

**Family Study: Biblical Grandparenting**  
for the College and Career Class at Gulf Coast Baptist Church  
3/3/24 by Steve Thomas

**Introduction**

Our culture sends the message that the older generation is somehow less important, that the grandparent should live independently from their children and grandchildren, that retirement is a time for the grandparent to become self-indulgent and do whatever makes them happy, and that their role is to be a playmate and companion to their grandchildren. Are these principles Biblical? The “sugar them up and send them home” approach seems to rule the day in the world system.

While we can see that the grandparent has an opportunity to do things that a parent might not be able to do, the Bible emphasizes the needs of the child that the Grandparent can contribute to. Grandparents are listed as one of the four most influential people in the child’s life, and they should use that influence to help their grandchildren to develop a lifelong faith in Jesus.

Grandparents are not just to be babysitters that give parents a break, but have the opportunity to pass on a heritage of faith and make a huge difference in their lives.

**Cultural Messages**

America has an unspoken “social contract” that states that grandparents should live mostly disconnected lives from their children and grandchildren. Add into geographic distance and grandparents become lonely, disconnected, mostly amputated from the daily life of the family. When these families do connect, the grandparent becomes a companion or a playmate, sacrificing the wealth of wisdom and a great opportunity for the grandparent to contribute to the raising of that child.

Having mainly confusion about the grandparent’s role, leads to poor outcomes in many relationships. The Bible gives clear principles about the needs that the child has, and the grandparents have the opportunity to partner with the parents of the grandchildren to meet these needs.

The other message that grandparents receive is that retirement is a time to focus on themselves. Retirement is an opportunity to have a “giving season”. Consider the fact that retirees have the gift of flexibility, the gift of presence, the gift of experience and wisdom from life experience, and the gift of what we could call “God stories” to make the principles of scripture come alive in a way that parents often cannot with their limited life experience.

**Biblical Messages**

Grandparents have a lot to offer their grandchildren. In a transient culture where children are having a different set of friends every few years, grandparents offer their grandchildren long-term relationships. They can, like parents ask the child to give them their heart (Prov 23:26). They can be a great example for a long period of time to these children.

Proverbs 4:7-8 elevates wisdom. This often comes from having made a lot of mistakes and learning lessons. While age is no guarantee of wisdom, most grandparents have more to

offer in this area than parents can. We also can focus on the fact that all true wisdom comes from above (Prov 1:7).

Grandparents can illustrate the truth that a good name is rather to be had than great riches (Prov 22:1; Ecc 7:1). This is something that a grandchild can have passed on to them, and give them something to live up to - a great family name.

The Grandparents can display a Christ-like character to the younger generation (Titus 2). This principle is found in the OT as well. Deut 4:9, 15, and 25 have a directive from Moses for the elders of Israel to put righteousness on display for the younger generation to see and learn from .

Grandparents can display strength, stability, and joy in hard times. 2 Tim 1:5 gives us Timothy's grandparent who was a great example for him. It is easier to follow God when the times are good, but grandparents can display joy in hard times . Phil 1:25-26;4:4 show us that joy is to be put on display in every time, not just the good times.

### **Conclusion**

God designed grandparenting, it should be God-centered, and it should leave a long and lasting heritage. Grandparents should partner with their children to be intentional about having the right kind of influence on the children. Time at granddaddy and grandma's house does not need to be a drudgery, but it can use the God-given opportunities to enforce the real needs that children have. Grandparents can be the support that parents need, and can use their God-given influence to raise children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.