that I can grow up to be anything I want to be

Grandpas . . . have better stories than dads
laugh more
get sicker than fathers
don’t get so embarrassed when you do something silly
need more naps
let you do things fathers say you aren’t old enough to do

can tell you what you ought to do without it sounding like a lecture
know how to say “I love you” with their eyes
think that you are the greatest kid in the world when everybody knows that you aren’t
Paul came of a line of ancestors who were sincerely godly according to their light. Compared with the light in which he now walked their day was cloudy. But they too had meant their adoration; and their almost beatified descendent here clasps that fact with a loyal affection to his heart, as, with the instinct of retrospect which is frequently so strong in dying men, he reaches back to his pious fathers and feels their spiritual oneness with himself before their god.

--Moule
Ross Baker  Author, American Demographics – The number of Americans aged 100 and over is projected to grow from 45,000 today to more than 77,000 in 2000. By 2050, 2.4 million baby boomers may be saying, “Never trust anyone over 99.” If the projections are accurate, Willard Scott’s birthday greetings to centenarians will eventually take over the entire Today show.