

# Child Dedication – Children are a Heritage from the Lord

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Today's focus is on dedicating children to the Lord & on families.

- God places children in families
- The family is God's ordained "seedbed" from which children are raised
- The institution of marriage is God's ordained framework around which families and children can thrive & prosper

**Malachi 2:15 (NLT)** *Didn't the Lord make you one with your wife? In body and spirit you are his. And **what does he want? Godly children from your union.** So guard your heart; remain loyal to the wife of your youth.*

- A husband and wife team are the basic biblical / traditional family unit
- Children are not "the family", but "an addition to the family"
- God wants godly children raised within our families
- (Of course, many solo parents are doing a splendid job in raising their children)

**Psalm 127:3-5 (NLT/NCV)** ***Children are a gift from the Lord; they are a reward from Him. Children born to a young man are like arrows in a warrior's hands. How joyful is the man whose quiver is full of them! They will not be defeated when they fight their enemies at the city gate.***

- **Children are a gift from the Lord**
  - Children are not an accident of nature, nor the sum-total of evolution
  - Children are created by God & given to parents as a gift & a reward
- **The Bible likens children to arrows in the hands of a warrior**
  - Warriors made great effort in preparing and sharpening their arrows
  - So parents should make great effort in shaping the character & personality of their children & sharpening their talents & abilities
- **Children, once grown up and 'shot forth', will not be 'defeated'**
  - Fighting enemies at the city gate means conducting business in the city & joining the ranks of leaders in society
  - In ancient times, the movers and shakers of society would meet at the city gates to conduct business and exert their influence in government, in the community and in the market place
  - Children are raised to become the leaders and positive influencers in society

## HOW IS THIS ACHIEVED?

**A. We dedicate children to the Lord to give God 'access' into their lives**

**B. We train them in matters of obedience, righteousness and morality**

**Proverbs 22:6 (NKJV) *Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.***

**(Msg) *Point your kids in the right direction-when they're old they won't be lost.***

- A warrior places an arrow in his bow & points it the direction he wants it to go
- Provided the arrow is "straight", it will continue in the flight path that it has started in, and hit the target
- A parent's task is to "straighten out" any "crookedness" in their children, and remove all the "lumps" and "bumps" before they are "shot forth"

**Ephesians 6:4 (GNT) *Parents, do not treat your children in such a way as to make them angry. Instead, **bring them up with Christian discipline and instruction.*****

- Giving children a Christian upbringing by training and instructing them according to God's Word means that they will become well-adjusted adults, morally upright, knowing right from wrong, as well as having the strength & discipline to choose what's right

**C. Our children need to be born again**

The ultimate goal of a Christian upbringing is that children come to Jesus Christ and accept Him as Lord and Saviour of their lives.

**The pattern is:**

- a. Dedication**
- b. Christian Instruction & Training**
- c. Salvation**

**John 3:3,5 (GNT) *Jesus answered, "I am telling you the truth: **no one can see the Kingdom of God without being born again.**" .... "I am telling you the truth," replied Jesus. "No one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit."***

Being “born again” is reference to a conversion experience, which happens when a person repents of their sins and surrenders their life to Jesus Christ.

**Heaven is reserved exclusively for those who’ve become born again, children & adults alike, by receiving Jesus as personal Lord & Saviour**

### **EXAMPLES OF CHILDREN BEING DEDICATING TO THE LORD:**

**1 Samuel 1:26-28 (GNT)** *Hannah said to Eli, “Excuse me, sir. Do you remember me? I am the woman you saw standing here, praying to the Lord. <sup>27</sup> I asked Him for this child, and He gave me what I asked for. <sup>28</sup> So I am dedicating him to the Lord. As long as he lives, he will belong to the Lord.”*

**1 Samuel 2:26 (GNT)** The boy **Samuel** continued to grow and to gain favour both with the Lord and with people.

- Samuel’s mother dedicated him to the Lord
- Samuel not only grew physically, but he also grew in favor and grace with both God and the people around him
- Samuel became a leader & impacted his generation in a powerful way

**1 Samuel 3:19 (NASB)** *Thus **Samuel grew and the Lord was with him and let none of his words fail.***

- The Lord was with Samuel and blessed him tremendously
- Failure wasn’t a part of his life - things worked out really well for him

**Dedicating children to God is by no means all that is required to ensure their success in life. However, it gives the Lord a ‘doorway’ into the life of the child, a starting point, to bring blessing, protection & success.**

- God is always looking for ways to bless us
- As adults we invite God’s blessing on our lives by accepting Jesus Christ as our personal Lord and Saviour, and by living according to His Word
- Very young children aren’t able to do that for themselves, so we ask on their behalf

**Luke 2:22 (NCV)** *When the time came for Mary and Joseph to do what the law of Moses taught about being made pure, **they took Jesus to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord.***

**Luke 2:40,52 (NKJV)** *The Child (Jesus) grew and became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him ... Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.*

- Jesus was dedicated & presented to the Lord
- Children should not only grow physically & mentally, but also spiritually
- For a person to know the full blessing of God upon their life they have to grow spiritually so they can discern the Lord's will & direction for their life, and follow it

**The blessing of God can be seen on peoples' lives:**

Things mostly go well for them without trying any harder than others

**The absence of the blessing of God can also be seen:**

Many things go wrong for them even though they try hard to get ahead

**Today we present these children to the Lord & declare Psalm 91 over their lives.**

**1. Child dedication in itself does not constitute salvation for the child**

- For a person to receive eternal salvation, they must surrender their own life to God as an act of their own will

**2. Child dedication is not 'christening'**

- We do not christen children since we have no biblical basis to do so
- (In Scripture, baptism is reserved for people old enough to surrender their lives to the Lord & live for Him rather than for themselves)

**In summary, by dedicating children to the Lord:**

1. We acknowledge that our children are a gift from the Lord
2. We give them back to Him and declare that it is our will for the children to live according to God's plan for their lives
3. We take responsibility in bringing the child up according to God's Word rather than according to worldly philosophies
4. We ask for God's blessing, His protection and His favour on the children all the days of their lives
5. We also charge the parents / caregivers with the task of giving their children a Christian upbringing and biblical training