

As a seasoned continual learner, a grandparent who genuinely seeks to understand their children's perspectives—even when they differ—can open doors for reconciliation and lasting influence. Approaching children with humility and love, trusting the Holy Spirit to work in their lives, is always the right posture. He will. He is.

IMPARTING WISDOM

Grandparents are a blessing, uniquely positioned to share the Gospel and impart wisdom to their families. Whether through direct conversations, shared prayers, or quiet acts of love, their influence can shape not only their children but also their grandchildren and generations yet to come.

As Psalm 145:4 encourages, "One generation shall commend your works to another, and shall declare your mighty acts." Grandparents should use every opportunity to point their family to the hope and truth found in Christ. Whether raising grandchildren, supporting adult children, or offering prayer and guidance, their role is vital in God's plan for the family.

GOING FURTHER: RESOURCES

Grandparents Make Grand Partners: How to Have an Eternal Impact on Your Grandchild's Life by Lori Wildenberg

Backward Discipleship by Ron Hunter



GRANDPARENTS' INFLUENCE

Grandparents have raised their children and watched them leave home. Now it's time to relax, have fun, and spoil the grandkids, right? Well, yes and no.

Scripture frequently encourages individuals to pass on their knowledge to future generations. For instance, Deuteronomy 4:9 states, "Only take care, and keep your soul diligently, lest you forget the things that your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life. Make them known to your children and your children's children." Moses urged his people to remember their past experiences and, most importantly, to share them with their children and grandchildren.

The role of a grandparent is not solely to have fun and spoil their grandkids; it also includes the responsibility of passing on wisdom, beliefs, and values, albeit in a different way. The Bible places great value on influencing future generations.

Psalms 78:6–7 emphasizes, "That the next generation might know them, the children yet unborn, and arise and tell them to their children, so that they should set their hope in God and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments."

Proverbs 17:6 says, "Grandchildren are a crown of the aged, and the glory of children is their fathers."

While the joy of being a grandparent is undeniable, today's realities sometimes call grandparents into more active roles. According to recent statistics, 2.7 million grandparents in the United States are raising their grandchildren. This often happens due to factors such as addiction, incar-



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ceration, or economic challenges in the parent's life. While this role can be both a blessing and a burden, it underscores the importance of grandparents stepping in with wisdom, patience, and love to provide stability and spiritual guidance.

PARENTING CHILDREN AS THEY PARENT

As grandparents, an essential role is guiding their children as they parent their own children. This doesn't mean taking over but rather offering wisdom and support while maintaining healthy boundaries.

It's tempting for grandparents to step in and correct parenting choices they disagree with, but Proverbs 15:1 reminds us, "A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger." Grandparents should speak with grace, offering thoughts respectfully while allowing their children the freedom to parent in their own way.

Grandparents may be tempted to think they "nailed it" as parents, but their adult children may have differing opinions—and that's okay. The role of a grandparent is not to be "right" but to be "approachable." The relationship with an adult child should be one not of an expert but of a continual learner.

Grandparents should not become someone their children feel threatened to ask for advice. They should avoid becoming the person their children hesitate to "vent" to because responses might include correction or cynicism. Instead, they should be a safe haven—a soft spot for an adult child to lean into and find rest. And always point them to Scripture and the Savior.

The grandparent's role is to encourage and pray for their children as they guide their own families. Boundaries are crucial—offering advice when asked but avoiding the urge to push a personal perspective. Ephesians 4:2 reminds us to approach all relationships with "humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love."

Grandparents should be careful not to insert themselves into their child's parenting of their own children. Instead, they should strive to be available and supportive to both their children and their grandchildren. Grandchildren may confide things they don't share with their parents, and it's important to handle that information with care and respect. Honor their trust while maintaining integrity.

Grandparents should focus on building a unique relationship with their grandchildren—one that complements, not competes with, the grandchildren's relationship with their parents. If caught in the middle of a situation, the grandparent's aim should be to be a bridge that connects

the hearts of their children to their children, fostering understanding and strengthening family bonds.

WHAT CAN GRANDPARENTS DO TO LEAD THEIR FAMILY?

1. PRAYER

Grandparents should never underestimate the power of prayer. Praying daily for children and grandchildren—lifting up their challenges, their growth, and their walk with God—is one of the most faithful things a grandparent can do. Prayer for wisdom in this role and for the ability of their children to parent well is the most powerful tool in shaping future generations.

2. BE PRESENT

Grandparents should engage intentionally with their grandchildren. Attending their events, calling to pray together, or sharing faith stories all matter deeply. Technology can help bridge the distance for those who live far away. Being present shows grandchildren they are loved and important.

3. SUPPORT WITHOUT CONTROL

Children will face challenges in raising their kids, just as their own parents did before them. Grandparents can be a source of support without taking over. Letting adult children know they are being prayed for and offering advice only when sought are marks of a healthy grandparent relationship. Respecting their authority as parents, even in disagreement, honors God's design for the family.

4. TEACH THROUGH EXAMPLE

Psalm 71:18 says, "So even to old age and gray hairs, O God, do not forsake me, until I proclaim your might to another generation, your power to all those to come." Grandparents who model a life of faith, humility, and joy in Christ leave a legacy that outlasts them. Their actions reflect God's love and truth to every generation that follows.

WHEN THERE ARE CHALLENGES

For grandparents who find themselves raising their grandchildren, the role is deeply significant. They are not just providing a home—they are shaping the spiritual and emotional foundation of those children. Proverbs 22:6 reminds us, "Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old, he will not depart from it."

When strained relationships or differing beliefs arise, practice understanding and patience.