

## **Chapter 43: Unconditional Love: The Lesson of a Grandchild**

### **Life Application Verses:**

**1 Corinthians 13: (NIV)** “ If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing. Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when completeness comes, what is in part disappears. When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me. For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known. And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.”

**L**ove is a powerful gift. It is a Gift from God. It is absolute Heavenly Minded, being from the Holy Mind of God; and it is Earthly Good, because it is a Holy Gift from God for us on Earth. What we do with Love is the crux to our existence. With that said, I wanted to speak about my grandchild and all grandchildren, in general. Let me speak to you for a moment on *Unconditional Love: The Lesson of a Grandchild*. [Lessons, that is...]

The first thing we need is to understand what unconditional is all about. While this topic is about grandchildren, it applies to many families, situations, and our Blessed children, grandchildren, parents, and friends. But...back to the grandchild. If you have ever had a little person of about 5 years of age ask you a question that made your heart ‘flutter’ because of the wisdom of the question, you will know of what I speak. Recently, I had the question asked of me: “Taterpop, will you Go to God one day?” You see, we have been talking to our granddaughter about God and Jesus since she was much younger, and she is beginning to ask questions about God, Jesus, where they live, who are they, and those types of things. Another similar question was asked of Nana: “Before you go to God, Nana, will you give me a hug and kiss?” When she holds out her arms for our hugs and kisses, there is no condition to those things. She loves because she is loved without conditions placed on that love.

Today, as this is written, it is July 17<sup>th</sup>, 2014. She was born on this date, five years ago, in the afternoon at about 3:30p.m. Seeing her then as a newborn was like **witnessing** God's Hand at Work in our lives; seeing her today at 5 years old, is like **watching** God's Hand at Work in our lives. This little person reminds me of what it must be like to stand alongside an Angel. God gives us so many examples in His Word of Angels at work in the lives of ordinary Christians to help us become extraordinary. So it is with my granddaughter. When I talk to her in her innocence at her age, I imagine what Heaven must be like for us in the Presence of a Most Holy and All Powerful God. With the wave of a Hand, God can move mountains or place the stars in the Heavens. Yet, who am I that He gives me evidence to believe that His love is like the love of my granddaughter? Unconditional. Oh, now don't confuse unconditional love with being a rascal. Okay, Ken, you lost me here...

Our children and we ourselves are very capable of being rascals. Rascal tendencies include ill tempers, having a bad day, being agitated, and several other descriptors for how we can become at times. Even my little granddaughter, at times, can be a rascal. Nana and I work with her, talk to her, encourage her, explain why this 'rascaling' is not a good thing, and so forth. Even in the midst of her rascal tendencies, Nana and I never---let me reiterate this---NEVER stop loving our angel. We love her before being a rascal, during being a rascal, and knowing that future 'rascaling' will take place. We place no conditions on how we love her, why we love her, or that she must be like 'this or that' for us to love her with all that we are! Our love is 100% without condition on that love. So is God's Love for us, even when we are 'rascaling' and sinful. He doesn't desire the sin in our lives, but He never stops His Love for us. Therefore, let me identify and talk about Lessons of a Grandchild.

Lesson #1: The 'Go To God' Question. Death is something that we don't really care to dwell on as grandparents. We know, however, that our lives are getting up in age, ailments are more likely, and we—more often than not—are beginning to learn the prospects of bi-and-tri-focals! (I have to believe Heaven has no such things!) We know that sooner than later at our ages, God will sooner than later, call us Home to be with Him and Christ Jesus at the Right Hand of our God. With that said, when my little 5 year old granddaughter asked me recently if I would one day Go To God, the lesson I learned was this: use every moment as if it is the last moment. IN

other words, never miss an opportunity to hug, laugh, play, Pray, and enjoy my time with my granddaughter. In doing this, if I were to suddenly Go To God, I have left very little undone with her. I call her my Little Buddy, and I want my Little Buddy to know that TaterPop never forgot about her and he never forgot to fulfill his promise to God to Pray for her before God, in Christ Jesus, by Lifting her up to Lord in Prayer often. In fact, TaterPop has asked God to protect her and keep her from harm by Claiming Her for Him. If it is my time to Go To God, I want to ensure that I have done all that I could with the time I had to make sure she knows that God Loves her, Jesus Loves her, and she is not—nor will she ever be—unloved by us and God and Jesus. When Nana and I Go To God, my Little Buddy will not be unsure of our Heavenly Home. She taught us to remember God, be prepared, and to give her a hug and kiss before we Go To God. What a lesson, Little Buddy!

Lesson #2: Play Like You Mean It. In the time that we are Blessed to have before we Go To God, our granddaughter is a hard playing little girl. She is intent on having fun when she plays and when she laughs that big-little burst of full-bodied laughter, I am amazed at her enjoying life to the fullest—or what I would cite as the lesson of ‘play like you mean it.’ Well, that idea translates into our Christian lives: Be an extraordinary Christian like you mean it! Don’t stand around the edges of what is Heavenly Minded, resulting is ‘some’ Earthly Good. Jump in the Deep End of the Christian Life, get involved, play like you mean it!!! And, you know that when I use the metaphor of ‘play like you mean it’, this has Eternal implications! When my Little Buddy wants to play, I just have to ‘gear-up’ and get-with-the-program! When God wants my Life to count for Earthly Good, I must play like I mean it, ‘gear-up’ and get-with-the-program!

Lesson #3: The Investment of Love. When you invest money in an account, you hope it makes a bit of interest. When you work on a project, you hope it produces positive outcomes. When you follow the law, you hope it keeps you out of harm’s way legally. When you give to your community, you hope it helps others in any number of ways. And, when you love your grandchild unconditionally, you hope it builds love in that child. My Little Buddy gives back exponentially in the love we invest in her. When she gives us that hug or little kiss, we know that she has learned that she is loved by TaterPop, Nana, Mommie, and Daddy. She knows that God loves her, Jesus loves her, and Sierra the Dog loves her. (Yes, the pets are important too!).

The lesson that we have learned is simple: invest not, want not! Let me say it like this: if you invest money, you must set aside money to invest with an expectation for growth, right? If you want your child or grandchild to learn love, you must invest love in that child or grandchild. Pretty simple, eh? Now, step up to Heavenly Minded expectations. God invested in us Salvation in Christ, right? If we accept it, that is... If we are Born Again, He has an Investment of Love in us and we must be Earthly Good to show that Love...by giving back tenfold. My Little Buddy gives back more than I can measure, and oh how Glorious is that love. And oh how Glorious is the Love of Christ Jesus on the Cross! How great is this Love? Please re-read The Life Application verses.

Lesson #4: When She Hurts, I Hurt. Recently, we had one of those days when my Little Buddy and I had the day to ourselves. Her mommie and Nana went shopping for a beach trip, and me and Little Buddy played up a storm. We made a mess of the house, but we had FUN!!!! (it was straightened up in a day or so!) At lunch time, we went out to *Chick-Fil-A* to get some nuggets and waffle fries (and a milkshake---pssst...don't tell anyone). When we got back, we were at the kitchen table and were getting our plates ready for lunch. My Little Buddy slipped off her chair and fell on the floor. Thank God, she was not hurt, less a small bruise on her left arm, but I was hurting from head-to-toe and in Heart and Soul. You see, when she is hurt, falls, gets a 'boo-boo', has a stuffy nose, cries, gets a sad face, sick, or any other thing that is detrimental to her in even the smallest way, I 'cry.' My heart breaks, I feel her pain, and I even Pray to God that if she is going to experience anything that causes her pain, heartache, or sadness, let that fall on me. When she fell from the chair, the first thing I did was to make sure she was not hurt. She said her arm was a little 'stingy' but it was okay. The very next thing she did was to come to me and let me hold and hug her and give her comfort. I talked to her, held her tight to let her know TaterPop was there for her, and made very sure she was not hurt. We forgot about play, lunch, or laughter. Our sharing time was to love and comfort each other and when she was hurting and unsure of what had just happened, I was hurting and unsure of what had just happened. The lesson here is that when we are hurting, we should not get angry at God. If we are honest, does that not become a tendency that we exhibit? The first thing Little Buddy did, after she realized what had just happened, was to come right over to TaterPop and seek

comfort and a voice of assurance that it was okay in her life. Is that not what God wants us to do? I cannot imagine that the God of Love, Grace, Mercy, and the Provider of our Salvation in Christ Jesus, would not want us to seek Him for comfort and a voice of assurance that it is okay in our lives, can you? I am unwilling to even consider that Jesus would not desire for us to Remember His sacrifice on the Cross for our Sins, because that Gift draws us to Him daily, for comfort, assurance, and Salvation. My Little Buddy was hurting, embarrassed, and needed TaterPop—I was going to be there for her to share her pain, embarrassment, and need for comfort: so, I remind us all—is the Heart of God in Christ Jesus.

Lesson #5: 'I Get To Missing Her'. I think someone said once that the heart grows fonder in the absence of being with someone we love. When my Little Buddy is not here, I get to missing her. She only lives a stone's throw (literally) from our house, so I could go out the driveway door and shout, "I Love You Little Buddy!" The neighbors might look at me like I have cut the grass too much in the hot sun, but that's how close they live. Yet, if I go even a day or two without seeing her, I really start to miss her little voice, her calling my name, and those small hugs and kisses that are so precious to me! The lesson I learn from this is simple: Do I miss God or Jesus like this? When I go a day or two without Prayer, Fellowship, or Scripture reading, do I miss those things? Do they cause me to long for Fellowship with God, which is a special time of sharing, not just the everyday 'talking' with God. I can talk to my Little Buddy on the cell phone, but that is not going to help much when I get to missing her! Being with her, talking to her, hugs, and little kisses—that's the stuff of Life More Abundantly. So it is with my Prayer Life, Fellowship, and Bible Study. I hope we all 'get to missing Him' when we fail to do these things. Jesus gave Himself for us and God's Love is within a 'stone's throw', if we but go out on the driveway and shout, "I Love You my Lord Jesus." The neighbors need to hear this from us without shame!

Lesson #6: Love, Revisited. The last part of 1 Corinthians 13 is: "And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love." Faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior; Hope of a Heavenly Home, where tears and pain and sorrow no longer have a hold on us; and, Love—the greatest of these is Love. My Faith in Jesus Christ leads me to Father God, to Hope and Pray that He will care for my Little Buddy for all her days, that she may know Him in His fullness. Her unconditional Love has shown me The Life Application verses; it has shown me

Heavenly Minded fulfillment of God’s Love in Christ Jesus, and caused me to be Earthly Good in how I love her in return. The lesson is that she has shown me that Love is the greatest of all things, for without love, Hope and Faith are but ‘clanging symbols.’

Lesson #7: Sharing. This final lesson (and there are others) is about sharing. My Little Buddy is inquisitive. She amazes me that a 5-year old is asking advanced-type questions about life, love, Heaven, and friendships. Between her mommie, daddy, TaterPop, and Nana, we have all shared with her since she was born. We’ve talked to her about so many things, explained more than many things, and answered why so many times, I think we have responded to more why’s than there are Stars in the Heavens?! Yet, we have learned that when we share with Little Buddy, she grows Spiritually, Mentally, Psychologically, and Physically. We’ve shared our love, knowledge, why it’s important to be safe, God and Jesus in Bible Stories and Prayers, and soon we will share the opportunity to accept Jesus Christ and be Born Again. The lesson that we have learned from this little person is that sharing these truths is needed by so many in our world today. She is only 5 now, but her questions have given us insight into sharing our Faith, Hope, and Love to a dying and lost world.

**A Question of Curiosity:**

Grandchildren are not to be spoiled and sent home, even in jest. They are as precious as our own daughters and sons, and their very lives depend on unconditional love. My wife and I have been blessed with two Little Buddies—and God has given us these Angels to nurture, love, and guide. Should we do any less for our grandchildren than we did for our children?

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**Deuteronomy 4:9** “Only be careful, and watch yourselves closely so that you do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them fade from your heart as long as you live. Teach them to your children and to their children after them.”

The greatest legacy one can pass on to one's children and grandchildren is not money or other material things accumulated in one's life, but rather a legacy of character and faith.

~ **Billy Graham** ~

Grandparents are similar to a piece of string - handy to have around and easily wrapped around the fingers of their grandchildren. ~ **Author Unknown** ~

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**My Prayer For You:**

Heavenly Father, my prayer is that all grandparents might read again the verses You have given us. I pray that this time they might read it as they think of their grandchildren: "If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing. Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when completeness comes, what is in part disappears. When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me. For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known. And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love." In Christ Name, Amen.

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