

The Example Of Two Good Mothers

by Zac Poonen

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Scripture: Luke 2:22, Hebrews 11:23, 1 Timothy 1:5, Proverbs 22:6, Ephesians 6:4, Deuteronomy 6:6, Psalm 127:3, Colossians 3:20, 2 Timothy 3:15, Proverbs 31:26

Topics: "Child Dedication", "Parental Responsibility in Faith"

Description

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Transcript

There are only two, we can say, things that Jesus said we should do in a church as meaningful rituals. One is baptism and the Lord's table, both of which have meaning related to our dying with Jesus Christ on the cross. Dedicating children is not compulsory, there's no law, you can do it on your own at home, dedicate your child to God, but the reason we do it publicly is because Jesus was dedicated as a baby, so that's a good example to follow, like we follow his example in baptism, he broke bread, we follow there.

So we also follow the example here as we read in Luke chapter 2 and verse 22, when the days of their purification was over, they brought Jesus to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord, for it is written, the law of the Lord, every firstborn male, Luke 2.23, that opens a womb and shall be called holy to the Lord. Many commands in the Old Testament were partial, but they are fully fulfilled in the New Testament. The reason why God told the Israelites, your firstborn son must be dedicated to me was because when the Israelites were in Egypt, the angel of death went through and killed all the firstborn sons in the whole land, but the firstborn sons of Israel were not killed because they put the blood on the door.

So the Lord said to them, they should have been killed, but they were saved by the blood, so you must dedicate them to me. So that was the law, but that was only for the firstborn son. Now for us in the New Covenant, all our children, there's no difference between male and female now in the New Covenant.

The Old Covenant, the man was more important than the woman, as you see right through the Old Testament. But in the New Covenant, they are equally important to God, and our baby boys and baby girls are equally important, and we don't present the first only, we present all of them to the Lord. So just like in the Old Covenant, they had one day that was holy, the Sabbath, Saturday, now all days are holy for us.

In the Old Covenant, 10% of their income belonged to God and 90% belonged to themselves, but in the New Covenant, 100% belongs to God, and we use it as God tells us to use it. We don't recognize anything as ours. So all our children belong to the Lord, and God gives them to us to bring them up in a godly way, so that another generation also will continue to be witnesses for him on the earth, and then they will be witnesses to their next generation, and so the Lord's purpose is that generation after generation after generation, right from the time the Holy Spirit came on the day of Pentecost, right up until the time Jesus returned in all these 2,000 years, if Christians had followed that teaching, in every generation there would have been godly people holding up the light of God, being the salt of the earth, and the light of the world.

But as you know, 99% of Christians fail, they don't care for the word of God, they live only for money and honor and earthly things, God's purposes are not fulfilled, but the Bible speaks about a remnant, a remnant means a small number, do you know out of 600,000 men who came out of Egypt, only two entered the land of Caleb, Joshua and Caleb, and I think among 600,000 Christians on the earth, there may be two who are really serious that God will be first in everything in my life, and I'm going to honor God in every area of my life, I'm going to honor God in my family, I'm going to honor God in my work, I'm going to honor God in my thought life, my speech, there's no department of my life that God will not be honored in, I think it's about two out of 600,000, I mean so many Christians in my life, I have very few, who are really serious about their Christian life, the same way we're bringing up children, out of 600,000 children born to Christians, maybe two are brought up in a really godly way to grow up to be wholehearted disciples of Jesus Christ, and the failure lies 100% with the parents, because the Bible says, when he's old he will not depart from it, God's word cannot be broken, he will not depart from it means he will not depart from it, she will not depart from it, so if a child departs from it, you can't say God failed, you can't say his promise failed, you have to say maybe parents did not bring them up in a proper way, and to me one of the greatest examples of that, one of the finest examples, you read one example in the New Testament, one in the Old Testament, one is Moses and the other is Timothy, the mother, in both cases the mother, not the father, the reason is, even though it's the father who disciplines the children, that's important, it's the mother who spends most of the time with the child at home, unfortunately these days so many mothers are working, I believe it's unfortunate if the children are neglected, but I mean, right up until about 100 years ago, almost from the beginning of history, mothers were at home, it's all different now in the last 40-50 years, but from the beginning of time, in every nation mothers were at home, and they worked like in Proverbs 31 you read, they worked at home, and they cared for their children, and Moses' mother is an outstanding example of that, you read in Hebrews in chapter 11, you know, Hebrews chapter 11 is a great chapter of people who split the Red Sea, pull down the walls of Jericho, like Samson, shut the mouths of lions, raise the dead, like Elijah, and in the midst of the list of these fantastic miracles, you read about a woman, a set of parents, but I think especially the woman, who brought up a child in a godly way, to bring up a child in a godly way, can you put it in the same category as raising the dead, splitting the Red Sea, I say yes, God has put it there, because you read that chapter sometimes, Hebrews 11, it's fantastic

miracles, tremendous miracles, which people are astounded by, but nobody thinks of the fact that you brought up a godly child as something to be astounded by, but it is, in an evil world, it says about Moses in verse 23, Hebrews 11, 23, by faith Moses, now it's not talking about the faith of Moses here, it's talking about the faith of his parents, and especially his mother, by faith Moses when he was born was hidden by his parents, so it's the parents who took that decision, and they saw he was a beautiful child, and I just want to tell you that every child is a beautiful child, if you can see God's purpose for that child that is given to you, whether it's a boy or a girl, every child is a beautiful child, don't ever look at some child and say this is not a beautiful child, that's a lie of the devil, and they were not afraid, the king said, now what I want you to see is this, if you know the Old Man was so afraid that the Israelites were slaves, they were increasing in number by hundreds of thousands, that he was afraid that they would one day start a riot and kill the Egyptians and take over the country, so he passed a law, Pharaoh, that every male child should be killed, so that there will not be any riot in Egypt and the Israelites will not take over the country, and so that's what all the Israelite, many of the Israelite mothers did, of course some of the house, some of the midwives would not kill them, when God came he did not kill all the children, but Moses' mother, when his baby was born, she and her husband had faith, we got somehow, God has got a plan for this child, it's wonderful when you have a baby born in your home, God's got a plan for this child, we must do everything to protect it from harm, from the devil, in that case from Pharaoh, today from the devil, and so they kept the child at home, but as it grew up you can't keep it at home too long, those Egyptian soldiers will come checking every house to see if any babies are there, so they put it in a basket and put it into the river, Nile is full of crocodiles and all that, and they trusted God to protect it, and Moses' mother, sorry, Moses' sister, older sister, maybe 10-12 years older than her, was hiding in the bushes to see what would happen to this baby in the basket, and sure enough how the leading of God, because of the faith of that woman, the mother, amazing what God does when a woman, when a mother has faith, the right person comes along, Pharaoh's daughter, who's got a kind heart, she sees this child and says, oh this must be one of the Hebrew's children, which my father, the Pharaoh, told to kill, so she picked it up, and Moses' sister, wise little girl that's instructed by her mother, go ahead, tell her they want a nurse to look after the child, because she ran up to Pharaoh's daughter and said, can I get one of the Hebrew nurses to look after the child, she said sure, and she went and called her mother, and the mother came, didn't notice the mother, Pharaoh's daughter said, you look after this child, and when he's grown up, bring him to the palace, because I don't want the hassle of looking after a child when it's a little baby, or can't take care of it. So Moses' mother did that, and they kept Moses at home, and at a certain age they brought him to Pharaoh. Now it doesn't say in the Bible how old Moses was when he was brought to Pharaoh's palace.

Okay, let's assume that even if he was at home for 10 years, or 7 years, or 10 years, that's a maximum 10 years, and he had to take the child to Pharaoh's palace. Okay, now we took this child for 10 years at home, and 30 years in the most wicked place on the face of the earth, with immorality, loads of money, and power, and position, and all that, from the age of 10, think of your child, say your little boy or little girl, whom you have at home for 10 years and so on, and at the age of 10 you send that child out to the most wicked, worldly, corrupt, sinful, wealthy place on earth, and I'm not talking about America, I'm talking about the palace of Pharaoh. In 30 years he grows up there, with not a single godly person in that whole palace, and at the age of 40, look at the decisions he takes.

Number one, I will not be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, verse 24, I don't want the honor of this world. Okay, second, verse 25, I don't want the passing pleasures of sin, of sex, and all that. Third, verse 26, I don't want the riches, the treasures of Egypt.

So after 30 years in these wicked surroundings, where there's plenty of money, plenty of honor, plenty of sex, and pleasure, he rejected all three. I don't want the passing pleasure of sin. He knew, there is pleasure in sin, it's one of the words in the Bible that says, there is pleasure in sin, but it's a passing pleasure, I don't want it.

All this wealth that I see in Egypt, I don't want it, and I don't want the honor of this big title, Pharaoh's daughter's son. What should I choose instead? I will choose to stand, verse 25, with the people of God, and I will choose, verse 26, the reproach of the Messiah who's going to come, because the Israelites believed the Messiah Christ would come. Isn't it amazing that a 10 year old boy goes into the most wicked place on earth, and at the age of 40, turns out to take such important decisions in relation to honor, money, and pleasure of the world? There's only one reason for it.

His mother drifted to his mind by the time he was 10, the values that he should have. And that teaches us in those days when there was no Bible, no church, no fellowship, how a child could grow up if a mother had done her job faithfully, and not played the fool during those 10 years. You know, she couldn't afford to play the fool.

Every day was important, because at the age of 10, she'd go, imagine if you knew that at the age of 10, your child is going to go out of your house. How would it be? But most of you at the age of 18, they go to college. I know all of my boys went to college when they were 18.

You had them at home for a certain period, that's it. And you had your children at home for a certain period. And if you don't make use of every one of those days, later on you'll see, you'll suffer the consequences of it.

So it's an amazing, I really admire this lady. Why do I say the mother? Because they were all slaves in Egypt in those days, the Israelites. So I can imagine the father went to work at 6 o'clock in the morning, and they really treated those slaves badly.

And if you came late, they'd really trouble you in some way. So 6 o'clock in the morning, you'd have a quick breakfast at home and rush off to work, and probably come home at 9 o'clock at night. Slaves, worked the whole day.

I don't even know whether they had a day off. Maybe they gave them a half a day off on some day of the week, I don't know. My point is, he hardly ever saw his baby, Moses, except when he was asleep.

The father hardly ever saw him. Maybe if they had a half day off in the week, he'd spend a little time with his son. But all the time, that boy was with the mother.

And that mother was such a godly woman, put so many values into this child's head, that he didn't forget 30 years later. That's quite a lesson for us as parents. Today we have father and mother.

Why should your child choose the riches of the world, or the honor of the world, or the pleasures of sin, when he's old? When this child, with a mother who had no Bible at home, no church fellowship, nothing, all she had was God and her faith, and she wanted to impart to that child. It's a tremendous challenge to me. And to every mother sitting here, there's absolutely no excuse for your child to follow the ways of the world.

Absolutely not. We have a hundred times more than his mother had. The other example is in the New Testament, is Timothy.

You read about Timothy in 1 Timothy. In 2 Timothy, chapter 1, Paul says about him, maybe before that, I should just show you an introduction to Acts, chapter 2, verse 16. Acts, chapter 16.

Paul was driving around, and I just want to tell you something about Paul's team. Paul had a team of workers. He was very, very strict about who he got under this team.

I mean, if you got under Paul's team, it was like the highest honor that you could think of. In Christian circles, to be one of Paul's team, he was very selective. You read about one man who was on his team called John Mark, who after one trip got a little, found that he was too tough, and he went away.

Paul said, I'll never take him back under my team again. He was so strict. He would not have any half-hearted compromises on his team.

And Paul was a person of great discernment about who he selected. And we read here that there was this disciple, Acts 16, 1, called Timothy. And we're told something about his background.

His mother was a Jewish woman who had become a believer. But she married a Greek. Now that means that she disobeyed God's word when she was a young girl, because the Jews were not allowed to marry the non-Jewish people.

They were not Christians. They were just Jews, and they were not allowed to marry non-Jewish people. If you married a non-Jew, you were cut off from God's people.

So she must have been a backslidden Jew, a backslidden Jewish young girl, who had then married a Greek man, who probably was a businessman, spiritual thing, just making money. You know, like some women, their husbands are only interested in money and this world, and this poor woman maybe was backslidden when she married him. And now she's come to the Lord, and she's got a child.

And I have a feeling that when she saw this child and saw the worldliness around, she must have gone to the Lord and said, Lord, forgive me for my backsliding, that I stripped up when I was a young girl. But I want to make up for that by bringing up this little boy in a Godly way. And I reckon that he must have been 19 or 20 years old.

And Paul took him, verse 3, with him and said, I want you to be part of my team. Can you imagine this strict Paul who could discern people and see people through and through, selecting a young man who was 19 or 20 years old. You know, like God selected David when he was 19 or 20 years old, and God selected Joseph when he was 17 years old, and selected Samuel when he was a little boy, and God selected Jeremiah when he was a little boy.

There are a lot of cases in history of God selecting small people because before they're 20 years old, God's laid hold of them. It's really amazing. And so the fact that God, Paul, could select this young man tells me something about his mother, something like Moses' mother, that she had brought him up so well, even with a Greek worldly father.

Can you imagine if you're a godly woman and your husband is thoroughly worldly, only interested in the world, and you have a child and you bring up that child in such a good godly way that the apostle Paul

says, you should be on my team. Boy, you ought to take your hats off to that mother. She must have been a fantastic mother.

None of us have any excuses. They didn't have a Bible in those days either. I mean, the Old Testament was there in the synagogue.

The parchment was very expensive. You didn't have one in your home. And here she was.

And what did she impart to the child? It was not just knowledge. Very often today parents impart knowledge to their children, which is good, Bible knowledge. But here we read in 2 Timothy.

Now we go to 2 Timothy 1, and Paul says in verse 5, I am mindful, 2 Timothy 1, 5, of the sincere faith which was first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice. So the grandmother was a god-fearing woman and tried to bring up her daughter in a good way, but somehow she ended up marrying a Greek man. But anyway, she repented, and so Eunice, the daughter, got paid as well.

But the point is, it is a sincere faith which was in Timothy's mother, Eunice, which he passed on to Timothy, not knowledge. He says, I see the faith, Timothy, that was in your mother. And what does that mean? How did Timothy get faith? He says, I'm sure you got the faith inside you, which was first in your mother's heart, and now it's in you.

Now how do you put faith into a child's heart? Bible knowledge we can put into their mind. If they are clever and intelligent, just like you teach them mathematics or history or science, you can put the facts of the Bible into the mind of a clever child. But how do you put faith into a child's heart? That's much more difficult.

And the important thing that, you know, it's good to teach our children the Bible and all that, but to put faith into their heart is much more important. And that is by, you know, when you read the Bible, you know, for example, if you tell them our story of Jesus going through the storm, storming in, I mean, that's great to see, to tell them the miracle that Jesus stood in the storm. But to relate that to practical daily life and say to your child, see, we can also face difficulties like that, small things, big things.

Some little problem may come in your school when you are studying with other children or some other bigger problem in the house. There's not enough money or we have to vacate our house and find another one. So many problems can come in life when we get a sickness.

Suddenly if it's unexpected, it's like a storm. Timothy's mother would have said, what shall we do, Timothy? Just trust God. Remember how Jesus stood in the storm? Do you remember in all the Gospels? There was never a storm which he could not stop.

So let's trust him. They would pray over that problem they faced. And little Timothy learned from a very young age, three or four years old, that when there's a problem or a storm, I must pray.

And then something else happens in some other situation, some sickness or some other problem or anything. Timothy, let's pray. And they pray and they see how God wonderfully solves that problem.

So we should not pray, Lord, take us through life without any problems. Whenever I see a person who's gone through life without any problems, I can tell you a person who's got zero faith. He doesn't need faith.

He's got enough resources in his bank and with his friends to take care of all his needs. Why does he need God? He doesn't need God at all. He has no problems.

But some other person who's faced all types of difficult problems and trusted God through them, they have something that's solid inside them that lasts for eternity. They can communicate something to their children. So it's not only the children of rich people who have no earthly needs or problems.

Very often, many of them don't grow up to be godly. They're just normal Christians who just sit in a church and ease their conscience and they'll perform again, as they call it. Useless to God and useless to man.

We should not want any one of our children to grow up useless to God and useless to man. Not even one. If you have ten children, all ten must be profitable to God and profitable to man.

And the way to train them up is to teach them to trust God in the trials of life. So if you have trials when your children are small, praise God. Praise God.

There's a challenge. There's a storm that's coming to our home. And we're going to trust Jesus to still it.

A little child grows up. Even if it's a small little thing. So son, did you lose your pen somewhere? Let's pray to Jesus.

A pen costs hardly anything. But teach that child to pray. Lord Jesus, please help me.

I lost my pen somewhere. Can I find it? Or mommy says, I lost my, I misplaced my keys. Timothy, can you help me to pray? We pray to ask Jesus to help me to find my keys.

It's not the most important thing in the world. But to teach our children to pray for every little thing and big thing. Not just when the house is on fire.

But small little things. And little by little by little, faith came into Timothy's heart. That is the thing that all discerning man that he was could say, Hey, here's a young man.

It's not just Bible knowledge he has. So hey, that's the type of man I want in my team. I think I would have considered it a tremendous honor if God selected me or any of my children to be in Paul's team.

That's how Timothy's mother felt. She let him go. She let him go, okay.

This is what I brought you up for all your life. This is what I longed for you. Not that you should become a millionaire.

But that you should be a servant of God. So she longed for that. She didn't, wasn't there.

There wasn't any hesitation in her heart. Because this is what she wanted. That my child should grow up to be a witness for Christ on earth.

And so I want to say to you, dear brothers and sisters. You know, we say you're a part of the new covenant of Christian fellowship. And the new covenant, for a person new covenant Christian, Christ is everything.

Not just first. Christ is everything. The whole circle is Christ.

There's no little segment of that circle for something good. And that is the way we must bring up our children also. So remember the responsibility is very much upon our parents and especially on the mother to bring up every child God has given you in a godly way.

And God will help you with that. Definitely. He is there to help us in our weakness.

So let's trust Him.

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