

## ***The Duties of the Priest Part 12 Dedicating the Little Children***

***“but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.”  
(Joshua 24:15 KJV)***

Many parents promised to serve the Lord with their children. Many assumed that as they dedicated their little children to the Lord, whatever circumstances they grew in, later the Lord will call their children back to serve Him because they have been dedicated for God’s service. But training children to serve God is in the hand of the parents, and the Scripture says, **“6 Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.” (Proverbs 22:6 KJV)**

Many churches consider the ceremony of child dedication especially for new born babies. It is a good practice to do because it is Scriptural, but if we only do for the sake of the procedure and the ceremony without the real commitment of the parents to obey God to teach and discipline the child as he or she grows according to God’s instruction, then there is no point for the ceremony of dedicating the little child to God in the Church.

***“13 Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put his hands on them, and pray: and the disciples rebuked them. 14 But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven. 15 And he laid his hands on them, and departed thence.” (Matthew 19:13-15 KJV)*** The Lord Jesus desires that the children would come to Him and no one should hinder them. But coming to Jesus would not mean only to bring the children to the church physically and perform the dedication ceremony, but to raise them up and nurture them in the ways of the Lord.

God spoke to His people through Moses when He told them, ***“6 And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: 7 And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. 8 And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. 9 And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.” (Deuteronomy 6:6-9 KJV)***

**\* We ought to put the commands of God in our hearts and impress them in our children’s hearts and mind by continuously demonstrating and teaching them the ways of God. \* What the Lord requires of us is not only to ceremonially dedicate our children to Him but to raise them in the ways and in the fear of God and serve Him. \* So significantly, we need to dedicate ourselves to God to serve Him, and to dedicate our family life to nurture our children in the fear and service of the Lord.**

The attribute of Jesus’ birth and how He was raised up by His earthly parents would help us understand the true meaning of child dedication:

***“18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. 19 Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily.” (Matthew 1:18-19 KJV)*** Joseph was a

righteous man. He was pledged to marry Mary but he found her with a baby so he wanted to divorce her. He needed to divorce her because according to the Scripture the virgin who is pledged to be married or betrothed is considered married and is already a certain man’s wife. But they are not allowed to meet or go outside together until the wedding day is over. This is the principle of God’s Word and not the Middle Eastern culture as some think. So when Joseph discovered that Mary was pregnant he decided to divorce her. But since he was a righteous man he wanted to do it secretly and not to expose her to public disgrace.

**\* The marriage according to the Bible is not based upon a man and a woman who like each other, but wait upon God who calls two royal priests to come together in holy matrimony to lead their family in righteousness and to raise a Godly offspring. \* Marriage is never built on Eros love or lust. \* According to the Scriptures, when two priests are called by God to lead a family, they are pledged to get married. And during that period they are prepared and trained to develop the kind of love that the Lord requires:**

***A, Agape love:*** The Lord requires unconditional and sacrificial love between couples to serve Him. This type of love will enable the man in the future to care for his wife and family, and it does not depend on the condition of the wife or the circumstances in life.

***B, Philadelphia love:*** The Lord requires brotherly love, and to respect each other’s rights as man and woman created in His image and likeness. Having this kind of love between the couple would inspire them to carry each other’s burden in building and leading the family.

In the family of Jesus, Joseph was a righteous man and Mary was God’s servant. Both of them were living for God and were willing to do God’s will and plan for a Godly family. Here from the narrative of Jesus’ birth, let us learn what is meant to build a family to serve God, and how to dedicate our children to God’s service:

***1. “19 Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily. 20 But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. 21 And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.” (Matthew 1:19-21 KJV)*** Truly Joseph was a righteous man, and God would speak and direct righteous parents how to protect their children. God spoke to Joseph to take Mary as wife and he obeyed even though God’s proposition was not acceptable to his mind and emotion. God directed Joseph through dreams to let the birth of Jesus and His childhood life to be victorious. **\* God is the unchanging God who speaks and reveals His plan of marriage to righteous, humble, and obedient people like Joseph and Mary. \* As servants and priests of God, we dedicate our coming children to the Lord, firstly, by dedicating our lives to be married to the man/woman whom God chooses for us and secondly, by dedicating our lives as husband and wife to live and serve God and thirdly, we commit ourselves to become parents of Godly children.**

***2. “24 Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife: 25 And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS.” (Matthew 1:24-25 KJV)*** Joseph respected Mary and

the plan of God for the birth of the Saviour. Joseph was humble, righteous, wise, and full of understanding. ***“13 Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom.” (James 3:13 KJV)*** Righteous and dedicated parents could raise children to serve God. Joseph and Mary raised our LORD Jesus Christ in God’s ways and will. In the same way, Joseph and Mary raised all their children in a Godly manner and they finally became part of God’s Church as we read in the book of Acts: ***“14 These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.” (Acts 1:14 KJV)*** James was one of Joseph’s and Mary’s son and the half brother of Jesus. James became one of the pillars of the Jerusalem Church, and he was the one who wrote the book of James. ***As royal priests we commit ourselves to the right decision to lead all our children to be dedicated to God, and become servants of God.***

3. ***“22 And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord; 23 (As it is written in the law of the LORD, Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord;) 24 And to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons.” (Luke 2:22-24 KJV)*** Joseph and Mary fulfilled their obligation of having a firstborn son, Jesus. They presented Jesus to the temple and brought with them the offering that they were able to afford according to the Law of Moses. ***“Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord.”*** Mary and Joseph fully dedicated their lives to serve God with their firstborn and their whole family. Hence, they were able to bring up Jesus and the rest of their children in the way that God had planned and ordained for them as a family. ***In the same manner we need to commit ourselves to fulfill all our obligations to God as we dedicate our children to Him.***

4. ***“13 And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him. 14 When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt: 15 And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son.” (Matthew 2:13-15 KJV)*** ***“19 But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, 20 Saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel: for they are dead which sought the young child’s life. 21 And he arose, and took the young child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel.” (Matthew 2:19-21 KJV)*** ***“22 But when he heard that Archelaus did reign in Judaea in the room of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither: notwithstanding, being warned of God in a dream, he turned aside into the parts of Galilee: 23 And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene.” (Matthew 2:22-23 KJV)*** God spoke to Joseph through dreams and instructed him how to protect Jesus from the enemies who wanted to kill Him. Also, God continually directed the affairs during the childhood of Jesus through Joseph, His earthly father. The same situation should be applied for us and for our children. If we live a righteous life, God will continually come to us, inspire us, and speak to us what to do for our children. ***Thus we dedicate our children to the Lord by dedicating our lives to listen to God’s instructions for our children. We commit ourselves to read, study and to meditate on the Word of God so we can grasp and understand what God is speaking to us.*** Joseph knew the Scriptures, and God spoke to Joseph in the dream to marry Mary to fulfill the Scriptures. God

explained to him that Mary was pregnant by the Holy Spirit: ***“22 Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, 23 Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.” (Matthew 1:22-23 KJV)*** Righteous parents should know the Scripture to understand what God is speaking to them and what He wants them to do.

Jesus is the Son of God born to men, and he lived as a man to give eternal life to all mankind who believe in Him. However, God was behind the growth of Jesus, from birth unto His childhood and Joseph and Mary did their part as His earthly parents. ***“40 And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him.” (Luke 2:40 KJV)*** Joseph and Mary took care of Jesus from birth and as He was growing up they made Him involved in the occupation of Joseph as carpenter, and in going to the temple. ***“41 Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover.” (Luke 2:41 KJV)***

***“52 And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.” (Luke 2:52 KJV)*** To highlight the childhood life of Jesus: *First*, God planned for His birth and His parents. *Second*, the completion of the role of Joseph and Mary as dedicated Godly parents. They did well the task that was entrusted to them.

***We are the royal priests called to accomplish the goal as Godly parents. And God would make our children grow according to His good plan to prosper them and serve HIM if we could inculcate in our children’s young mind that they are born in this world to serve God’s purpose.***

Let us be assured that our children grow in wisdom and stature and in favour with God and men. As royal priests and Godly parents we need to care and train our children, physically and spiritually at home and in the church. Let us learn from the Scriptures and understand what God wants us to do and how God wants us to rear our family and children. Ceremonial child dedication would not be helpful unless we dedicate ourselves to bring up children to serve God and His Church.

***My dear and beloved:*** Let us commit ourselves to love God, to love His plan for us, to love and obey His Word. Let us love to marry what he prepared for us to marry. Let every one of us love his or her spouse; loving, cherishing, helping, respecting, and forgiving one another, and let us dedicate ourselves to serve God. As parents let us be united to dedicate ourselves to serve God and let us work out to dedicate our children to serve God with us and so they will do that willingly after us. Let us work out to provide for our families and care for our children. Let us work out to prepare a clean atmosphere in our families that our children will be away from the pollution of the media and public schools and friends. Let us do all what we can to protect them from all the temptations that will pull them into dangers. Let us be willing to receive and implement the instruction of God sent to us by the Holy Spirit, His Word and through His church to teach us His ways so our children will raise and grow in wisdom, in stature and in favor of man and God.

***My Prayer:*** Father God I come before you in the name of Jesus, who died on the cross for my sins and rose from the dead to give me eternal life.

*Lord I thank you for your Word that showed me clearly your ways of life that you need me to follow.*

*Let us repent and renounce all our sins,*

*Renounce you lack of commitment, the lack of dedication to serve God, your carelessness toward the needs of your spouse, home, family and children, your rebelliousness against the plan of God that he has for you, your delayed obedience, your negligence to the instructions of the Holy Spirit, your negligence to the instructions of God's Word, and your negligence to the instructions of us as a church to you.*

*Lord I repent from the following sins \_\_\_\_\_.*

*Lord I am coming back to you. I am willing to commit myself once again to serve you and to dedicate myself fully to you. Lord I commit myself to dedicate all my children to you and to train them to serve you. Lord I commit myself to protect them from all temptations and to provide for them and keep the atmosphere of home from pollution and evil.*

*Lord come and abide in my life, in my house and my family. I commit my life to live for you and to serve you according to your Word. Lord I commit myself to reproduce more fruit of the Holy Spirit that people will see Jesus in my life.*

*Lord thank you for my Brothers and Sisters who came to you and offering their lives to you in dedicating themselves and their children to you. Lord bless them, protect them and provide all their needs so they can raise their children in the fear of yours and train them to serve you and to accomplish your will in their lives. Lord fill them with the Holy Spirit and use their lives and testimonies to evangelize and to bring others to you.*

*Lord we pray that you bless us as a church, fill us with the Holy Spirit once again and give us the spiritual gifts to go on and serve you reaching the lost. Lord help us as a church to equip all the parents with your Word, plan and will and to aid them in dedicating their lives first and then their children to serve you. Lord go before us and help us to plant new congregations and new Bible studies. Lord fulfill the vision of the church, 'Multiplication in peace with implementing the whole will of God', Lord bless us, enlarge our territory, let your hand be with us and free us from harm so we will not feel pain. May the grace of the Lord Jesus, and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all in Jesus name, Amen.*

The Duties of the Priest Part 12. Dedicating the Little Children. Joshua 24:15. Proverbs 22:6. Matthew 19:13-15. Deuteronomy 6:6-9. Matthew 1:18-25. James 3:13. Acts 1:14. Luke 2:22-24. Matthew 2:19-23. Luke 2:40-41. Luke 2:52.

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