

# Leaving A Legacy

*Lillian Ann Penner*

Grandparents are a critical link to a child's future. Whether it is intentional or not we are leaving a legacy behind. The life we choose to live will have an impact on those we leave behind.

Just as Lois was a spiritual role model for her grandson, Timothy (II Timothy 1:5), we as grandparents have a responsibility to play a significant role model in the lives of our grandchildren. We can leave an important legacy by modeling the reality of a daily walk with God. We demonstrate our dependency on God when we walk with Him in the hard times as well as the good times. We might ask ourselves, "Am I passing on a spiritual role model to my grandchildren and future generations?" As we invest in our walk with the Lord, we provide a spiritual foundation for future generations. God tells the Israelites in Deuteronomy 4:9 NIV ". . . *be careful, and watch yourselves closely so that you do 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.*" The Son of God must be shining in our lives to reflect His love, joy, and peace to our grandchildren just as the sun must shine on a lake in order to have a reflection.

I had many opportunities to visit my grandmother while attending college in her hometown. Recently widowed, she shared how God was comforting her during her times of loneliness with the promise Jesus gave His disciples after His resurrection. "*Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world.*" *Matthew 28:20KJV*

Her faith that God would always be there for her made a great impact on my life. Her testimony influenced me to incorporate that verse into the daily experiences in my life. Since those early adult years, whenever life has been difficult, disappointing, or downright discouraging, I have claimed that same scripture verse.

Our prayers will not guarantee salvation, but prayer can prepare their hearts for when presented with an opportunity to step into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. We can pray our descendants will live in a constant awareness of God's presence and be firmly established in His Word.

We must be diligent in demonstrating a life of prayer to our grandchildren. It's important to teach them to see prayer as a privilege as well as a responsibility. It is not about praying to see what we can get; it is praying to see how God changes our hearts and those around us.

Author Jennifer Kennedy Dean shares in her book, *The Legacy of Prayer*, "It may be wonderful to leave behind wealth for the generations to follow. However, at best, money and possessions are fragile and unstable. However, we can leave behind for our descendants a spiritual trust that can never be stolen, squandered, or lost. We can leave riches that will only increase in value. We can lay up a storehouse of imperishable wealth." Matthew 6:19-20 NIV reads, "*Do not store up for yourselves treasures on*

*earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal.”* We can lay up a storehouse of imperishable wealth by praying for our grandchildren and future generations. Our prayers are deposits in their spiritual trust fund and will be there when needed. Now that is a return on an investment all of us would enjoy seeing.

God still promises to pour out His Spirit and blessings to our descendants. Just as God told Israel in Isaiah 44:3 NIV *“For I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground; I will pour out my Spirit on your offspring, and my blessing on your descendants.”*

My granddaughter confirms that praying for these precious loved-ones is never a wasted effort. She wrote, *“I have known that my grandma was praying for me, but especially while living away from home during college and starting married life, I have sensed her prayers. Grandma’s prayers and encouragement have been rock solid reminders of God’s truth amidst my crazy and incredibly life-shaping years helping me learn to surrender the craziness of my life to God, slowly but surely.”*

Recently, I found a letter in my family archives my great-grandfather in Poland had written to his son, my grandfather in America, who never had the privilege of seeing his son’s family. In the letter, he wrote that he was praying for him, his children, and grandchildren. It was a great blessing to see in writing that my great-grandfather had prayed for me before I was born.

My husband and I have experienced many blessings because we have seen God answer many prayers in the lives of our children and grandchildren. There are still many needs to be met, but we know we have a great God on whom we can call because the Lord tells us in Jeremiah 33:3 NIV *“Call on me and I will answer you . . .”* God doesn’t always answer our prayers immediately. Often we have to wait for God’s perfect timing. We may not even see the answers to our prayers in our lifetime but our prayers are an investment in their lives.

My dream or desire is that my grandchildren and future generations will develop an intimate relationship with God, and serve Him fervently. God has promised in Exodus 20:6 if we love Him and keep His commandments He will show His love to a thousand generations. We need to be intentional about building a legacy of faith into our grandchildren. We may ask ourselves the following question, *“Do my grandchildren see Jesus in me?”*

My grandmother’s faith, prayers, and dependence on her heavenly Father left a lasting legacy that has helped sustain me for more than fifty years.

I trust you will experience many blessings as you invest in the spiritual trust fund with your prayers for your grandchildren and future generations.

*“I could have no greater joy than to hear that my children live in the truth.” III John 4 NIV*



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Lillian has been active in church ministry for 45 years, and has led a "Heart to Heart" mentoring program for women, participated in a short term missions trip in Ukraine, volunteered at the Northwest Regional office of Wycliffe Translators, Jose Zayas Evangelistic Association, and Focus On the Family. Currently, she teaches a women's Bible study in her home church.