

The Influence of Grandmothers

Storyteller: A two-year-old granddaughter saw the noisy cockatoos flying through the bushes and squawking to each other. She looked up...

“Gran,” she said, “they’re ‘squawking’ because they can’t find their mother.”

Gran: I think they’re just having fun darling!

Granddaughter: No – they’re ‘squawking’ because they can’t find their home.

Gran: Well maybe you’re right, but I’m sure they’ll find their home again soon.

Tammy: Isn’t that cute! Of course – what is important to a 2-year-old is mother...

Carol: ...and home! Of course – through her little eyes she was sure that these birds were upset because they couldn’t find their home and their mother! I think her Gran was wise to just accept that and reassure her granddaughter, don’t you?

Carol: Welcome to *Women of Hope*, I’m Carol.

Tammy: And I’m Tammy...it’s good to be here together again.

Carol: ‘Grandmother’...I wonder what that word means to you?

Are you a grandmother? If so I wonder if you see your grandchildren often? You may have children who work, and you’ve taken on the responsibility of taking care of the children some days. Or you may not see your grandchildren – they may live far away from you.

Tammy: Maybe you’re about to become a grandmother and you’re not sure what to expect or even what your grandchild will call you – Granny... Nana... Oma... or some other special word!

Carol: Tammy, you’re a new grandmother.

Tammy: I *am* Carol. I have a 14-month old grandson and I’m known as Oma. And I love my little boy.

Carol: I know you do because I’ve seen the photos. But how do you feel about being married to a grandfather? Aren’t you much too young?!

Tammy: Oh yes! But then of course...he’s now married to a grandmother!

Carol: I’m looking forward to becoming a grandmother one day – but neither of my grown-up children are married yet – so I may be waiting a while.

Tammy: Today we’re going to share some different ideas about being a grandmother or even about how other people see grandmothers.

You may have sometimes heard Ros on *Women of Hope*. She has been a grandmother for a while

now. Her newest granddaughter is only a few weeks old. I'm sure she's enjoying lots of cuddles! The eldest granddaughter is 12 years old and loves to write poetry. She wrote a funny little poem about grandmothers. She has two grandmothers as many children do, and she thought about some things that her two grandmothers do and say. This is what she wrote – especially for us...

'Grandmothers' (by Carly Spark)

They sit all day, play chess and knit,
And sew up our jumpers, bit by bit,
You might even see them with dogs on big leads,
Or bending in the garden, pulling out weeds,

They might have dogs, trained to be smart,
That are so attached they wouldn't dare part,
They're there when you need them no matter what,
And they don't just sit in a chair and rot,

They're very crafty and good with their hands,
And sometimes they come from faraway lands,
They've watched the world develop and grow,
And they've been here since a long time ago,

They love reading stories like Cinderella,
And Pooh Bear with his big umbrella,
They're in the kitchen, cooking up a storm,
Wonderful dinners, with hands well worn,

They have lots of teddies to keep for protection,
To cuddle, love and show affection,
When they see you they give you a wet sloppy kiss,
And most of the time you hope that they miss,

They might be teachers...or nurses...or others,
But one thing we're sure of, they're our grandmothers,
At home, they're waiting for us to arrive,
Grandmothers, part of our everyday lives.

Tammy: Well she must have two *interesting* grandmothers. What did you learn about them?

Carol: It seems like one has a dog that she has trained well and is very attached to and maybe the other has teddy bears – for her grandchildren to play with and cuddle.

Tammy: It sounds like they're both busy grandmothers doesn't it? What do they do?

Carol: Well what I can remember is that they make things with their hands – they knit and sew up

jumpers...they pull out weeds in the garden...

Tammy: ...they cook delicious dinners...they hug you and show that they love you...and they are there when you need them!

Carol: And I love what she says at the end – that she knows that grandmothers are at home waiting for them to come and visit – they're always there for their grandchildren.

Isn't it great that this is how Carly feels, and I'm sure many children across the world feel that way about their grandmothers.

You may be a grandmother, or you may remember your grandmother – perhaps she's gone now. We can all learn something from them, can't we?

Tammy: Here today on *Women of Hope* we're talking about grandmothers. Katharine is an experienced grandmother. She's come to share some thoughts with us.

It's so good to see you, Katharine. I heard you had been away helping take care of a new grandchild. Do you have a photo?

Katharine: Of course, right here in my bag. Isn't that what grandmothers are supposed to have – ready to show anyone who asks?

Tammy: Oh, she's just beautiful. That makes four grandchildren, doesn't it?

Katharine: Yes. This baby has an older brother...so there are two to go away and visit sometimes. The other two live here in town, so I get to see them often.

Tammy: I know you pray for your precious little ones often.

Katharine: Oh yes! I'm so concerned that they grow up to know about Jesus and hear all about his love for them. I pray every day for them, even for the smallest ones.

Tammy: Tell me...how did things go when you were with your son's family?

Katharine: Mostly I enjoyed it. The baby is so sweet...

But it was a little difficult at times. My daughter-in-law and I don't always see things the same way, you know... But I had to remind myself that it was *her* home – and *her* children – even though I thought maybe I had better ideas of how to handle things.

Tammy: That's hard, because you have so much experience, raising your own children.

Katharine: Yes, it was hard, sometimes...but I love my daughter in law and the beautiful children she has given my son...and I respect the way she's raising them. Of course, I loved rocking the baby, and had some good times with big brother Jonathan. The weather was nice, so we visited the park every

day. Jonathan's so much fun now that he's three, and eager to learn everything. He loved hearing about his uncles and aunts, and even about my life as a child. He wanted to read all the Bible stories in the book I gave him – all about the world God made, and about Jesus. We even learned some songs together.

Tammy: Sounds to me like you shared some really important things about God with that little boy.

Katharine: I hope so. You know, it's not always easy to keep up with a lively little boy and his active imagination. I was ready for his nap before he was!

Tammy: I'm sure grand-parenting has its challenges. I think of all the grandparents who have to raise their grandchildren...maybe because something has happened to the parents. Or maybe they take care of them because the parents have to work long hours.

Katharine: That's right. They can't send them home at night, like I do with my grandchildren. And these grandparents have already raised their *own* children.

Tammy: But think how good it is for these little ones to be cared for by loving family members. I remember my grandmother taking time to tell stories to my sisters and me, and she always had time to listen to our troubles.

Katharine: Yes...all of us grandparents have an important job to do, don't we? When we're running after toddlers or rocking babies, making the food they love, or listening to teenagers, we do have more time and patience than their parents do. After all, we don't have to worry so much about discipline, keeping house, paying the bills and all the problems young parents have.

Tammy: If you are a grandmother, you might wonder just how much influence you have on your grandchildren – those in your family, or even other children in your neighborhood. Let's keep listening and find out more...

Katharine: Children say the cutest things don't they! Let me tell you a little story about my granddaughter, Helen...

We were in the car, going to meet my daughter, Helen's mother, who was in a women's meeting. They meet together every week to study the Bible. As we pulled into the car park, Helen said, "I want to go see Mama's meeting."

"It's almost time for her meeting to be over," I said, "they're probably praying now, so we don't want to disturb them."

"Yeah," said Helen. "She's probably praying for my daddy and me."

"Probably," I said, "because she loves you so much. Helen, do you pray for your mama and daddy?"

"Oh Grandma, I'm just a little kid," answered Helen. I had to smile at that, but I said, "You know, Helen, God loves to hear the prayers of his little children. No one is ever too young to pray."

So, there in the car, Helen and I bowed our heads and Helen said, "Thank You, God, for my mama and daddy, and help me be a good girl. Amen."

"Was that a good prayer, Grandma?"

"Yes, Helen, that was a very good prayer, and I'm sure God heard it."

Tammy: Sometimes we hear from Fran, our counselor. We asked her to tell us something about the grandmothers in her family...

Fran: My mother's mother died when my mother was a child. My father's mother had 17 grandchildren and I was somewhere in the middle. I only knew her as a very old, blind and rather grumpy lady who was not quite sure who I was. So, when my daughter in law was expecting a baby, I wasn't sure what a grandmother's job was.

So I asked my friend who had four grandchildren, and she thought for a while... Then she said, 'I think a grandmother's job is to make her grandchildren know that she loves them...no matter *what* happens. To make each one feel they are *really* special to you.'

My daughter spent a lot of time with her paternal grandmother (my husband's mother) as she stayed with her while she was studying at university. She called her 'Nana', and Nana cared for her lovingly. But gradually Nana stopped being able to care, and Kate began to prepare the meals and remind Nana of what needed doing.

Eventually Nana lost her memory altogether, and that was very hard for Kate to watch. One day she told me, I just want to keep my memories of Nana when I was a little girl.' 'What was special to you?' I asked. Kate replied, 'She was the one person in the world who thought I could do no wrong.' I think Nana was very good at her job.

Carol: Yes...I think Kate's Nana must have been *very* good at her job – how lovely for her to have that one person in the world who thought she could do no wrong!

We hope you're enjoying our special *Women of Hope today about* grandmothers, and other older women who spend time taking care of children. You may be an aunty, or a friend who takes care of someone's children. If you don't spend a lot of time with your grandchildren, or the children you take care of, you may think there isn't much you can teach them. Do you sometimes feel you're too old, or that they won't listen to you?

Katharine is going to tell us something from God's word, the Bible about a special mother and grandmother who taught by the way they lived...

Katharine: In God's Word, we read about a grandmother who was very important in the life of a young man. (2 Timothy 1:5). Timothy loved God and spent his life preaching about God and His Son, Jesus.

Timothy's grandmother was named Lois. Isn't that a pretty name? She must have been a very good woman, too, because she taught Timothy's mother Eunice – and later Timothy himself – about God. Timothy's older friend, Paul wrote him a letter when he was a young preacher. He said in this letter that the very thing that made Timothy love God...(Paul called it "faith")...lived in Timothy's grandmother, and then in his mother.

Now let's just imagine what it might have been like for Timothy...

When he was a little boy, maybe he came in from playing in the back yard, hot and dirty. Maybe he was crying because he had fallen and skinned his knee, or because some big kid from down the street had pushed him over or taken his sling-shot.

He came into the house, where his mother was busy cooking supper. "Go and wash your hands before we eat," she said, seeing his dirty hands and knees—maybe even the dirt streaks on his face from crying.

When he went into the front room, there was his grandma Lois. Maybe she was reading a book, or working with her hands to make something beautiful out of string or yarn. She noticed the sad look on Timothy's face, even after he washed it.

"Come here, Timothy," she might have said. "Tell Grandma what happened."

Timothy knew how much his grandma loved him, so he could tell her all about his day, even about the big mean kid who hurt him.

Timothy was probably too big to sit on her lap, so he would pull a chair close to Grandma's rocker and they would talk for a while.

Because Lois loved Jesus, she would watch for a chance to tell him about how God loved him so much that He sent His own precious Son to die for him. It was a hard lesson for a little boy to understand, but Timothy knew his grandmother would always tell him the truth, and so he listened. That was when the thing called "faith" began to live in Timothy's heart.

When Timothy grew up, he wanted to tell other people all about the God Who loved them so much that He was willing to give up His own Son for them. Can you imagine how many people learned to love Jesus because of what Timothy's grandmother taught him all those years he was growing up? Maybe you don't live near your grandchildren, but you can write encouraging letters to them, just as Paul wrote to his friend Timothy. You can always pray for them, asking God to guide them in decisions they have to make, in their friendships, their jobs and their families. That's what it means to have faith living in us. And God hears the faithful prayers of grandmothers!

Let's pray right now. Won't you join me?

Dear God, we thank you for the grandchildren and other children we can love and teach. We ask for that faith in us, to love and obey you, and to teach that to the little ones you give to us. Amen

Carol: We heard from my friend Stevie a while ago. She has cerebral palsy, so she was not able to run and jump and go out on her own, like other children when she was younger. She told us how much she misses her grandmother. She calls her 'Nana'. This is what she said...

'Nana was one of the most special people that I know. I loved her dearly. Nobody was as proud of me as she was. Many times I travelled with my parents and my brothers to a nearby country to see her and Grandad, or they would come to visit us here in my home. I grew excited whenever I knew that I was going to see her soon. She was warm and friendly, giving me big squeeze hugs, and telling me how much she loved me. She made me feel special. I often sat on her knee while she rocked in her rocking chair. Sometimes, when I put my head on her chest, I could hear her heartbeat. We would talk about all sorts of things, and she was always interested in what I had to say. I loved climbing into her bed in the morning, snuggling in next to her and chatting.

She loved being around her family and delighted in her grandchildren. She enjoyed having meals, playing games, reading stories and dancing with us. She used to take us to the park to play, or for a walk. She sometimes took us shopping, or to the movies. She was a hairdresser, and I *loved* going to work with her and helping her sweep away the hair that had been cut off. I thought that I was pretty cool whenever she came to get me, or to pick me up from school.

I miss hearing Nana's lovely voice. I have kept a recording of her telling me stories about her life. I listen to it whenever I miss her. I have two photos of her on my bedroom wall to remind me of her. Even though she has died now, she will always have a special place in my heart and in my memories.

Carol: What a beautiful grandmother she must have been for Stevie.

My, haven't we heard some lovely things about grandmothers today. What have you learned about grandmothers? Maybe what you've heard today has helped you to see how important your job as a grandmother is.

Maybe you're looking forward to being a grandmother – and now you can keep in your mind and heart the special things that your grandchildren might want you to do with them.

Maybe you will never be a grandmother, but you can be that special person in a child's life who thinks they can do no wrong!

Tammy: Maybe you can be like this listener to our programs... She is 84 years old, but she is not too old to want to help young mothers...

'My name is Cocuta and I just listened to some of your programs. I am 84 years old and I am so happy to see how God works through you. I want to give these programs that you sent me to my friends that come to my house every week. Among them there are young mothers who will be very interested to hear the medical advice and other things to learn on your program. I am praying for you, and for the whole team of Women of Hope.'

...Well, we don't know if you are a grandmother, Cocuta, but we thank God for you as you help young mothers. And as you help them you will also help their children...so you would have many 'adopted' grandchildren who will benefit from your love and care.

Carol: We hope you've enjoyed hearing *about* grandmothers...hearing *from* mothers and grandmothers...and hearing from *grandchildren* today. We pray that God will bless you...whatever job he has given you to do as you help and encourage those around you.

Tammy: We would love to hear from you. If you want to contact us please write to us in care of this station or at TWR Women of Hope. Our email address is TWRWomenofHope @TWR.org. You can visit our website at TWRWomenofHope.org. Or visit our Facebook page.

Have a good week!