

## Parenting by example - Stephan Museler – 6 February 2011

Most of us in this family of believers who have had children will at some stage have gone through the dedication of their children, and it is always a very happy day, and all the family are here, and we have a nice lunch afterwards.

We write prayers and promises for our beloved children and at some point deal with the dedication before the Lord. We have a standard template which we give the parents to work from and it goes something like this...

Here is the essence of the dedication..."

1. As the head of my family I, dedicate our child to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. We promise to train him (let's refer to a boy for now) to understand God's will, to love God's works and the way He does things.
2. We will strive by the grace of God to be obedient to Prov 22:6 which says "*Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it*".
3. We promise to be parents who by our life style give him an **example** to follow, of lives dedicated to the Lord God.
4. We promise to **teach** him the true and only way of salvation which is by faith in Jesus Christ alone, so that when he is old enough he will receive Him as his own personal Savior.
5. We promise to **love** him by having his best interest at heart, which includes proper **Biblical discipline** when necessary.
6. We promise to train him in building good wholesome **relationships** within the family, with the extended church family, as well as how as Christians, we are to be the salt of the earth.
7. We promise to teach him about **God's family** here on earth called **the Church**. We will lead him to value being involved in regular fellowship, loving God's people, serving, as well as the grace of giving of his time, talent and finance.
8. We will always acknowledge that it is by grace through faith in His divine enablement that we make this commitment before God and these witnesses.

Now, couples usually understand their general parental responsibility and it is this that is often in the forefront of our thoughts when we do the dedication: i.e

- a. We must teach them to have good manners.
- b. Be on good behaviour,
- c. Say hello and greet people,
- d. To work hard at school, and get good marks

- e. To be kind to others,
- f. To be humble,
- g. To be generous,
- h. To read their bible and to go to church
- i. Get a good tertiary education, and a good job

Now Tanya and I have worked very hard at all of these things in our children and have always believed in Godly discipline, and it has not always been easy. Consistency and perseverance is one of the single biggest lessons I have learned as a father, when it comes to discipline...

Through consistent godly discipline you can teach your children that there are consequences to sin.

We have also had wonderful tender family times where we had moments in our children's lives where we acknowledged their growing up.

These are moments that have an incredible lasting impact on our children and are very precious.

However, when you look at their characters and who they have become as individuals, you quickly realise that there is far more to it than just these practical moments. Children become what they see in those adults who are dominant in their lives, with parents obviously playing the major role.

They become mini you's...

Whether you are considering your parental responsibilities with a new child, or even reaffirming these biblical principles with your older children (It's never too late!)

Even as grandparents toward your grandchildren, Uncles or aunties to your nieces and nephews, or just plain an adult to another child, the following precepts are biblical, directly from God's Word and are sure to benefit you, your family, and your church. I have 10 here and am not sure how many we will get to today.

This is about instilling Godliness in your children through example... this is about teaching them to do what you do.

## **1. Pursue Righteousness in Your Marriage**

Husbands, you need to show your children how a husband loves his wife, even as Christ loved the church. How did He love the Church...?

([Ephesians 5:25](#)) **Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her**

Do they see you giving yourself up for her?

Are they observing how you tenderly and patiently lead her, teach her, and protect her?

Your example in the treatment of your wife will teach volumes about Christ's love for His beloved bride, the church.

Men, you carry an incredible responsibility in the eyes of the Lord for which you will be held accountable. Your family, wife and children, are a direct product of who you are as a man.

What you do, they do

What you say, they say

What you think, they think

What you believe, they believe

And so it goes on. You leave an indelible mark on your children by the person you are and the way that you lead your family. The fruit of your life will be magnified in theirs.

Do you live your life with the understanding that you do not own it? It belongs to God, to your wife and to your children.

Everything you do is to be for His glory, and it will be to their benefit.

Every decision you make is to be for His glory and will be to their benefit.

Your time belongs to Him, and it will be to their benefit.

Your talent belongs to Him, and to them.

You are called to deny yourself for His sake, and for theirs.

This is what it means to give yourself up for her. Do you say in your heart, "As for me and my house... we will serve the Lord"?

[Mark 8:34](#) And calling the crowd to him with his disciples, he said to them, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.

[Mar 8:35](#) For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it.

But what does that mean...

Well, it can be compared to a young man who sees a navy recruiting advertising campaign on TV. He observes a classy naval officer on the deck of an incredible warship sailing the open seas with crystal clear skies, smiling at his friends and companions on the ship.

He sees this sailor in exciting ports all over the world, and it is all free...

He runs off to the recruitment office and signs up, but does not read the conditions of joining because he is focussed only on the benefits.

He is very happy because now he will have a blast seeing the world, becoming part of a great team and making many new friends.

However, as basic training starts he discovers that he can't sleep until 9am anymore, and that he has to cut off his precious hair.

Except for a couple of days every now and then, he is never allowed to go out socially and their regimented schedule does not allow for time off to hang out.

All the whiles he is cleaning bathrooms and dining halls and doing push ups and PT.

He collapses on his bed tired, and longs for the time to come on the ship.

However, once basic training is complete, he is assigned to a ship, but it is even more labour intensive, only now it is on the open seas.

War breaks out and he finds himself fighting a battle for which he did not sign up.

He enlisted because it was a life he never could have provided for himself, and it was free. Yes it was free, but he did not make note of the details that it would cost him all his freedoms.

He feels angry because he was sold a package that showed him only the benefits but didn't make known the personal cost.

Many times a gospel has been preached that speaks only of a free salvation, but neglects to tell you that it will cost you your freedom.

You are freed from the bondage to sin but you belong to Christ. Those outside of Christ are slaves to sin although they may fully believe they are free.

Who do you belong to today?

Who do your children see you belonging to today.

What does the saying, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" mean to you and your family today.

Men, Your children watch you... and model themselves after you.

Women... you are not exempt from this.

To your children you need to model biblical submission as you subject yourself to your husband in everything.

**Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit fin everything to their husbands. ([Ephesians 5:24](#)).**

Do your children see how you work out your submission to Christ in respectful submission to your husband?

Your marriage is a living, breathing example of the church's willing submission to her Head, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Women... go and look at Proverbs 31... in fact, let's read it together right now...

### **The Woman Who Fears the Lord**

**10 4 uAn excellent wife who can find?**

**She is far more precious than vjewels.**

**11 The heart of her husband trusts in her,  
and he will have no lack of gain.**

**12 She does him good, and not harm,  
all the days of her life.**

**13 She wseeks wool and flax,  
and works with willing hands.**

**14 She is like the ships of the merchant;  
she brings her food from afar.**

**15 She xrises while it is yet night  
and yprovides food for her household  
and portions for her maidens.**

**16 She considers a field and buys it;**

with the fruit of her hands she plants a vineyard.

17 She zdresses herself 5 with strength  
and makes her arms strong.

18 She perceives that her merchandise is profitable.  
Her lamp does not go out at night.

19 She puts her hands to the distaff,  
and her hands hold the spindle.

20 She aopens her hand to bthe poor  
and reaches out her hands to bthe needy.

21 She is not afraid of snow for her household,  
for all her household are clothed in cscarlet.6

22 She makes dbed coverings for herself;  
her clothing is efine linen and fpurple.

23 Her husband is known in gthe gates  
when he sits among the elders of the land.

24 She makes hlinen garments and sells them;  
she delivers sashes to the merchant.

25 iStrength and dignity are her clothing,  
and she laughs at the time to come.

26 She opens her mouth with wisdom,  
and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue.

27 She looks well to the ways of her household  
and does not eat the bread of idleness.

28 Her children rise up and call her blessed;  
her husband also, and he praises her:

29 "Many jwomen have done kexcellently,  
but you surpass them all."

30 lCharm is deceitful, and beauty is vain,  
but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised.

31 Give her of the fruit of her hands,  
and let her works praise her in the gates.

Ask yourself if this is what you are modelling to your daughters, whether your own, or those of other people. Don't think if you only have sons, or if you have no children that you are not responsible.

Older women... is this what you are modelling to younger women today?

Women, wives, mothers, aunties, sisters, friends..., you too, have an incredible responsibility before the Lord for which you will be held accountable. Girls grow up to become who you are.

## 2. Confess Your Sins to One Another... this is a hard one!

You need to confess, when appropriate, your sins to your family

([Proverbs 28:13](#)) **Whoever  $\times$ conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who  $\surd$ confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy.**

You need to humble yourself, and seek their forgiveness when necessary [Matthew 6:14-15](#) **For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, <sup>15</sup>but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.**

[Colossians 3:13](#) **bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another,  $\mathcal{G}$ forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.**

As you are quick to confess your sins, and also to forgive others, you are demonstrating true humility and an ultimate desire to be pleasing to God in all your ways.

[2 Corinthians 5:9](#) <sup>9</sup> **So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to  $\surd$ please him.**

## 3. Pursue Sexual Purity

Be very careful to protect your home from the sexual immorality of the world we live in.

That means you need to abstain from sexual immorality yourself, and otherwise promote sexual purity in your home

([1 Thessalonians 4:3-8](#)) **For this is the will of God,  $\mathcal{I}$ your sanctification:<sup>2</sup>  $\mathcal{I}$ that you abstain from sexual immorality; <sup>4</sup> that each one of you know how to control his own  $\mathcal{K}$ body<sup>3</sup> in holiness and  $\mathcal{I}$ honor, <sup>5</sup> not in  $\mathcal{M}$ the passion of lust  $\mathcal{N}$ like the Gentiles  $\mathcal{O}$ who do not know God; <sup>6</sup> that no one transgress and  $\mathcal{P}$ wrong his brother in this matter, because the Lord is  $\mathcal{Q}$ an avenger in all these things, as we told you beforehand and solemnly warned you. <sup>7</sup> For  $\mathcal{I}$ God has not called us for  $\mathcal{S}$ impurity, but in holiness. <sup>8</sup> Therefore  $\mathcal{I}$ whoever disregards this, disregards not man but God,  $\mathcal{U}$ who gives his**

## Holy Spirit to you

You can also read through Proverbs 5-7 for further instruction and caution in this regard.

The pursuit of sexual purity should govern your entertainment choices.

It should season your speech.

It should guard your thoughts.

It should guide you when you're in public or private, especially when you think no one else is looking or listening.

Your own sexual purity will protect you and your children from the heartbreak known well among a depraved generation.

([Proverbs 5:7-14](#))

**7** And *h*now, O sons, listen to me,  
and do not depart from the words of my mouth.

**8** Keep your way far from her,  
and do not go near the door of her house,

**9** lest you give your honor to others  
and your years to the merciless,

**10** lest strangers take their fill of your strength,  
and your *l*abor go to the house of a foreigner,

**11** and at the end of your life you *k*groan,  
when your flesh and body are consumed,

**12** and you say, *l*"How I hated discipline,  
and my heart *m*despised reproof!

**13** I did not listen to the voice of my teachers  
or incline my ear to my instructors.

**14** *n*I am at the brink of utter ruin  
in the assembled congregation."

But there is another type of purity that we need to protect that we often miss when thinking along the lines of sexual purity... and it is this.

**Rev 19:7** Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready;

What does a bride look like that has made herself ready? She is one without spot

or blemish that has prepared herself to be united with her groom... you get the picture? We are the bride of Christ and it is an incredible challenge to us in this world in which we live to fully grasp the nature of this and make it our own... I speak for myself here too.

Our children are looking to us, and are dependent on us to show them what the bride of Christ look like.

Millions upon millions of people across the world and across all ages have said the sinner's prayer.....

Father, today I confess that I am a sinner

Please forgive me of my sins.

This day I ask Jesus to come into my life as my personal Lord and Saviour.

Thank you for making me your child.

In Jesus's name

Amen.

In modern day charismatic evangelical churches this would then be followed by loud cheering and praise for them and music playing and the new "believers" go back to their seats.

But I do believe many of them go away and live lives deceived.

They do not live a life that embraces repentance from disobedient lifestyles.

They do not deny their own desires in order to embrace the Will of God.

They are not prepared to lose their life for the cause of Christ.

They have confessed Jesus as their Lord, but there has been no heart change.

Jesus is now just a part of their lives... one component of the whole of their lives.

Well, friends, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords does not come into anyone's life as second, or even first among rival lovers.

He comes in as our complete and total King with no person, thing or activity vying for His place in our hearts.

He must be Lord, which means supreme master and owner; meaning we do not own our lives any longer.

Lets' think back to the marriage analogy.... What do your children see in you?

Would you marry someone who informed you that they would be loyal to you

along with their other lovers, but that you would be first?

How much more the King of the universe?

Will he accept a bride who says, "You are first among all my other lover's!"

"I commit myself to you, but I retain the relationships and love affairs I have with all my other lovers?"

This, friends, is the deception that goes on all over the world. This is in many cases what our children see, and model themselves after.

I have often heard the question asked, "Why is this such a perverse and wicked generation?"

I believe it is because many have not allowed the Cross to slay their self seeking lives and make room for the new nature of Jesus Christ to be formed within.

They have been sold on a better life here and the promise of heaven one day.

It is interesting to know that in many countries of the world where Christians are persecuted, they come to Jesus knowing that within hours or days they will lose their own life.

Today in many western, so called "Christian" cultures we come to Jesus for a better life, a life of health, wealth and happiness... and as a bonus, Heaven thrown in.

No thought is given to losing our lives....

What life are you modelling to your children today?

Are you raising them in the way they are to go by living a life of devotion to the Lord?

Are you showing your grandchildren a life lost for the sake of Christ?

Are you walking as an example to children all around you?

Is Jesus truly the Lord of your life?

I am going to leave you with these questions as a challenge.

**Psa 139:23 Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts!  
And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!**

**NIV - Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.**

Ask the Lord to show you the areas of your life not in submission to him and allow the Grace of the Lord's life changing power to work in you.

I also want to leave you with a quote from Isaiah...

**Isa 6:9 And he said, "Go, and say to this people: "Keep on hearing, but do not understand; keep on seeing, but do not perceive.'**

**Isa 6:10 Make the heart of this people dull, and their ears heavy, and blind their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and turn and be healed."**

Do not listen to this series, and not understand it. Make sure...

Do not see what is right and not perceive it and make it practical in your life.

Hear with your ears, see with your eyes, understand with your hearts and turn and be healed.

God bless!!!