

# My Personal Journey of Praying for my Grandchildren

*Lillian Ann Penner*

Grandchildren are one of the rewards of growing older, in addition to the senior discounts. What a joy it is to have that precious little one come running into your arms with hugs and kisses or the six-year-old calling to tell you she lost her first tooth. Becoming a grandparent is a gift of God.

I have nine grandchildren with ages ranging from three years to twenty-five years. As a long-distance grandmother for many years, I was not fully aware of my grandchildren's immediate needs. I prayed that God would bless them, give them good health and protection. Ultimately, I became frustrated and felt something was lacking with my vague and general prayers. I asked God to show me how to become more deliberate about my praying.

After reading *Grandma, I Need Your Prayers* by Quin Sherrer and Ruthanne Garlock and *When Mothers Pray* by Cheri Fuller, prayers for my grandchildren changed dramatically. The books encouraged me to use specific scriptures in praying for them. They also presented me with practical advice, and motivated me to pray regularly and specifically for their emotional, physical and spiritual well-being.

Because of their encouragement, I developed a Pictorial Prayer Journal. In a three-ring binder, I made a profile sheet for each grandchild, including his/her picture and personal information. I also added several pages on which I recorded my prayer concerns, hopes, and dreams for that grandchild. I made a section for each grandchild.

I started praying specifically for each grandchild, using suggestions from the books I had read. With my older grandchildren, new channels of communication opened between us when I asked them how I could pray for them. For the younger children I consulted with their parents to keep abreast of specific concerns and prayed they would make wise decisions in their parenting. This also afforded a wonderful opportunity for me to engage in meaningful conversations with my adult children.

My primary prayer for all my grandchildren is that they will come to realize how much God loves them and He will always be there for them. I pray they will accept Jesus Christ as their personal Savior and spend eternity with Him.

God's Word became my manual for learning how to pray more effectively for my grandchildren. Praying scripture unleashes the supernatural power of God in their lives. When I pray according to God's Word, I am in line with His will. As I started claiming God's promises and personalizing the scriptures for them, I experienced more confidence and boldness in my prayer life.

There are times when I do not know how to pray for my grandchildren's needs. However, Romans 8:26 NIV reads, ". . . the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express." The Holy Spirit knows the needs of my grandchildren. Therefore, I ask the Holy Spirit to make intercession for me according to His will. It shifts the responsibility on God, instead of carrying the burden myself. It is comforting to know the Holy Spirit intercedes for me when I do not know how to pray.

The love we have for our grandchildren in the human form, would like to control their lives and keep them from pain, disappointment or discouragement. Humanly, we want to rescue and shield them and by praying, "Don't let anything bad happen to them." To which the Lord may say, "I need to allow disappointment, pain, and failure so they will learn to trust and obey me and I can pour out my blessings on them."

God has created our grandchildren for a unique purpose. I pray my grandchildren will discover their dreams, be motivated to pursue them, and trust God will provide the resources.

"For I know the plans I have for you," says the Lord. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope."

*Jeremiah 29:11*

I grew up in a Midwest rural community and did not encounter the temptations and pressures my grandchildren are facing today in this post-modern society. They are growing up in a generation teetering on the brink of moral and spiritual bankruptcy. I pray for protection from the evil deception in the world around them. During these turbulent times, we as grandparents can have a major role in stabilizing and influencing their lives by praying for them.

The Pictorial Prayer Journal has been an excellent tool for staying connected to my precious grandchildren. Sometimes I ask God to make opportunities to let our grandchildren know my husband and I love them and pray for them each day. I call them on the phone and send cards for holidays, note cards, or e-cards to offer encouragement and make them feel special. It is important for us to communicate to them that we love them and accept them even though we may not accept their behavior.

I want to share part of a letter from my married granddaughter. It is a confirmation that praying for these precious grandchildren is never a wasted effort. She wrote, "I always knew my grandma was praying for me, but in my Junior High years, I truly internalized it and it meant something to me. Her frequent phone calls, cards, and emails were encouraging and made a significant impact on my life throughout my teenage and college years. My grandma's prayers and encouragement have been rock-solid reminders of God's truth amidst my crazy and incredibly life-shaping years. Her prayers helped me learn to surrender the craziness of my life to God."

In Isaiah 44:3 NIV God told Israel, "I will pour out my Spirit on your offspring and my blessing on your descendants." God still promises to pour out his Spirit and blessings on our descendants.

My prayers for my grandchildren have strengthened my relationships with them. Whether they live nearby or far away, praying for them keeps me in touch. Often my prayers can be more powerful than my presence, when I let them know I am praying for them.

Best of all, praying God's Word has enabled me to pray with His power, direction, and wisdom. It has given me more fulfillment and satisfaction in praying for my grandchildren.



Lillian Ann Penner is a retired secretary from public high school in Bakersfield, CA. She and her husband, John, have been married 48 years and currently reside in Portland, OR. They have three married sons and nine grandchildren.

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.