

STRATEGIC GRANDPARENTING

10 ANCHORS OF
A VICTORIOUS LEGACY



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Introduction

My fondest memories center on being at Grandma and Grandpa's house. I felt safe, I felt cherished, and I felt truly at home. They possessed a gift for making us feel like we all were the favorite. My grandparents created an atmosphere where we always knew we were accepted. I know now that they worked tirelessly to build a legacy of stability for generations to come. My grandparents impacted my life in profound ways, and for that, I am forever thankful. I dedicate this book to Bill and Opal Higginbotham, who have now gone on to be with the Lord.

As I encroach upon the season of life of being a grandparent myself, I write with a burning conviction. Grandparenting is not a passive role—it is a high-stakes, strategic, and powerful assignment God has placed directly in your hands! You possess a unique, God-ordained access to the next generation that no one else can claim. This is your moment to seize a built-in channel of love and respect to launch a legacy that will echo into eternity.

To coin a phrase my friend Harry Hogan says, we cannot "put old heads on young people," but we must refuse to let this opportunity go dormant. You are strategically positioned to impact, influence, and ignite your family in ways that ripple far beyond your years. This is not just a family role; it is your primary mission field, and the time to act is now!

In today's world, our adult children face immense pressures. Between the demands of careers, education, and the frantic pace of modern parenting, the vital task of nurturing character and faith can sometimes flounder. Some of our children have started their own families so young that they are still navigating life's complexities themselves, and you may find yourself stepping in—or being forced to step in—to help raise the next generation.

If you are in that season, thank you. You are a great blessing. You are impacting a generation that will live long after you are gone, and your legacy is being woven into the fabric of their lives.

In the pages that follow, I want to give you 10 keys—anchoring principles—to teach your grandchildren and great-grandchildren. These strategies are designed to help you nurture their minds, their hearts, and their faith, greatly enhancing the life God has uniquely given them.

A Pastor's Note: A Foundation of Grace

If you feel like you have missed the mark in the past, with your children or if your relationship with your grandchildren is currently strained, know this: It is never too late to begin anchoring. Grace is our starting point. We do not lean on our own understanding or our past regrets, but on the God who restores what has been lost. As you read these principles, do not approach them as a set of rules, but as an invitation. Invite the Holy Spirit to guide your heart and your words, knowing that He is the true Shepherd of your family. You are simply the under-shepherd, and His grace is sufficient for every gap you feel.

Prayer Guide for your grandchild:

Insert your grandchild's name. Pray this as many times as you think necessary.

Add your own points to the prayer as you feel appropriate.

Father, I pray for my grandchild _____. I know You love _____ more than anything. I come into agreement with You for _____ to fulfill Your will for (his/her) life. Father, save my grandchild's soul to the uttermost!

Father, draw _____ deeper in love with You! Father, give _____ a radical knowledge of Jesus that influences every decision (he/she) makes.

Father, order my grandchild's steps all the days of (his/her) life. Father, keep (him/her) from evil. Father, give _____ discernment spiritually and physically.

Father, cause _____ to have a heart after you. Father, apply Your discipline where needed to help _____ to live holy and make it to heaven! Father, wash _____'s conscience and restore (his/her) soul.

Father, uproot wrong loves, wrong attractions, and wrong desires out of _____'s heart. Father, uproot any wrong perspectives, any contentious heart attitudes, and any roots of jealousy, pride, envy, and strife out of _____'s heart.

Father, plant the seeds of Your Word in _____. Father, plant Your seeds of purpose, hope, and love in _____'s heart! Father, let nothing stop _____ from fulfilling Your purpose. Father, anywhere _____ is being slow of heart or rebellious bring Your understanding and correction. Father, let Christ be formed in _____ to maturity.

Father, cause _____ to love you with all (his/her) heart. Father, cause _____'s hope to be anchored in you! Father, Don't let _____'s faith fail! Father, put leaders, teachers, and coaches in _____'s life who will have a heart to help and teach _____.

Father, I pray _____ will learn to overcome challenges of life with Your wisdom. Father, I pray _____ will hear Your voice. Father, I pray _____ will learn to effectively communicate. I pray _____ will discern people and opportunities wisely.

Father, cause _____ to be a doer of the word not just a hearer of your word. Father, cause your blessings to come upon _____ and over take (him/her).

Father, I pray _____ will have the joy of the Lord. Father, fill _____ with Your Holy Spirit. Father, I pray Your will will be done in _____'s life!

Father, let Your Kingdom come and Your will be done in _____'s life.
In Jesus Name! Amen!

Principle #1: Anchoring Faith in God's Reality

Charge into this mission by inviting the Holy Spirit to set your heart ablaze as you reveal the wonders of God, knowing you are planting seeds of eternal destiny.

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."

— Genesis 1:1 (NKJV)

The foundation of everything else we teach our grandchildren begins here. If they understand that God is not just a concept but a living, loving Presence, their world changes. Faith is often caught more than it is taught, and your daily life is the primary classroom.

Showing God Through His Creation

When you are with your grandchild, take time to observe the world together. Whether it's looking at a sunset, planting seeds in a garden, or admiring the complexity of a bug, point to the Creator. Ask questions like, "Who do you think made the colors in that sunset?" or "Isn't it amazing how God designed the trees?" By marveling at nature alongside them, you teach them that God is the Master Artist. You teach them what to focus on in life.

Demonstrating His Goodness

While spending time with your grandchild, help them recognize God's hand in their lives. Express gratitude for the small things and big things alike. When you say, "I am so thankful God gave me you as my grandchild," or "Let's thank God for the meal we have," you are teaching them that every good gift comes from Him. Modeling this thankfulness helps them see God as the source of our families and our blessings. This will also teach your grandchild to show appreciation and thankfulness in all areas of life.

The Story of the Cross

Share the truth of Jesus with simple, age-appropriate honesty. Talk about how much God loves us—so much that He sent Jesus to die on the cross to bridge the gap between us and Him. When they see you reading the Bible, praying, or talking about Jesus with love, they witness that this relationship is the most important one in your life.

Modeling His Presence

Children watch how you live. If they see you turning to God in prayer during stressful times, or hear you talking about God throughout the day as if He were in the room, they will catch that He is real. Don't wait for "church time" to talk about faith. Mention God during a walk, while driving, or when comforting them. When they see God as a constant, ever-present reality in your life, they are far more likely to embrace Him as the Reality of theirs.

By anchoring their faith in the living reality of God, you are bestowing upon them a foundation that cannot be shaken, ensuring that they will know the Shepherd's voice all the days of their lives.

Principle #2: Anchoring the Mind in Truth

Seize your post as a spiritual guardian, inviting the Holy Spirit to sharpen your conversations as you fight for the mental fortitude of your grandchildren.

"For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind."

— 2 Timothy 1:7 (NKJV)

Mind management is the engine of a person's life. What a grandchild thinks about, they eventually become. As a grandparent, you are uniquely positioned to act as a "thought-coach," helping them catch unhealthy thought patterns before they take root and spiral into harmful actions.

You can often diagnose your grandchild's internal thinking by watching their external behavior and listening to their words. When you hear something contrary to truth—whether it's self-pity, bitterness, or reckless ambition—you have the precious opportunity to step in. The goal isn't just to correct, but to help them *reframe* their perspective.

Here is how you can help anchor their thoughts through the different stages of their growth:

- **Age 5 (The Big Emotion Stage):** At this age, thoughts are often tied to immediate feelings. If they yell, "I hate my friend because they took my toy!" they are overwhelmed by frustration.
 - **The Mission:** Capture the surge. Your goal is to separate their identity from the temporary emotional storm.
 - **The Tactical Shift:** Validate the feeling, but immediately pivot to the truth of their character. Say: "I see you're upset, and that's okay. But remember, you are a kind friend, and one bad moment doesn't change that."
 - **Grandparent's Pro-Tip:** Consistency is your best weapon. Repeating their true identity helps it stick when the next storm hits.
- **Age 7 (The Social Comparison Stage):** They are starting to notice who is "better" at things or who is "cool." They might say, "I'm not good at anything" just because they lost a game.
 - **The Mission:** Target the comparison trap. Ensure they understand that their value is God-given, not performance-based.
 - **The Tactical Shift:** Anchor them in their unique design. Ask: "God made you with special strengths. Winning or losing doesn't change who you are. What is one way you used your gifts today?"
 - **Grandparent's Pro-Tip:** Affirm the effort, not just the outcome. Celebrate the "try" more than the "win."
- **Age 10 (The Reality Check Stage):** They may start struggling with fairness and authority, saying things like, "That's not fair, the teacher is mean to me."
 - **The Mission:** Strategic perspective-shifting. Help them move from "victim" to "observer" of their circumstances.
 - **The Tactical Shift:** Launch a curiosity strike. Challenge them to see the bigger picture: "It feels unfair, but why do you think the teacher made that choice? How can you show respect even when you're annoyed?"
 - **Grandparent's Pro-Tip:** The "Cool Head" strategy—remind them that the person who stays calm usually wins the day.

- **Age 13 (The Identity and Drama Stage):** The middle school years are turbulent. They may be consumed by peer drama or rejection, declaring, “No one likes me” or “I hate school.”
 - **The Mission:** Fact-checking the spiral. Stop the emotional tailspin by re-anchoring them in objective truth.
 - **The Tactical Shift:** Separate feelings from facts. Gently remind them: “I hear the hurt, but emotions aren’t facts. The truth is you are valued, loved, and this day is just one chapter, not the whole book.”
 - **Grandparent’s Pro-Tip:** Be the “Safe Harbor.” Don’t judge the drama; just be the stable ground they can land on.
- **Age 16 (The Independence and Purpose Stage):** This is the time for deeper conversations about the future, dating, and responsibility. They may struggle with pressure to conform, saying, “Everyone else is doing it.”
 - **The Mission:** Mission-critical discernment. Equip them to evaluate every influence against their long-term calling.
 - **The Tactical Shift:** Deploy the “End Game” question. Ask: “What is the end result of that path? Does that thought line up with the person you want to become in five years?”
 - **Grandparent’s Pro-Tip:** Respect their independence. Offer wisdom as a partner in their journey, not as an authority to be dodged.

By gently guiding them to evaluate their thoughts against truth, you are bestowing upon them the most powerful tool they will ever own: a balanced, anchored mind that reflects the wisdom of the Father.

Principle #3: Anchoring the Heart in Stability

Intercede with urgency, praying that the Lord equips your grandchild with a resilient spirit to master their emotions for His kingdom purposes.

“The Lord is near to those who have a broken heart, and saves such as have a contrite spirit.”
— Psalm 34:18 (NKJV)

Emotional maturity is not about the absence of feelings, but the ability to steer them rather than being steered by them. As a grandparent, you are a master of emotional regulation for your grandchild. While their world may feel chaotic and reactive, you can provide the “emotional harbor” where they learn to process feelings without letting those feelings dictate their actions.

The goal isn’t to suppress their emotions, but to help them identify, label, and bring them before God. Here is how you can help anchor their hearts through different stages of growth:

- **Age 5 (The Foundation of Labeling):** At this stage, emotions arrive like a storm—sudden, loud, and intense. They don’t have the vocabulary to explain why they are screaming, only that they are overwhelmed.

- *The Strategy:* Coach them to name the emotion. When they are melting down, stay calm and say, "You are feeling frustrated because your tower fell. It's okay to be sad when things break." By naming it, you reduce the power of the surge.
- **Age 7 (The Expression of Empathy):** They are beginning to realize that others have feelings too, but they often struggle to balance their own needs with those of others.
 - *The Strategy:* Teach the "pause button." When they are upset with a sibling or friend, ask, "How do you think your friend feels right now?" Help them move from "What do I want?" to "How can I handle this kindly?"
- **Age 10 (The Regulation of Reaction):** This is when emotional stakes rise. They may experience rejection or disappointment, which can lead to quick-trigger reactions like withdrawal or anger.
 - *The Strategy:* Model the 'prayer-first' response. When you are disappointed or frustrated, let them see you pause and pray. Teach them: "We don't have to act on the first wave of emotion. Let's talk to God about it before we decide how to respond."
- **Age 13 (The Depth of Internalization):** Emotions during these years feel magnified. They may try to hide their pain or project it through moodiness.
 - *The Strategy:* Create a "no-shame" safe zone. Encourage them to be honest about their feelings without being punished for them. "I know this feels like the end of the world. It's okay to feel that way. Let's look at the truth beneath the feeling together."
- **Age 16 (The Mastery of Stewardship):** By now, they are navigating complex social and personal pressures. The goal is to move from being reactive to being reflective.
 - *The Strategy:* Mentor them in stewardship. Ask them, "Your anger (or sadness) is a signal. What is it telling you? Is it helping you grow, or is it holding you back?" Help them realize that their emotions are data to be managed, not masters to be obeyed.

By anchoring their hearts in stability, you are gifting them a legacy of peace that surpasses all understanding, ensuring they remain steady in the storms of life under the watch of the Prince of Peace.

Principle #4: Anchoring Value in Eternal Things

Petition the Father to open their eyes to the high-stakes reality of eternity, valuing people and divine callings over the fleeting shadows of this world.

"For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

— Matthew 6:21 (NKJV)

In a world driven by consumption and convenience, helping your grandchildren discern true value is one of the greatest gifts you can provide. It is the ability to look past the price tag to see the worth of a person, a moment, or a legacy. As a grandparent, you have the opportunity to teach them the difference between "disposable" living—like using paper plates when you could be using fine china—and investing in things that endure, like heirlooms and shared experiences.

True value isn't found in a catalog; it's found in what lasts. It is the stewardship of time, the development of God-given talent, and the recognition that people are always worth more than things.

Here is how you can help anchor their perspective through the different stages of their growth:

- **Age 5 (The Shiny Object vs. The Shared Moment):** They are easily distracted by the latest "nic nac" or plastic toy that glitters, only to discard it by afternoon.
 - *The Strategy:* Begin teaching the value of *presence* over *presents*. When you play together, put your phone away. Tell them, "I choose to spend my time with you because you are worth more than any toy." Help them see that the moment you share is a treasure they get to keep forever, unlike the plastic item that breaks.
- **Age 7 (The Stewardship of Talent):** They are starting to understand that they are "good" at certain things (drawing, sports, reading) but may not yet see these as gifts to be valued.
 - *The Strategy:* Affirm their talents as contributions. Help them see that their ability to draw a picture for a sick friend or help a sibling is a valuable use of their talent. Explain that time and talent are like currency—you "spend" them on what matters most.
- **Age 10 (Heirlooms vs. Nic Nacs):** At this age, they can grasp the concept of family history. This is the perfect time to introduce the weight of an heirloom.
 - *The Strategy:* Show them a family heirloom and tell its story. Contrast this with a "nic nac"—a cheap, mass-produced item. "This ring/book/tool isn't valuable because it's expensive; it's valuable because of the people who held it before us." This teaches them that history and legacy add a layer of value that money cannot buy.
- **Age 13 (Paper Plates vs. Fine China):** They are beginning to navigate social pressures and "shortcuts." They may prefer the convenience of paper plates (doing the bare minimum) to the effort of fine china (doing things with excellence and intention).
 - *The Strategy:* Use this as a metaphor for character. "It's easy to live on paper plates—to take the easy path, the short answer, the gossip, the lazy choice. But there is a time for fine china—a time to show up, dress up, and act with excellence because the occasion and the people deserve your best."
- **Age 16 (The Value of Legacy):** They are preparing to launch into adulthood and are deciding what they will value most.
 - *The Strategy:* Help them evaluate their "time budget." Ask them, "If your time is your most limited resource, why are you spending it on [activity] when you could be investing in your future/relationships?" Challenge them to discern the difference between things that are merely "urgent" and things that are truly "valuable."

By teaching them to distinguish between the temporary and the eternal, you are bestowing upon them a perspective that will serve them for eternity—a legacy built on the treasures of God's kingdom.

Principle #5: Anchoring Character in Discernment

Operate with divine precision, relying on the Spirit to grant you the discernment to protect your grandchild's character from the destructive influences of the age.

"He who walks with wise men will be wise, but the companion of fools will be destroyed."
— Proverbs 13:20 (NKJV)

Wisdom is not just about what you know; it is about who you know and how you discern the character of those you let into your inner circle. Not everyone who behaves poorly is a "fool"—some are simply immature, still learning how to navigate the complexities of life. However, your grandchildren must learn the difference between someone who is growing and someone who is actively destructive.

Teaching your grandchild to anchor their character in discernment helps them protect their own peace and future. A "fool" in this context is someone who persists in harmful behavior, refuses correction, and creates a wake of pain around them. An "immature" person, conversely, is someone who makes mistakes but shows a desire to grow, apologize, and change.

Here is how you can help them navigate these distinctions through the stages of their life:

- **Age 5 (The "Mistake" vs. "Mean" Distinction):** At this age, children often confuse someone who is being silly or impulsive with someone who is being "bad."
 - *The Strategy:* Teach them to look for the "oops" versus the "intent." If a friend accidentally breaks a toy, that is a mistake (a learning opportunity). If a friend breaks a toy because they were angry and wanted to hurt the child, that is different. Help them understand that while we are kind to everyone, we don't have to play with people who use their hands or words to hurt others on purpose.
- **Age 7 (Identifying the "Silly" vs. "Mean"):** Children start to navigate social play where some kids test boundaries.
 - *The Strategy:* Use the "Safe-Person Test." Ask them, "Does this person make you feel happy and safe, or do they make you feel scared and worried?" Teach them that being a friend doesn't mean you have to go along with someone who is constantly breaking rules or being mean to others just to "be funny."
- **Age 10 (The Influencer Check):** By this age, the desire for acceptance is high. They may try to excuse bad behavior in friends because they want to fit in.
 - *The Strategy:* Discuss the "Fruit of the Tree." Ask them, "When you hang out with this person, do you come home feeling proud of who you were, or do you feel like you did things you shouldn't have?" Help them realize that true friends bring out the best in us, while "fools"—those who prioritize drama and destruction—drag us down to their level.

- **Age 13 (Distinguishing Immature vs. Foolish):** This is the stage where peer pressure peaks. They need to learn that "immature" is a stage of development, but "foolish" is a character choice.
 - *The Strategy:* Teach them to look for teachability. "Is this friend someone who listens when they've done something wrong, or do they get defensive and keep doing it?" If a person refuses to listen to correction or laughs at harmful choices, that is a person to keep at arm's length. Encourage them to be kind to everyone, but selective about who they trust with their secrets and their time.
- **Age 16 (Guarding the Future):** As they prepare to launch into adulthood, they must understand that their closest friends are the ones who will shape their character for years to come.
 - *The Strategy:* Help them evaluate their "inner circle." Ask, "If you spent all your time with this person, what kind of person would you become in a year?" Teach them that there is no obligation to stay close to those who consistently choose destructive paths. Wise discernment means knowing who to love from a distance and who to invite close enough to walk through life with.

By teaching them to discern between the growing and the destructive, you are bestowing upon them the wisdom to protect their purpose and the grace to walk in the company of the wise.

Principle #6: Anchoring Respect in Honor

Command respect by modeling the honor of Christ, showing your grandchild how to see every soul through the lens of their God-given value.

"Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king."

— 1 Peter 2:17 (NKJV)

Not everyone walks the same path, and teaching your grandchildren to recognize the diverse roles and experiences people bring to our world is a vital part of helping them navigate society with respect and insight. From community helpers to those who have built long-term commitments, helping your grandchild "see" the person behind the title or the role is a powerful way to anchor their social intelligence.

Here is how you can help them develop this understanding through the stages of their growth:

- **Age 5 (The Community Helpers Stage):** At this age, children learn by observation. They see people in uniforms and may not fully grasp what those roles mean.
 - *The Strategy:* Make "community appreciation" a game. When you see a police officer, firefighter, or mail carrier, explain, "They have chosen a job that helps keep us safe and connected. They work hard so we can have a better day." Help them see that people who serve the community are worthy of a polite "thank you" and respect.
- **Age 7 (The "Grown-up" Roles Stage):** They are beginning to notice more adult roles, like shopkeepers, teachers, or coaches.
 - *The Strategy:* Point out the "stories" of people they encounter. When visiting a local shop, say, "This business owner works hard to bring these goods to our

neighborhood; they are an important part of how our community thrives." This helps them move from seeing people as "service providers" to seeing them as neighbors with a purpose.

- **Age 10 (The Experience Stage):** This is when they can start to grasp the value of long-term commitment.
 - *The Strategy:* Introduce them to people with "life-experience" milestones. If you know someone who has been married for 30 years or served in a specific career for decades, facilitate a conversation or tell their story. "Did you know they worked as a nurse for 25 years? That means they have helped thousands of people feel better." Teach them to value the endurance and wisdom that comes with dedication.
- **Age 13 (The "Why" Behind the Work):** At this age, they are ready to think more critically about life choices and the impact of others.
 - *The Strategy:* Encourage them to look past surface interactions. "Look at how she listens to her customers; she has been doing this for years, and she treats everyone with care." Help them identify the qualities that make people "pillars" in a community—consistency, kindness, and hard work.
- **Age 16 (The Legacy of Character):** As they look toward their own future, they should be observing people who have "run the race" well.
 - *The Strategy:* Encourage them to interview or observe people you respect. Whether it's a grandparent who raised six children, a retired teacher, or a community leader, ask your grandchild: "What do you think makes that person someone others rely on?" This helps them discern the character traits that lead to a life well-lived.

Valuing Those Who Invest in You

It is vital to teach your grandchildren that people like coaches, teachers, and pastors are not merely authority figures to be obeyed, but "investors" who are pouring their time, wisdom, and energy into their lives. Recognizing this shift in perspective fosters a deep sense of respect and appreciation for the influence these individuals have on their development.

Help your grandchild value these efforts by practicing gratitude and honor. Encourage them to be "teachable"—to receive guidance with an open heart and a respectful spirit. When a child understands that someone is choosing to invest in them, they are more likely to respond with the respect and excellence that such an investment deserves.

Understanding the Strength in Overcoming

Respecting others involves recognizing their resilience, especially those who have overcome significant challenges in their lives.

- **Special Needs:** Teach them that "different" is not "less than." Help them see the unique strengths and perspectives that individuals with special needs bring to the world.
- **Wounded Warriors:** Use these stories to show courage. Explain that when someone serves and sacrifices for others, they deserve profound honor, regardless of the physical or invisible wounds they may carry.

- **Health Challenges:** Help them develop compassion for those battling illness or chronic pain. Explain that fighting through health struggles takes a daily, quiet strength that is often invisible to the outside world.
- **The Core Lesson:** Remind them that everyone is carrying a burden they cannot see. Teaching this early anchors their empathy and stops them from making snap judgments about others.

By teaching them to value each person's unique journey, you are bestowing upon them a spirit of honor, ensuring they reflect the heart of Christ to a world in need of His grace.

Principle #7: Anchoring Behavior in Wisdom

Navigate every environment as a scout for the Kingdom, leading your grandchild to walk with wisdom and holiness in a world that desperately needs their light.

"Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful."

— Psalm 1:1 (NKJV)

Your grandchild is an explorer, and their world is vast—ranging from the quiet of a library to the roar of a stadium. As their grandparent, you have the unique privilege of being their "travel guide," helping them understand that just as different settings require different clothing, they require different "social clothing" as well. This principle isn't about teaching them to be someone else; it's about teaching them to be *wisely themselves* in every environment they step into.

When you help them discern the "spirit" or the "vibe" of a place, you are giving them invisible armor. You are teaching them how to read a room, how to honor the people within it, and how to protect their own peace.

Here is how you can share this wisdom as a guide, not just a rule-maker:

- **Age 5 (The "Volume and Vibe" Game):** At this age, children see the world as one big playground. They haven't yet learned that a funeral home and a birthday party need different approaches.
 - *The Shared Adventure:* Before you head into a new building, play a quick "What's the vibe?" game. "Are we in a whisper-place or a cheering-place? Are we in a running-place or a walking-place?" This turns environmental awareness into a fun, low-pressure scavenger hunt for social cues.
- **Age 7 (Becoming a "Good Guest"):** They are starting to branch out into friends' homes, classrooms, and community centers.
 - *The Shared Adventure:* Introduce the concept of "Hosting and Guesting." When you are a guest, you are there to honor the culture that family or organization has built. Explain: "Every place has its own rhythm. Being a good guest means we pause, watch for a moment, and then move in harmony with how that place works."

- **Age 10 (The "God-Given Gut Check"):** This is when life starts to get a little more complex, and they may encounter "shady" situations where behavior feels reckless or "off."
 - *The Shared Adventure:* Teach them to trust their God-given instincts. Ask, "Does this place feel like it's growing good things, or does it feel like people are trying to hide what they're doing?" Help them understand that a fun environment should never make them feel like they have to "hide" their true character to fit in.
- **Age 13 (Building Up vs. Tearing Down):** Middle school years bring peer pressure, and they might find themselves in spaces that normalize gossip, disrespect, or rule-breaking.
 - *The Shared Adventure:* Ask the heart-check question: "Is this environment building you up, or is it slowly tearing you down?" Teach them that if an environment requires them to dull their shine or act in ways they wouldn't want you to see, that place is not for them.
- **Age 16 (Walking with Grace):** As they prepare for adulthood, they'll face high-stakes settings—interviews, solemn events, parties, and professional meetings.
 - *The Shared Adventure:* Mentor them in "Social Versatility." Frame it not as "faking it," but as "showing honor." Remind them: "Knowing how to act at a funeral versus a celebration isn't about being fake; it's about knowing how to show love to the people and the purpose of that room." It's the ultimate act of maturity.

A Note on Safety: Discerning Danger vs. Safety

Finally, teach them that some places carry real hazards, even if they look fun on the surface.

- **The Safe Environment:** You see respect, transparency, and people who are comfortable being their true selves.
- **The Shady Environment:** Secrets are kept, people are nervous or aggressive, and the atmosphere feels like it's built on "getting away with" something.

By teaching them to discern their environment, you are bestowing upon them the keys to navigate the world with holiness, equipping them to carry the light of His Presence into every room they enter.

Principle #8: Anchoring Ambition in Stewardship

Warrior in prayer for their destiny, nurturing their potential with the intensity of one who knows they are raising a leader for the next generation.

"And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men."

— Colossians 3:23 (NKJV)

One of the most profound gifts you can give your grandchild is the ability to distinguish between "activity" and "opportunity." In a world filled with endless distractions, helping your grandchild recognize that every moment and every decision is a seed for their future is a critical lesson. We must teach them that true success is not accidental; it is the harvest of choices made today.

As a grandparent, you are the voice of experience. You have seen that the path of least resistance is rarely the path of greatest reward. Your role is to help them anchor their ambition in

wisdom, ensuring they learn to invest their time in things that build a solid future rather than squandering it on temporary entertainment.

Here is how you can help them discern opportunity through the stages of their growth:

- **Age 5 (The Foundation of Focus):** At this early stage, children are learning that they can't do everything at once.
 - *The Strategy:* Introduce the idea of "choosing your best." When they have a choice between a quick, mindless game and building something creative with blocks or reading a book, ask, "Which one helps you grow?" Teach them that building a tower or reading a story builds their brain, and that is a special kind of opportunity.
- **Age 7 (The Value of Practice):** They are beginning to pick up hobbies. This is when they learn that "play" is good, but "practice" is how you get better.
 - *The Strategy:* Use the "Guitar vs. Games" analogy. If they are interested in music or sports, explain: "If you spend 30 minutes on a game, it disappears when you turn it off. If you spend 30 minutes learning a guitar chord or practicing a skill, that skill stays with you forever." Help them see that they are investing in *themselves*, not just passing time.
- **Age 10 (The Problem-Solver Mindset):** This is the age where they can begin to see that "problems" are actually doors to learning.
 - *The Strategy:* When they face a challenge, don't just solve it for them. Ask, "What's the best way to fix this?" Teach them that people who solve problems—who are curious and willing to think hard—are the ones who open the biggest doors in life. A "problem-solver" is a person who will always have opportunities waiting for them.
- **Age 13 (The Power of Preparation):** They are starting to look toward high school and beyond. This is the time to contrast different life paths without being judgmental, but by being realistic.
 - *The Strategy:* Have open, non-pressuring talks about the future. "You know, there is a big difference between just 'getting by' and getting an education. If you choose to study and work hard now, you are buying yourself choices later." Explain that trades, college, and skilled work are all paths of dignity that provide stability—unlike settling for a path that requires no effort and offers no growth.
- **Age 16 (The Visionary Perspective):** As they approach adulthood, they are making decisions that will echo for decades.
 - *The Strategy:* Help them look at the "end of the road." Ask, "If you spend the next five years developing a trade or a professional skill versus just drifting through a retail job, how do those two lives look different at age 25?" Teach them that there is no shame in any honest work, but there is immense wisdom in choosing a path that allows them to lead, create, and provide, rather than just "getting by."

The Core Lesson: The Stewardship of Time

Remind them often that time is the one resource they can never get back.

- **The Squanderer:** Treats time as something to be killed or burned through mindless distraction.
- **The Steward:** Treats time as an investment, knowing that the skills they sharpen today are the tools they will use to build their life tomorrow.

By anchoring their ambition in the stewardship of opportunity, you are bestowing upon them the vision to see that every effort is an act of worship, building a life that honors their divine calling.

Principle #9: Anchoring Discovery in Inquiry

Become a strategic mentor, listening with intent and leading with power to fuel a holy curiosity that seeks the deep wisdom of the Father.

"Counsel in the heart of man is like deep water, but a man of understanding will draw it out."

— Proverbs 20:5 (NKJV)

A "teller" delivers information; a "mentor" empowers the next generation to seek it. While any question can bring us a simple fact, it is the "good" questions that unlock the deep, true information necessary for navigating life. As a grandparent, your goal is to transition from being the one with all the answers to being the coach who teaches your grandchildren how to inquire. By helping them refine their curiosity, you ensure they have the tools to discern truth and wisdom in a complex world.

Here is how you can mentor them in the art of inquiry through the stages of their growth:

- **Age 5 (From "What" to "How"):** At this age, children are naturally inquisitive, but their questions are often repetitive or surface-level. They want to know "what" everything is.
 - *The Strategy:* Gently nudge them toward "how" questions. When they ask, "What is that bird doing?" encourage them to ask, "How do you think that bird finds its food?" This shift helps them look for processes and designs rather than just labels, teaching them that better questions lead to more exciting discoveries.
- **Age 7 (The Quest for Understanding):** They are beginning to experience social dynamics and may have many "why" questions when things don't go their way.
 - *The Strategy:* Teach them to ask questions that bridge gaps. If they are upset about a friend, coach them to ask themselves (or the friend), "How can I understand what you were feeling when that happened?" Teaching them to ask for the "why" behind a person's actions builds empathy and clarity.
- **Age 10 (The Information Filter):** At this stage, they are consumers of information from many sources. They need to learn that not all information is equal.
 - *The Strategy:* Introduce "Source Questions." When they tell you something they heard, ask them, "What questions did you ask to find out if that was true?" Encourage them to ask, "Where did this information come from?" and "Is there another side to this?" This anchors them in a pursuit of truth.
- **Age 13 (The Power of Peer Inquiry):** In the middle school years, peer influence is dominant. They need to learn how to ask questions that protect their character.

- *The Strategy:* Help them develop "Internal Boundary Questions." Coach them to ask themselves, "How does doing this align with who I want to be?" or "What will the result of this choice be in a week?" These internal questions act as a compass during turbulent social times.
- **Age 16 (Questions as Keys):** As they look toward the professional world and adult relationships, they must understand that the right question can open a door that a statement cannot.
 - *The Strategy:* Mentor them in "Professional and Personal Inquiry." Help them practice asking questions like, "What is the most important thing I can learn from your experience?" or "How can I best contribute to this team?" These questions show maturity, respect, and a desire for excellence that will distinguish them in any field.

By mastering the art of the good question, you are bestowing upon them the gift of spiritual hunger, equipping them to seek the hidden riches of God's wisdom throughout their entire lives. By mastering the art of the 'good' question, you are bestowing upon them the ultimate tool for lifelong learning, equipping them to navigate life with an anchored mind and an open heart, always ready to discover the wisdom God has placed in the world around them.

Principle #10: Anchoring Relationships in Peace

Stand as a vessel of reconciliation, training your grandchild to be a high-impact peacemaker who heals breaches and establishes the shalom of God.

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God."

— Matthew 5:9 (NKJV)

Conflict is inevitable in any human life, but broken relationships do not have to be. As a grandparent, you are a master of perspective—you have seen enough of life to know that most arguments are temporary, but relationships are eternal. Your role is not to protect your grandchild from conflict, but to equip them to navigate it with grace, integrity, and wisdom. By teaching them that conflict is an opportunity for repair rather than a reason for ruin, you are helping them build the resilience to handle the hardest parts of life. We want to teach them that the goal of a disagreement isn't to "win," but to restore harmony.

Here is how you can mentor them in the art of resolution through the stages of their growth:

- **Age 5 (The "Stop, Listen, and Tell" Stage):** At this age, conflict is usually physical—grabbing, hitting, or yelling. They don't yet have the words to describe their frustration.
 - *The Strategy:* Teach the "Pause and Reset." When they are in the middle of a conflict, step in and calmly say, "Stop. Let's take a breath." Help them label the problem: "You wanted the block, he wanted the block. That's the problem. How can we share it?" By slowing down the moment, you teach them that problems can be solved with words, not impulses.
- **Age 7 (The Perspective-Taking Stage):** They are starting to understand that other people have thoughts, but they often struggle to see beyond their own needs.

- *The Strategy:* Practice the "Switching Shoes" game. When they are arguing with a sibling or friend, ask, "If you were them, how would you feel right now?" Teaching them to put themselves in the other person's shoes is the fastest way to dissolve selfishness and move toward empathy.
- **Age 10 (The Win-Win Mindset):** This is the age where they can grasp that a solution doesn't have to be "my way or the highway."
 - *The Strategy:* Introduce the concept of "The Third Way." When they are deadlocked, say, "You want this, they want that. Let's find a third way that makes us both happy." This teaches them to be creative problem-solvers rather than combatants. It anchors them in the idea that cooperation is a superpower.
- **Age 13 (The "Person vs. Problem" Distinction):** Middle schoolers often turn disagreements into personal attacks. They need to learn that you can be angry about a situation without being mean to the person.
 - *The Strategy:* Use the "Issue Filter." Coach them to ask, "Is the problem the *person* or the *situation*?" If a friend makes a mistake, teach them to address the mistake while remaining kind to the friend. This protects their relationships from the damage of unnecessary escalation.
- **Age 16 (The Art of Reconciliation):** As they enter adulthood, they will face conflicts that are much bigger than broken toys—disagreements over values, boundaries, or trust.
 - *The Strategy:* Mentor them in "The Grace of Forgiveness." Help them see that forgiveness isn't about ignoring the wrong; it's about choosing not to let the bitterness rot their own heart. Teach them: "Reconciliation might take two people, but peace only takes one—you." Empower them to be the first one to say, "I'm sorry for my part," or "I want us to move past this."

The Core Lesson: The Peacemaker's Heart

Remind your grandchild that in a world where everyone is fighting to be "right," the person who knows how to resolve conflict is the most valuable person in the room.

- **The Combatant:** Focuses on proving they are right, often at the expense of the relationship.
- **The Peacemaker:** Focuses on understanding the truth and healing the breach, knowing that a restored relationship is worth more than a "win."

By teaching them to resolve conflict, you are bestowing upon them a deep, lasting peace. You are teaching them that character is defined not by how they act when things are easy, but by how they handle themselves when things are hard, leaving them a legacy of reconciliation that will heal generations to come.

Conclusion: The Grandparenting Advantage—Launching a Legacy

You have reached the end of these ten principles, but the real adventure begins the moment you put this book down. I want you to walk away with a shift in perspective: Grandparenting is not a retirement from influence; it is the culmination of your mission.

For too long, the culture has suggested that grandparents are the background characters in the family story. The truth? You are the strategic architects of your family's future. You stand at the incredible confluence of generations—holding the wisdom of the past, the love of the present, and the vision for the future. That is not just a role; it is a God-ordained, high-stakes, and deeply exciting assignment!

Think of the opportunity sitting in front of you. You have a unique, "built-in" channel of love to the next generation. You are not just hanging out; you are launching a lineage. You are the one who can anchor them when the culture shifts, who can speak truth when the world speaks noise, and who can model the reality of Jesus when the world offers only shadows.

As you move forward, seize this opportunity with everything you have:

- **Be Bold in Your Mission:** Don't play small. Your influence is not limited by your age; it is multiplied by your faithfulness. Every conversation about truth, every prayer offered over them, and every time you demonstrate character, you are placing a brick in the foundation of their future.
- **Embrace the Ripple Effect:** You are not just teaching one child; you are investing in a generation. The faith and discernment you pour into your grandchildren will, in turn, be poured into their own children and grandchildren. You are starting a ripple effect of godliness that will wash over your family for decades—and perhaps centuries—to come.
- **Trust the Victory:** There will be challenging days. There will be seasons where the world seems to pull them in the opposite direction. But never forget that you serve a God who loves them more than you do. You are not fighting for their future alone; you are standing in the victory that Christ has already secured for them. Your job is simply to point them to that victory, over and over again.

Go forward with the confidence of one who knows they are strategically placed for a purpose. Your home, your words, and your prayers are the headquarters for a legacy that will stand firm. You have the honor of shaping the future, one anchored moment at a time. This is your time. This is your mission. Seize it with joy!

"Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it."

— 1 Thessalonians 5:23–24 (NKJV)

THE CULTURE IS SHIFTING. YOUR MISSION IS STABLE.

Grandparenting is not a retirement from influence—it is the culmination of your life's mission. In a world of endless noise and shifting values, you hold the unique, God-ordained authority to be the anchor for the next generation.

If you have felt the burning conviction that your role is more than just "babysitting" or "visiting," this book is for you. **Strategic Grandparenting** is your high-stakes, tactical field guide to anchoring your grandchildren in truth, character, and faith.

Inside this book, you will discover 10 powerful anchors—strategic principles designed to help you:

- **Anchor their minds** in truth and mental fortitude.
- **Discern the difference** between fleeting trends and eternal values.
- **Mentor them** in the art of resolution and godly character.
- **Launch a legacy** that ripples far beyond your own years.

You are the strategic architect of your family's future. It is time to step into your assignment, seize your mission field, and launch a lineage that will echo into eternity.

Don't just watch the next generation drift—anchor them for victory!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Pastor William “Gino” Bryant is a seasoned shepherd, strategist, and mentor with over two decades of experience in pastoral ministry. As the Senior Pastor of Full Gospel Worship Center in Newport News, Virginia, Pastor Gino has dedicated his life to equipping the body of Christ, resolving conflict, and mentoring individuals to discover their divine purpose.

With a Master's degree in Theology and a heart for discipleship, Pastor Gino has trained hundreds of leaders, authored resources on marriage and ministry, and developed a vibrant online presence that brings the Gospel to thousands. He is a man who leads with grace, wisdom, and a profound commitment to the whole counsel of God's Word.

Above all, Pastor Gino is a man of family. He has been happily married to his wife, Donna, since 1997, and together they have raised two children who share their love for God's Kingdom. Drawing from his own upbringing, his years of ministry, and his deep respect for the legacy of his grandparents, Pastor Gino writes with the conviction that grandparenting is not a passive role—it is the most important mission field you will ever enter.

To learn more about Pastor Gino's ministry and access his teaching resources, visit www.fgwc.org.