

## **“Grandparents are Also a Gift from God”**

**Proverbs 17:6, 2 Timothy 1:5, Genesis 48:9**

We have focused on the theme of love this month, noting that out of God’s love He has given us Christian marriage and children. We conclude this short series by focusing on grandparents.

The word “grandparent” is very seldom used in scripture, yet from beginning to the end we encounter people who enjoy the blessing of their children’s children. We might miss the importance of grandparents in God’s design for family if we didn’t slow down and spend a few moments talking about grandparents. That is what we will do today.

One wise little girl is noted as saying, “Everybody should try to have a grandmother, especially if you don’t have internet, because they are the only grown ups who like to spend time with us.”

As you know, Lise and I are newbies into this exclusive group called grandparents. This morning we are delighted to have Cole and Amanda with us, and for the first time in her young life baby Eliena is at church with this grandma and grandpa. We are so happy that every other week she can be at church with her other grandma and grandpa.

But as newbies to this world of grand parenting, we lean on the many sitting here today who are not only grandparents but even great grandmas and grandpas.

This morning I want to briefly walk through four scripture passages that speak of what God thinks of grandparents, and their role in the family (or church) and how children can respond to them. Grandparents are part of God’s great design for his creation that he declared was good.

Someone said that we wouldn’t need so many support groups in our world today if we had more grandmas!

Yes, grandparents make a difference – and God designed it that way.

We begin our journey in the book of Proverbs where we find these words:

**“Children’s children are a crown to the aged, and parents are the pride of their children.”**  
**Proverbs 17:6**

One of the gifts of getting old is to see your children’s children. This is like wearing a crown, Solomon says. It is a privilege to be involved in the lives of children, even when we are no longer young. Last week we saw the great value God puts on children, this week we see that even as we get old we should treasure the opportunities we have to be with children.

Yesterday Amanda was reading a book that told of the life of my father as he grew up in war torn Germany and then made his way to Canada. This is the grandpa that she never met, and she is the granddaughter he never met. Seeing our grandchildren means we have been blessed

with a good number of years, and for that we should be grateful. This is one of the reasons why they become the crown of the aged.

I have a message for the children here: if you take time for your grandparents you will give them the greatest gift of all. Even as you grow older and your lives get busier, try to take time for the grandparents in your life.

If your grandparents are far away, or no longer alive, find some other senior and spend time with them. Write them a note. Sit by them at church. Give them a hug. They may be missing family too, and you can cheer them up with a little kindness.

One of my favourite stories of a child who understood far beyond their years is the story of the little girl who slipped away to spend the afternoon with her older neighbour who just lost her husband. When the little girl came home, her mom asked where she had been. She said she was with the neighbour lady.

Why did you go there? Mom asked the little girl.

Because Mrs. Jones is so sad after Mr. Jones died.

What did you say to her? Nothing, we just sat and cried together.

Grandmas and grandpas get sad too. A child's smile, hug or visit can really cheer them up.

The second thing I want to say is that we have much to learn from our grandmas and grandpas. They can teach us about baking and sewing and cutting grass and a host of other things.

I am drawn to a character in the Bible named Gershom. Do you know who he is? His story is found in the book of Exodus, though most of his story is about his father. Do you know who his father was? Moses!

And Gershom had a grandfather named Jethro. His grandfather was a priest – like a pastor today. He was a very wise man. One day he came to visit his family as they journeyed from Egypt to a new land God was going to give them, and he watched his son-in-law working. Moses was leading a large group of people – probably over one million people, and it was hard work. Grandpa Jethro saw Moses was getting very tired, so wise Jethro suggested Moses share the work with other capable people.

Moses agreed and he started to let other people handle the problems of leading so many people. Soon Moses had time to play with his son again. Gershom was so glad that grandpa Jethro came to visit.

Older people have done many things. They were not always old, and so they learned a whole bunch about life, and they can help us if we will listen to them. (the story of Gershom and his grandpa Jethro visiting the camp is found in Exodus 18).

I want to turn to a New Testament verse which speaks about a grandmother named Lois. The verse is found in a letter from Paul to a young man named Timothy. Lois was Timothy's grandma. Here is what Paul wrote:

**I am reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also. 2 Timothy 1:5**

Grandparents can show the next generation how to live for Jesus. They can be examples of faith to their grandchildren.

I remember visiting my grandmother when I was a little boy. She lived in a simple house that didn't have flush toilets at first, and we had to pump the water for washing dishes, and go to the big pump down the street for our drinking water. She was always sewing a quilt and baking. But she always had time for her grandchildren.

I remember her singing a silly song that went like this:

I don't want to play in your yard,  
I don't like you any more.  
You'll be sorry when you see me  
Sliding down our cellar door;  
You can't holler down our rain barrel.  
You can't climb our apple tree;  
I don't want to play in your yard  
If you won't be good to me.

Grandma taught me far more than silly songs. My grandma is what they called a prayer warrior. Every day she would pray for all her grandchildren, and a whole bunch of other people. She would sit in a rocker in her room and read her Bible and pray. I am sure her prayers have helped me through the years.

My grandmother did not have an easy life, but the most important thing in her life was Jesus. I knew that even as a child. She would always take us to her church. I think when our family of five showed up we almost doubled the church attendance! But that little church sent out more pastors and missionaries and church workers than many large churches because it had people like my grandma who knew how to pray.

When my grandma died she had no money to leave the grandchildren, but she left something more valuable – a strong faith. Her example still speaks to us today, encouraging us to live for Jesus – not sometimes, but all the time, with all our heart, soul, mind and strength.

Now turn with me to the Old Testament where we have the story of Joseph finally being reunited with his father after many years of being apart. You may remember Joseph's story, the boy who was sold by his older brothers as a slave and taken to Egypt. There he is falsely accused of a crime he did not do, and was thrown into prison. While in prison God uses him to interpret

dreams for a baker and a wine server. This gives him the opportunity to help Pharaoh, king of Egypt.

After many years of not seeing his family, God sends his brothers to Egypt to buy food when there was no food in their country. Joseph reveals himself to his brothers and the family all move to Egypt to be saved from the drought. It is at this time Joseph is able to introduce his sons to his father. When grandpa Jacob sees his grandsons, what does he want to do? He wants to bless them. Hear the Word of the Lord:

**<sup>9</sup>“They are the sons God has given me here,” Joseph said to his father. Then Israel said, “Bring them to me so I may bless them.” Genesis 48:9**

To bless someone is to pray for them, yes, but also to desire God’s best for that person. Grandparents want what is best for their grandchildren. They want the children to be healthy, to be safe, to be wise and above all else, to grow up knowing and living God. This is what they are asking God to do in a blessing.

God wants to bless not just children, but their whole families. He wants them to know his love in their homes and in their lives.

We have seen how God, who is love, gave us marriage, children and even grandparents. Scripture also talks about single people, and the unique place they have in God’s family. Scripture talks about widows and orphans, people who know loss. Not all families are mom, dad, children and grandparents. But God loves every family.

Today I hope children will appreciate their grandparents, or even older adults who can be like grandparents to them. I also hope that we who are older, maybe already grandparents or have been for a long time, will realize we have an important part to play in the lives of the children. **We are never too old to love a child.** Remember Simeon and Anna who rejoiced because they had the privilege to hold baby Jesus? They were both old, but they have an important part in God’s story.

Yes, children are a gift from God, but so is our spouse (the person you married!) and so are the grandparents.

We thank God today for his love for us, shown to us through the family.