



LEGACY

PARENTING WITH ETERNITY IN MIND

———— BREAKOUT SESSION ————

GRANDPARENTING SECOND-CHAIR LEADERSHIP

LED BY DR. BILL MILLER

GRAND PARENTING



Second Chair Leadership

Led by Dr. William R. Miller

LEGACY : PARENTING WITH ETERNITY IN MIND

Grand-Parenting at any age is not clearly defined.

An inadequate history of grand-parenting:

Those raised by a grandparent: It is not uncommon to know or have known someone who was raised by a grandparent. That is not a new phenomenon.

Those who have raised grandchildren: As such, many grandparents have raised grandchildren, either solely or partially.

Those raising grandchildren: For instance, a 70 year old grandparent who is, by herself, raising three grandchildren under the ages of 10, one of which is a two year old. Her role as a grandparent is dramatically different than “the best thing about being a grandparent is you don’t have to take them home with you.” She is parenting her grandchildren.

The absent or long-distant grandparent. This role as a grandparent is significantly different in a myriad of ways. Limited by distance, and most often relegated to the use of social media. The latter proving to be a modern day blessing.

The welcomed and active grandparent. Have the privilege of ongoing participation in their grandchildren's lives. Active in virtually every way.

The unwelcomed or shunned grandparent. Sometimes, and sadly so, warranted. Sometimes, not warranted. An example is a couple who exclusively raised their grandson the first eight years, from infancy. When the father finally got his life together, he retrieved his son and refuses to let the grandparents talk or see "their" son. It has been like a death to them.

The "make up for the past" grandparent. This grandparent to be welcomed and resented at the same time. Parents are often left thinking, "Where was this version of mom or dad when I was a kid?"

Many more types exist: jealous grandparent, angry grandparent, competitive grandparent, the needy grandparent, etc.

Some of the above are beyond the spectrum of this discussion. The idea though is in the realm of spiritual influence. What are some principles of influence that grandparents, regardless of their grand-parenting stead, can employ to impact grandchildren in Christ Jesus?

The Principle of Leadership:

Leadership is ***influence***. (In this case grand-parenting)

Simply put, Christian Grandparents want to influence their grandchildren to and in Christ Jesus.

1. Influence is ***relational***.

Grandchildren need to witness a...

- Genuine relationship with Christ.
- Genuine relationship with others. Spouse, family, church family, etc.
- Genuine relationship with them.

This is hugely important. Kids are not relationally stupid. They may not know how to relate, but they figure out fake pretty quickly. They need to see in you a walking, living definition of genuine faith in every aspect of your relationships. You cannot underestimate the influence of a genuine faith lived out genuinely.

2. Influence is ***earned***.

To gain the privilege of influence one must earn the right to influence.

- Earning influence is a mindset.

- Earning influence must be deliberate in actions.
- Earning influence is respectful.

Illustration: Southern tradition of “Mr. and Mrs. or Ms.” and adults who scold (sometimes harshly) children who fail to address them accordingly. It is in childhood that the child learns how to be, or how not to be, a parent or grandparent. Set your mind, actions, and respect for the best possible results.

4. Influence is given.

Teaching moments. This is also part of “mindset.” The power of stories versus lectures. Stories are relational, lectures are one-sided. Life is full of teaching moments that a life-time can be related through personal stories, dreams, experiences, victories, failures, etc.

5. Influence is transformative.

Never underestimate the power of influence. Children listen, children hear, children process, and children remember.

Illustration: David N., reminder... “Before marriage hands off, after marriage...”

Types of *Influence*:

1. Negative influence

Probably each of us can remember something said or not said, something done or not done, something seen or not seen, and something that influenced us negatively. Sadly there are those who receive a negative overload.

2. Indifferent or negligent influence

On more than one occasion I have had church members of a former pastor say, “We knew he didn’t love us.” The culprit? Indifference and/or negligence. Kids know if you really care. “I love you” can be hollow words if not backed up with action.

3. Positive influence

Your goal? To influence **to** Christ Jesus, to influence **in** Christ Jesus, to influence a genuine life centered in Christ Jesus.

Four Keys to *Influence* (Proverbs 24:3-4):

Home analogy.

1. Get wisdom:

James 1:5; wisdom is *knowing* the right thing to do. Wisdom is foundational to the home.

2. Get understanding:

Understanding is *doing* the right thing. Understanding puts the home in order. The opposite of chaos.

3. Get knowledge:

Knowledge is *knowing* (wisdom) and *doing* (understanding) the right things over-and-over again. In other words, wisdom and understanding are not one-and-done, but a reservoir for life from which to draw.

4. Get blessing:

Gaining, applying, and repeating God's wisdom produces results. Verse 4 describes those blessings as "precious and pleasant riches."

Looking to the analogy of the home, the end result of wisdom applied repeatedly gives spiritual, relational, and familial blessings. A worthwhile investment.

One Size Does Not Fit All: Learning to love effectively

Gary Chapman's book "The Five Love Languages" is a worthy investment for parents and grandparents alike. Everyone has love languages, yes, even children. Learn to speak their love language.

1. Physical Touch:

Ask yourself, "is my grandchild a hugger?" Casually observe them. Are they prone to touching? Do they reach for your hand walking through the store? If so, they are speaking their love language. Consciously reciprocate.

2. Words of Affirmation:

Listen to your grandchild's words. These children are more prone to make loving or pleasing observations to or about you. "I'm glad you're my grandma" or "grandpa." "You're so funny!" "I love you!" Children who do this are children who like it when others do the same to them. They are speaking their love language. Consciously, but genuinely, reciprocate.

Illustration: Toilet paper roll

3. Giving and Receiving Gifts:

Do not misunderstand this love language. This is not spoiling by excessive gift giving (or buying love) or being spoiled and demanding gifts. These children may be the ones who come in the house with a fist full of daffodils, trying ever so gently to deliver them intact.

It is not the size or cost of the item, it is the thought that counts. My experience is that of the five love languages, giving and receiving gifts is the least common. But, these people exist. They are speaking their love language. Consciously reciprocate.

4. Quality Time:

Pay attention. This is the child that is getting under your feet in the kitchen or in the shed. You may discover them shadowing your every move. They may snuggle up against you (physical touch) on the couch just to be near you (quality time). This child may engage you in endless conversation about anything and everything.

5. Acts of Service:

This child wants to do, or is naturally doing things for you. They will ask to help. That may seem surprising to you, but if you pay attention early and include them, they will flourish. If you are not paying

attention you will unconsciously ignore, minimize, or discount their pleas to do for you. In actuality they are speaking their love language. Consciously reciprocate.

“...influence as a Grandparent has a lot to do with your history as a parent to parents. If they (the parents – your children) saw consistency and genuineness of faith in you, they are likely to be consistent in their own parenting. On the other hand, influence with the young parents may be compromised if they have seen the opposite and do not want to parent as you did.”

- *Mark McArthur*

“Try to learn and understand what goals the parents have for their children.”

-MM

Keys to Grand-Parenting:

1. **Love big**
2. **Reinforce good behavior**
3. **Be sensitive** to the attitude of the parent
4. **Be up front with parents**
 - a. If possible parenting with the couple before they become parents
 - b. Understand how they discipline - if you disagree, discuss that with the parents away from the child
5. **Demonstrate Christ-likeness** in your home and personal life
6. **Sometimes the best thing** is to refrain from saying anything. You can ruin any hopes of having influence by expressing your thoughts on an issue that does not require your input.

Spiritual Basics:

- 1. Live Right:** Model Christlikeness before them.
- 2. Live Honest:** Sanctification is a process. Philippians 2:12; “work out your salvation in fear and trembling.” Talk honestly, when appropriate, about your life process of learning what it means to be in Christ. Teach them what it means to die to self and to live unto Christ Jesus
- 3. Pray Right:** Model prayer, teach them to pray, pray with them, pray specifics with them, and engage with them in prayer for others.
- 4. Read Right:** Model and teach them to spend time in God’s word. Let them see you alone in God’s word.
- 5. Live Redemptive:** God is a God of second chances. Be redemptive in spirit and actions. Let them see the redemption of God in you.
- 6. Work Hard** at getting good at sitting in your chair as grandparent, whatever that role may look like. It is there that your influence will lead well.

