

D6 – Grandparent’s Influence

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This Sunday is National Grandparent’s Day. We want to honor and encourage our grandparents because you are God’s special agents of influence for children. In homes where children are able to spend a good amount of time interacting with their grandparents, grandparents can be a strong source of spiritual guidance.

We have been working on becoming a D6 church. D6 stands for the emphasis of passing faith down to the next generation and placing the training emphasis on the family, more than the church. The family must live the faith or children will not actually adopt faith themselves. They will adopt religion, but not faith. So, as a reminder, let’s consider Deuteronomy 6:1-2:

Deuteronomy 6:1-2 NIVO

**These are the commands, decrees and laws the LORD your God directed me to teach you to observe in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess,
² so that you, your children and their children after them may fear the LORD your God as long as you live by keeping all his decrees and commands that I give you, and so that you may enjoy long life.**

Deuteronomy 6 talks about parents training their children to know the Lord. So, how can grandparents help in that process?

Grandparents are not the primary persons of influence, unless they have taken the child into the home to raise them, when parents are not able to properly care for the children. This does happen a lot in our day.

However, in normal circumstances, grandparents become a second tier of influence backing up the parents.

Back in previous generations when family life was mostly rural and farm based, grandparents had a great amount of exposure to children. Families tended to live in a close knit unit. Grandparents might be more apt to stay at home as the younger adults went out to work the fields. In our day, grandparenting looks much different. We are a mobile society and we may be raised completely away from grandparents. That is the way my life went. I saw my grandparents only a few times over the course of my years.

How grandparents can help influence their children depends on the tools they have available to them. We have presented you a list of grandparenting tools you can use to influence your grandchildren spiritually. Before we look at these tools, let us consider how Paul sought to influence someone’s life. Paul didn’t have children because he was never married. However, he did adopt Timothy as a spiritual child and he sought to guide his life in the Lord’s service.

2 Timothy 1:1-6 NIV

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, according to the promise of life that is in Christ Jesus,

² To Timothy, my dear son: Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

³ I thank God, whom I serve, as my forefathers did, with a clear conscience, as night and day I constantly remember you in my prayers.

⁴ Recalling your tears, I long to see you, so that I may be filled with joy.

⁵ I have been 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.

⁶ For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands.

The older seasoned Apostle Paul writes a letter to encourage his “son in the faith,” Timothy. Paul uses a **letter** to help young Timothy develop as a spiritual leader.

Paul also gives a clue to the spiritual **legacy** found in Timothy’s family. This faith in Jesus has a family history. It first lived in the grandmother, Lois. Then, faith lived in his mother, Eunice. Following them, faith came to Timothy. Timothy is the recipient of a legacy of faith.

Legacy Lois ~ Eunice ~ Timothy

Timothy was not Paul’s son. Yet, Paul adopted Timothy as a spiritual son. He used tools of influence to encourage the developing faith of this young man.

What were some of the tools Paul used?

1. Writing letters

Paul wrote two letters to Timothy to guide him in faith and ministry. When Paul could not be with Timothy in person, he wrote letters. Writing letters takes time and thought. In his day, the material he wrote on was expensive. Paul invested much into Timothy’s life by taking the action of writing letters.

2. Traveling together

Paul took Timothy as a traveling companion on his first missionary journey at Lystra. Timothy traveled with Paul to many of the cities. He was with Paul when Paul wrote several of the letters, including the letters from Rome. This means that Paul and Timothy shared meals together. They would have spent a lot of time together as they walked to all of the towns.

3. Assigning work

Paul sent Timothy to Corinth on a teaching task. This means that he first taught Timothy and trained him, before he sent him.

When we want to influence our children or grandchildren, as some point we must let them learn by doing. We start with small tasks. Then, as they grow and mature, we give them greater responsibilities.

Handout: LegacyCoalition --

8 Spiritual Practices to Influence Your Grandchildren for Christ

1. Asking Questions:

A practice used to generate discussion, create spiritual dialogue, build relationships, and understand what grandchildren believe.

Children love to talk. They also love to explore. With open ended questions, parents and grandparents can open the doors to children to be aware of spiritual life.

When you are visiting with your grandchild, along with the joy of exploring everything in life with them, take the lead in helping them to explore the spiritual world as well. Be intentional. This is especially critical if the parents are not pursuing life with Christ.

Key Tool: Catechism – teaching the faith

2. Blessing: A prayer requesting God’s favor upon a grandchild.

John Trent and Gary Smalley have helped us realize the importance of a spoken blessing on the development of a child. Even more powerful is to hear a person pray a blessing over you. It comes with the power of hearing and knowing God is speaking this blessing over you. Such is the special role a parent or grandparent can have in praying for their children.

Key Tool: Spoken Blessing

3. Intentional meals:

An opportunity to discuss matters of faith, teach God’s Word to grandchildren, pass on family history, and talk about the events of the day.

It has been known for a long time that families who share a family meal in which they can converse about life (not be busy with the cell phone) have strong bonds that develop with them. Grandparents can use intentional meals to help speak of Christ to their children.

Key Tool: Family Table

4. Prayer:

The practice of praying with or praying for grandchildren. Common prayers include spiritual protection, physical health, salvation, and daily wisdom.

We know that faith is often more caught than taught in a child’s life. If children see us praying, they are more likely to see the importance of prayer in life. If they know we are communicating with God on a daily basis, they are more aware that this is a reality that can be in them as well.

A special way to pray is to pray verses of Scripture with them.

Key Tool: Praying Scripture

5. Teaching:

The practice of mentoring grandchildren by passing on wisdom that has been accumulated through a lifetime of experience. Common teaching topics include life lessons, social skills, manners, godly morals, and biblical truth.

Grandparents can come alongside parents as teachers. This has been a common role for generations. Just be aware, you can teach about God as well as about life. You can teach about wisdom, as well as accomplishment.

Key Tool: Godly Wisdom

6. Reading and memorizing the Bible:

The practice of reading the Bible with grandchildren, memorizing Scripture together, teaching grandchildren to develop spiritual habits, and giving grandchildren their first Bible.

In addition to reading the Bible for yourself, consider inviting your grandchildren into your reading time. Challenge your grandchildren to learn Scripture verses. You can give them a Bible, if they do not have one. By sharing the Word of God, you are trying to lead them to know the living God.

Key Tool: The Bible

7. Telling God-Stories:

The practice of telling grandchildren the work of God in their life which includes a grandparent's conversion, God's provision, and God's presence in their life.

Who does not like to listen to a good story. We tell stories when we eat, when we travel together, and when we sit together as families. Just remember to tell stories of faith, as well as family remembrances. Tell them about your faith and your faith paths.

Key Tool: Personal Testimony

8. Sharing the Gospel:

The practice of verbally stating the gospel to grandchildren and inviting grandchildren to respond in faith.

Don't forget to share the gospel. We should not assume people are going to heaven because, after all, they are good grandchildren and we love them. Make sure you understand the gospel. Then, help them know the meaning of sin and repentance, of Christ's death and forgiveness. You must articulate the gospel, not merely live a good moral life.

Key Tool: Gospel Message

The insert is here for you. It is a tool chest with many tools you can use to help influence the spiritual life of your children. I hope you will ask God to help you **Be a Grandparent of Influence.**