

The Christian Home - Giving Your Children to God - 1 Sam. 1:1-28

Last week, we were discussing a virtuous woman, and mentioned how Hannah, when she prayed for a son, she vowed to give him back to the Lord *all the days of his life* (1 Sam. 1:11). She kept this promise and Samuel brought about a mighty revival in Israel. **If we had more Hannahs in our day, we would have more Samuels.** According to the United Nations, about 250 babies are born every minute - more than 130 million in a year (5 million in America alone). Very few of them will grow up in Christian homes, and only a small percentage of those in Christian homes will be given to God. **Giving a child to God means desiring what the Lord desires for that child.** Letting go of children is a difficult thing, but in order to give our children to God, we must take our hands off and turn them loose for God's Will and purpose. This is to continue all their lives as we sincerely believe that God's Will is best for our children. Many Christians know the story of Samuel and how God used him in a mighty way at a critical time in the history of the nation Israel. All of this was the result of one woman's prayer. She asked God to give her a child, and she made a covenant with God that she would give that child back to Him. As we consider where our nation is headed today, may the Lord help us to give our sons and daughters to Him for His use. Hannah presented her son to God, but not just as a baby. Every day that he lived, she renewed the covenant she had made with the Lord.

1. Children are a Gift from God - Psalm 127:3

How sad that we are living in a generation where children are literally thrown away if they aren't murdered in the womb of their mother. **We need to be reminded that children are a gift from God. Children are an heritage of the LORD.** When conception takes place and life begins, it is a miraculous work of God. Gen. 33:1-5.

2. Children are to be Given back to God - Rom. 8:28

Parents have a caring, loving feeling that is an instinct from God, but we must remember that we are not rearing them for ourselves. **We are rearing them for Christ and for the mates they will meet and marry someday.** They are placed into our care and keeping only for a while, although we continue the parent-child relationship throughout the years. We must not try to conform them to our image, but rather yield ourselves to God, praying that He will lead and direct our children. His desire is to transform them by the indwelling Holy Ghost into the likeness of Jesus Christ. In one sense, parents must take their hands off the circumstantial dealings of their children's lives and realize that God can work through all things for their good and His glory. **We should never violate any biblical principle while raising our children, neither should our children try to justify what they are doing with their lives;** but when things look bad at times, God can still work good out of the bad. When it seems as if someone has been brought into their lives who is not the person we would have chosen, in some way God can take and turn it around for His glory and their good. When my mother held me in her arms as a baby, she had no idea that I would someday be the Pastor of a church. This is what God has chosen to do with my life and I am happy with His choice. God made me, and He knows what is best for me. Rom. 8:28. Parents should give their children back to God and trust God to direct their lives. Even Joseph recognized God's leading in his life and told his brethren that they had sold him but God had sent him (Gen. 45:5).

3. Children are to be Grounded in Godly principles in the Home - Deut. 6:4-7

The home is the natural place to learn about God and His Word. A Christian Home doesn't just mean that there is a Bible in the home and Bible verses hanging on the wall, it means it is a home where mom and dad have yielding their lives to the Lord Jesus Christ. In other words, **Jesus isn't just a welcomed guest or someone who has weekend visits - He abides there all the time!** Not only are Christian books and Bibles found there, but it is a place where family members learn about God and what God wants them to do with their lives. Do not expect the church to be able to resurrect things of God that are put to death in your home. How can we expect our children to believe more strongly about the Bible than we believe, or to love church more than we love church? Instruction must begin in the heart of every mom and dad. The Word of God teaches that when we give our children to God, this does not stop at the altar of the church. We must teach them diligently. The word *diligent* means *to give our whole-hearted attention to it, to make it a matter of utmost importance, to make certain that it is done*. This passage of Scripture commands us to teach God's Word to our children at all times. To teach our children diligently, we must always remember that we are to delight in the opportunity to work with them. This is the parent's responsibility. **Many parents have given up on working with their children and have forgotten to delight in this wonderful opportunity God has given them.** Our children should be a blessing, not a burden. This blessing comes from realizing that they were given to us by God. The responsibility of the parent is to delight in the opportunity to instruct and the responsibility of the child is to be willing to be instructed. Lead your children to know Christ as their personal Saviour. Be sensitive to the opportunities the Lord provides to speak to your children specifically about knowing Christ as Saviour. Keep them in faithful attendance to a Bible-teaching, Bible-preaching church. Read God's Word with them daily. Help them to memorize God's Word. Teach them the stories of the Bible. Pray with them and for them. Kneel beside them and allow them to lead in prayer. Hear them speak to God. As parents, live the truth of God before them each day.

4. Children are being raised in a Generation that has forgotten God - Prov. 30:11-14

This is not the America that our parents and grandparents grew up in. Exo. 1:1-8; Judg. 2:8-10. The real crisis in the world today is not an economic crisis or an environmental crisis; it is an education crisis! It is that there is a generation that does not know the Lord, neither do they know the mighty works that God has done. The responsibility this brings to those of us who know Christ is staggering! The time of our youth is the time to lay the foundation for all of life. Ecc. 12:1. This is why we need to have a heart for the whole ministry at our church. We must have a strong preschool program, a strong children's program, and a strong youth program. By strong I mean strong in the Lord, His Word, His grace, and His love. We witness each day the fruit of a generation that has forgotten God. Youth are at risk, but the great risk is not the AIDS virus; there are other risks that are far greater! The word *risk* means *danger* or *peril*. Young people are at risk because so much has been substituted for the clear Gospel message. The Gospel has never lost its power, but it needs messengers to proclaim it. It is still *the power of God unto Salvation*, but so many are ashamed of it. It is indescribably worse to die and go to hell than it is to have anything else happen in your life. We must make sure that we never tire or stray from the Gospel message. 1 Cor. 2:2. We live in an increased secularized society. We must speak up and speak clearly to the youth of this generation. Understanding the way of Salvation is in peril

today. There is so much confusion about God and Heaven and hell. May God help us to zealously keep giving the Gospel and telling people how to be saved. There has never been a greater time for soul winners to be in the harvest field.

The stability of the Christian Home is at risk. You may be trying to build a strong family, but the devil is trying to tear your family down. The world, the flesh, and the devil want your young people, your husband, and your wife. The home is under attack! The Christian family is the greatest institution on earth. It preserves the best things and teaches things that no other institution on earth is commissioned to teach. Even the best church cannot substitute for a Christian Home. Parents can say all they want to say about how good the church is, but when they sit at home or on the boat or in some mountain cabin on the Lord's Day, they are telling their children, "The church does not mean what it should mean to me." When you are not faithful to attend church, you are sending the wrong signal to your children. We are in this fight together! Hold your ground! If you want your children to look and behave like the rest of the world, then just turn them loose; but that is not what you want. Your pastor is in your corner trying to say, "God bless you, mom and dad, I am standing with you!"

The risks we face are not imaginary - they are real! Let us stand the ground God has given us and press forward to greater heights for His glory and the good of this generation!

Home Work

- **Desire God's Will, not your own, for your children.**
- **Make a deliberate decision to give your children back to God.**
- **Provide a Christian Home where your children can receive instruction from God's Word.**
- **Do not expect your children to be stronger Christians than you are willing to be.**
- **Diligently teach your children the Word of God.**
- **Read the Bible with your children every day and teach them the stories of the Bible.**
- **Keep your children in faithful attendance to church.**
- **Give your children the clear Gospel message of Salvation.**
- **Uphold personal standards of decency and modesty.**
- **Follow the teachings of God's Word, not the standards of the world.**
- **Remember that a church cannot substitute for a Christian home.**
- **Bring your family to church faithfully, knowing that your home is greatly helped by a Bible-believing pastor and church.**