

Grandparents Cannot Retire From Kingdom Work

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By Eric Metaxas

Manhattan, N.Y.—Many of you may have observed the 2018 Grandparents’ Day in September (Sunday, Sept. 9). However, Christian grandparents are certainly not limited to focusing upon their grandchildren on one day a year.

Many Christian grandparents are interested in helping to prepare their grandkids for a life of faith.

A colleague of mine—let’s just call her Gail—was delighted when her son announced that he and his wife were expecting their first baby. Gail immediately headed for the mall and bought a boatload of baby clothes and toys. When their grandson reached toddlerhood, Gail and her husband frequently took him to parks or out for ice cream.

And now, as her grandson grows older and starts wading out into the culture, Gail wants to be a positive spiritual influence on him as well. But how?

Think about the drastic cultural and moral changes that have occurred just in the past 10 years—never mind the changes in the 50 years since today’s grandparents were growing up.

America’s 30 million grandparents could never have imagined the ubiquitous presence of screens, smart phones or social media, or the redefinition of marriage and what it means to be a man or a woman, or the utter coarseness of popular entertainment. But this is the only world our nation’s grandkids have ever known.

That’s one reason I recommend for you grandparents my colleague John Stonestreet’s book *A Practical Guide to Culture: Helping the Next Generation Navigate Today’s World*.

It will help you better understand the social pressures and trends your grandkids deal with every day. And it will help you help them as well.

And here’s another thing. Our culture wants us to believe that our elders belong in the retirement home or on the golf course. Don’t buy it!

In fact, Chuck Colson dismissed the idea that Christians could ever retire. Sure, it might be time to walk away from the 9-5 job and start collecting a pension.

But we can never retire from Kingdom work. And certainly teaching our “children and our children’s children” to love and fear the Lord as we are commanded in Deuteronomy is vital Kingdom work.

It’s why the apostle Paul praised Lois, Timothy’s grandmother, who nurtured one of Paul’s most able helpers in his Christian faith (2 Timothy 1:5).

And it’s why Chuck himself took a great interest in the spiritual lives of his own grandchildren, praying for them daily and spending one-on-one time with them.

Yet when was the last time you heard a sermon on the spiritual role of grandparents?

While many churches provide classes on Christian child rearing, very few teach grandparents how to contribute to the discipling of their grandchildren.

That’s one reason one of John Stonestreet’s friends, Larry Fowler, founded the Legacy Coalition, a ministry that encourages intentional Christian grandparenting.

Several years ago, Larry said, God began to impress on him and his wife how important it was for them to become involved in the lives of their own grandchildren as additional spiritual influences—even though it meant moving halfway across the country to be near them.

As he puts it: “Behind parents, grandparents are the most influential people in the lives of children and youth. We want to help leverage that for the Kingdom.”

The Legacy Coalition provides resources and training for grandparents and church leaders who want to come alongside the grandparents in their congregations. It also offers ideas for long-distance grandparenting.

If you have grandkids, I urge you to reflect on the enormous treasure that God has given you in your grandchildren—and on how God would use you to build them up in the knowledge and love of Jesus Christ.