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C0519 -- May 11, 2005 – Proverbs 22:6 – Principles of Child Rearing

I. Knowing Your Child

Often parents ask the question, “When do I start training my child?” “At what age are they ready to be trained?” Now we are not talking about disciplining them per se but training them. The answer to this question is very simple. The timing and the manner of training are based upon when you know your child. In order to know when and how to train our children we must first know our children. I say this because the Bible teaches that every child is unique. I’m not talking about being your child’s best buddy. I’m not talking about how much time you spend with your children. I’m talking about making a very definite study of your child so you can come to know your child. Turn to Prov 22:6

Prov 22:6 Train up a child in the way he should go, Even when he is old he will not depart from it.

This verse has been very misunderstood by people. I had a lady come to me one time in tears about one of her children, “How could my child run off and live that way. I took him to church, to Sunday school, I taught him the 10 commandments, I had him memorize Scripture verses and now he is off living like the world. I thought the Bible said that if I trained up a child in the way he should go he would not depart from it.” This is a sad but common response among parents. But this simply goes to show that they never understood this verse and that is perhaps because it is rarely taught accurately. What is the proper interpretation of Prov 22:6? The proper interpretation is very important in terms of what I am teaching you—that your child is unique and that you as a parent have the responsibility to know your child. Let’s look at the verse again from the Amplified Version of the Bible. The Amplified Version reads,

Prov 22:6 Train up a child in the way he should go and *in keeping with his individual gift or bent*, and when he is old he will not depart from it.

The part we are interested in is where it says **in keeping with his individual gift or bent**. See, this emphasizes the unique and individual bent of each child.

What this means is that no set of rules is going to work with every child in every detail. What will work for someone else's child will not necessarily work for your child. Even within your own family, what works with one child may not work with the others because each child is an individual and must be dealt with as an individual. Therefore, one of the greatest efforts a parent should make is the effort to make a very definite study of each of your children. Just because you've seen one child does not mean you have seen them all, they are all individually bent and the Bible is full of examples of this (e.g. Cain and Abel, Jacob and Esau, Absalom and Solomon). In all these homes the basic training environment was the same but the children went opposite directions.

The second observation in this verse is the word **way**. Notice that word. It is the word *derek*, a word which pictures a bow which is bent in order to launch an arrow in a specific direction (Ps 11:1-2). What this means is that as a parent you have the responsibility of discovering which way your child is drawn or bent. When you discover this you will know how to train him. If you try to bend a bow the wrong way your going to damage or break it. In the same way, if you try to bend your child the wrong way, a way that is contrary to his natural bent then you will not be training your child properly. However, if you learn to loosen the string, discovering who your child is, and the natural bent of your child then you will know how to train your child properly. Prov 22:6 suggests that your child and every child is already bent in a certain direction. Your child is not a "blank slate" (Descartes *tabula rasa*). He is already pre-bent in a certain direction. If you want to ignore this and train your children any old way then you can do whatever you want and I hope the best for you, but if you want to train your child successfully then you will exhaust yourself trying to discover his natural bent and you will adjust your training accordingly.

I want to re-enforce this observation by making a third observation about this verse, namely, the words **should go**. This word in the Hebrew (*peh*) refers to "a predetermined appointment" (2 Sam 13:30-32). So, you should not think of your child as a pliable piece of clay which you can mold any way you want by your training rules (a *tabula rasa*). If you do you will only be fighting against the child's predetermined bent. This means you should never plan out your son or daughters career. It's your responsibility to help each child discover God's appointed plan for their life. You are dealing with a child that has

been fashioned ahead of time and placed in your hands. Therefore, your responsibility is to make a study of your child so that you discover his predetermined appointment. We might translate Prov 22:6 this way, “Train up a child with an understanding of how the bow has been bent by predetermined appointment”.

Parents harm their children whenever they try to force them into a mold. Parents who try to fix their failures or meet their dreams through their children are doing nothing but damaging their children. How many times have we seen a parent force their child into a field of study or a sport and the child hates it and resents the parent. This parent has failed to study their child to discover the natural bent. If you try this you will discover that your child will have no taste for it and it will cause tension, stress, and resentment.

The fourth observation in this verse is the word **train** (*chanak*). Like most words this word has a series of meanings.¹ First it means “dedication” and it is very important for parents to dedicate their children to the Lord. “Dedication” is the first step in training. While I can’t go into this much tonight “dedication” has very little to do with the public ceremony in front of the church. God may be leading you to do that and that is fine but that is not the end of child “dedication”. “Dedication” means that the child whom God has given to you, you give back to Him. In other words you are saying, “God, I want you to have him, I want you to lead him.” This does not imply that once you’ve dedicated him or her that’s it, you’ve done your duty and its over. Let me emphasize that the emphasis in child dedication is *not* the religious service where you stand up in front of the congregation with the little baby in your arms and go through some vows. I am saying that the emphasis is that you and your husband get together on your knees before the Lord and dedicate that child to the Lord. Every child should be dedicated. What you as a parent are doing is taking responsibility. Now you’re responsibilities include:

- 1) studying your child,
- 2) adjusting the training accordingly,
- 3) praying specifically for your child and *with* your child,
- 4) taking the time to reason with your child and answer his questions, and
- 5) recognizing when to let them go and when not to let them go

When should you dedicate your child? I would suggest dedicating your child to the Lord as soon as you discover you have conceived. Why? Because Scripturally that is when training your child begins (e.g. *prayer* and *woman taking care of her body*...Ps 139; Judg 13:13-14). If the Lord leads you to a public dedication then do it, follow His guidance but if not then simply keep it private. But, the main idea is that the word **train** here means

“dedication” and “dedication” involves continual responsibilities for the parent. It is not simply about having a little service and that being the end of it.

The second meaning of the word **train** is “initiation”. As a parent you will be initiating your child into new things that he is not aware of. Parents have the responsibility of introducing their children to these things at the right time. For example, when do I discuss the gospel with my child? sex? If you don’t introduce these things to your child then someone else will and then you can’t guarantee the accuracy of the information. When should you initiate your child to these new things depends on two things? Their level of understanding. If you answered their question would they be able to understand your answer. If not then it is too early. You might say, “you’re too young right now to understand Daddy’s answer, when you get a little older I’ll explain it to you.” How do you know if they can understand? Listen to their questions. Answer their questions. Don’t give them more than they ask for or less. Answer them truthfully. Don’t fudge the truth. That’s lying and your children will see right through that. Don’t put them off either. Some children may ask question after question and you may tell them the whole story at once. Others may ask questions occasionally and they may not get the whole story for several years. That’s fine too. When he starts asking be ready to initiate him into that knowledge. That’s a part of training. Don’t be a prude about things. If you don’t introduce your child to these things someone else will and then you can’t control the information and that means real problems for your children.

The third meaning of the word **train** is “to throttle something”. In this sense it means that, as a parent, you have the responsibility “to throttle” certain tendencies in your child. For example, your child throws him or herself face down on the floor and starts throwing a temper tantrum. You have a responsibility to throttle that tendency. You are not to let him just keep at it till he gets it out of his system. Parents are not to sit by and say, “oh, this is just a phase he’s going through.” This shows lack of concern on the parents part. You should be very concerned with this behavior and should recognize that it is time to throttle this tendency.

So, Prov 22:6 means that parents have the responsibility to “train up a child according to the direction of his predetermined bent and then when he is mature and old enough to make his own decisions he will not depart from the training you have given him.”

We will return to this verse in a little while but for now let’s look at two other ways in which your child is bent.

A. Knowing the *General Bent* of Your Child: Evil

Whether we like it or not and whether we like to talk about it or not our children have a natural bent toward evil. This is a theological point that is clearly taught in Romans 5:12 *“just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned.”* “all men” includes all children ever born into the world. Children do not become sinners the first time they commit a conscious sin. David says he was conceived in sin (Ps 51:5). This does not mean that “sex” is sinful. It means that the sin nature was transmitted to David at the point of conception. This is the Christian answer for why people experience physical death. All people ultimately die because of sin and every child has a bent toward doing evil. For example, Ps 58:3 teaches that our children do not become liars they are born liars.

Psalm 58:3 The wicked are estranged from the womb; These who speak lies go astray from birth.

Children, regardless of how cute and cuddly they are, are born totally depraved. You may say, “not my dear Elizabeth, she’s so sweet.” Well, you’ve been deceived by dear Elizabeth if that is the case. The Bible teaches that all children are born, not with a desire to do right but with a desire to do wrong. It comes naturally for children to lie, cheat, steal, etc...because they are bent that way since the Fall. Turn over to Genesis 5:1-3

Genesis 5:1-3 This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day when God created man, He made him in the likeness of God. ² He created them male and female, and He blessed them and named them Man in the day when they were created. ³ When Adam had lived one hundred and thirty years, he became the father of a son in his own likeness, according to his image, and named him Seth.

Man was made in the image and likeness of God but did you ever notice that verse 3 says that Adam’s son was made in **his own likeness** and not in God’s likeness? (pause) This is because all children since the Fall inherit an Adamic nature (sin nature). “As long as the Adamic nature is in a child, you’re going to have to deal with it in your training. If you forget it is there, you will never be able to train your child successfully.”ⁱⁱ Turn to Prov 29:15

Proverbs 29:15 The rod and reproof give wisdom, But a child who gets his own way brings shame to his mother.

Forget about the rod for now, we'll get to that later. What we are interested in here is the **child who gets his own way**. What this means is that if you let your child go and don't discipline him then he's going to shame his mother. In other words, if you want a child to shame his parents just do nothing and let him remain in the same state as he was born. His Adamic nature will go uncorrected and he will end up just as he was born. No child who "gets his own way" will ever do what is right. His Adamic nature will lead him to do what is wrong. He is naturally bent to go the wrong way.

Parents must interfere in their child's development or they will simply do what comes naturally; steal, lie, kill, live impure lives. You should not be surprised at your child when he lies. You should not say, "how could I have given birth to this little beast, he's nothing like me." When you say that you are simply saying you don't know about the Adamic nature. As a parent you must know that your child is naturally bent toward evil. If you try to force your children to live a certain way and threaten to kill them if they don't they will still keep on living that way. This is because they have the Adamic nature.

B. Knowing the *Specific Bent of Your Child: Great Grandfather's Sins*

If this is true, and it is, then the ultimate goal of every parent should be that their child needs to receive Jesus Christ, they need to be born again. You say, but how old must my child be to really trust in Jesus Christ and be saved. That is a matter of the Age of Accountability. At what age is my child accountable? The Bible does not give a specific age. Most people assume that when he is in junior high he is accountable but the Bible doesn't make it this simple. This is another area where you have to know and understand your child. My child may become accountable at a much earlier age than your child. I don't know. Each child is unique. God didn't lay down a specific age because He makes every child unique and wants you to study to know your child. The sooner you know your child the sooner you will be able to lead your child to saving knowledge of Jesus Christ and that is the biggest key in getting the training on the right track.

There is another principle you must know about your child that comes along with the sin nature. This is how the sins of your ancestors show up in your children. These are what we call "Problems that Great-Great Grandfather Started". Turn to Exodus 34:5-7

Exodus 34:5-7 ⁵ The LORD descended in the cloud and stood there with him as he called upon the name of the LORD. ⁶ Then the LORD passed by in front of him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth; ⁷ who keeps lovingkindness for

thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin; yet He will by no means leave *the guilty* unpunished, visiting the iniquity of fathers on the children and on the grandchildren to the third and fourth generations."

Notice that last phrase in verse 7 where it says "visiting the iniquity of fathers on the children and on the grandchildren to the third and fourth generations." This verse has disturbed many people but it shouldn't. What God is saying is that He will not allow a family sin pattern to run for more than four generations. He will graciously put an end to it. If He didn't then God would have to destroy the whole human race. So this is actually a blessing that God stops the sin pattern by the fourth generation. But how do we deal with these sin patterns that Great Grandfather started? The first thing, as parents, we have to do is be able to recognize it. This should not be that difficult. A father's sinful tendencies seem to show up among his children (e.g. David and Solomon both had a female lust problem; Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob all had the sinful tendency of lying). It is our responsibility as parents to recognize our ancestor's sin patterns and to deter our children from getting stuck in them.

Proverbs 20:11-12 It is by his deeds that a lad distinguishes himself If his conduct is pure and right. ¹² The hearing ear and the seeing eye, The LORD has made both of them.

Two things are taught here. First, a child is known by his conduct and second, God has given the parents ears that can hear and eyes that can see. Therefore, parents, it is your responsibility to use your God-given ears and eyes to listen and watch your children so you can know your child. If he lies don't look at him and smile and say, "well, the precious little thing doesn't know what he is saying." Realize that the first lie he tells you is a sign of his Adamic nature and that you are going to have to deal with it and you better deal with it then before it gets to be a habit. Secondly, be alert to sin patterns that run in your family and be ready to detect them and deter them. Every child has different sin tendencies so they will not all have the same weaknesses. Each child is unique and so you have to study each child individually so you can know each of them. Everyone intuitively knows that our children are each unique but only the word of God gives us the way of dealing with them; and that is where our responsibility of knowing our children comes in (Deal with Adoption).

Let's review what we've learned. Our children are actually bent three ways. *First*, there is the general bent of all children due to their total depravity; they have an Adamic nature. This means that their natural bent is toward evil. If they go toward good it is because of

training, not because of the way they are bent. *Second*, we learned that all children are bent to follow in Great-Grandfather's sinful tendencies. He may have specific sin patterns that he inherited from his ancestors.

C. Knowing the *Specific Bent of Your Child: God's Predetermined Plan*

Lastly, we learn from Scripture that each child is bent a third way. This is the way described in Prov 22:6 and where we started tonight. This is a good bent, Your child has been bent in a good way by God. That is what Prov 22:6 was teaching, "train up a child in the bent which has been predetermined". This predetermined bent is predetermined by God and it means that God has a plan for your child's life. It is your responsibility as parents of the child to help your child discover what his purpose in life is. We do not need to give our child an aptitude test that is supposed to tell him what he is fit for. I think these tests have become mandatory in the public schools. If I were you as a parent I would not let my child take one of these tests. Too many people have taken one of those tests and followed the conclusions so that they went to college and studied and got a degree and went into a field and now they are miserable today. Yet that is what the test said they were fitted for so they keep at it. Besides, it is too costly and time consuming to go back to school and try something else. This has led to many people into misery. So, I would not let my child take one of those aptitude tests. The school may think you are nuts and that you are doing a disservice to your child and that you don't really love your child but which is really more important; your self-image before the school board or your children. Frankly, and I say this sincerely, I could care less what the school board thinks. My responsibility is to my child and not to the school board. If you are a Christian that believes the word of God then it is your responsibility to help your children discover what God's predetermined purpose is for your child's life. And remember this: the purpose that God has for your child is not necessarily the purpose you have for them.

What passages do we have that teach that your child has a predetermined bent that was given to him by God? The most important passage that explains this is Psalm 139. I do not have the time to teach you this Psalm tonight so you will have to take what I say at face value. Psalm 139 teaches that God is omniscient that He knows all about you and that God is omnipresent, that He is always around you. This means God is extremely interested in every child. Why is God so interested in us? Why will God never leave us alone? The simple answer is that God was interested in you from the moment of conception so why shouldn't he be interested in you now. In fact, the word of God elsewhere indicates that God was interested in you even before you were conceived? If God takes this much interest in each one of us how much interest should we as parents have in our children? We should

be interested in our child from the moment we discover that they have been conceived. We should not wait until they are born or until they have grown up some and there is a problem. Our way of interest can be expressed two ways before birth. First, by knowing Judges 13:13-14 we know that a woman should take care of her body during pregnancy. How many times have we seen a pregnant woman smoking cigarettes or drinking alcohol or even doing drugs? We know that causes abnormalities. This woman is already training her child; her irresponsibility is going to have a huge effect on her child's physical, mental, and spiritual development. During pregnancy a woman should take good care of her body. This means eating right, exercising, and avoiding harmful substances. By knowing Psalm 139 we know that God takes extreme interest in our child and therefore we ought to do the same. We can express this interest by getting down on our hands and knees with our spouse, dedicating them to the Lord and continually praying for the child even as God knits them together in the womb. See how the Scripture tells us ahead of time, before we've even met our child what we can do; we already know our child somewhat. We are on the right track. Psalm 139 should also motivate you to take interest in your child and to anxiously discover their predetermined course in life so you can adjust your training precisely to them.

Now, let's change gears. I obviously can't cover all the principles of child rearing tonight. It would take about 8-10 weeks to cover all the important aspects in detail. But I do want to take some time to look at disciplining your child because I think this will be helpful.

II. Disciplining Your Child

A. Three Hebrew Words Used of Correction

We are going to look mostly at the OT because the NT has very little to say about discipline. It has some but not much. In the OT, Proverbs has the most to say about "correction" and Job gives some of the best illustrations. They key to effective discipline is learning to discipline our children the way God disciplines us. I'm sure you know many people who raised their children in a strict home and when they left the home they went crazy. The parents get totally confused when this happens, "I spanked them, I was strict with them, I taught them the right way to go. I don't understand why they ran off the other way." This problem can be answered from the word of God.

In the OT there are actually three Hebrew words used to translate our English word "discipline" or "correction". They all suggest a progression toward maturity in discipline. We will look at the words in their proper order of progression as a child develops. The first two words are words which describe discipline that any kind of parent can do whether he

is a Christian or not. When these two kinds of discipline are used obedience results but that is all it result in. They will follow the rules but that is it. The third word translated “discipline” is associated with God’s discipline as well as with godly parents. Thus, the secret to effective discipline is to be able to discipline after the manner in which God disciplines. Let’s look at the first word.

B. Physical Punishment

The first Hebrew word for “discipline” is found in Prov 22:15

Proverbs 22:15 Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; The rod of discipline will remove it far from him.

The word **discipline** here is the Hebrew word *musar*. *musar* is a barren word referring to physical discipline. That is all it refers to. It refers to spanking your child. It is an empty, barren word. It does not imply discipline in love. The word means to secure obedience by sheer force. You can force someone smaller than you or younger than you to obey you by the use of sheer force. That’s what this word is all about and that is why I say an unbeliever can do this kind of discipline. If you can pick up a rod you can do this kind of discipline. I think it is sad that this is as much discipline as many parents ever offer. This kind of discipline does not imply love, it does not imply understanding, it simply says, “if you do that I’m going to whip you” and that’s the end of it. This kind of discipline will result in a child who obeys because of sheer force. He may keep his mouth shut on the outside but on the inside he is cursing you. As soon as this child gets big enough to take the rod out of your hand, he will. What if you have a child who is too big to spank? If he needs spanking when he’s that old then you haven’t trained him properly. All you have done, whether you knew it or not was *musar* him. You’ve been using sheer force.

I’m not saying *musar* is wrong. I’m saying that if this is all that takes place then it is wrong. This is just the first step in discipline, but left alone it is totally inadequate.

C. Verbal Punishment (Tongue-Lashing)

The second Hebrew word for “discipline” is translated “correction” in Prov 29:17.

Proverbs 29:17 Correct your son, and he will give you comfort; He will also delight your soul.

The word here is *yasar*. *yasar* is the word that means correction with the tongue and with the rod. This is a little better than just discipline with the rod because here you are taking the time to at least talk to the child. But this is still not the best kind of discipline. When your child is learning to talk you want to go ahead and add *yasar*. Spanking alone will get you obedience. This verse says that spanking plus talking will get you “comfort” or “rest”. In other words, if you talk at him long enough he’ll shut up and you can get back to your comfortable life. Notice also that it says **he will also delight your soul**. That word **delight** does not mean happiness. It means that you will not be bothered. You can get some rest, you can relax. That is all it means. So, *yasar* is not the best kind of discipline. It uses both the rod which may hurt the physical body but always remember that our words may hurt the spirit and while the body will heal sometimes the spirit will not. Sometimes our words cut much deeper than physical spanking. The dangers of verbal correction are in the area of tongue lashing. We lash out at our children. All this does is accomplish obedience but they don’t have any understanding. A parent should never yell at a child (Eph 4:29, 31). Your voice should only be as loud as is necessary for the child to hear you. If you say, “come here Matt” and Matt doesn’t come and then you say it again and he still doesn’t come and then you yell, “Matthew Allen, get in here now!” and he comes running then what has happened is you have taught him that he doesn’t have to do what Mommy says until you yell.

D. Biblical Punishment

1. Correction in Love

The last Hebrew word for “discipline” is translated “reprove” in Prov 3:11-12.

Proverbs 3:11-12 ¹¹ My son, do not reject the discipline of the LORD Or loathe His reproof, ¹² For whom the LORD loves He reproves, Even as a father *corrects* the son in whom he delights.

This is the Hebrew word *yakach*. Why does the Lord *yakach* us? Because He loves us. Therefore, fathers are to reprove their children as God reproves us, because we love them. Our heart should be filled with love for our children.

2. Delighting in Your Child

Notice what verse 12 says about the **father**. It says he **corrects the son in whom he delights**. That word should be **reprove** because he's picking up the same idea. And what kind of son is it that a father reproveth? One in whom **he delights**. The word **delights** here is not the same one we looked at in Prov 29:17. This word means "admiration". This father admires his son's capabilities, talents, abilities and reproveth his child because he doesn't want to see them go to waste. He corrects because he loves and admires his capabilities. You've got to have a right attitude if you are going to discipline successfully. If you do this then your children when they are old will not depart from your training. If our children depart then we only disciplined them in terms of the first two words; physical discipline and verbal discipline and we have not followed that with the third aspect.

3. Allowing Discussion

Job 23:2-4 ² "Even today my complaint is rebellion; His hand is heavy despite my groaning. ³ "Oh that I knew where I might find Him, That I might come to His seat! ⁴ "I would present *my* case before Him And fill my mouth with arguments.

Do you see what Job is saying? Job is under discipline and he wants to talk to God about it. He wants to present some arguments. He doesn't want to argue with God. He means he wants to have a reasonable discussion with God. He wants to understand. Understanding comes by means of discussion. Our children also want to understand and what we're saying is that when God disciplines us He permits arguments. Therefore we ought to also permit time for arguments with our children. I don't mean disagreements but reasonable discussion. Let's read on in the passage...

Job 23:5-7 ⁵ "I would learn the words *which* He would answer, And perceive what He would say to me. ⁶ "Would He contend with me by the greatness of *His* power? No, surely He would pay attention to me. ⁷ "There the upright would reason with Him; And I would be delivered forever from my Judge.

In other words, Job is saying, "I want an audience with God. I want to understand His reasoning's behind the discipline. I want to learn what He has to say so I can use it with my own children. Surely God's not going to use His almighty power to just knock me down and say 'shut up'. No, God is righteous, He will reason me through this.

The application is obvious. When your child seriously asks "why" you need to give him/her all the time needed to discuss the thing for which you are correcting him. If they are very young and would not understand sometimes you have to say, "Father knows best; do it."

4. Being Consistent

If there is one thing that I would emphasize above all else it would be this; consistency. God is absolutely consistent in His discipline of us and parents ought to follow His model (Job 13:15). This is an area in which you need to pray all the time, "Lord help us be consistent." This means husband and wife have to be on the same page (abide by the same set of rules). Since the husband is responsible for the whole family and the husband and wife are responsible for carrying out the discipline then husband and wife must agree. If there is a disagreement the wife submits to the husband and carries out his will (because it is the Lord's will that you defer...Eph 5:18, 22-24). There is probably not one thing that is more damaging to a child than inconsistency. It confuses them and it destroys their confidence in you. Eventually they will not believe what you say. If you threaten your children, "I'm going to spank you if you do that again" and then you don't spank them then you are destroying their confidence in you. Do what you say you will do; be consistent. Children are very smart. They will try to disobey and then if it works, you don't do what you said you will do then they learn that they don't have to do what you say. This teaches our children that its ok to lie just like Mommy and Daddy do.

5. Reasoning with Your Child

According to Isaiah 1:18 God reasoned with Israel. There was already a set standard laid down; the Mosaic Law. You need to set up standards or rules in the home so that you can have a basis for reasoning with the child, pointing out why it was wrong and you better be able to prove your point. Never, I repeat, never go out on a limb and make a false statement. Do you ever go out and make a statement that he knows is false and that, deep down, you also know is false? If you do it won't be long before your child knows that your discipline is not based on reason but on a few peculiar ideas that Mommy has and he's not going to like that any more than you would. It's going to cause irritation. You better be able to prove your point. If you say, "I don't reason with my child. They know better than to talk back to me." We're not talking about talking back, we're talking about reasoning

6. Praying for Your Child

7. Ultimate Goal: Receiving Christ and Pleasing Him

ⁱ The verb occurs infrequently (five times) with the object "house," either private (Deut 20:5) or religious (e.g. 1Kings 8:63). Although usually rendered "dedicate" a more accurate translation is "begin" or "initiate." See Prov 22:6 for μ^1nak translated as "train" (a child). Synonyms are $q^1d\acute{e}sh$ "to

set apart," a notion not inherent in μ^1nak , and the phrase $m^1l\phi^\circ yad$ "fill the hand," thought by some to mean "filling the hand (with an offering?) for Yahweh" (cf. Jud 17:5, 12; Exo 29:24ff), a phrase used with respect to "people."

μ^1nak is best understood as "inaugurate." There is not in the term itself the notion that dedication is to someone or to something, though that concept is present in the synonyms. With one exception (Prov 22:6, where the meaning is "start"; cf. NEB), μ^1nak and its derivatives refer to an action in connection with structures such as a building (1Kings 8:63), wall (Neh 12:27), an altar (Num 7:10), or an image (Dan 3:2).

μ^1nak is almost certainly a community action which in the case of cult structures involves offerings. The ceremony of dedication ($\mu^1n\forall kk\hat{a}$) for Solomon's altar extended over seven days (2Chr 7:9). Dedication of Solomon's temple as well as the temple at Ezra's time was marked by numerous sacrifices (1Kings 8:63; Ezr 6:17).

Judging from Israelite practice, the initial use of a religious structure was given special significance. The completion of a project was observed with an inauguration of the structure, an event appropriately accompanied by sacrifice and joy. Rites of inauguration have their place. Elsewhere, with the use of other vocabulary, greater emphasis is given to the consecration of people to God.

$\mu^1n\acute{ik}$. Trained servants, trained men (RSV). A hapax legomenon in Gen 14:14. Now translate as "armed retainer" used by Palestinian chieftains as mentioned in the Egyptian Execration Texts (nineteenth-eighteenth centuries B.C. and in a fifteenth century B.C. cuneiform inscription from Taanach, Israel. It is of textual significance that this hapax has good second millennium parallels. No point is to be made of the number armed retainers born in Abraham's house (318) nor is it accurately to be compared to the Sarcophagus of Amenophis III which records that the prince Gilukhipla arrived from Naharaim (Haran) with 317 women of the harem (A. DeBuck, *Egypti Reading Book I*, 1948, p. 67).

$\mu^1n\forall kk\hat{a}$. Dedication, inauguration. The term occurs eight times in Hebrew and twice in each of the Aramaic portions of Ezra and Daniel.

The noun is most famous because of its intertestamental use for the reestablishment of worship in the temple after the excesses of Antiochus Epiphanes. This Hanukkah feast is mentioned in Jn 10:22. It falls in late December.

ⁱⁱ Temple, Joe, *Know Your Child* (Abilene, TX: Living Bible Studies, 1998), 16.

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