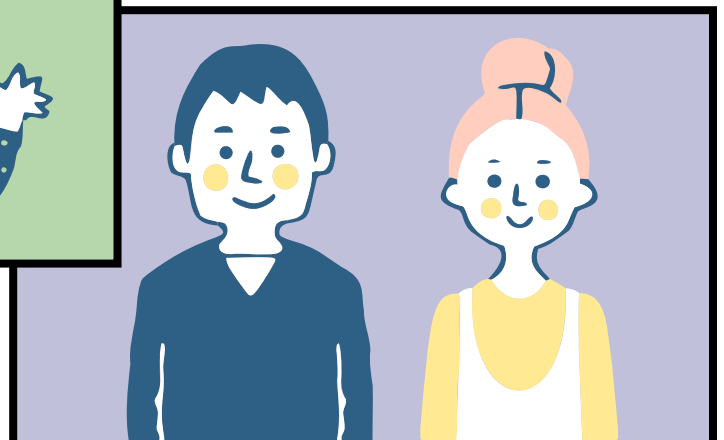
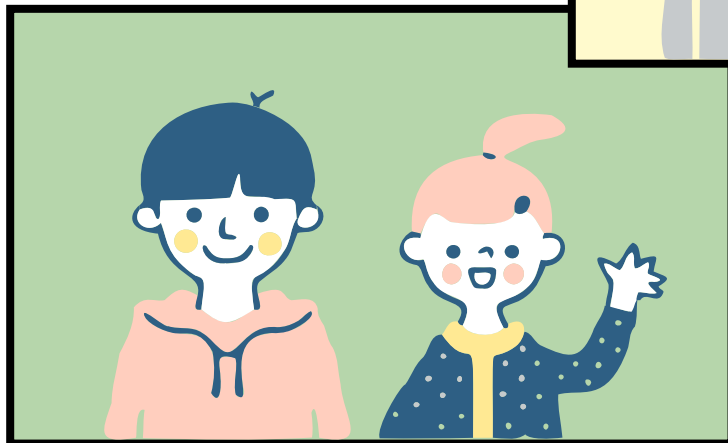
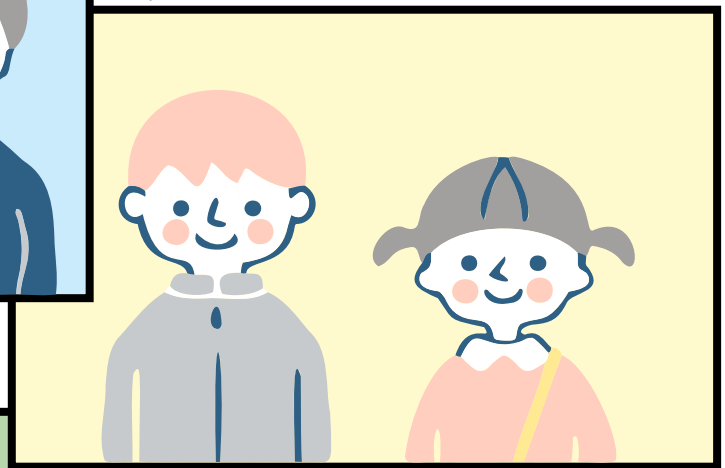
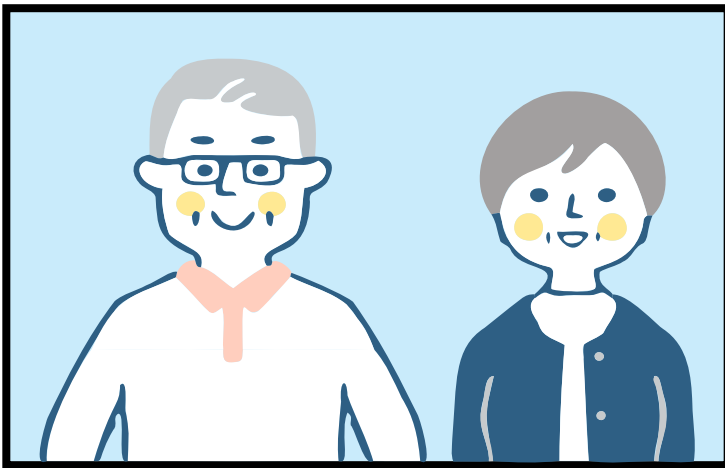


# 10 Reasons Your Grandkids Need You *Just as Much as* Their Parents

By DiAne Gates





Nineteen years ago, our daughter died. This left a five-year-old girl and a seven-month-old boy motherless. Papa and I became instant parents and grandparents.

We flew home from the funeral with these two precious grandchildren and they lived with us for the next seven months while their father finished schooling at his new duty post. Two households were pitched off the cliff of loss into the valley of grief and despair.

But in this generation of crime and chaos, many grandparents find themselves thrust into this figure eight life cycle—parent to grandparent, to parent again. But isn't that what families do? We circle the wagons and do what it takes to help our children and grandchildren fulfill God's plan for their lives.

“Know therefore that the Lord your God, He is God, the faithful God, who keeps His covenant and His lovingkindness to a thousandth generation with those who love Him and keep His commandments...” (Deuteronomy 7:9 NAS)

## **1. God Created the Family**

From the first days of Genesis God had each one of us in His mind. Scripture says that He formed you in your mother's womb. He has numbered your days, and counted the hairs on your head. You were fearfully and wonderfully made (Psalm 139, Luke 12:7).

God created the family, and He said all created was very good. In biblical days families lived in close proximity to each other – more often than not, in the same household.

The mobility of our age often requires family units to live at opposite ends of the globe. While that hampers daily interaction, the family bond is still necessary in raising a healthy, God-fearing generation. Grandmas and grandpas are meant to be their children and grandkids' safe place to fall. Their retreat. Their place of refreshing and time-out from the stresses and strains their busy world demands – the touch-stone from whence they came and a lighted path to the future.

“Do not move the ancient boundary which your fathers have set.” (Proverbs 22:28)



## **2. Grandkids Are Twice Our Children**

Grandparents link the past to the present and point the way to the future. With exploding technology, we are prone to forget the real people and circumstances of our lineage. And grandparents have the responsibility of reminding grandchildren of their heritage. We all stand on the shoulders of those who came before us, and there are lessons to learn from them, even if it's what not to do.

The gene pool of family history is there—like it or not. My grandson and his uncle are not together often because of both of their families' military lives. Yet the genes that run through them are unmistakable. Grandson looks like, acts like, and talks like his uncle. And granddaughter has the disposition and tenacious drive of her mother, great grandmother, and me. Grandparents have the privilege, responsibility, and time to join these links, so as family members pass from this world, the next generations have the benefit of knowing who they are.

## **3. Wisdom: All You Have to Do Is Ask**

“But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God who gives to all men generously and without reproach and it will be given him” (James 1:5 NAS).

Wisdom is a gift from God, and He promises all we must do is ask. But wisdom comes through years and years of learning to ask before acting. Waiting before leaping. Learning to recognize our hearts are frail and continually asking for God's wisdom in each problem and every decision.

The verse or two just before that promise gives more insight. “Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance...” And I can tell you for certain, parenting will test your faith. When you become a grandparent, having developed a daily habit of asking for God's wisdom before reacting will take you giant steps forward. But He warns us, “But let him ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, being a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways” (James 1:6-8 NAS).



#### **4. Grandparents Hold Firm Our Misplaced Heritage**

Those of you who are senior grandparents had the privilege of growing up in “One Nation Under God.” The Bible was read each morning in the school room. Everyone prayed the Lord’s Prayer and pledged allegiance to America’s flag. Each Sunday morning church bells rang throughout the land, especially South of the Mason-Dixon line. The majority of our friends and neighbors joined us in Sunday worship services. The Ten Commandments were posted in the school, government buildings, churches, and in our homes. And I memorized great passages of scripture as a teen.

But the same can’t be said for our grandchildren. The past fifty years have brought egregious changes to America. And as grandparents, it’s our mission to be sure our grandchildren hear and know the truth of God’s Word before the devil whisper lies into their minds and hearts.

We must be on our knees crying out to God for our children as they parent these gifts from God. I can think of nothing sadder than to spend eternity without my children or my grandchildren—but God allows them to choose. However, grandparents are accountable as well to teach their grandkids the truth of the word of God so they can make an accurate decision.

“Do not be carried away by varied and strange teachings; for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not by foods, through which those who were thus occupied were not benefited...For here we do not have a lasting city, but we are seeking the city which is to come.” (Hebrews 13:9,14)

#### **5. Grandparents Have Earned Their Stripes**

Say what you mean, and mean what you say. When our children were teens, I cautioned them, “Be careful what you do. You’ll never know when I’ll be standing behind you.” And I’ve relayed that same message to the grandkids.

During the 80’s, the drug culture had crept into schools and some families lost kids to the streets. School officials asked for help and a number of us responded. The drugs came from an over-age, under-age club in our inner-city area. But we



parents knew how to rain on a kid's parade and groups of us spent numerous Saturday evenings sitting in that club. The police warned us of the environment's dangers, which did nothing but cause us to question, "We're in danger, but you allow teens to go there?"

We prayed and others prayed for us and for those targeted teens. Within a short period of time, the club closed its doors, but tried to move into a vacated mall across from our high school. Again, we prayed, contacted the real estate company handling the lease, and they were refused. Were we frightened? Of course, but our children were in danger. Grandparents have learned to become warriors, trusting God and willing to act when our young'uns are evil's prize.

"Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil." (Ephesians 6:10-11 NAS)

## **6. Grandparents Are the Family's Safety Valve**

The pace of the family in today's world can be compared to hamsters on a hamster-trail. Always running. Never enough time. Chronic fatigue. But grandparents can be the jiggle valve on their family's pressure cooker.

One of my friends has summer camp at their house each year for their numerous grandchildren. She plans activities for these multi-aged kiddos, and I don't know who's more excited, the kids or the grandparents.

Our son-in-law married a wonderful young lady who became an instant mama for our two exuberant kiddos. During SIL's long deployments, we have always tried to provide R&R for this very special daughter-in-law by giving her sanity breaks. Yeah, twist my arm...we've loved having this relationship over the years. The oldest graduates from college this year and the youngest just began his college adventure. Now we're looking forward to great-grands someday.



## **7. Grandparents Prove How Love Overcomes Loss**

“And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment.” (Hebrews 9:27 NAS)

Today our world is littered with angry, broken relationships. Grandparents are the key to unlocking how love can indeed overcome loss. This doesn't mean death and broken relationships aren't tragic. They are—causing deep grief that can debilitate lives unless dealt with. Grief is the price we pay for loving someone.

But there is life and love after loss. A very different life, but a good life. And who better to teach our children and grandchildren than grandparents? Of course, sometimes our grandchildren teach us things too. Like my tenacious granddaughter did after her mother died. I was sitting on the floor one afternoon bawling when this five-year-old slipped up behind me and asked, “Why are you crying, Mimi?” I replied, “I miss your mommy.” “Why?” she asked and I blubbered, “Cause she was my daughter.”

She pumped her hands to her hips. “Mimi. She's still your daughter.” We hugged and I wiped my eyes, and smiled. “How'd you get so smart in five years?” I learned that afternoon, while grief lingers, we don't have to dig a trench and live there. Love for those still with us beckons us to overcome the dark pain in search of our new normal.

## **8. Grandparents Can Lead by Watching, Listening, and Asking Questions**

“Train up a child in the way he should go, even when he is old, he will not depart from it.” (Proverbs 22:6 NAS)

Preaching at our children and grandchildren doesn't work. Often our actions speak so loud they can't hear what we're saying. Grandparents must watch, listen, and pray. Pray for our grandchildren and their parents every day.

I ask non-intrusive questions to see what's going on so I'll know how to pray



for them. As our grandchildren grow older, they are more than delighted to talk about themselves, so listening to what they say and don't say, gives us information to intervene on their behalf.

Pray for the husband and wife God has chosen for your grandchild, asking God to bring them together at just the right time. We trust God to work in their lives.

## **9. Grandparents Know Attitudes Are Caught, Not Taught**

“Whether then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”  
(I Corinthians 10:31 NAS)

Children are quick to latch onto our attitudes and they are quite talented in manipulating those attitudes and actions to get their way. Just visit Walmart and watch parent-grandparent-child interactions.

The older I grow the more convinced I am that we haven't paid enough attention to our attitudes—and those troublesome, trailing-behind-actions. I'm afraid my generation's been more concerned with monetary gain and personal comfort than glorifying God. We've allowed things to creep in unnoticed among us—we've watched, read, and allowed deceptions to dominate our minds. Our children and grandchildren will be trapped in the chaos of our failures unless we pray for God to intervene.

Our only hope is to fall on our knees before God, confessing our sins as a nation, repenting, and illustrating to our children and grandchildren what perseverance in following God and giving Him glory looks like.

## **10. The Cupcake Analogy**

I love cupcakes, don't you? But a cupcake without a layer of scrumptious icing just isn't finished. I'm not implying the work of parenting is incomplete, but the day to day work of parenting is overwhelming, mine-boggling, energy-draining work. I compare those early years of parenting to the nuts and bolts of making



cupcakes—a basic foundation to build upon.

By the time parents get the kids off to school, make it to work themselves, then race home to face mountains of chores and homework before bedtime, the day's work can be compared to baking a basic cupcake. A completed day, but a no-added-frill one.

Grandparents have time and experience to add layers of yummy frosting to their grandkids' lives. This sweet balance of relational love and responsibility causes kiddos to blossom in the deliciousness of their grandparents' unique love—learning to love their Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ just like Mimi and Papa do.

“Behold, children are a gift of the Lord; the fruit of the womb is a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, so are the children of one's youth. How blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them...” (Psalm 127:3-5 NAS)

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DiAne Gates writes for children, young adults, and non-fiction for adults through her blogs. She writes monthly articles for Christian online magazine, Crosswalk.com. Freelance artist and photographer, she also facilitates a GriefShare support group. August of 2015, ROPED, DiAne's award winning, first western adventure series released, and the second book, TWISTED, released by Pelican Book Group July 14, 2017. UNTIED, is her work in progress.

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