



Grandma, I Need Your Prayers

Copyright © 2002 by Quin Sherrer and Ruthanne Garlock

Requests for information should be addressed to:

Zondervan, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49530

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Sherrer, Quin.

Grandma, I need your prayers : blessing your grandchildren through the power of prayer / Quin Sherrer and Ruthanne Garlock.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN-10: 0-310-24026-3

ISBN-13: 978-0-310-24026-6

1. Grandmothers—Prayer-books and devotions—English. 2. Grandchildren—Religious life. I. Garlock, Ruthanne. II. Title.

BV4847 .S48 2001

248.3'2'0853—dc21

2001046640

All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from the *Holy Bible: New International Version*®. NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked AMPLIFIED are taken from *The Amplified Bible*, Old Testament. Copyright © 1965, 1987, by the Zondervan Publishing House. Used by permission. All rights reserved. And from *The Amplified Bible*, New Testament. Copyright © 1954, 1958, 1987, by the Lockman Foundation. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked KJV are taken from the King James version of the Bible.

Scripture quotations marked MESSAGE are taken from THE MESSAGE. Copyright © by Eugene H. Peterson 1993, 1994, 1995. Used by permission of NavPress Publishing Group.

Scripture quotations marked NASB are taken from the NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE®. Copyright © The Lockman Foundation 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995. Used by permission.

Scripture quotations marked NKJV are taken from the New King James Version. Copyright © 1979, 1980, 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked NLT are taken from the *Holy Bible*, New Living Translation, copyright © 1996. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Wheaton, IL 60189. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked TLB are taken from *The Living Bible* © 1971. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Wheaton, IL 60189. All rights reserved.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or any other—except for brief quotations in printed reviews, without the prior permission of the publisher.

Published in association with the literary agency of Ann Spangler & Company, 1420 Pontiac Road SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49506.

Details and circumstances of certain events, and some names of persons and locations, have been changed to protect individuals' privacy.

Interior design by Nancy Wilson

Printed in the United States of America

Contents

Introduction 11

1. A Grandmother's Spiritual Influence 15
2. Praying for Spiritual Growth 33
3. Praying for Homes and Families 49
4. Praying for Friends and Schooling 65
5. Praying for Protection and Health 81
6. Praying for Hurting Grandchildren 97
7. Praying for Families Broken by
Death or Divorce 115
8. Praying for Adopted Grandchildren
and Stepgrandchildren 133
9. Praying for Prodigal Grandchildren 149
10. Praying for Choices and Turning Points 165
11. Taking the Role of Parent or Coparent 181
12. Leaving a Lasting Legacy 197

Epilogue 211

Appendix 214

Suggested Reading 219

Notes 221

Introduction

I got word of the birth of my first grandchild—Kara Nicole, born on the island of Kona, Hawaii—while I was speaking at a Christian retreat center in the mountains of Pennsylvania. When my prayer partner, Jane, went to get us early morning coffee, the hotel clerk told her that during the night a message had come that Kara had been born.

“You’re a grandmother! A grandmother! A grandmother!” Jane shouted excitedly at me.

A grandmother. It was hard for me to comprehend the new title tacked to my name. A new identity. My three children were older when they married, and two of them had been married for several years. I had wondered at times whether I’d *ever* be a grandmother. No need to worry! Now, six years later, I have six grandchildren, one born during the writing of this book, giving Kara and her sister, Evie, a baby brother.

Three of my grandchildren were born overseas, so at first I could communicate with them only by letting them hear my voice on the phone. They responded with silence or cooing. But now all three families are just a short drive from us, and the grandkids call me “Mama Quin.”

Our home quickly filled up with all the paraphernalia that goes with tending babies and toddlers—high chairs, baby beds, potty-chairs, swing set, T-ball stands, and a miniature basketball court. We also have children’s books on prayer and character development, phonics games, puzzles, videos, and music tapes. I became a regular baby-sitter, since two of the grandchildren lived across the street for a couple of years.

My goal is to be the best grandmother I can be, to establish a Christian heritage my grandchildren won’t forget. As I rock them, I sing and pray over them. When we stroll around the block, I tell them we’re praying for our neighbors as we sing “Alleluia.” We

enjoy having parades with rhythm band instruments in our den while the vibrant old hymns play on the video. In the summer, I splash in the plastic pool with them, and in the winter, I cheer as they coast down our back-yard snowbank. Since most have entered preschool, I attend their performances and get acquainted with all their teachers.

If you were to drop by my house today, you'd probably find me sitting on the floor with two or three grandchildren building railroad stations out of plastic blocks, or drinking imaginary tea from tiny china cups, or sitting in a sandbox making sand castles. I'd be wearing my favorite sweatshirt that says, "Grandmas Are Antique Little Girls." I always stop whatever I'm doing to give them attention. When they stay overnight, we have the best times sharing and praying. Right now they are the most important people in my life whom I can influence for God's purposes.

I have a picture of all six of my grandchildren gathered around me on a stairway decorated with holiday holly. I carry it with me on out-of-town trips so I can see them smiling down at me from the bedside table. The wooden frame, a gift from a daughter, is carved with these words:

Grandchildren bring sunshine into my heart
And laughter into my household.
Their visits may be long or short, but always memorable.
I tell them my stories and they tell me theirs right back.
It's my grandchildren that actually made me a grandparent,
So I'm eternally grateful.
They always bring such spirited joy into my life.

—Author unknown

I don't remember having a grandmother who prayed for me. My maternal grandmother died just after I, the first granddaughter, was born at her home. My paternal grandmother was a pastor's wife, but I never was aware whether she prayed for her fourteen grandchildren. I remember that as a twelve-year-old, I sat on a stool at the feet of my blind great-grandmother, whose brothers had fought in the Civil War. Once, after telling me stories of that tragic

war, she asked me to guide her hand to rest on the top of my head. Did she pray for me? I'd like to think so, but I will never know.

My mother, a wonderful long-distance grandmother to my three children, left me the only example I have to follow. She constantly kept in touch with them through phone calls, letters, or as many visits as she could manage, always letting each one know how special he or she was to her. Just as her prayers are affecting my children and grandchildren, I hope my prayers will affect the next generation.

Once, I saw a picture showing an elderly woman's lined hand with an open palm reaching out for a child's tiny hand, just inches away. The caption read, "If all the hands that reach could only touch." I envisioned a grandmother, reaching out to touch a grandchild, offering hope and love to her. A recent survey indicates that nearly 90 percent of grandparents do keep in touch with their grandchildren. We urge you not only to maintain contact with your grandchildren but also to pray for them.

If you are one of the more than sixty million Americans who have grandchildren, this book will motivate you to pray consistently and strategically for them, whether they live next door, across town, or halfway around the world. You will read stories which testify to the remarkable power of grandmothers' prayers. And in each chapter you will find Scriptures and prayers to help you pray regularly for each of your grandchildren.

May you be encouraged and challenged as you read of grandmas who share how they pray for the precious grandchildren God has given them. You will discover, as they have, that praying makes a difference in your grandchildren's lives.

—Quin Sherrer

chapter 1

A Grandmother's Spiritual Influence



I constantly remember you in my prayers. . . . I have been reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also.

—2 Timothy 1:3, 5

When grandmothers are missing from a society, that society loses its link to the wisdom of the past and the traditions that make the tribe able to reflect on itself. . . . Being a grandmother is a constant learning and teaching experience, because as grandmothers, women must learn to apply yesterday's wisdom to today's challenges.

—Kristen Johnson Ingram,
I'll Ask My Grandmother—She's Very Wise

Mom, you're going to be a grandmother!"

When you first hear these words, the prospect of seeing a new generation raised up ignites hope, love, and purpose in your life. A grand opportunity awaits you to immediately begin praying for the spiritual, physical, and emotional well-being of your grandchild.

Perhaps you're wondering whether your prayers can actually make a difference in your grandchild's life. I (Quin) had an encounter one day that reminded me how much of a difference a grandmother's prayers can make.

“She Was Always Praying for Me”

“I’ll bet you had a praying grandmother,” I said to the professional basketball player I’d been chatting with while we were waiting in the Atlanta airport for our flight to be called.

“I did, but how did you know?” he asked, looking surprised.

“While we’ve been talking, you mentioned her several times and spoke about how much you love and admire her,” I answered.

“Yes,” he said softly, dropping his head. “When my mom left, my grandmother took me in to live with her. Through all those years, she prayed for me and encouraged me in every sport I ever tried. She always told me I could become a professional athlete if I set a goal, practiced for hours, and depended on God to strengthen me.”

“And it looks like some of those prayers have been answered,” I replied.

“She was always praying for me,” he continued with a smile. “I could call her from anywhere I was playing a game, and she’d pray on the phone for me right then. She was a wonderful grandmother—old now but still praying.”

What a tribute to a quiet little grandmother who poured her life and prayers into an abandoned grandson, never dreaming he would one day become a well-known athlete. And what an encouragement to praying grandmothers that their efforts are not in vain!

When the apostle Paul wrote to his spiritual son, Timothy (in the verse quoted at the beginning of this chapter), he acknowledged—for all generations to follow—the powerful influence of a godly grandmother. In this book, we hope to expand your vision to see just how far-reaching your spiritual influence upon your grandchildren can be. Keeping a heart connection with them is the important thing, whether they live close to you or many miles distant. We’ll share creative ideas through stories of other grandmothers to

show you how. Also, we'll provide guidelines to help you establish a scriptural strategy for praying for your grandchildren.

Impacting the Next Generation

Most grandmothers probably have given their best years to rearing their children. They've sacrificed, worried, scolded, and encouraged—and through it all prayed that God would keep their children safe and help them become mature adults. As author Barbara Johnson says, "We're always hoping that something we instilled in them *might* show up, even when we've started to think it's too late."¹

Some, feeling their work is now over, may sigh with relief when their children leave home and later start families of their own. Others may be tempted to spend their best energy pursuing a relaxing lifestyle filled with travel and hobbies. A few may feel a bit depressed, wondering why they seem to have no purpose now that their children are out of the nest. Whatever our situation, God still has more kingdom work for us moms to do, especially when it comes to our grandchildren.

Even if you don't yet have any, it's never too early to begin praying for your grandchildren. Whether a child is in the womb or is only a dream, you can influence your future grandchildren for good through your prayers. They are our link to the future, and our faithfulness to pray for them can greatly impact this new generation.

With the pressure on families today, grandchildren need our hugs, reassurance, and wisdom more than ever. And most of all, they need our prayers and godly influence. Grandmothers usually are fond of giving gifts to their grandchildren, but the greatest and most lasting gift they can give is one of faithful prayer. Many children have no one except a grandma to pray for them.

“What Grandma Meant to Me”

When we asked people to share what a grandmother's spiritual influence has meant in their lives, we got a variety of answers.

- “My grandmother gave me a sense of security and stability and taught me many practical things. Because my mom was a teenager when I was born, she was too young and immature to add that dimension to my life.”
- “Granny was my hero; she always remembered my birthday and other special moments in my life. But most of all, she prayed for me.”
- “My grandmother read my favorite stories to me over and over; then I’d let her read me her favorite ones from her well-worn Bible.”
- “Grandma Jessie had twelve children and helped manage a farm for much of her life, yet she always seemed calm and serene. I never saw her get upset or raise her voice. She left me with an enduring sense that whatever comes, faith in God remains imperturbable. Nothing ever wins against it.”
- “My great-grandmother’s prayers have followed me from the day I was born. Like a heavenly searchlight, her prayers have exposed darkness in my life.”
- “I remember Friday nights at Mammaw’s home and her tucking me into a feather bed as she prayed over me. Then came Saturday morning in her busy kitchen, when she made and sold tuna sandwiches and homemade pies to have extra money for an offering to the church. She was my first prayer partner, and remembering the intimacy she had with the Lord has given me the security to know he is there for me when I call.”
- “Grandma Bea treats me like the age I am and doesn’t talk down to me.”
- “My grandmother didn’t live nearby, but she wrote me many letters. Every one of them ended with, ‘Stay close to the Lord; he’s coming soon.’ I was—and still am—enamored with heaven because of her letters.”
- “Grandma MuMu could not communicate well in English, but I loved hearing her sing her beloved Finnish hymns and watching her read her large Bible at the dining table. I saw her life as a book; I read from her and learned the value of her beautiful character, compassion, and godliness.”

- “I never knew my grandmothers, but God has placed women in my life who have shown me the power of a praying grandmother and who have been examples to me.”
- “I can still ‘see’ every nook and cranny of Grandma John’s house. I knew I could always go there—a safe place where I was totally accepted. She played the piano and sang hymns when I visited her, giving me a love for hymns that I still have today and have tried to pass on to my own children and grandchildren. Wholeness and a love for life are what she taught me; she had an awe and reverence for God and all his creation that she passed on to me.”

I (Ruthanne) usually saw my Grandma McBee only at reunions of my mom’s family, except for one summer when I stayed with her and Grandpa for two weeks. My strongest memory of her is how she loved to read her Bible and prepare lessons for the Sunday school class of boys she taught. When I think of her, I picture a stooped little woman in a faded apron and cotton dress, sitting in a rocking chair reading by dim lamplight. In later years, I was amazed to learn that famous baseball player Mickey Mantle had often visited her Sunday school class with a boyhood friend.

My husband, John, had a very different experience with his maternal grandmother, who was the daughter of Irish immigrants. He shares his story.

“Her Anchor Was Prayer”

“My first clear memories of Grandmom Trotter, as we called my mother’s mom, are of her visit with us in Colorado Springs, where my father was a pastor. I was five years old. ‘How old are you, Grandmom?’ I asked her one day. After extracting a promise that I wouldn’t tell anyone, she told me she was sixty-six, an age which seemed to me ancient at the time. When I was eleven years old, I got to know my grandmother better than most people ever have the chance to experience.

“My younger sister, Ruth, and I had been sent back to the United States from West Africa for health reasons. We lived with Grandmom in a small, shabby frame house in New Jersey while my parents were finishing the last year of their four-year term as missionaries in the northern territories of Ghana.

“During that year I became really aware of Grandmom’s deep faith, her love of the Bible, and her discipline of prayer. She faithfully maintained daily ‘family devotions’ for the three of us and often spoke earnestly of spiritual things. I learned from her that prayer is central, not auxiliary, for a Christian. Also, my first experience of telling others about Jesus came that year as I led several neighbor children to accept him as Lord.

“Grandmom was used to austerity and knew how to make do with very little. We grew potatoes, tomatoes, carrots, and cabbage next to our little house, which was heated by a coal furnace in the basement. A block of ice in an icebox kept our milk cool. Cooking was done on a coal stove. Grandmom was sober, sometimes

Essential Prayer Keys

Years ago while attending a writer’s conference, I (Quin) sat across the dinner table from Catherine Marshall, whom I had long admired. Knowing her reputation as an author and also as a praying mother, I asked her, “Can you give me some advice on how to pray more effectively for my three children?”

“Be as specific in your prayers as you can, and plant waiting prayers for your children’s future,” she advised. Then she asked, “When you pray, do you really expect anything to happen?”

I pondered that question. Do I really expect anything to happen when I pray? I can tell you now that without a doubt, I do!

I not only listened to her advice, but I went home to dig through the Bible to read everything I could find on prayer as I endeavored to pray for my children—and see results. Now many years later, I use these same biblical principles in praying for my

grandchildren. Though I share here some things I do in my private prayer times, I'm sure you can add to this list.

Be specific. I pray practical but specific prayers for my grandchildren. I base this on a parable Jesus told about a man who wakes up his friend at midnight to ask for exactly three loaves of bread for his unexpected company (see Luke 11:5).

Be persistent. The man in the parable knocks continuously until his friend gets out of bed to answer his request. This isn't saying that prayers are needed to overcome God's reluctance to answer. Rather, this parable encourages us to be bold and persistent when we pray. Jesus said to ask, seek, knock—a continuous asking, seeking, knocking (see Luke 11:8–10). I find myself in persistent prayer until I see a resolution to my grandchild's situation.

Be in agreement. I usually ask a prayer partner (my husband, a close friend, or a prayer support team) to pray in agreement with me concerning a pressing need. Jesus gives us the basis for prayers of agreement (see Matt. 18:19–20). For seventeen years I prayed with another mother on the phone for five minutes a day, five days a week. We were just two mothers concerned about our children's welfare, both spiritual and physical. Because that was such a positive experience, when I became a grandmother I began praying with grandmother friends. We pray for each other's grandchildren regularly, again by phone. Sometimes I contact them by e-mail when there is a crisis such as a grandchild in the hospital.

Be Bible based. As we get better acquainted with the Bible, we grow to know God better and to understand how to pray in accordance with his will. We learn what he says about salvation, health, family values, the abundant life on earth, and heaven's promises. I often find a Bible verse I can turn into a prayer for the need of a grandchild. The Psalms are a good place to start with Scripture prayers.

Be open to the Holy Spirit. After ascending to heaven, Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to help us pray what is on God's heart. Whatever our grandchildren's circumstances or crises, we invite the Holy Spirit to show us how to pray. Sometimes we may find ourselves praying things we could never have "thought up" on our own (see Rom. 8:26–27).

Be submitted to God's plan. We should never presume God is going to answer according to our preconceived ideas or in our desired timeframe. Presumption means assuming God will answer me in the way I envision and in my timetable. Faith, on the other hand, is a supernatural ability to trust God when he has spoken to my heart, trusting him to fulfill his will in his time and in his way. Often this "inner trust" or faith level comes after time spent in prayer, listening and waiting on him.

Be thankful. Present prayer requests to God with thanksgiving, thanking him in advance for answering your prayer his way (see Phil. 4:6).

Be willing to fast. Those serious enough to abstain from food have found fasting and prayer often yield one or more of these results: direction and answers from God, a deeper understanding of Scripture, a closer walk with God, a humbling of oneself, a healing, or even a deliverance. If you have a physical problem or are on medications, be careful about the type of fast you undertake. There are other things besides food we can give up to concentrate on a prayer project.

Trust him always. When it seems that our grandchildren are in a hopeless situation, we can admit that "we have no power . . . [nor do we] know what to do, but our eyes are upon you" (2 Chron. 20:12). We don't know how or when our answer to prayer is coming, but we praise him for his loving-kindness and mercy. It's always too soon to quit praying.*

*Adapted from Quin Sherrer, *Miracles Happen When You Pray* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997), 16–19.

grim, but never mean. I don't remember any laugh more boisterous than a hearty chuckle. Our care was her mission, and she was diligent about it. I had several bouts with malaria that year, and she was my nurse.

"What with all the household work of cooking, cleaning, gardening, washing and patching clothes, and darning socks, she had little time to spare. Firing the furnace and picking off the potato bugs in the garden was my job when I was well enough. But what time she had to herself she always spent reading the Bible and praying. How diligent she was to intercede for Ruthie and me, and for my parents, who were so far away! And when she prayed, you somehow knew God was listening.

"When Grandmom Trotter passed away in her nineties, I was a missionary in Africa and had not seen her for years. As an adult I'd never had the opportunity to spend time with her. But I look back and realize what a rock of stability she was for me in that boyhood time of ill health, poverty, and insecurity. She was an anchor of my life, and her anchor was prayer."

Special Weekends

Grandmother Mary, who lives in Alaska, spends one special weekend each year alone with her granddaughter, Nicole. She began this tradition when Nicole turned five. Her own grandmother was full-blooded Haida Indian and had spent time teaching her when she was small. Mary feels spending a special weekend with Nicole is a way she can share that legacy with her only granddaughter.

After Mary and Nicole check into a hotel, they go shopping, swimming, and finally dress up for dinner in a restaurant. Then they return to their hotel for the best time of all, talking for hours before going to sleep. They pray for many diverse things, ranging from Nicole's school projects to her future husband.

The weekend is always a surprise to Nicole; Mary schedules it with Nicole's mom, who knows her daughter's activity calendar. When Nicole was small, they would take along Indian dolls to play

with. Mary would use a gray-haired “grandma” doll to talk to the little girl doll about manners, character building, biblical principles, and decisions Nicole will one day face. But now the dolls have been put aside, and Mary and fifteen-year-old Nicole talk woman to woman.

“As I pray aloud for her, I ask God to reveal his plan for her life, just as my Christian grandmother did for me when I was young,” Mary said. “Once, when Nicole was nine, I took her with me to a Christian retreat where I was speaking, and there she had a deep spiritual experience with the Lord.”

Mary always looks forward to this time, as it gives her the opportunity to pour spiritual truths and blessings into Nicole’s young life. Also, the hands-on instruction helps nurture the talents and gifts God has placed in her granddaughter. When the storms of life occur, Mary knows Nicole will be aware that the Lord’s arms are around her and will sustain her, even as her grandmother’s arms have been around her, guiding her all these years.

The two do spend other times together, but they still set aside this one special weekend each year. Mary says she’s watched her granddaughter’s character unfold so beautifully as she has shared with her by phone or in person about God’s purposes for her life.

Bestowing Blessings

Dr. Mary Ruth Swope, an author and nutritionist, was influenced by the godly life of her grandmother. When Mary Ruth was only six months old, Grandmother Lutz came to live with the family. From the start, she prayed over her infant granddaughter. As Mary Ruth grew, Grandmother Lutz not only prayed aloud with her, but she also played games with her, read her stories, and helped her memorize poetry. The two enjoyed many happy hours together as Grandmother Lutz taught Mary Ruth to sew, knit, crochet, tat, and quilt. Later Mary Ruth realized her grandmother had become her ideal role model.

As Mary Ruth thought about the tremendous impact her grandmother had had on her life, she longed to impress her seven-year-old

grandson, Daniel, in a similar way. However, the many miles separating them made it impossible for her to be with him regularly.

Then she had an idea. Why couldn't she bless her grandson every time she spoke to him on the telephone? That would be a way to convey her personal and spiritual values to Daniel when she couldn't be with him.

That's exactly what she did. The first two times she spoke Scripture verses as blessings over him on the telephone, Daniel replied, "Thank you, Grandmother." But the next time she called, after they'd talked a while, he asked, "Aren't you going to bless me today?" Her heart jumped as she realized God was confirming to her how meaningful the blessings had been to Daniel, so she continued the tradition weekly.

Each time she prayed with Daniel on the phone, Mary Ruth would focus on a different area—praying blessings for his physical health, his spiritual and emotional needs, his educational interests, and his relationships with friends and family members. Doing this regularly made her feel much closer to her grandson.²

Today Daniel is an accomplished violinist who also composes music, and he is still grateful for his grandmother's prayers and blessings, which he receives regularly.

For sons and daughters in biblical times, receiving a blessing from the patriarch of the family was a momentous event. For instance, Jacob not only imparted a blessing to each of his twelve sons; he also spoke blessings to two of his grandsons (see Gen. 48:15–16, 20). And Jesus gathered children in his arms, put his hands on them, and blessed them (see Mark 10:13–16).

In their book *The Blessing*, authors Gary Smalley and John Trent further explain this principle.

A family blessing includes:

- Meaningful touch
- A spoken message
- Attaching "high value" to the one being blessed
- Picturing a special future for the one being blessed
- An active commitment to fulfill the blessing

When God blessed us with the gift of His Son, it was His *Word* that “became flesh and dwelt among us” (John 1:14). God has always been a God of the spoken word.

While the blessing is an ancient practice, it still holds important keys to granting genuine acceptance. From a blessing to the firstborn, to special words of love and acceptance for each child, the blessing remains a part of Jewish family life today. For the Christian parents [and grandparents] who have the hope and reality of Jesus, the Messiah, and His love, their blessing can be even more powerful.³

Beth, the mother of teenagers Anna and Abram, was blessed to have had godly grandparents while she was growing up. Grandma Louise and Grandpa Don were now in their nineties, and before the Lord took them home, she wanted them to touch the lives of her children. So she and the kids traveled from Colorado to California to visit the children’s great-grandparents and ask them to lay hands on Anna and Abram to speak blessings over them.

“I’m grateful we made the trip before Grandma Louise died,” Beth said. “Grandpa Don, now ninety-four, lives in a home for seniors, but each morning, he wakes up excited about what God might do that day. He conducts a regular Bible class for younger folk who come to learn from his wisdom. Recently, my husband went to visit Grandpa just to kneel at his feet and ask him to lay hands on him and impart blessings into his life. It’s a wonderful legacy that we have.”

Blessing and Prayer of Commitment

When Dee learned that her daughter, Dena, was expecting, she was excited about becoming a grandmother for the first time. Granddad Dick Eastman, president of Every Home for Christ and author of several outstanding books on prayer, believed he was to fast the entire month of October, the month Dena was expected to give birth to their first grandchild.

When Dee accompanied her daughter for a routine prenatal exam a week before the due date, doctors noted the baby was in a

breech position. They needed to perform a cesarean section within hours. Granddad-to-be Dick, who was on the eighth day of his fast, was out of town, but Dee called immediately to alert him to pray.

As doctors prepared Dena for surgery, the monitor showed the baby's heart rate was falling. Concerned for the baby's health, Dee and her son-in-law, John, and Dena's parents gathered around Dena's bed to pray. They prayed for the baby's heart to function properly, for him to live and not die, and for all those involved in the birthing process to have God's wisdom. Then while John stayed with Dena, the others continued praying in the waiting room.

After some anxious moments, John, cradling his newborn son in his arms, walked into the waiting room to introduce little Jack to his grandmother Dee and his great-grandparents. "He was whole and healthy and beautiful, for which we praised God," said Dee.

Dick continued fasting through that month, praying for baby Jack. On the last day of the month, Granddad Dick and Grandmother Dee gathered for a special prayer and blessing service for the baby with little Jack's parents in the home of the other set of grandparents.

As a guide for their prayer, they chose the book *Living and Praying in Jesus' Name*, which Dick had coauthored. Baby Jack's parents and grandparents went down the list of thirty-one scriptural names for Jesus, praying that these attributes of Christ's nature and character would be developed in his life. Blessings were spoken over him with the words of promise associated with each title. Dick concluded by praying a prayer of commitment over his grandson.

Grandmother Dee held the baby most of the time as prayers and blessings were spoken over him. Amazingly, little Jack, without so much as a whimper, kept his eyes open, looking up at each one of them for the entire two hours of prayer. They videotaped the event so that when he gets older, Jack can watch the prayer service and know this is part of his spiritual heritage.

"Since I feel I'm to do this for each grandchild in the future, I jokingly asked both my daughters if they would please limit the size of their families," Dick said, laughing. "I was quite hungry by the end of that month!"

Here are a few of the thirty-one Scripture names of Jesus that the family prayed for Jack.

- A Wall of Fire (protection): Zechariah 2:5
- A Sure Foundation (stability): Isaiah 28:16
- The Way, the Truth, and the Life (purpose): John 14:6
- The Lord of Peace (comfort): 2 Thessalonians 3:16
- The Hidden Manna (provision): Revelation 2:17
- My Rock (refuge): Psalm 31:3⁴

A Lasting Memory

When I (Ruthanne) married my husband, John, he was a widower, a single parent who leaned heavily upon the family of his late wife for the emotional support they could give his two daughters. That family accepted me with open hearts, and I soon realized that my stepdaughters' Grandma Rains was a strong spiritual influence in the lives of *all* her grandchildren, not just the two in our house. One of them, Jill, shares her memories of this exceptional matriarch who lived to age 102.

"When I was small, I often spent the night at Grandma Rains' house. At bedtime we would kneel beside the bed to pray. First she would give thanks for our health, for our home, and for our many blessings. Then she began praying for her six children's families one by one, starting with the oldest and mentioning by name each family member.

"When she got to her fifth child—who had passed away before I ever knew her—she prayed for Uncle John, now married to Aunt Ruthanne, and for their children. Extra time was spent on them because they were full-time missionaries living overseas, and to Grandma they were saints. By the time she had called by name every child and his or her spouse, and every grandchild and great-grandchild, I was almost asleep. I thought she would *never* finish! I listened to her prayers for years and always paid attention to see whether she would accidentally skip somebody, but she never did.

"I grew older and married. During a time when my marriage

was in trouble, I asked Grandma to pray for me. I could go to sleep at night knowing that she was on her knees in prayer. What a wonderful comfort I had, knowing that no matter how big our family grew, I always had a praying grandma. Every child should be so blessed!"

Planting Seeds

The Bible instructs us to "not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them slip from your heart as long as you live. Teach them to your children and to their children after them" (Deut. 4:9). I (Quin) try to speak godly principles into the lives of our grandchildren whenever possible.

Often I will say to one of them, "God has a purpose for your life, and I'm praying God will prepare you for that purpose." While they may be too young to understand the implications of my words, I am planting seeds for their future understanding. In fact, I have hung this Scripture plaque on my kitchen wall: "The LORD will fulfill his purpose for me" (Ps. 138:8). I personalize and repeat it over and over to each grandchild, "The Lord will fulfill his purpose for you, Samuel."

We can encourage our grandchildren to develop their God-given abilities by praying for them and teaching them to talk to God even when they are toddlers. I've written our family's history to pass on to my grandchildren to help them understand their spiritual heritage. I'm also keeping a separate journal noting the little things I hear them say or watch them do that indicate their understanding of the gospel message. I pray this tradition will extend even to their children.

Like many grandparents, we keep a collection of Christian children's books, videos, and music tapes at our house. We read, read, read to our grandkids! The story of the walls of Jericho falling down is as exciting to our grandsons as it might have been for the Hebrew children watching that event thousands of years ago. They reenact the scene over and over in our den, playing toy trumpets and watching their large wall of blocks fall down.

Praying for a Spiritual Harvest

One grandmother wrote of how she loved baby-sitting two of her grandchildren after their elementary school was out and before their mother got home from work.

“I’ve always believed that we grandparents can impart deeper spiritual truths to our grandchildren than our children can, as they are twenty-something years younger,” she said. “Sometimes I sense that I am viewing the happenings in those youngster’s lives from a different perspective than the one their parents have. God helps me see the circumstances from his point of view, then he shows me how to pray with discernment.”

It’s true. Grandparents with a strong foundation of faith demonstrate by their lifestyle how to withstand the storms of life. Often a grandmother’s involvement in the lives of grandchildren who are experiencing instability at home is crucial to their survival. But perhaps the most important role for a grandparent is simply to pray faithfully for those children, knowing that the seeds of prayer we plant today will yield a harvest of blessing in the future.

Our commitment to pray for our grandchildren and bestow blessings upon them whenever we can will impact their lives in countless positive ways. But more than that, our actions toward this generation will influence many generations to follow. We can’t afford to miss this awesome opportunity God has given us.

Prayer

Lord, thank you for the spiritual and practical influence I have in my grandchildren’s lives. Even if I don’t see them often, I pray the time we do spend together—whether in person or on the phone—will be quality time. Show me ways to bless them, encourage them, and be available for them. Please reveal to me when and how to pray for their spiritual, physical, and emotional well-being. I want to be a godly grandmother they can emulate; thank you for equipping me to do this. Amen.

Helpful Scriptures

May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart
be pleasing in your sight,
O LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer.

—Psalm 19:14

One generation will commend your works to another;
they will tell of your mighty acts.
They will speak of the glorious splendor of your majesty. . . .
They will tell of the power of your awesome works,
and I will proclaim your great deeds.

—Psalm 145:4–6

Know therefore that the LORD your God is God; he is the
faithful God, keeping his covenant of love to a thousand gen-
erations of those who love him and keep his commands.

—Deuteronomy 7:9

Scripture Prayer

*Lord, I pray for my grandchildren [names], holding un-
swervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promises is
faithful [Heb. 10:23].*

Thank you for your faithfulness!

Related Scripture References

Deuteronomy 11:18–21; 30:19–20

Proverbs 31:25–27