



## The Vulnerables: Our Heritage Builders!

*By David Cook*

Attending a recent investment seminar with a group of retirees, I was asked whether I was a skier. I was astonished that many of my fellow attendees said they were skiers! Then the speaker added, 'a skier is one who Spends the Kids Inheritance'.

Government policy in Australia is that Pension Funds must be spent and not used as a means of passing on an inheritance. Up till this year this policy has proved a boon for the travel industry. Our population is ageing and this has led to the construction of many retirement villages ( in the US there are whole gated suburbs which allow only limited access of children at certain times of the year). Even Church services have become filleted by the use of 'traditional' and 'contemporary' as descriptors.

The poet Coleridge wrote 'what a melancholy world without children, what an inhumane world without the aged'.

Today I want to write about the importance the Bible gives to the place of grandparents as heritage builders. The Bible only uses the term grandparent twice, but speaks often of forebears, fathers' fathers and children's children. In Proverbs 4:3-9, Solomon says, 'when I was a son with my father David, the only son of my mother, Bathsheba, my father, David, your grandfather, said to me and I pass this onto you'.

We may not value David's fathering, with the affairs of state and defending his throne he must have been distracted, but Solomon remembers his influence and now passes it onto David's grandchildren. My father, your grandfather taught me:

Proverbs 4:5, get wisdom and insight whatever the cost. Prize her highly, make her your priority; And in 4:8. Thus, when God invited Solomon to ask for anything this urging of his father drove Solomon's request for wisdom.

In Proverbs 4:6, God tells Solomon in almost romantic terms, that wisdom is to be loved, never forsaken, and Solomon's descendants are to embrace her and stay faithful to her.

That is what Solomon remembers of his father and passes onto his father's grandchildren. In his Tyndale commentary on Proverbs, Derek Kidner writes that the grandparent demonstrates a love of the best things, transmitted by personal influence, along channels of affection!

Urge on our grandchildren that wisdom, referencing God, is the best foundation for a meaningful life. I offer these reflections:

The most effective youth workers and counsellors at the Katoomba Youth conventions were a couple who were then in their 60's. Age is no barrier to effectiveness. From my observation, this couple remembered names, listened well, spoke but didn't dominate the conversation and as far as I know, never criticised the present in the light of the good old days. They were bright and outgoing.

Filleted services are understandable but unfortunate, the young and old are impoverished by this lack of access to one another. The generations need to mix, how else can we fulfil Psalm 78? I had an elder who used to say, 'I'm giving while I'm living, so I'm knowing where it's going'. The next generation will inherit wealth eventually, so why not direct it their way while you are alive? Encouraging Bible College gap years, short term mission visits, intensive years in Christian colleges, participation in ministry apprenticeship schemes, could all benefit from grandparents' financial support.

PRAY! Regular prayer for grandchildren that they will be born from above and that in whatever vocation they choose they will

faithful servants of the Kingdom.

In the first 9 chapters of Proverbs there are 4 direct quotations, the criminal gang in 1:11ff; the tragic son in 5:12ff; the seductive harlot in 7:14ff; and here, the only positive words quoted, the words of Grandpa, 4:3-9.

They are well worth communicating by personal influence, along channels of affection.

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