

GRANDPARENTS RAISING GRANDKIDS (Part I)

If the statistics are accurate, then more than six million grandchildren (as of 2000) in this country are being raised by their grandparents with or without the parents in the home. This represents more than six percent of all grandparents at that time, and the numbers rise annually at a staggering pace. Though the numbers are not fully available yet, it is estimated that this number will have nearly doubled by the end of 2007.

There is no doubt that this has become a huge issue among today's grandparents. The role of raising grandchildren is not new. In fact, for most of human history grandparents played a significant role in the raising of grandchildren because grandchildren, parents and grandparents all lived together. Today, however, the role is much different because in more than 45% of these situations, the parents are not present at all. Many of these situations are the result of problems related to substance abuse, physical abuse or criminal activity.

Clearly, for greater numbers of grandparents, raising their grandchildren today is much more complex and challenging than in previous generations. Though resources and assistance is beginning to develop to help grandparents in these roles, there is much more that must be done to give such grandparents the support systems they desperately need. If you are in this situation, a partial listing of resources that are currently available has been provided with this newsletter and on our web site. CGN is committed to ongoing research and investigation to find all possible helpful resources to assist you who are in this role. In addition, we will regularly feature articles like the following to encourage you, to remind you that you are not alone in this daunting task, and to strengthen you in the knowledge that God is your strength and will see you through the deep waters for His glory!

THE CHALLENGES AND BLESSINGS OF RAISING GRANDKIDS

Ron and Cathy Berry

The word says, "Train up a child in the way they should go and when they are old they will not depart from it." I believe in the Word of God wholeheartedly and trust our Lord without question. Still, as the span of time runs through our hands, our children, for a season, sometimes bend to the ways of the world. We are at this time in our lives and we trust the Almighty without question and lean hard on his word.

At this moment in time, where we have had to lay our daughter at the feet of Jesus, we were also given the divine purpose to train up our six year old grandson, Bradley. We have had him since the age of two. The challenges at the beginning were trial and error, and a lot of praying and tears, because he came from an abusive home life. He had been through and seen more than most adults see in a lifetime, but our God is faithful and not lacking in mercy and healing!

We couldn't attend church for almost a year because his language was so bad. I left my job as a prayer counselor at a worldwide ministry, to spend the much needed time for his healing and training. Now, four years later, we marvel at the young arrow that God placed in our hands.

We take communion together in our home every night. At first Bradley listened, as we tenderly told him what the elements meant and why we did this. We would also pray a short prayer afterwards, and then bedtime. Now, a year later, we still do communion nightly, but our prayer time has become much

longer, as our grandson has taken it over. During prayer time the other night, Bradley said, “Bow before the King!” He bowed down, as if to show us how. Oh, the joy that filled our hearts and the awe of such a moment! We felt as if heaven was looking down and kissing us! We were beginning to see the fruit of our obedience and God’s faithfulness.

Grandparents, may God bless you as you are faithful to the work that God has placed in your hands! A tender, forgiving and merciful father is He. We all come from different backgrounds, some with good, some with bad earthly fathers, but we can rest and trust in our Heavenly Father as our guide, model, comforter and friend. The Bible says, “He is our ever present help in times of trouble.” We encourage and bless you, as we travel together down this road of grandparenting our grandchildren, training them up in the ways of the Lord, and pressing toward the high calling!

A FEW RESOURCES FOR GRANDPARENTS RAISING GRANDKIDS...

1. The Grandparent Foundation (www.grandparenting.org) a great resource for legal issues facing grandparents as well as many other grandparenting issues.
2. AARP Grandparent Information Center (www.aarp.org/families/grandparents/qic/) or 1-800-424-3410 Various state chapters have specific programs for grandparents raising grandchildren.
3. GrandsPlace (www.grandsplace.org) for grandparents and special others raising children.
4. Grand Parents Again (www.grandparentagain.com) helps in areas of legal issues, medical issues, support groups and general information.
5. Books on raising grandkids:

To Grandmother’s House We... Stay: When You Have to Stop Spoiling Your Grandchildren and Start Raising Them by Sally Houtman, Studio 4 Productions, Northridge, CA 1999.

Grandparents as Parents: A Survival Guide for Raising a Second Family by Sylvie De Toldeo and Deborah Edler-Brown, The Guilford Press, New York, 1995.

Grandparent Power by Arthur Kornhaber, M.D., Crown/Random House, 1995. (See the Grandparent Foundation web site for more books by Kornhaber on grandparenting.