



God Almighty Christian
Community Services

Helping To Put It Together...
And To Keep It That Way!

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Empowerment Parenting Workshop
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GRANDPARENTS AS PARENTS

Grandparent headed households have grown about 73% since 1970, contrast to the overall 38% growth of household in the U.S. during that time.

The reasons for this varies and may include such problems facing young families as:

- Drugs and alcohol abuse
- Unwed teen parents
- Divorce (and sometimes re-marriage)
- Unemployment
- Incarceration
- Mental health problems
- Murder
- HIV/AIDS
- Employment schedules
- Medical problems

"Guilt should not be added to the emotional burden of the parenting responsibility of a grandchild!"

Neither is the problem necessarily a result of poor parenting by the now-grandparents.

Many families have other children who are successful adults and good parents."

It is very tempting to spend a great deal of time analyzing why you are now in a position that requires you to provide care that normally would be provided by a parent. This is the time that you need to pull from God's wisdom and ignore trying to lean on your own understanding.

- Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. Proverbs 3:5

Considering the task that is set before you, your health is extremely important at a time when health problems tend to be on the rise. It is for this reason that one must not ignore God's call to not be wise in your eyes. Blaming oneself accomplishes nothing and usually is not a true assessment. "What ever choices you made as a parents are past you. You did the best you could. Your children are now adults and making their own choices."

- Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and shun evil. This will bring health to your body and nourishment to your bones. Proverbs 3:7-8

Strong emotions can run high throughout the course of one day and may include:

- Grief and shame for their adult children
- Love for their adult children
- Fear for their future of possible dwindling health and finances
- Resentment towards a juvenile court system or other systems that treat them with disrespect
- Anger at losing their dreams at this time in their lives
- Guilt for feeling that anger
- Fear that you will not be able to keep with the changes that the new millennium will bring

In the midst of all you are faced with, you must remember God's faithfulness. "But remember this – the [un-welcomed or stressful situations] that come into your life aren't anything new and different. Many others have faced exactly the same problems before you. And no situation is [unbearable]. You can trust God to keep the situation from becoming so strong that you can't stand up against it, for he has promised this and will do what he says. He will show you how to [manage] the situation so that you can bear up patiently.

(based on I Corinthians 10:13)

However, this will require honesty on your part about you feel about the situation, whether it is anger, frustration, guilt, or just tired of being misused by others. You must allow yourself to heal from the hurt you maybe experiencing in order that you may be able to provide the emotional nurturing that grandchild will require. Failure to heal may lead to:

- Statements about the parents that are damaging to the child

- Irritability that the child translates into not being wanted
 - Difficulty in making good decisions because of your preoccupation with anger
 - Distrust of the child that they may betray you as you may feel their parent has
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- Failure to take care of your own needs and allow yourself the breaks and recreation that will lead to your own stability
 - Failure to enjoy the moments that are cherish able and can never be repeated
 - Increased health problems or stress leading to mental health problems
 - Eventual lack of fellowship with God

Coping daily will require that you keep yourself spiritually, mentally, and physically healthy. Have daily fellowship with God and meditation in the Word of God. Do not ignore your own physical needs and health. Rather, have regular check ups and keep doctor appointments. To improve your mental stability consider the following:

- Consider other options. If another family member can help, consider letting them take or share the responsibility.
- Prioritize. Decide what is most important and handle that first.
- Take one thing at a time. Even one day at a time may be too much.
- Take time for yourself. This is important, even if the time is only a few minutes in a warm bath. If you fall apart, physically or emotionally, there will be no one to care for the grandchildren
- Make lie easier. Try to lighten your load regarding cooking and housekeeping.
- Set limits. You don't have to give up all the things you enjoy.
- Ask for help. Look for "people support."
- Get into a support group or have a stable friend that is grounded in the Word and emotionally balanced to support you.
- Allow yourself to regularly fellowship with other Christians and allow them to minister to you and give you breaks from the children.