**Grandparents on a mission**

**Preface**

*“Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them.” (*[Ecclesiastes 12:1](http://www.icr.org/bible/Ecclesiastes/12/1)*)*

Here is the wisest counsel a young person can receive. Though it was first written many years ago, it is more relevant than ever today when young people are being bombarded daily with the propaganda and practices of evolutionary humanism. They urgently need to realize that despite these pressures, they are not products of chance, with pleasure their only aim in life. They are special creations of God, with a high and holy purpose destined for them by their Creator.

If they will only recognize this fact, acknowledging God, in Christ, as Creator and Savior while they are young, trusting and obeying His Word as they mature, they can anticipate a life of fulfillment. “I have been young, and now am old,” David said, “yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread” ([Psalm 37:25](http://www.icr.org/bible/Psalm/37/25)).

If they refuse their Creator in the days of their youth, however, then it will become increasingly difficult to remember their Creator as the years go by. Few are converted in later life. They can only anticipate the bitterness and regrets of old age and death, as described so vividly in the verses following our text. Under the figure of a decaying house symbolizing their aging bodies, the forlorn picture is drawn of fading eyesight, trembling hands, buckling knees, sleepless nights, easy irritability, increasing senility, and other aspects of approaching death—all with no pleasure in them because they long ago had forgotten their Creator. Remember now thy Creator, young man, young woman!” (ICR)

This week has been a week like so many others of recent history. We have experienced protest, political name-calling, governmental paralysis, irrational killing and so much more. Maybe nothing is more unsettling than the report by our own government that we are one of the top sexual trafficking nations in the world.

Even more disconcerting is this revealing statement: “We have a major issue here in the United States” Geoff Rogers, co-founder of the United States Institute Against Human Trafficking (USIAHT), said in an interview with Fox News. “The United States is the No. 1 consumer of sex worldwide. So we are driving the demand as a society.”

Rod Dreher has ominous words for our present generation of Christianity in the West, ““The West has lost the golden thread that binds us to God, Creation, and each other. Unless we find it again, there is no hope of halting our dissolution. Indeed, it is unlikely that the West will see this lifeline for a very long time. It is not looking for it and may no longer have the capability of seeing it. We have been loosed, but we do not know how to bind.”

Think of those words for one moment. We have lost the golden thread that binds us to something beyond ourselves. It seems inconceivable that out of so many mouths could come a confession to follow Jesus and then at the same time to live unbounded from the “One” who is indeed outside of us.

If Dreher were the only voice of warning, we might relax and simply declare him a reactionary. But he is not alone for there is a growing crescendo of men and women who stand in a gap between time and eternity and warn us of danger.

In commenting on the nature of the Gospel message abounding today in too many churches DA Carson warns, “If the love of God is exclusively portrayed as an inviting, yearning, sinner-seeking, rather lovesick passion, we may strengthen the hands of Arminians, semi-Pelagians, Pelagians, and those more interested in God’s inner emotional life than in his justice and glory, but the cost will be massive. There is some truth in this picture of God, as we shall see, some glorious truth. Made absolute, however, it not only treats complementary texts as if they were not there, but it steals God’s sovereignty from him and our security from us. It espouses a theology of grace rather different from Paul’s theology of grace, and at its worst ends up with a God so insipid he can neither intervene to save us nor deploy his chastening rod against us. His love is too “unconditional” for that. This is a world far removed from the pages of Scripture.

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With this swirling world of confusion in which we are living Dreher concludes, “The changes that have overtaken the West in modern times have revolutionized everything, even the church, which no longer forms souls but caters to selves. As conservative Anglican theologian Ephraim Radner has said, “There is no safe place in the world or in our churches within which to be a Christian. It is a new epoch.”

Children need safe places. Places to discover the love, the sovereignty and the justice of God, even as they are given opportunities to understand and embrace the Gospel of God in His Son Jesus Christ. They need opportunity to understand time from God’s point of view. They need opportunity to understand how and why His word should form the foundation to their lives, live bounded by it in His commandments and allow the Holy Spirit to lead them in making daily decisions that honor their creator and live within His provision and protection.

Of course it is in the family that these things can be first introduced and nurtured. But, do a father and mother need to stand alone in this?

I would like to say that the local church and other Christian friends join in helping. And, there are still some local churches that do understand that they exist to nurture faith even as they reach out to others with the offer of the Gospel. They understand that they are not Gospel entertainment centers. But sadly the numbers of both, local churches and Christians whom we can “trust” are diminishing.

So the role of father and mother in nurturing faith becomes even more vital. They need not be alone in this. Godly grandparents can have a vital and significant role as well. How important could grandparents be in the lives of their grandchildren?

**Chapter One**

Give ear, O my people, to my teaching; incline your ears to the words of my mouth! I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings from of old things that we have heard and known, that our fathers have told us. (Psalm 78:1-3)

In spite of the negative idea in vogue in many peoples’ minds about the past, the words from those who have gone on before us are valuable. They are to be sought out, nurtured and cherished. For as the saying goes, history does indeed repeat itself. Or as one very wise man said, “What has been is what will be, and what has been done is what will be done, and there is nothing new under the sun.” Ecclesiastes 1:9

Those of us who have a long term experience of walking with God, should be equally prepared to pass that relationship and learning on to our next generations. No matter how hostile the environment becomes, or hardened our own family might be in listening, “We will not hide them from their children, but tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the LORD, and his might, and the wonders that he has done.” (78:4)

Our experiences within the journey God have led each of us to take, and His wonders that we have experienced along the way, should not be hidden. Those times when we walked through a shadow of death, or wondered where the money would come from, or were deeply hurt by another persons treachery, are opportunities for us to pass on to our children God’s forgiveness, protection and provision.

Each of our individual journeys has been crafted by God and superintended by the Holy Spirit. If we are in Christ, this is equally true whether we have been in occasional doubt, or full obedience. And, our next generations need to hear these stories, realize God’s sovereign role in them, and be inspired to follow our model.

Steve Green sings a song in close affinity to the words of Hebrews 11. “We're pilgrims on the journey Of the narrow road

And those who've gone before us line the way

Cheering on the faithful, encouraging the weary

Their lives a stirring testament to God's sustaining grace

Surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses

Let us run the race not only for the prize

But as those who've gone before us

Let us leave to those behind us

The heritage of faithfulness passed on through godly lives

CHORUS:

Oh may all who come behind us find us faithful

May the fire of our devotion light their way

May the footprints that we leave

Lead them to believe

And the lives we live inspire them to obey

Oh may all who come behind us find us faithful”

There is eternal importance in one generation learning from the generations that have gone before them. “He established a testimony in Jacob and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers to teach to their children, that the next generation might know them, the children yet unborn, and arise and tell them to their children, so that they should set their hope in God and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments;” (5-7)

We who go before, who have walked imperfectly with God, realize later in life how much He has indeed orchestrated. We want to see our children and our children’s children set their hope in God and choose to obey Him.

Notice the two powerful words coming from the mouth of the psalmist: hope in God and keep His commandments. These two joyous expectations that ought to fill the heart and mind of every grandparent are rooted in the bridge statement between them, “not forget the works of God.”

Everything around them is conspiring to lead them to forget. The frenetic world they live in conspires to fill their minds with so much noise that the still small voice of God should be drowned out

The marketing world that has attached itself to everything that they touch, conspires to convince them that there is joy in possession. So, do all you must to posses as much as you can.

The educational world conspires to convince them that if there is any truth, it is found in knowledge. Too often todays’ knowledge leaves no room for God, and little room for the value of history. You are writing your own personal history, they are told. So write it as YOU want.

The political world is paralyzed at best, fueled by corrupt people at worst. They conspire to convince younger generations of the bliss of ignorance. They promise roses, but fail ever to mention the thorns.

And in the face of all of this new reality, the church appears impotent to do exactly what the Psalmist has advised. “We will not hide them from their children, but tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the LORD, and his might, and the wonders that he has done.” (78:4). For God wants that His children, “should set their hope in God and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments;”

We would like to believe that if we can just get our kids to “like” church, they would be safe. But today’s churches all too often, “are nothing more than a loosely bound assembly of individuals committed to finding their own “truth,” (and) are no longer the church in any meaningful sense” (Excerpt From The Benedict Option

Rod Dreher)

Where do we turn? We turn back to the Psalmist. The role of the church ought to be to mobilize Christ’s people into deepening walks with Him, and greater obedience. In these we have the genius of God’s daily supply for increasing righteousness. And where there is righteousness there is life, there is wholeness, their health, there is joy, and there is eternal assurance. But the role of parent and grandparent is remembering.

Parents bear the primary responsibility for the role of remembering in their children. Administered correctly, even when we are often imperfect, and into obedient hearts, there is the exciting expectation of hope, continued remembrance and obedience.

But, parents do not stand-alone. Christian grandparents have a significant role as well. One hopes that the two roles can be played in concert. For this synchronized effort can build a strong context of safety for the children where the still small voice of God can be nurtured, in spite of and in the face of the deadening noise around them.

I am convinced that children can learn younger the role of spiritual discipline in their lives. I am convinced that as they build these spiritual disciplines, they will grow “early onset” obedience to what God says to them through His word. They will make better decisions about the outcomes of their lives. As a result, they will put God, His calling and His assets at the top of their lives. They will make better decisions about education, vocation, marriage, and spending their assets. They will stand stronger against the overwhelming tides that conspire against them.

Down the corridor of biblical and Christian history we are amazed to see young people growing deep lives of walking with God and serving Him.

David was a teenager when God first called him as a shepherd boy. Timothy was a teenager when Paul chose him. Amy Carmichael was 25 when she applied to go to China.

God can do the work of calling on His own. But how often have grandparents been an inspiration to their younger generations? How often have they had the opportunity to help set an environment where their grandchildren can draw from their experience and find both encouragement and modeling for walking with God in obedience?

**They have a tremendous opportunity to model God’s ideal**. Our culture breeds confusion. Not only between male and female, but also equally in what it means to be a woman or a man. Radical feminist ideas have bled even into the church. Hostility has been planted as a result in the marital relationship. Who is a man? Who is a woman? And equally important, what are they together? Confuse, inflame, or distort the nature and role of either and the full meaning and blessing of together is all but lost. Loose this essence and the family can become a hostile place for children, rather than the place of safety. Perhaps the most important thing a mother and father, AND a grandfather and grandmother, give to their children is a healthy marriage, founded upon God’s wonderful provision.