

## The Newborn Promise Podcast

### Episode 28: Shepherding Your Grandchild's Heart with Margy Tripp

Audra Haney: Thanks for tuning in to the Newborn Promise podcast, a production of Graham Blanchard, Incorporated. You are listening to an interview with Margy Tripp called Shepherding Your Grandchild's Heart. For today's show notes, transcript and more information about your Newborn Promise Project, please visit [GrahamBlanchard.com](http://GrahamBlanchard.com).

Welcome back to the Newborn Promise podcast. I am Audra Haney, and we are so excited about today's topic. In our work at Graham Blanchard, we've been passionately aware that when a baby is born, new parents are born, too, and with that, new grandparents. We couldn't think of a better guest to talk on this topic than Margy Tripp. Margy was the co-founder of Shepherding the Heart Ministries, along with her husband, Dr. Tedd Tripp, who was featured on our program earlier this year. Margy was also the founder and principal of Immanuel Christian School, where she served for 17 years, and had a faithful voice in the lives of parents. And her best credential? Today, she is the proud grandmother of nine grandchildren.

We think you'll find her both encouraging and challenging as she faithfully points you back to the heart of Jesus, and the great work he has for grandparents. Here's our interview with Margy.

Margy, thank you so much for joining us today. It is an honor. We so enjoyed having your husband, Dr. Tedd Tripp, and benefited so much from his wisdom. We know the same will be true of your interview today. But before we get started on this lovely topic of grandparenting, would you mind telling us a little bit about your family?

Margy Tripp: Sure. I'd be happy to. We have grown children. Our children are all in their 40s. We have two sons who are married to dear, precious women who we see as our own daughters. We have nine grandchildren who are between the ages of 20 and 10, and we have one daughter who is unmarried. They all live close by, so we have the great privilege of spending a lot of time with our children and grandchildren. I know not everyone has that privilege so we really count it as a privilege and take every opportunity that we can to be with them.

Audra Haney: That is so wonderful. I do remember Dr. Tripp sharing that all of our grandchildren were so close ...

Margy Tripp: Yes.

Audra Haney: ... and I know there are a lot of grandparents listening that are trying very hard not to be jealous, but it does sound like you have a beautiful family. I would also love to hear more about your ministry with your husband, Shepherding The Heart Ministries. You have been involved with that for so long. What made you and Dr. Tripp so passionate about that work?

Margy Tripp: Well, I believe that in the early years of our marriage in the '70s, '80s, and '90s, we were raising our children, for one thing. We were in pastoral ministry, so we had loads of young children in our church. At one time, we had I think a hundred or so children under the age of 12 ...

Audra Haney: Wow.

Margy Tripp: ... which is a lot.

Audra Haney: Yeah.

Margy Tripp: At the same time, we started a Christian school in the last '70s, and so, we were confronted with child-rearing issues everywhere we look.

That was really part of our passion. It was out of necessity, but there were also ... We had a desire to apply our growing understanding about the heart raising children. We were confronted in those years with the idea of getting under the skin. That's how we used to talk about it, getting under our children's skin with the Gospel. Of course, as time went on, we came to understand that what we were really after was getting to our children's heart, and so, we had a passion that I think was born of the fact that this was new to us.

This was something we had not experienced before. Our parents were wonderful and godly people, but they were more focused on our behavior, and for good reason. But this idea of getting to the heart, of doing something other than challenging external behavior was very, very exciting to us. So I would say that was what created the passion that we felt then and which has continued.

Audra Haney: I love that and it makes it so authentic. Now, let's move on to grandparenting. With nine grandchildren, you must be pretty seasoned, and you guys must be the greatest grandparents. For our audience, we have to remember that when couples become new parents, their parents become new grandparents, and we hope these excited new grandparents are listening today. What are some of the things that surprised you most about becoming a grandparent?

Margy Tripp: Oh, that's a good question. Well, first of all, let me say I'm sure we're just the average grandparents, but I think in terms of surprises, I think that probably the thing that surprised us the most was we thought it would be wonderful. We looked forward to it, but I don't think anything can really prepare you for the great joy that it is to see this dear child, to see the product of your children's marriage, and the just unparalleled joy that you feel as a grandparent I think surprised us more than we expected to be surprised, just that joy of being new grandparents.

Audra Haney: That's so beautiful. What were also some surprising challenges you faced as a new grandparent?

Margy Tripp: Well, I think probably the greatest challenge for Christian grandparents is not overindulging your grandchildren. Because you love them so much, I think you just feel so overwhelmed and wanting so badly to express your love for them, that it's very easy to overindulge them in wrong ways. I always said you can spoil your grandchildren, but you can't love them too much.

I think that the distinguishing between genuine love that is not focused on your desire to express your joy, but it's focused on their wellbeing, what will cause them to grow in their understanding of God, in their understanding of their place in their family, of their understanding of themselves, of Christianity.

Audra Haney: That's great advice, and I can definitely see where that would be a challenge. Is there any other advice you'd give to a new grandparent that's listening?

Margy Tripp: I think that another area that is an area for grandparents is that we kind of expect that our children are going to grow up and they're going to want to be just like us. That's really not true. They're going to have their own taste and style. They're going to have their own way of organizing their home, and it's easy for us to get kind of unseated by that. I think we need to just say, you know, whatever choices they make, whatever direction they go with their children, we're going to not only pray for them, but we're going to support them.

Obviously, our desire is that they be walking in a Christian path, but, of course, many grandparents have the experience of their children not knowing the Lord. I think still even there, having them know we love you unconditionally and our desire is to support you in every way we can, always be determined to underscore their parenting goals, rather than undermining them as parents.

Many parents come to Tedd and I when we do seminars and say, "Can you help us? Our problem is not our children. Our problem is our

parents. They're always saying things like this to our children. 'I know that your mom and dad don't like this, but when you're at my house, you can do whatever you want.'" That cuts the legs out from under parents and it's very discouraging to parents because they feel like they can't even enjoy their parent's interaction with them because they're always having to be so wary about the grandparent's influence on their children.

I think that's another thing. We want to also commend our children for their effort. We want to express our respect for them, our appreciation for them, wherever we can, even if we don't agree with what they're doing. As long as they're not doing destructive thing, that's another conversation. Where we can, we want to in every way express our respect to them, our appreciation for them, even if they're not going about things exactly the way that we would.

Audra Haney:

That's so powerful. You and Dr. Tripp did a very faithful job in shepherding your children's hearts, but how can grandparents help spiritually shepherd the hearts of their grandchildren?

Margy Tripp:

Oh, shepherding our grandchildren's hearts. Well, I think that probably relationships is what is the most important, I think making time for our grandchildren, keeping engaged with them. Because relationship is what enables us to have influence, both in our children's lives as they grow into their teenage years and young adulthood, but also I think it's true for our grandchildren. If we as Christian grandparents want to maintain influence in their lives, we've got to use our energy and our time and our resources. I don't just mean financial resources. I mean everything that is us. We've got to use those things in our children's lives.

I've heard grandparents say, "Oh, they don't care about me," and kind of have a self pity party that says, "You know, I can't get my children to care about spending time with me and so forth." Well, I think it's because they haven't been proactive in their relationship with their grandchildren.

Now, I don't want to make it too simple. I know there are difficult circumstances where grandparents long to be involved in their grandchildren's lives. But I think, typically, when we are willing to use ourselves up to pursue relationship with our grandchildren, we can remain influential in their lives. We can gain the right to have a voice in their lives and pursuing them, rather than expecting them to pursue us.

Audra Haney:

You know the reality is some grandparents have that hurdle of distance to overcome when it comes to building relationships with their grandchildren. What are some ways that they can still foster powerful relationships with their grandchildren, even if distance is a factor?

Margy Tripp: Now, obviously, if we lived close by, like we do with our children, that's easy because we attend their football games and their concerts, their plays, and that's a great joy. But often, grandparents say, "Well, that's great for you, but what about me?" They go, "I live on the other side of the world." They are missionaries on a mission field, or "They live on the East Coast and I live on the West Coast, how can we help?"

Well, I think we because ... Let me just say this, this is a great use of technology, we live in an age where we can get on the phone and we could be looking at the people we're talking to. What a blessing for us. What a great joy for us to be able to look at our grandchildren and look them in the eye, even though over the internet. To look into their eyes and tell them we love them and talk to them and smile at them and show them our love for them and inquire about them.

Of course, everything from snail mail to texting and all the new technology that children are so into are ways that I think as grandparents we need to overcome our natural resistance to and figure out how to do it so that we are sufficiently relevant in this new age of technology that our grandchildren say, "Oh, how cool. I got a text from my grandmother." I think that we live in an age where we can stay connected and that is what makes the difference. Stay connected. Don't expect them to connect to you. Be proactive. Pursue them. Get connected to your grandchildren.

Audra Haney: In addition to the power of just building those relationships, talk to me about the power of prayer. What kind of impact do you think a grandparent's prayers can play in the life of their grown children and their grandchildren?

Margy Tripp: My father was a pastor and my mother was a pastor's wife. We know that from before the time me and my four siblings were born, my parents prayed for us daily, and they never stopped praying all through our childhood, through our children's childhood and through their children's childhood until they went to be with the Lord. We knew that they were praying for us, and that not only was power for them as they pray, but it was powerful in our life. Our children and our grandchildren know that as long as their grandparents and great-grandparents were alive, they were praying.

Audra Haney: Margy, I love that. In that, how do you see grandparents as uniquely positioned to serve as prayer partners for their children and their grandchildren?

Margy Tripp: Oh, I think it's a wonderful privilege. It's an exceptional opportunity for a number of reasons. Number one probably because we're grandparents we've lived a long time, and so, we have some perspectives on life, we have some life experience that helps us look at

the circumstances of our children's and our grandchildren's lives with probably more wisdom than they might have yet. Not because we're better than they are, but just because we've lived longer and we've gone further down the road. We've walked with the Lord for a longer period of time. We've learned the hard lessons of life. We've learned how to find the cross in our time of need.

I think the other side of that coin is that we need to be active prayer partners with our children and their grandchildren. We need to ask them for prayer request. When I talk to my two granddaughters who are now away from home, when I talk to them on the phone or send them an email, or more likely a text, I say, "How can I pray for you?" I want them to tell me how I can pray for them, both because that tells them I'm praying for them, and it gives them an occasion for thinking about, "What are my prayer needs?" Because I want them to be actively thinking about their prayer needs.

Audra Haney:

Yes. Margy, thank you so much for sharing that. I have loved this conversation with you today. Speaking of prayer, can you please just close out our time today, praying for these new grandparents as they step into the beautiful new role of grandparenting?

Margy Tripp:

I'd be happy to. Let's pray. Lord, we come to you with such thanksgiving for the fact that you've made us part of the family of God. We know that part of the reason why you used familial terms in order to express your love for us as the heavenly father, Christ worked for us as a brother, the relationship between Christ and the church as a bride and bridegroom is because you have created the family. You've created the family to be a picture of what it means to be part of the family of God. What a privilege.

We thank you for this, Lord, and we pray that for the people who are getting this podcast, that you would bless them with every spiritual blessing as they listen to this thing, not because of my word, but because you are our heavenly father, who has given us in your word ways to live, ways of thinking about our roles and our responsibility, that not only bring glory and honor to your name, but they cause us to live out our lives, which we'll prepare for glory in ways that are whole and joyful and pleasing to you and to create in our home and in our family, even in our extended family, great love and great enjoyment of what it means to be a child of God.

Lord, I pray for the parents who are listening. I pray, Lord, that you would give them hope in you, as they raise their children. I pray, Lord, that you give them wisdom and insight first into your words, and then, into their children. I pray, Lord, that they would have the mind of Christ, that always has us in mind, rather than himself.

Lord, I pray for grandparents as they think about their children and their grandchildren as they watch from afar. Lord, I pray that you would give them hearts of love and prayer for their children and grandchildren that cause them to be daily in prayer. That cause them to hear [inaudible 00:20:15] their energy and their time, whether they lived close by or far away, to pray for and to engage in every way possible for Christ kingdom, these precious lives, that they have the privilege and responsibility to partner with.

Lord, we pray that you would give courage and hope. We pray, Lord, that you [inaudible 00:20:49] parents and grandparents whose children or grandchildren have strayed from you. Lord, we pray that you would give them the comfort of your love. Your words says in Psalm 34 that you draw near to the broken-hearted and you save those who are crushed in spirit. Lord, we pray that you would draw near to those who are suffering in those way and give them hope. Give them hope not in circumstances or people, but give them hope in you. And give them the courage to pray daily with great hope for those they love.

Lord, we pray that we would be used as grandparents and parents to raise up a holy seat for your church and in this very challenging 21st century, that we would be people who are making a difference, not only for now, but for eternity. We thank you for Christ's sake. Amen.

Audra Haney:

Thank you, grandparents, for joining us today and your passion to pour spirituality into the lives of your family. You have been our honored guest and we are praying for you in your new role. To learn more about your Newborn Promise Project and our beautiful solid spiritual resources for children ages zero to seven, please visit [grahamblanchard.com](http://grahamblanchard.com).