

# Voices: Godly grandmas and God's good

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When I was a young child, my German grandmother told me all you can hope to be in life is a good man. When I turned 18, that same grandmother told me I was no good.

For years, I kept trying to be a good man, but no matter what I did, I could not live up to those expectations. I never could live up to this image of a good man in the eyes of my grandmother.

Although I loved and cherished my "Hotzi," her standards and expectations of her only grandson never were rational or even realistic.

However, my Texas-born grandmother had a different twist on life. She never told me to be a good man. Instead, she told me everything she was telling me was for my own good. Her name was Granny Jackson, affectionally known as "Gangy."

## 'For your own good'

I was born with a weakened and crooked right foot from complications during delivery. I was about 4 years old when I started doing physical therapy. There were times I would get so mad at Granny Jackson during the physical therapy I had to undergo.

I remember getting so furious when Granny said, "This is for your own good."

Among other things she told me were for my own good were whoopings, homework and bedtime. I hated all those things. None of these of things

seemed good to me.

We had to bless the food no matter how hungry I was. We had to go to church no matter how boring it was. "Church is for your own good," she said.

How am I to be good man if I do not like all these things that are for my own good?

If we look at what both of my grandmothers said and blend into what God would have us understand today, then they both were correct. I am no good, and all those things Granny Jackson had me do or obey were for my own good.

Why did Granny Jackson never say I was no good even though I really am no good? Because Granny Jackson knew she herself and everyone else were no good, that only God is truly good. Therefore, God is for our own good.

## **History for our good**

Before I echo the words of my Granny Jackson and tell you why God is for your and my own good, I must provide a brief historical background on Romans 5:6-8. As Granny Jackson would say about the historical context of the Bible: "It's for your own good."

The apostle Paul wrote the Book of Romans while in Corinth in late A.D. 57, near the end of his third missionary journey. Paul had yet to visit Rome, but he longed to meet his Christian brethren there. Therefore, he wrote to the Romans to pave the way for his visit.

Paul proves the wonder-working power through the Holy Spirit throughout his ministry to spread the gospel to the community and commission others, so they may preach it to the world.

As Swiss theologian Karl Barth stated in *Church Dogmatics*: “The community has to proclaim to the world the free grace of God and the hope that it carries with it. It has to declare to it that Jesus Christ, very God and very man, has come as its Savior and will come again. This is the announcement of the kingdom of God. This is the gospel. The Christian community does not exist for itself; it exists for the gospel.”

However, Paul was quite the uncanny proclaimer of the gospel, as his early life was something unlikely in contrast to the characteristics of a Christian apostle. Before Paul was the apostle Paul, he was the Pharisee Saul. Saul was very meticulous with his duties as a Pharisee, mainly pursuing Christians to persecute them.

Although Paul’s past is what made him the perfect apostle for the difficult task of bringing the gospel to the Gentiles, he was qualified fully for this office by background, training and experience.

His Jewish birth, his Hebrew language, his Roman citizenship, his Jewish training and his Greek culture all helped to make him the man he was.

## **Our weakness, God’s good**

The first part of Romans 5:6 states, “For while we were still weak.” The word of God says we were weak, helpless, stranded and impoverished without God.

The word “[weak](#)” in the ancient Greek perks my interest. It means “sluggish in doing right.”

You ever feel physically sluggish after eating more than you should? I am a Baptist pastor, so I frequently find myself eating more than I should. Although Romans 5:6 is not talking about how one feels after eating too much at lunch, what Paul was trying to say is we are so spiritually sluggish

from the start that we never could truly do right.

There was no way we could save ourselves from the consequences of our sin. We indeed were without strength and unworthy, yet Christ died for us when we were no good. By the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, we were delivered and preserved by his own life. We were utterly, absolutely and completely unworthy, but Christ died for us anyway.

This was an act of love beyond any human experience. Do you know of a love anywhere like that in this universe?

I couldn't imagine what life would be if I didn't have my godly grandma who taught me Jesus died for us.

*Brandon Galbreath is pastor of Bethel Baptist Church in Ingleside. This article is adapted from the [original post](#) and is part of a [sermon](#) by Galbreath. The views expressed in this opinion article are those of the author.*