

Grandparents Day

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Well today is officially Grandparents Day. The second Sunday in September is National Grandparents' Day in Canada. This holiday was finally recognized in 1995 after about 20 years of celebration in the U.S.

It is presumably a day when we recognize and honour grandparents.

The original idea for Grandparents Day originated in the heart of a grandchild. I suppose that would be expected in that while not all of us are grandparents all of us are grandchildren.

And another interesting bit of trivia is that your grandparents directly impacted your ability to have children. If your grandparents didn't have any children, you won't have any either.

The year was 1969 and Russell Capper at the age of nine sent a letter to President Nixon suggesting a special day be set aside as Grandparents' Day.

In June of that year Russel received a letter back from Rose Mary Woods the Personal Secretary to the President reading, "Dear Russell, Thank you for your letter to President Nixon.

Your suggestion regarding a Grandparent's Day is appreciated, but the President ordinarily issues proclamations designating periods for special observance only when a Congressional resolution authorizes him to do so.

With best wishes, Sincerely, Rose Mary Woods
Personal Secretary to the President".

Well eventually more and more people became involved in the push for a national recognition of grandparents.

In February 1977, Senator Randolph, with the concurrence of many other senators, introduced a joint resolution to the senate requesting the president to "issue annually a proclamation designating the first Sunday of September after Labor Day of each year as 'National Grandparents' Day'."

About a year and a half later, President Carter signed the proclamation. Well, the wheels of Government turn slowly but after about ten years Russel Capper's wish came true.

The statute cites the day's purpose: ".to honor grandparents, to give grandparents an opportunity to show love for their children's children, and to help children become aware of strength, information, and guidance older people can offer".

The wheels of government in Canada turn even slower and Grandparents Day was only officially recognized here in 1995.

It is interesting to speculate as to why Mother's Day and Father's Day receive considerable attention in our culture, but Grandparents Day tends to pass almost unnoticed.

We grandparents just don't seem to be getting our share of recognition.

To many it seems that Justin Trudeau has called an election without a good reason for it.

Perhaps the PM can adopt strengthening our resolve and commitment to Grandparents Day as a reason for the election and a key part of his platform.

Our culture certainly tends to regard grandparents much differently than previous generations.

If we consider the culture of Bible times, we find that grandparents were regarded as sources of wisdom. Children sought the blessing of their parents and also sought the blessing of their parents for their children.

In Genesis Chapter forty- eight when Joseph hears that his father's health is failing, he brings his sons to Jacob anxious that they would receive their grandfather's blessing.

In those times, grandparents were seen as people to be cherished, a valuable source of wisdom gained from years of experience.

Grandparents were also seen as people of spiritual influence.

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Here is the prayer of blessing that Jacob offered for his grandchildren.

“May the God before whom my grandfather Abraham and my father, Isaac, walked, the God who has been my shepherd all my life, to this very day, the Angel who has redeemed me from all harm may he bless these boys. May they preserve my name and the names of Abraham and Isaac. And may their descendants multiply greatly throughout the earth.”

Notice how Jacob acknowledges the role that God had played as shepherd and protector in his life and in the life of his parents and grandparents.

Abraham and Isaac though imperfect people like us, provided Jacob and his children and grandchildren a legacy of faith based living before God.

I think many of us here today have been blessed with a similar legacy. Unfortunately, there have been some who have not been blessed in this way, but all of us regardless of the legacy we inherited, can provide our children and grandchildren with a legacy of faith going forward.

Those words of Jacob's were words of encouragement. Words to encourage the grandchildren to place their faith in God as their ancestors had done so before them.

In his letter to his young protégé Timothy, Paul acknowledges the influence of both Timothy's mother and grandmother.

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In II Timothy chapter one verse five he writes:

I remember your genuine faith, for you share the faith that first filled your grandmother Lois and your mother, Eunice. And I know that same faith continues strong in you.

We don't know exactly how Timothy came to faith in the Lord but it would seem that Paul believed he had been substantially influenced by his mother and grandmother.

We lived in Moscow Russia for a few years in the late nineteen nineties. By that time about eighty years had passed since the Russian Revolution that brought in communism and the communist government's determination to eliminate Christianity. Almost the entire population had grown up without Christianity and the church.

But it was mazing to us to see that when the new freedom came many were instantly once again practicing their orthodox Christian faith. Churches were full. We even saw lineups int he snow in Red Square, lineups of people waiting to receive communion.

The language of the people was still full of Christian words and phrases. My secretary would wish us 'God Speed' when we travelled.

Surely the passing of two generations would eradicate all traces of Christianity

How was that possible that Christianity would survive two generations of soviet repression?

Professor Gordon Rupp, the British historian, was asked how the church could survive the decades of persecution and communist propaganda in Russia.

His answer was, "It's largely due to grandparents." The communists made the big mistake of thinking that because the church was only full of old people, it had no future.

They failed to realize that grandparents have an impact on their grandchildren. The old Russian grandparents passed their faith on to their grandchildren, and that is why there is a new revival of Christianity in Russia.

Now we do not live under a communist regime, but I believe that our schools and indeed our culture are just as anti God and just as anti Christian as what Russians experienced for most of the twentieth century.

Many grandchildren in our country live day after day without exposure to Sunday School, church or Christian parents.

The importance of our influence as grandparents cannot be over emphasized. You may well be the only Christian influence they receive.

I think that most grandparents find it easy to be generous with their grandchildren, perhaps even too generous at times.

One study suggests that Grandparents spend an average of \$200 per year per grandchild.

Some might even think it necessary to spend even more lavishly on their grandchildren in order to receive their love. Others may be frustrated in that their financial situation prevents them from sharing much in the way of monetary resources.

We do well to remember the gift of grandmother Lois to grandson Timothy. There's no mention of money although she might have done so, we just don't know.

But the gift that towered above any monetary gift that could have been offered was the grounding that Timothy received in the faith.

Money is only tangible for the moment. It is soon spent and forever gone, but the influence of Grandma Lois lasted Timothy a lifetime.

What are some of the other ways we can influence Grandchildren?

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Writer Deborah Haddix has some good suggestions:

First: The Gift of Unconditional Love

1 Corinthians 13:4-7 ESV says:

Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. --

Grandparents can give their grandchildren the very precious gift of unconditional love. Wrap your grandchild in a love that does not fluctuate according to his or her words and actions.

Not a fan of tattoos or piercings or “strange” hairstyles? Look beyond it and love your grandkid anyway.

Have a special needs grandchild, one who is defiant, or from an unwanted pregnancy? Offer them the gift of unconditional love by treating them as the image bearer of God that they are.

Rather than holding grudges and trying to “fix” people and situations, unconditional love offers forgiveness, even when unwise choices have been made.

Unconditional love is flexible and does not insist on its own way.

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Secondly: The Gift of Intentional Talk

Ephesians 4:29 ESV says...

Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. –

Words are powerful, and in the hands of a grandparent, they can become a gift of incomparable value.

Think about it! You have so much to share with your grandkids. One of the ways you can use the gift of intentional talk is to help your grandchild get to know God.

Use your words to give testimony to the goodness and greatness of God, declare His power and His wonders, recount His mighty works, share the glory of His kingdom, and proclaim His attributes. Add to those words, your family God-stories.

Dig into your family history and share how God has worked. Tell your own personal God-story.

Another very important way to give the gift of intentional talk is to use your words to build up your grandchild. Look for ways to speak words of appreciation, affirmation, and sincere praise, and speak them often.

This one gift has the power to add life to your grandchildren while pointing them to Christ.

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Thirdly: The Gift of Prayer

Lamentations 2:19 says:

“Arise, cry out in the night, at the beginning of the night watches! Pour out your heart like water before the presence of the Lord! Lift your hands to him for the lives of your [grand]children, who faint for hunger at the head of every street.”

Yes, other people can give the gift of prayer to your grandkids, but no one can give it in quite the same way!

The regular, consistent, specific prayers of a grandparent are one of the greatest investments that can ever be made – and with very little to no money involved.

Consider, a grandparent’s prayers help God accomplish His purpose in and through the lives of grandchildren, can stop Satan’s schemes and powers toward grandchildren, and helps equip grandkids to stand fast in the faith.

Additionally, one of the wonderful things about this gift is that it also blesses the giver abundantly.

When grandparents pray for their grandchildren, relationships are strengthened, generational and distance gaps are diminished, uncontrollable burdens are released to God, and we are drawn closer to God. A grandparent's gift of prayer has eternal impact.

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Fourthly the gift of a gospel shaped life.

1 Corinthians 9:22-23 says.

To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings.

Our grandkids are growing up in a culture of chaos and confusion. That fact scares us, sometimes to the point of [anxiety](#), fear, and even hopelessness.

Instead of sitting by wringing our hands, we can offer them the gift of a Gospel-shaped life. For their sake, we can proclaim God as Creator, share the truth of the [Bible](#) with deliberation, and model the giving of honor and thanks to God.

Through the decisions we make, the way we spend our time, and the things we occupy ourselves with, we can be vessels that carry the Gospel to our grandchildren.

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Fifthly the gift of a Biblical world view:

Colossians 2:6-8 says:

Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving. See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ. –

This gift goes hand-in-hand with the gift of a Gospel-shaped life. There is no denying that our grandkids are growing up in a post-Christian culture. Help them navigate the maze of opposition and competing belief systems by giving them the gift of a Biblical worldview.

Root your grandchildren in the Bible. Read the Bible and engage in discussions about it with your grandchildren. Teach them the big picture of the Bible, the essentials of the Christian faith, and how to obey God's commands.

Help them apply God's truth to their lives and train them to defend their faith. It is a precious gift to see the world through the lens of the Bible.

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Lastly, there's an old chorus the lyrics of which go: "Lord prepare me to be a sanctuary. Pure and holy Tried and true and with thanksgiving I'll be a living sanctuary, for you."

There are many children in the world in desperate need of a sanctuary. In Haiti for example HIV has claimed the lives of many parents leaving children with no support except their grandparents. Now covid adds to that challenge.

There are countless other cases where fathers or in some less frequent cases mothers abandon their children or where marital discord introduces substantial stress and anxiety into young impressionable lives.

Such children are in desperate need of a sanctuary. Perhaps you find yourself in a situation to be a sanctuary to someone within your biological family. Or perhaps there is a child from outside your biological family that needs a sanctuary, need some grandparents to step in, to love on and to provide a Jesus based sanctuary.

May each of us as grandparents be open to the opportunities the Lord puts before us and realize that we do have the ability to influence future generations in the faith.