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THE POWER OF A PRAYING® GRANDPARENT

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The mercy of the LORD is from
everlasting to everlasting
on those who fear Him,
and His righteousness to children's children,
to such as keep His covenant,
and to those who remember
His commandments to do them.

PSALM 103:17-18



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The Lifelong Gift of a Praying Grandparent

n amazing thing happens in your heart when you see your grandchild for the first time. It's difficult to explain. Though it's different from having your own children, the experience is what every grandparent has told you for years that it would be. Nothing else is quite like it. There is an instant and deep connection. There is unconditional love that is unimaginable before that moment. It is profoundly special. Uniquely moving. And irrevocably life altering.

This doesn't minimize the unconditional love we felt for our own children or the moving and life-altering experience we have when they come into our life. But, as grandparents, we don't have the major physical and emotional journey of getting our grandchildren here. They are gifts that are laid in our laps—often literally. That's not to say we aren't constantly prayerful and concerned for the safety and health of our daughter or daughter-in-law—the one who carries her precious cargo to what we pray is perfect development. We also pray for our son or son-in-law to be a good support for his wife, an excellent

provider, and a great father for his children—which can seem quite overwhelming to most new fathers who are in touch with the reality of all that.

I remember when Michael and I first became parents. The process engulfed us. Whether it was self-doubt about our ability to be good parents, or we feared what could happen to our child, or we felt unprepared, the process was our focus. No matter how many books I read on child rearing or classes I took on what to do after our child was born, the journey consumed me. And that is true for most people—whether the child was theirs biologically, or by adoption, or through marriage. The road to the child's arrival could seem scary, and there were no guarantees.

Our grown children may have many of those same fears too. Besides all this, the process of bringing forth and raising children is exhausting. The sleep factor—or lack thereof—complicates things when parents are trying not to neglect their spouse and marriage. This can seem like an overwhelming task. If one spouse is not even in the picture—for whatever reason—and the parent raising the child is a single mom or dad, the worry factor goes up greatly. A single mom or dad may be the only one in charge of the rent, mortgage, food, clothing, medical care, schooling, and every other need of the child or children. Without having the emotional support of someone to share the duties of being a good parent, the responsibility can seem impossible.

As grandparents, we usually don't fully carry the same burdens the way a parent does, although these things concern us greatly. That is, unless the child is not only laid in our lap, but also the total responsibility for our grandchild is laid entirely on our shoulders because the parent or parents cannot care for their daughter or son. Many grandparents experience that.

Whatever your situation, consider yourself blessed to have a precious grandchild. So many people are grieved because they will never have one, or the one they had is no longer in their lives. Thank God every day that you have the privilege and the power in prayer of affecting your grandchildren's lives in ways you may not even imagine.

The Gift of a Praying "Gramma" or "Grampa"

Grandchildren are a gift from God to you. And your prayers are a gift to them that can touch them for a lifetime—even after you are no longer around to see all of the good results. God has an important ministry for you to your grandchild or grandchildren—not only in word and deed, but also in prayer.

Personally, I didn't have a praying mother or father—at least, not to my knowledge. But I did have one praying grandmother. I didn't realize this for years because I only saw her twice in my life—once when I was about six, and another time when I was around twelve. She was my father's mother, and she seemed to be a kind, gentle, and caring person.

It was later in my life, after I was married and had two children of my own, that my severely mentally ill mother died of cancer at the age of 64, and we asked my dad to come live with us. He was in his mid-seventies at the time, and we gave him an entire wing of our house that allowed him three rooms to himself plus a small parlor, all at the front of the house where he could have privacy and yet be with the rest of the family whenever he wanted. Every day he sat in the parlor watching for the children to come home from school. They were in grade school

and high school during that time, and they loved to sit with him and hear him tell stories about his life. He'd had so many near-death experiences, such as being struck by lightning *twice*, hit by a train, shot with a gun, falling into a ravine on horseback, and losing control of his truck on an icy mountain road and going over the side of the mountain—just to name a few. It was amazing to think that he lived to be 93 and died quietly in his own bed as he slept.

I, too, had escaped death so many times in my life—including pneumonia when I was a baby and diphtheria when I was about six, for starters. There would be more perilous instances to come. After I received the Lord at 28 and walked with Him for two decades, I saw that my heavenly Father had His hand on me all along. One day in prayer, I asked God who had been praying for me because I realized at that point someone must have been. And I could think of no one on my mother's side. Her mother—my maternal grandmother—died in childbirth when my mother was 11. And my own mother was too mentally ill all of my life.

I asked my father about *his* mother, and I discovered that she was a faithful, godly woman of prayer. So faithful to God was she that every Sunday morning she walked with her children a very long way—even in freezing snow—across fields and down country roads to church. There was no such thing as children's church there, so my father sat on hard wooden pews for four hours in the morning, four more hours in the evening, and then again on Wednesday night as well. He said that his father never went to church, nor did he *take* them to church. So once my dad became an adult, he swore he would never enter a church again. And except for a funeral and a wedding, as far as I know he never did.

In answer to my prayer, God showed me that it was my father's mother who prayed for her eight children and her many grandchildren, and that was the reason my dad and I escaped death so many times. Even though she died when I was only a teenager, I feel it was her prayers that continued to cover me in my life.

My dad was always a good grandfather to my children. He never prayed that I know of, but when I asked him openly if he believed in God and that Jesus was the Son of God who died for us and rose again to give us eternal life with Him—because I wanted to be certain I would see my dad in heaven one day—he said emphatically, "Yes, of course!" as if to say, "Who in their right mind wouldn't believe that?"

That was good enough for me.

While he lived with us, he taught my daughter how to plant and grow a garden in our backyard, and they tended it every day. He taught my son how to play many games, and they played them every chance they got. Michael and I didn't have time for some of the things he could do. He was the only grandparent my children ever knew well because their grandmothers both died of breast cancer, and my husband's father lived far away and also died when they were young. But they were able to spend time with my father every day, and he and my children experienced a mutual and special love for one another.

A godly grandmother or grandfather is always welcome in a child's life. But being a godly *praying* "Gramma" or "Grampa" is a gift you can deliberately give your grandchildren even if you don't see them often. And if you don't have a grandchild

in your life *yet*, ask God to show you who needs a spiritual "Gramma" or "Grampa." There are so many who do.

I have had the joy of being a part of my grandchildren's lives from the time they were born. And even before that—while they were growing in their mother's womb—I prayed countless times daily for them to be healthy and perfectly formed. In fact, I was praying for my grandchildren even before my own children were married—well before I knew I would even have any.

You may have become a grandparent because one of your children married someone who already had a child. And that child may already have two sets of grandparents in their life. But you may not know whether the grandparents are praying. No matter what the circumstances are, your prayers are still a needed gift for that child.

A grandchild can never have too much prayer or too much love.

Not long after my book *The Power of a Praying Parent* came out in 1995 and had sold a few million copies, many people were asking me, "When are you going to write *The Power of a Praying Grandparent?*" I told them that while I was certainly old enough to be a grandmother, my children weren't doing *their* part. I was still praying about them finding the right person to marry, and I didn't want to write about something I had never personally experienced. I chose to wait until I had the joy of being a grandmother before I wrote this book. Now that I have two precious grandchildren, I feel at liberty to write it.

This book is divided into *four important sections*—or areas of prayer—to help you easily find the prayer topic you want.

The first prayer in each section will be for you to pray for yourself

as a grandparent. It will help you to understand how vitally important and long lasting your prayers are for each of your grandchildren. Even if you don't see them often, your role in their lives is more far-reaching than you may realize.

The second prayer in each section will be for the parents of each grandchild. They face serious challenges coming at them from all angles, and they desperately need your covering in prayer whether they realize it or not. In fact, one of the best ways you can pray for your grandchildren is to ask God to help their parents or stepparents to raise them well.

Following those first two prayers in each section will be five prayers for your grandchild or grandchildren. It doesn't matter if your grandchildren are small, teenagers, or adults. I guarantee they need your prayers.

I encourage you to not only pray alone as often as you can, but whenever possible, pray with others as well. There is power in praying together with one or two people about anything that concerns you. Jesus said, "If two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:19-20). The powerful promise of God's presence when we pray with others is too great a gift to ignore.

I added the italics in these verses above, and I have added them in other Scriptures throughout the book as well. So that I won't have to keep repeating the words "emphasis added," just know that when you see italics in Scripture, I have added them to bring special notice to certain words.

You can start praying from chapter 1 through to the end of chapter 28. Each chapter is short and includes a prayer and a page of Scriptures to back it up. Or you can pick and choose which section and chapter you feel is the most-needed area of prayer focus at that time for your grandchild.

Oh, and please do not take offense at my frequent use of the word "grandchildren" if you have one grandchild. It's just that the plural word keeps me from having to frequently use the words "he or she." Believe me, one precious grandchild is more than enough for you to have plenty to pray about.

SECTION ONE

Praying for Your Grandchildren's Understanding of Godly Love and Relationships





Lord, Enable Me to Clearly Express Love for Each of My Grandchildren

very child is unique. Each child—even in the same family—is different from the others in that family. We can't think that every grandchild has the same strengths, thoughts, or needs. Nor can we assume that he or she experiences the same events in the exact way the other family members do. Dynamics in a family change all the time. And so do the perceptions of a child.

That being said, every child has the same basic needs. Next to being fed, clothed, and housed with care, the greatest need of each child is for love. But even then, every child perceives and receives love differently. What we as grandparents must learn is the best way for us to express *our* love for each child.

Ask God to help you communicate love to each of your grandchildren in a way he or she can clearly understand and receive. Only He knows for sure what is in the heart of a child.

Some people have trouble communicating love—even for their own children or grandchildren. It's not that they don't love them. In fact, they probably love them deeply. It's just that they cannot express it well. Often, that particular person was raised in a similar way themselves. Love was withheld or not communicated well enough to them, so they didn't believe that they were loved.

That was my own experience. I don't ever recall either of my parents saying "I love you" to me. Nor did I ever hear it from any of my extended family members either—not that they should have said anything because I was isolated from them for the most part. My mother acted as though she hated me. She was physically and verbally abusive, and she locked me in a closet for much of my early childhood. But she was mentally ill, and her illness became more apparent as the years went on.

My dad was never abusive. He was kind but not affectionate. He later told me, after I was an adult, that he and my mother had decided to never communicate anything good or encouraging to me about myself so that I would never be spoiled. I remember thinking, *What a terrible idea!* And I vowed to never do that to my own children. I was going to make sure they knew they were loved—by God and me—and I asked God to help me do it well.

I realized early on that I was too damaged to know how to receive love from another person, and I didn't know how to reciprocate it, either. It wasn't until I received the love of God that I was able to truly give and receive love.

The person I loved most growing up was my baby sister, who was born when I was 12. She was the best thing that ever happened to our family and to me. I basically raised her because my mother told me that when I wasn't in school, she was mine. But that didn't bother me much because I was crazy about her. However, after I was out of high school, I had to leave home to

escape all the verbal abuse from my mother and the strife it created in the family. I always felt guilt for abandoning my sister, but I knew I had to get out of that toxic environment in order to help my sister get out one day as well. Besides, I believed that with me gone, the house would be more peaceful.

Apparently I was wrong about that.

While my mother was never cruel to my sister the way she was to me, I later learned how much my sister was neglected and in many ways felt abandoned. I didn't realize how badly until I heard about it in her own words. I felt terrible about all that had happened to her, but I didn't know what else I *could* have done at that time.

We were two sisters from the same family who had different experiences and perceptions. It was a shock to me when I offered to send my sister to college or open up a shop for her to display her artwork, which was professional quality, that she didn't want either option. I had always determined to get as far away as I could from the way I had grown up. She, on the other hand, felt hopeless and didn't have the self-confidence to even want to do any of that. I eventually accepted the fact that all the things *I* wanted for her were not what she wanted for herself.

In some families, children feel they are not as loved as their siblings. People have shared that kind of experience with me so many times, and although it's quite possible that this is true, it could also be that this is their own perception of family dynamics because love wasn't communicated in a way they could clearly perceive. Real or not, it still leaves a scar.

One of the Greatest Gifts of Love

One of the greatest gifts of love you can give to your grandchildren are your prayers for them.

Among the many rewards of prayer, one of the most amazing is that not only do you grow to love the person you pray for, but as you pray for that person, they seem to sense your love—or the love of God—through your prayers. When people say, "I felt your prayers," that is what they are sensing even if they don't understand what it is. The reason for that is as you draw close to God in prayer for someone, God's love is deepened in your own heart. So the more time you spend talking to God, the more His love is poured *into you*, and the more it overflows *through you*.

God is love, and as you pray you are in contact with all that He is. When you pray for another person, you receive God's heart of love for him or her.

Another amazing thing that happens is that as you pray for someone, God can soften that person's heart toward *you*. There is a transference of God's love to the person for whom you are praying. I cannot prove that it always happens, but I have experienced it enough times—and so have countless others—that it cannot be denied.

I had an extended family member who was very rude and unaccepting of me for a reason I couldn't understand. I hardly knew him. But after I received the Lord and learned about the power of prayer in Jesus' name, I started praying for him to open his heart to the love of God. Amazingly, my heart softened toward him. But not only that, when I saw him again years later, he greeted me like a long-lost friend. I saw no reason for him to reject me in the first place, nor did I know of anything that happened to cause him to suddenly accept me. It had to be because of the prayers. The only contact I had with him in those years were those two times. But I have

experienced this kind of thing many times, so there is a powerful dynamic that happens when praying for people to open their heart to the love of God.

Even if you live far from your grandchildren and don't see them often, your calls, cards, letters, emails, videos, and thoughtful gifts can have a major impact on their life—especially if you often tell them you are always praying to God for them. Ask them to tell you any specific needs they want you to pray about for them. Your prayers can help establish a bond of love between you and your grandchildren—even from a distance.

Removing the Barriers

Jesus taught us how to take authority in the spirit realm in order to effect change in the physical realm. He said, "Have faith in God. For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says. Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them" (Mark 11:22-24).

This is a great Scripture to apply to any family member where there may exist a mountain of resistance to expressing or receiving love. That kind of barrier can seem as impossible to move as a real mountain. Yet Jesus said it could be done if we have faith in *His power* and *His will* to do it. Helping people to love others—and *receive* love from others—is always God's will. But there can be an invisible wall that keeps someone from *receiving* love or a mountainlike barrier rendering them incapable of *communicating* love. In either case, it can

cause something akin to emotional paralysis in a family unless this mountain is first reduced to ashes in prayer.

Ask God to reveal if you have any barriers to giving or receiving love. This is very important. If you have felt unloved in your past, it could affect how you show love to your children and grandchildren today. Or if there is unforgiveness in your heart of any kind, this can put up major barriers, and people can sense them without knowing exactly what they are. God says He won't listen to our prayers until we confess anything in our heart that should not be there. (See Psalm 66:18.)

We can be hurt by the things our children or their spouses say or do. But we have to let it go and get completely free of it because if we don't, it will affect our heart, our relationships, and our close walk with the Lord. Ask God if you have any hurt in your heart that needs to be brought to Him so He can heal the hurt and break down every barrier creeping in to become a stronghold of division.

Family relationships can be very delicate—especially where in-laws are concerned. Pray that God will enable you to always walk a line of love, graciousness, kindness, mercy, wisdom, generosity, and forgiveness. Ask Him to break down any barrier to love flowing from you to your children, grandchildren, or other family members—including in-laws.

Only God knows what will communicate our love and His to our family members. The thing is, people sense unforgiveness in our hearts even if it is not directed toward them, and even if they don't know what it is they are sensing. We owe it to

our grandchildren to get rid of it so our hearts are clean before the Lord and our prayers are effective.

We all need a heart that is filled with unconditional love for our children and grandchildren, and the ability to communicate it clearly—unhindered and unfiltered. Let's pray for that.

My Prayer to God

Lord, I lift up my grandchildren to You. (Name each grandchild before God.) Show me how to express my deep, unconditional love for each of them in a way they can clearly perceive and receive. Reveal to me the many ways I can demonstrate my love for each child.

I pray that You will remove any barriers in me that have been formed through disappointment or pain in my past. If there is a place in my heart where I feel rejected or unloved, I bring that to You for healing. If there is any unforgiveness in me toward anyone, show me and I will confess it. I know Your Word says if I keep that kind of sin in my heart, You will not listen to my prayers until I have cleared the slate with You (Psalm 66:18). I don't want to carry anything in my heart that shouldn't be there. Set me completely free from all unforgiveness today so there is no mountain of separation between me and my children or grand-children. Keep my heart clean so that my prayers are never hindered.

If there are any other strongholds of separation or breaches of relationships in my family, dissolve those completely. Burn away any barriers to total forgiveness in the hearts of the people involved. Help me to pray so powerfully for my grandchildren that they sense Your love and mine for them. Enable my prayers to touch them deeply and create a bond of love between us.

Enable me to be one of the "peacemakers" You have described in Your Word. I know that functioning in that role distinguishes me as a child of Yours (Matthew 5:9). I pray for Your peace that passes all understanding to reign in my family—and the families of my children and grandchildren.

In Jesus' name I pray.

God's Word to Me

If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear.

PSALM 66:18

The discretion of a man makes him slow to anger, and his glory is to overlook a transgression.

Proverbs 19:11

Judge not, and you shall not be judged. Condemn not, and you shall not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.

Luke 6:37

The spirit of a man is the lamp of the LORD, searching all the inner depths of his heart.

Proverbs 20:27

Whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you... Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.

John 16:23-24