

Living a Legacy

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Being a new grandmother, as some of you know, is my new favorite role. Reese is only six months old and like most babies commands the attention of everyone in the house and we are more than happy to satisfy her every desire. I know I'm not the only grandparent who wants to meet the needs and wants of their grandchild. I see parents and grandparents on a daily basis going to great lengths to provide their baby with the latest and greatest whether it is items in their nursery, the clothes they wear, the carrier they ride in or the preschool they attend. Parents pore over and intentionally make these choices. Do we as parents and grandparents spend as much time poring over and intentionally planning for this same baby's spiritual development?

As I think about attending her "Baby Blessing" in a couple of weeks, I am ever so aware of my influence as Reese's grandmother in her spiritual growth. I wonder how many other parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles attending will be thinking about how they will influence these infants spiritually. How much will their own faith play a role in their parenting or grand parenting? Research shows not the majority. "The vast majority of parents hope their children grow up to live good lives, but for many, parental success does not include faith in God – even among parents who are evangelical Christians", according to a study from LifeWay Research by Mark Kellyon, 2009.

As a Minister to Women, I am ever so aware of my responsibility to help mothers, grandmothers, aunts and care-givers know and live what God's Word has to say about our responsibility to lead the next generation and to provide a plan, resources and support as they take this responsibility seriously. Deuteronomy 6 expresses God's expectation for all parents – to lead their children to love Him above everyone and everything else. Psalms 78 tells us to pass down to our children the things we have heard and know and that our parents have passed down to us. We are to tell the next generation of the praises of the Lord, His might, and the wonderful works He has performed. Titus 2 clearly tells us as older women how to act and to teach what is good so that we may encourage younger women to love their husbands and children.

Women's ministry has a unique opportunity to equip women and women's ministry leaders to:

- **Be Real:** Evaluate our own personal strategy for equipping the next generation living at or near our home address. The question of authenticity is, "Does Lesa Floyd effectively disciple her own children/grandchild?" "How am I intentionally leading my own young adult children and my granddaughter spiritually, my neighbors, my co-workers as a mom as a grandmother not as a ministry leader."

In Women's Ministry: Teaching women through offering life-changing Bible studies. Constantly asking our women: "What spiritual truths are you learning? What is God asking you to do with this truth? Are you leading out spiritually in that truth teaching it to others?"

- **Be Relevant:** Adjust our lives and the ministry to and with women in our church to God's plan for spiritual development in the home. Ask ourselves: "Does our existing ministry to and with women present opportunity or obstacles for a strategic partnership between church and family? Am I willing to think not addition but subtraction? Is the Women's Ministry willing not to do some

things that compete with this strategy? We must learn to align and simplify our ministries to give women and their families time to have faith talks, celebrate spiritual milestones and make the most of where they see God at work in their lives.

- **Be Relational:** Work with other ministry leaders to be a part of an integrated team that plans and embraces a strategy that engages every Christian home in the spiritual formation of the next generation. Form a generational team made up of all those who are responsible for equipping a particular generation of people in the church {Children, youth, men, women, adult small group leaders} led by the Discipleship Pastor. Work together to rethink the strategy for your church's context and culture allowing God to show you a clear simple path for spiritual development that will be unique to your church. Provide for and encourage opportunities for personal ministry in the church, in the community and in the world. One of the best ways to stimulate faith is to give them the opportunity to be a part of something bigger than themselves an experience that not only allows them to sense God but to experience what God wants to do through them.

"As leaders and parents, our primary calling is not to keep our children in the church, but to lead them to be the church." Reggie Joiner

Resources for teaching women:

Mentoring:

- *Woman to Woman Mentoring*, Janet Thompson
- *A Garden Path to Mentoring*, Esther Burroughs
- *Table for Two: Doing Life and Savoring Scripture Together*, Amy Pierson and Mona Corwin

Womanhood:

- *True Woman 10: Divine Design: An Eight-Week Study on Biblical Womanhood*, Nancy Leigh DeMoss, Mary A. Kassian

To love their husbands:

- *For Women Only*, Shaunti Feldhahn
- *Power of a Praying Wife*, Stormie Omartian
- *Women Making a Difference in Marriage*, Lana Packer

To love their children:

- *Mom to Mom Ministry* resources, Linda Anderson
- *5 Conversations You must have with your Daughter*, Vicki Courtney
- *Bringing up Boys and Bringing up Girls*, James Dobson
- *Power of a Praying Wife*, Stormie Omartian
- *Faith at Home Mom*, Maria and Mark Holman
- *Spiritual Parenting*, Michelle Anthony

To provide opportunity to be the church:

- *Nehemiah*, Kelly Minter
- *Crazy Love*, Francis Chan
- *Radical*, David Platt

Other Faith at Home Resources:

- *Think Orange*, Reggie Joiner, David Cook
- *Shift*, Brian Haynes

- *Transforming Children into Spiritual Champions*, George Barna
- *It Starts at Home: A Practical Guide to Nurturing Lifelong Faith*, Kurt Bruner and Stephen Stroepe