

## The Perfect Grandfather

At Christchurch and in our ministry there is often an interlocking of lives through the years. One such case is the Troutman family. When I was a teenage preacher I often spoke at my Greek professor's church, Dr. Earl White who was a member of my dad's church when he was thirteen. One of the finest families in Dr. White's church was the Troutman family. When Keith was a six-year-old boy I was preaching a tent revival and during that week, he gave his heart to Christ. When Keith was a teen, my brother was the youth director at the same church.

Years later after Keith had met and married Beth, they moved to Houston where he eventually became one of our finest deacons. It was always good to see his dad, Kenneth and his mom, Maxine when they came down from out of state.

Last Sunday night at The Lord's Table, my mind reflected back to Kenneth Troutman and the fact that we shall see each other again. This in turn stirred Beth to give me a couple of recent articles that two of her kids wrote about their grandfather known as "Big Daddy." I placed the articles in my Bible and when I sat down on the airplane the next day, surrounded by the businessmen, I was deeply moved. These articles were written describing their grandfather as their hero and why he was revered as such. After drying my eyes, I came to the conclusion that this man was the perfect grandfather. Now we know, humanly speaking, none of us are perfect, but as a dad and grandfather, I, as well as you, my readers, might profit from the life of Big Daddy as seen through his grandchildren's eyes.

### **1. Be the best friend you can possibly be to your grandchildren.**

Proverbs 17:17 says, "*A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.*" This can be a very cold world out here. A grandparent's place should be a place that exemplifies unconditional and continual love.

I want to tell you what I think about grandparents and why they are so valuable especially in their older years. The closer we get to the grave, the more valuable we can become! When a person retires or gets older, their close friends become fewer. This is because of death and the infrequent times you are now together with people you at one time worked with. When this happens, family becomes closer. Then I have experienced this insatiable desire to impart to my kids and grandkids things God has taught me. It is far better to learn the hard-learned life lessons from the experience of Grandpa than to have to learn it the hard way yourself! In the long run, it will save time for youth to get on with the business of living life to the fullest. Not only that, we have developed some great memories with another generation, twice removed along the way! Listen to the words of Cole, "Kenneth Troutman, my hero, my best friend, my Grandpa. I mostly call him "Big Daddy" or "Big D" not because he was big, but because he loved me more than anything in the world."

### **2. Live for others.**

Tiffany writes, "Every year around Christmas, Big Daddy would dress up as Santa Clause and get in a train that he made himself and ride up and down the street making all the kids happy." Tiffany goes on to write that Big Daddy had to break his tradition of being Santa Clause to the neighborhood when they discovered his wife, Maxine had cancer and he was busy taking her to the doctor and administering medicine. I was touched that Tiffany explained that when her grandparents would visit, after her dad left for work, Big D would do some of the work that Keith would normally do. He was bent on even cleaning the gutters because he didn't want his grown son to fall off the ladder and get hurt. This was the Mr. Troutman I always remembered. Earl White told me more than once that Kenneth Troutman was the best deacon that ever lived. He lived up to his title as servant.

Romans 12:10 says, “*Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another.*” In both essays, the grandkids expressed how much fun he was and that if he were still here they would be having fun. How sad to see a person get old and cranky. This does not have to be! Live for others and be sweet. No wonder our image of Santa Claus is very similar to a kind old grandfather! When Santa legends began to be circulated there must have been a Big Daddy around who was used as a role model.

### **3. Leave a legacy.**

Tiffany writes, “Big Daddy was the best at building and repairing things. He made my first baby cradle that my brothers and sister slept in after me”. Cole writes, “He would take me to Chuck E. Cheese’s and he got his picture taken with me and gave me all the tokens I wanted to play games with.” The Psalmist said, “*Now also when I am old and grayheaded, O God, forsake me not; until I have shewed thy strength unto this generation, and thy power to every one that is to come*” (Psalm 71:18). David went on to say, “*We will not hide them from their children, shewing to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done*” (Psalm 78:4).

Two final thoughts come to mind. As I see the handy work of Mr. Troutman in his building things, we, like Kenneth Troutman, should build something that lasts, such as our testimony. Let your children and grandchildren take the good name you have lived up to and spend it like moral currency in this spiritually bankrupt world. Then create happy moments that spend like gold tokens in a world that far too often depresses her residents. The perfect grandfather leaves all the tokens behind!

- Pastor Pope -

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