

## Tell, Teach, Train, or Dedicate?

Among a variety of proverbs, the wise man wrote, "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6). The Hebrew word that is translated "train" is used only five times in the Old Testament. Twice the term is translated "dedicate or dedicated" as it is related to an individual's house (Deuteronomy 20:5). Twice the term is translated "dedicated" as it related to King Solomon's dedication of the temple of God (1 Kings 8:63 and 2 Chronicles 7:5). It is only in the usage of Proverbs 22:6 that the term is translated "train up". One might get a better understanding of what "train up" means if he considers the usage of the term "dedicate" instead!

The dedication of a house and the dedication of the temple were done with great sacrifice. The text noted that Solomon offered twenty-two thousand oxen and one hundred and twenty thousand sheep in the process of dedicating the temple. One might note that these particular sacrifices required a lot of work on the part of the priests and a lot of life and blood on the part of the animals which were sacrificed. In this aspect, the dedication required not only a willingness to labor and sacrifice, but the actual actions of laboring and sacrificing.

If these thoughts are transferred to the usage of this same term in Proverbs 22:6, the passage would read, "[Dedicate] a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." This wording then calls attention to the process of "dedicating" the child. The responsibility for the dedication of the child falls upon the parents. This term becomes a call for the parents to labor and sacrifice with great sacrifice to bring the child to belong to God. While this term is a call for the parents to initiate, pledge, or recruit the child for righteousness, the process which this begins is a lifetime process. This process requires a lot of labor on the part of the parents as they tell their children about God, instruct them in the ways of God (Ephesians 6:4; I Timothy 2:15), and train them by example (1 Corinthians 11:1) and edification how to walk with God. This is an instruction about God and His will that is talked about when the family is at home, when the family is traveling, when the family is resting, or when the family is working (Deuteronomy 6:7). This dedication requires a lot of sacrifice on the part of the parents. Dedication requires toil, sweat, and blood. Literally the parent must be willing to sacrifice their physical

life to save the child's spiritual life. They must be willing to not only yield to Christ, but to sacrifice pleasures, time, energy, friendships, occupations, and money for the dedication of the child. This dedication can only come to maturity when the parents, by putting God first in their lives (Matthew 6:33), bring their children to live their lives in full submission to the will of God.

Dedicating children is not an event; it is a process. Some people have invented an event which they say is the dedication of the child. Some of these people make this event a religious worship event where the infant is "baptized" and dedicated to God. There is absolutely NO biblical authority for a "dedication event" in the Christian's practice. Quite frankly, proper baptism is not a dedication event. Baptism is part of the process of dedication that began earlier in life and that will continue throughout life if the individual is to be saved! The dedication of the child is a process which should begin **before** conception and should last throughout the lives of the parents and the child.

Often the dedication of the child is dependent upon the dedication of the parents. Rarely do children spiritually exceed the spiritual dedication of their parents unless someone takes a special interest in them. It is possible for one, as a Christian, to become involved in the process of dedicating an individual who is not their physical child. This person might be a grand-child or of no relation at all -- like Timothy (Philippians 2:19-22) and Titus were to Paul. One might have many dedicated children in Jesus Christ?

(This article was written by David Dalton and taken from the "Christian Messenger", the bulletin of the Algood church of Christ where brother Dalton preaches)

**Note from the editor:** Though I do not use a lot of articles from others, this article masterfully shows the proper dedication that should be allowed to our offspring. In our current age, even those in the church are often falling far short of our responsibilities to our children. Numbers that I have personally seen indicate that well over fifty per cent of our children are being lost. Certainly, one can go astray after leaving the nest, but likely it is because far too many are not being "dedicated" while still in the nest.

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