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Golden Age Parents

odly grandchildren are the crowning glory of godly golden years parents (Proverbs 17:6a). They leave their inheritance to them because well-brought up grandchildren who are God-fearing and God-loving are a cause for joy and dignity of golden years parents (Deuteronomy 6:6-9; Proverbs 13:22). Of course, this inheritance does not apply only to financial inheritance. "And if there is no earthly substance to leave; yet a church in the home; a family altar; the record of holy example and instruction; and above all, a store of believing prayer laid up for accomplishment, when we shall be silent in the gravewill be an inheritance to our children of inestimable value" (Charles Bridges). To Christian golden years parents, a rich spiritual heritage is preferable to wealth for their grand-children. The Bible exalts the part played by grandparents. Most grandparents have the wisdom of long experience coupled with the love of an understanding heart.

The Role of Grandparents in Today's Society

As grandparents, they can offer their time which parents lack, especially if they are both working. There is no better substitute than grandparents. No matter how good their domestic helpers may be, they will never be able to offer the love of parents and grandparents.

"Grandparents need grandchildren to keep the changing world alive for them. And grandchildren need grandparents to help them know who they are and to give them a sense of human experience in a world they cannot know." (Margaret Mead).

Grandparents can make themselves not only available but also accessible to their own home. The Government's policy is to encourage parents to live in close proximity with their golden years parents to make easier accessibility to one another. Even if grandparents are not living in close proximity, there are many ways where they can communicate with one another through visits, phone calls, etc. Because of their wealth of experience and wisdom, they can impart many lessons of life both practical and spiritual through their **PRESENCE** with them.

Grandparents usually have the means to provide some form of support for their grandchildren materially and financially because of their life-long savings; moreover, their wants are also few and getting fewer as the years go by. Grand-parents may, if necessary, make such a **PROVISION**.

How To Be Godly Golden Years Parents

We praise and thank God for giving us four lovely and loving grandchildren whose ages range between 17 years and five years.

In this article, we would like to share with you our relationships with our grand-children. Our oldest granddaughter, Sharon, aged 17, is studying in Vancouver, Canada, and of late our other three grandchildren are studying at an American International School in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil because my son-in-law, Ban Tat, has been posted there by his company.

It is always good to have grandchildren around because they somehow draw families together. We value our grandchildren's presence with us just as much as they value our presence with them. Although they are not living with us, yet whatever available time we have, and whatever free time they have, and whenever their parents need us, we'll always make ourselves available and make time for them. Our grandchildren always look forward to our being with them. Each of them is unique as God has so made them. One loves to be cuddled; another loves to be praised; and then another loves to receive and give gifts; and yet another loves to serve table, etc. When they were young, they loved to hear me tell stories, especially stories from the Bible. I bought for them many Christian books, videos, CDs and DVDs not only from Singapore but also from various parts of the world during my spiritual shuttle ministry.

Whenever we are in Singapore, when we are not travelling, my granddaughter, Lisa, who is aged 10, would ask me to tell her something about my life

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and my wife's: our childhood, our school days – primary, secondary and tertiary; life during the Japanese occupation from 1942-1945; my working life and marriage and thereafter. This presents me with the opportunity of reminiscing with her and her other siblings about our past life.

My wife and I believe that if we are going to enjoy our grandchildren, it is while they are young. We would always remember them in our prayers wherever we may be, and we also encourage them to pray for our ministry not only locally but also overseas. Whenever we go abroad on missions for Christ, they never fail to make regular long distance phone calls which are very cheap nowadays; and of late we use SKYPE which is free! And this is how we maintain our rapport, our close bond with them.

Why Are Grandparents Lenient to Grandchildren?

Grandparents, whether on the paternal or maternal, are naturally inclined to be lenient to grandchildren because they know that the time spent with them on earth is limited. And so they just can't help doting on them! Moreover, many grandchildren show that they do love and care for grandparents. This in turn move grandparents to reciprocate with loving care. I think parents should not feel insecure or feel that grandparents are trying to win over their children's love from them. Such is not generally the motive of grandparents because grand-children's parents are also their children in the first place and they love them just as much. Grandparents are interested in the happiness and welfare of their children as well as grandchildren.

Golden age parents can avoid certain pitfalls so that their involvement will not be construed by parents as interfering with the way the children are being brought up. They must not be seen to be undermining parental authority, especially when the parents are trying to administer Biblical discipline. A right balance must be struck in dealing with grandchildren and their parents: being involved and yet without being seen as interfering in the disciplining of their children and in the management of the home. Here grandparents need to exercise **PRUDENCE**, asking God for wisdom as to when to speak up, and when to keep silence.

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Conclusion

And finally, and most importantly, golden years Christian parents can uphold their grandchildren in **PRAYER** for their spiritual growth, that they may grow up to be God-fearing and God-loving grandchildren. And this is a further help to the parents as they train their children up in the way God wants them to go so that when they are old they will not depart from their faith in God. (Proverbs 22:6). Often grandparents have more patience and more time for praying and reading the Bible than anyone else. They are often prayer-warriors in their closet because they know that "ceasing to pray is a sin." Lord Tennyson described prayer as follows:

"For what are men better than sheep or goats That nourish a blind life within the brain. If knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer Both for themselves and those who call them friend...?"

I would also like to share with you some parts of the poem: "Growing Older Gracefully" (Anonymous)

Keep me from the fatal habit of thinking that I must say something on every subject and on every occasion. Release me from craving to straighten out everybody's affairs.... I dare not ask for improved memory, but for a growing humility when my memory seems to clash with the memories of others. Teach me the glorious lesson that occasionally I may be mistaken. Keep me reasonably sweet; a sour old person is one of the crowning works of the devil. Give me the ability to see good things in unexpected places, and talents in unexpected people. And, give me O Lord, the grace to tell them so.

Elder Khoo Peng Kiat

First Catechism

- 1. Q. Who made you?
 - A. God
- 2. Q. What else did God make?
 - A. God made all things.