

10 Things Grandchildren Need to Hear

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“For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things...” (2 Peter 1:12)

Last week all our children were home along with their spouses and our eight grandchildren. We live on a ranch in the mountains so coming home to visit Gramma and Papa is filled with lots of adventures and feeding the animals.

Getting older brings a clarity to what’s important. While we want our grandkids to remember their times on Papa’s farm, we want to leave them with a godly legacy. With this goal in mind, let’s look at 10 things every grandparent should tell their grandchildren.

1. I'm so glad God made you.

Our grandkids are growing up in a world that does not acknowledge God as their Creator, so it’s vital that parents and grandparents regularly remind them how God carefully designed them in their mother’s womb.

Along with knowing God made them, kids need to believe that people important to them are happy they are alive. Too many children struggle with feelings of inadequacy and loneliness. Some act out, some recluse, but few will say, “Hey, when you're too busy to play with me, read to me, or tuck me in at night, I feel like I don’t matter.”

2. I will always listen to you.

If you want to have the privilege of speaking truth to your grandkids, you have to earn that honor by being a good listener. Too many grandparents spend little time in conversations with their grandchildren until they see them making mistakes or choosing a wrong path. If the only time you engage with your grandchild is to correct them or point out what you don’t like about their attitude or attire, don’t be surprised if they’re not interested in listening to your wisdom when they become adolescents or young adults.

3. You are precious.

Jesus Loves the Little Children is the song at the top of my 3-year-old granddaughter’s request list whenever she gets tucked into bed at night. I often bend over and kiss her forehead as I sing, “Red, brown, yellow, black and white, they are precious in His sight” to show her how precious she really is to Jesus and to me.

Kids long to believe they are precious. And while God puts in the heart of every person a longing to find their worth in being loved deeply by their Creator, He has also created us to love and be loved by others. The more valued your grandchild feels by you and your family, the more they will be empowered not to seek affirmation by their peers by succumbing to peer pressure.

4. God loves you.

It may seem logical to teach kids about Christianity by telling them what the Bible says they should and should not do. And it is right to train them to honor and obey God’s commands. But if we focus only on the list of dos and don’ts, we miss the wonderful opportunity to introduce our grandchildren to the depth of Jesus’ great love for them.

Kids learn best how they are loved when it is demonstrated to them through loving actions. Saying “I love you” without showing love can feel like empty words to a child—or anyone really. In the same way, God, who is the perfect loving Father, displayed the depth of His love by sending his only Son whose sacrifice would pay the price for our sin. Reminding your grandchild of how God lovingly offers new life in Christ to anyone who would turn from their sin to follow Jesus is a great way to help them realize how great the Father's love is for them.

The Bible offers many reminders of God’s display of adoration for us. You would be wise to memorize some of these verses and regularly share them with your grandchild:

“Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us that we should be called children of God.” (1 John 3:1)

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” (John 3:16)

“But God demonstrates His own love for us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” (Romans 5:8)

5. God has a plan for your life.

From the time kids are little, people begin to ask them what they want to be when they grow up. Some children have a definite plan, like our oldest son who dreamt from a young age of being a fighter pilot in the Air Force. He grew up and did just that. But for most kids, their goals change daily—and that’s okay. But deep in their little minds, and this grows more intense as they reach adulthood, your grandchildren give a lot of thought to what they should do with their lives.

My husband often told our kids, and now our grandkids, “I don’t care what you grow up to do for a living as long as you are serving Christ.” When people would inquire, teaching them to respond by saying, “I’m gonna do whatever God wants me to do,” took a lot of pressure off of our kids. When our younger son made the decision to study music in college, he was met with a number of negative comments from men who challenged the wisdom of his decision. Saying things like, “You can’t support a family on a worship leader’s salary.”

These comments were meant in kindness but really threw off our son, Brandon. We would remind him how we trusted his decision because he was walking in a close walk with Christ and seeking the Lord for His wisdom and discernment. In the end Brandon studied music and biblical studies in college. After graduation he toured with some well known

Christian bands and then after he married, he was hired to lead worship at a church in Southern California. God has blessed Brandon’s decision as a young man to follow the leading of the Spirit, rather than succumb to fear and follow the “more reasonable career path” others thought he should have taken.*

I share this story to remind you of the power of your words as a grandparent. You can pour courage into your grandkids to follow God’s plan for their lives if you remind them of how God saved them unto good works that He has ordained in advance (see Ephesians 2:8-10). Exposing your grandkids to Bible stories and good biographies of people who wholeheartedly followed Christ is a great way to inspire them to trust that God has a plan for their lives too.

6. Loving God is the secret to loving others.

Loving others selflessly does not come naturally. Just spending an afternoon watching your grandkids take each other’s toys confirms this truth. But there is a way to train your grandkids to love others in a way that is truly selfless.

When the religious leaders asked Jesus what was the priority of life His response was, “You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength.” And then He said the second commandment was to love others as we love ourselves (see Mark 12:30-31). All too often we attempt to love others without first growing the depth of our love for God. When this happens loving others is usually a difficult task.

But when people first determine to spend the rest of their lives discovering God’s character as revealed in Scripture, their trust and love for Him will grow as they learn His ways. The more deeply you love God, the more freely His selfless love will spill out of your heart and onto those around you—even on those who are difficult to love. And don’t you want this to be the example of love your kids learn from you their grandparent?

Jesus said, “The student will become like his teacher” (Luke 6:40). Your grandchildren will learn to love by how they observe you loving others—not by how you tell them they should be treating people. You will bless your grandchildren if you teach them the secret to loving others deeply is not found in how well they measure up to your expectations, but in how well they love God. And let it begin with you.

7. Be quick to forgive.

Learning to quickly forgive others and to think well of them are valuable lessons to teach your grandchild. It is in our sinful nature to hold onto grudges and to assign wrong motives to people's actions. But by God's grace and the Spirit's power, we can break free of these unpleasant sinful practices to become a person who is ready to forgive—and looks for the best in others.

Wouldn't you agree that the best friendships are with those who you trust to believe the best about you? Helping your grandchild discover this valuable secret will equip them to become someone others will not only like to be around, but also trust to be a loyal friend.

8. Be content.

1 Timothy 6:6 says, "Godliness with contentment is great gain." In a generation where your grandkids will be influenced to believe they're entitled to more of whatever their little heart's desire, training them this valuable secret of contentment will do more to equip them for a happy life than all the gifts you might lavish upon them.

Trust me, I'm a grandparent who loves to pile gifts on my grandkids. But a wise grandparent will balance generosity with training them to be grateful for what they have. Ask God for His wisdom to help you guide them in godliness and contentment—beginning with your own example.

9. I'm praying for you.

When I was a young girl, I'd awaken each morning to the smell of coffee. As I dragged my sleepy self out of bed, I'd walk past the living room where I'd see my father on his knees praying for our family. (To this day the smell of coffee brings a warm reminder of those mornings.) I cannot tell you the security I felt knowing my daddy was daily interceding before God on our behalf. I learned from his example the power of prayer. So naturally when I had children, praying for them became a regular practice.

These days my children are grown, married, and have kids of their own. My father continues to pray for my kids, their spouses, and their children. My eldest daughter recently said, "Mom, Papa's prayers are precious to me. I love knowing that he and Oma are daily praying for me and my family." One of the most powerful legacies you can leave your grandkids is training them by example the importance of prayer.

10. Tell others about the hope of Jesus.

Do your grandkids hear you complaining about how the world's going to hell in a handbasket? Or do they sense your burden for the lost who are blinded by the enemy? It's easy to point out what's wrong in the world today—and we should help our grandkids learn to discern right from wrong. But couple those comments with your deep sorrow over the lost. And how their only hope for salvation is if we tell them God loves them so much He sent His Son to save them from their sin.

In this way you'll train them not to grow overwhelmed with anxiety, but rather to ask God to use them as a light shining like a star in a crooked and perverse generation (Daniel 12:3, Philippians 2:15). For in this, your grandchildren will find purpose in life and hope for the future. And I promise you won't regret it!

*Get more insights for moms from Rhonda's book: *Moms Raising Sons to Be Men*

Rhonda Stoppe is the NO REGRETS WOMAN with more than 30 years' experience of helping women build a no regrets lives. Rhonda is the author of six books and appears on numerous radio programs including FamilyTalk, Focus on the Family, Family Life Today and hosts The No Regrets Hour. Rhonda ministers alongside her husband Steve, who pastors First Baptist Church of Patterson, California. They live out their own Real Life Romance writing books and speaking at their No Regrets Marriage Conferences, but their favorite ministry is their family. To learn more about Rhonda's speaking topics, watch her teaching, and to book Rhonda for your next event visit NoRegretsWoman.com.