

Prayer: Loving God, we thank you for our grandparents and our elders who have played such an important role in our lives. We are forever grateful for the wisdom and stability they provided when we felt our world was falling apart. What a great gift to us that they loved us just because we were their grandchild. May we continuously feel their hugs and feel the warmth of their smiles so that we can better comprehend your constant and unchanging love for us. Amen. (Adapted)

Every Grandparent can testify that if someone would have just told them that grandchildren were so much fun, the choice would have been made to have them first! Since we can't do that, let's use our influence to impact the next generation.

On Aug. 3, 1978, President Jimmy Carter proclaimed the First Sunday of September, after Labor Day, to be the United States National Grandparents' Day. President Carter said, "This Day was to honor grandparents, to give grandparents an opportunity to show love for their children's children, and to help children become aware of strength, information, and guidance older people can offer." National Grandparents Day honors the love only grandparents and the elderly can provide.

Grandparents and their grandchildren share a special bond. These hugging, caring and patient people in the lives of children offer more than a generous dose of love. Grandparents provide an abundance of wisdom. They also offer guidance and stability.

When grandchildren need a story, grandparents tell the best. A grandparent's wealth of family history and wisdom offers lessons of their own. Through humorous stories and some serious ones, grandparents gently point grandchildren in the right direction.

Grandmas was in the bathroom, putting on her makeup, under the watchful eyes of her young granddaughter as she'd done many times before. After she applied her lipstick and started to leave, the little one said, 'But Gramma, you forgot to kiss the toilet paper good-bye!'

A young grandson called the other day to wish his Grandpa Happy Birthday. He asked how old he was, and was told, '62.' He was quiet for a moment, and then he asked, 'Did you start at 1?'

Grandparents and children have a special connection that is proven to both make grandparents live longer, and also make children more emotionally strong. Grandparents Day is an opportunity to treasure that connection and spend some quality family time together. Today, we're taking a few moments to stop and reflect on the value of grandparents—past or present. Scriptures offer beautiful words of affirmation about the aged—words that show just how important grandparents truly are.

"Grandparents are God's gift to children and to the world. They mentor, model, and minister to people of all ages and in all stages of life." — Richard Bimler

We live in a culture that promotes youthfulness and denies the importance of the elderly. The Bible calls us to instead honor the aged. Leviticus 19:32 – ***"You shall rise before the gray headed and honor the presence of an old man, and fear your God: I am the Lord."***

Here reading, taken from papers written by a class of 8-year-olds. It is entitled, "What is a Grandparent?"

- Grandparents are a lady and a man who have no little children of their own. They like other peoples'.
- A grandfather is a man grandmother.
- Grandparents don't have to do anything except be there when we come to see them.
- They are so old they shouldn't play hard or run. It is good if they drive us to the store and have lots of quarters for us.
- When they take us for walks, they slow down past things like pretty leaves and caterpillars.

- They show us and talk to us about the color of the flowers and also why we shouldn't step on the "cracks."
- They don't say, "Hurry up."
- Usually grandmothers are fat, but not too fat to tie your shoes.
- They wear glasses and funny underwear.
- They can take their teeth and gums out.
- Grandparents don't have to be smart. They just have to answer questions like "Why isn't God married?" and "How come dogs chase cats?"
- When they read to us, they don't skip. They don't mind if we ask for the same story over again.
- Everybody should try to have grandparents, especially if you don't have a television, because they are the only grown-ups who like to spend time with us.

WOW! What an important ministry grandparents have! Psalm 78:1-8 outlines this responsibility, and I hope you will take the time to read it. Basically, it tells us that we are to pass on God's Word to the generations to come, "***That they might set their hope in God...***" (Psalm 78:7a).

What a picture of God's design for the good of families. Think about it. There are three generations here. You've got grandparents, parents, and children. We all fit into this spectrum in some sense. We all are children with parents. We all are grandchildren. Some of us are parents of children. Some are grandparents with grandchildren. May we bring glory to God in the way that we care for our families.

God has designed our lives to honor our parents and our grandparents. God has designed our lives as parents and grandparents to be glorified in the way we love our children; in the way we love our grandchildren.

So, as we see these three generations, I just want to encourage you to think about life and think about how you can honor your parents, even just to thank God for them, to pray for them, and grandparents, as well. How can you honor them? How can you pray for them?

None of my grandparents are living. My Mom and Dad have likewise gone to be with the Lord. Yet, when comes to these amazing persons, it is an absolute fact that I am who because they were in my life. I thank God so much for Mother and Daddy, their parents, and their grandparents and by God's grace, for the legacy of faith they've passed on to me. I could go on and on and on far, far beyond the scope of this sermon just talking about God's grace toward me. I want to honor them. I'm so thankful for them.

And then I look the other way and think about our Kids. I think about how precious they are, what a gift they are, how much I pray for them. I want to glorify God by loving them and caring for but more importantly, I pray them and especially for Amme. I pray that she would know God, she would love God, she would know God's love for her. So, just think about your life and where you are right now in the spectrum, whether you are single, married, a parent, a grandparent. We just pray.

God, help us to honor you and glorify you in our families. I know that listening to this right now are men and women, kids with all kinds of different situations, some great family situations, some really hard family situations. All of us, I know at some point in the family tree with evidence of just brokenness and sin and things not the way you've designed them to be, so God, we pray for your grace in our families. We pray for grace to honor one another in different generations. We pray for grace to glorify you in our relationships with parents and grandparents, elderly, children and grandchildren. God, we pray that you would be glorified in the way we love our families, and the picture of your grace that the world sees in our love for our families.

Fifth Ave. UMC, we can ignite and deploy grandparents to raise up young generations to love and follow Jesus. We have an army of seasoned Christians sitting in the pews or watching us on line. What if we could deploy them to reach and lead millions of people to Jesus? That would be a miracle. What would motivate them? Ahhh... what if your mature

believers were motivated to spiritually influence the people, they love most... their grandchildren. Now that's a beautiful idea.

What about having a grandparent ministry? We need to mobilize the millions of Christian grandparents. In the United States, there are 30 million Christian grandparents who have influence over 120 million children. Worldwide, millions more.

Many grandparents are Christian grandparents, and find importance in their role through helping the parents, loving the grandkids, and even spoiling them a little. Then they learned there is a greater importance to the role of grandparenting than they imagined - empowering a new generation of grandparents to be spiritually intentional in the lives of the children and teens around them. And that could become the most powerful movement of God in this generation.

Giving us an Isaiah 6:8 moment: "Here we are, Lord. Send us!"

The Bible tells us to teach our children and our children's children. Deuteronomy 4:9: "So watch what you do! Be careful with your very life! Don't forget the things you saw with your own eyes, and don't let them fade from your memory. Remember them your whole life; teach them to your children and your grandchildren." There it is. Our clear Biblical mandate to teach our children and our grandchildren to live in obedience to God. The Bible shows us the parental role of faith builder extends through our children to our grandchildren, to the fourth generation.

God, we pray. We pray Proverbs 17:6 Grandchildren are the crowning glory and ultimate delight of old age, and parents are the pride of their children. God, I pray that our lives would honor you and honor our grandparents, elderly and parents. God, I pray that you would help us to love all children that you have entrusted to our care. Let all we do honors you and them. At this moment in our worship experience, I pray over every single person who's listening right now. Give us grace. Give us wisdom, and help us to see even things we need to do right now in our families, things that might need to change in our relationship to our families. As a result of praying Proverbs 17:6, God, we pray that you'd help us to honor our family members and to honor you in the way we love them. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.