



YOU AND YOUR BABY'S DEDICATION

"Sons are a heritage from the Lord, children a reward from Him."

Psalm 127:3

We, as Christians, have a tremendous responsibility given to us when the Lord blesses us with a child. By doing so, He entrusts us with the responsibility of raising that child in the way of the Lord and establishing early in his life, a foundation built upon Jesus Christ. It is this tremendous responsibility that causes us to think of baby dedications as "family dedications." We feel that the whole family needs to be lifted up to the Lord so that each member will be able to keep his or her responsibilities.

But first, what exactly is involved in "dedicating" your child to the Lord? As mentioned, children are a heritage from the Lord. He gives them to us to bless us, and because of this, we must be willing to give them back to Him. We too must be willing to totally submit our children to the will of our Father.

A perfect example of "dedicating" a child to the Lord is given to us in I Samuel 1:11, 26-68. Hannah, being barren (or without child) for many years, was weeping before the Lord because of her barrenness. As she was weeping, she made a vow to God. "And she made a vow, saying, 'O LORD Almighty, if you will only look upon your servant's misery and remember me, and not forget your servant but give her a son, THEN I WILL GIVE HIM TO THE LORD ALL THE DAYS OF HIS LIFE...'" (I SAMUEL 1:11) God honored Hannah's request and gave her a son named Samuel. Hannah then, in keeping her vow, dedicated (or set apart) Samuel unto the Lord.

We see here a beautiful example of what our attitudes should be towards our children and their relationship to God. We are to do the most we can to "set apart" our children to God until the day that they can make their own choice. By dedicating your children to the Lord, you are making a vow to raise them in His ways. The following is a list (though not exhaustive), of some of the things parents do as part of keeping their vows.

1. KNOW GOD'S GIFT OF LOVE

The greatest importance is to know the gift of God's love in Jesus Christ personally as parents. In Ephesians 2:6-9 the Bible says "And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast."

2. BE A LIVING EXAMPLE OF CHRIST TO YOUR CHILDREN

It does not do your child any good to instruct him in the way of the Lord if you yourself do not walk what you talk. Therefore, it is good for you to always be examining yourself and your witness to your children. In Proverbs 20:7 the Bible says "The righteous man leads a blameless life; blessed (happy) are his children after him." The main reason for the blessed state of this man's children is that they have someone to look up to and to use as an example to model their own behavior. We as parents are encouraged to strive to be that example to our children even as Christ is our example.

3. INSTRUCT YOUR CHILD IN THE WAY OF THE LORD

We are taught in Ephesians 6:4 (NIV) to "bring them (your children) up in training and instruction of the Lord." And Proverbs 22:6 adds, "Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not turn from it." If we, while our children are young, instruct them in His ways, our children will grow in the ways of God for a lifetime.

4. PRAY CONSTANTLY FOR YOUR CHILD

A parent's responsibility to pray for their child does not end at their dedication, but continues throughout the rest of their life. We see an example of this in Job 1:5..."When a period of feasting had run its course, Job would send and have them purified. Early in the morning he would sacrifice a burnt offering for each of them, thinking, "Perhaps my children have sinned and cursed God in their hearts." This was Job's regular custom." And in James 5:16..."The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective." The prayer of Christ-centered parents powerfully covers their children in prayer that will produce effective change for a lifetime.

The dedication of your family is a serious matter. It is hoped that this paper has helped you recognize the extent of this commitment that you will be making. If you have any questions concerning anything that has been said, or not covered here, please write them down and discuss any questions you may have with Pastor Buckley.