

Thought for a Wednesday  
June 17, 2009

“So in the course of time Hannah conceived and gave birth to a son. She named him Samuel, saying, *‘Because I asked the LORD for him...’* After he was weaned, she took the boy with her, young as he was, along with a three-year-old bull, an ephah of flour and a skin of wine, and brought him to the house of the LORD at Shiloh. When they had slaughtered the bull, they brought the boy to Eli, and she said to him, *‘As surely as you live, my lord, I am the woman who stood here beside you praying to the LORD. I prayed for this child, and the LORD has granted me what I asked of him. So now I give him to the LORD. For his whole life he will be given over to the LORD’...*” (1 Samuel 1:20-28)

Like Hannah, Karen and I have stood before our churches, with a baby in our arms and have dedicated each one back to God – Recognizing that each one of our girls are a gift, a stewardship from our loving Heavenly Father. We have an overwhelming sense that God in His Sovereign knowledge and grace decided to give us 5 daughters, each with their own personalities, unique gifts and talents, oddities and beauties... We have tried to live our lives in remembrance of that moment when each girl was given back to God in thankfulness and dedication for God’s use, God’s blessing and for God’s will to be done...

Tomorrow morning, Karen and I will be driving one of the vans loaded with luggage and members of our Cambodian team to NYC; of which, our daughter, Kristen Joy is a part of. There are many emotions running through my small brain this morning, but I’ll share with you just two...

- 1) As a father, I am **concerned** (okay fearful) for her safety – Let’s face it, I’m not sending her off to summer camp down the road... I’m sending her across the world to Cambodia! I’m concerned for her physical health, her emotional health – You name it, I’m concerned! As a father, there’s a part of me that just wants to keep my princesses safe behind the castle walls and fight off any and all foes who would want to harm them – I am extremely zealous for my children’s safety in that way. You can do anything to me, all day long – But, touch one of my princesses, hurt them and I take off the “reverend hat” and put on the “terminator hat”! Know what I mean, Dads? So, as I say good-bye tomorrow at the airport, I will be concerned for her well-being...
- 2) As a Christian father, I am **confident** – Confident that because her mother and I have given each of girls back to Him in dedication, I know she’s where He (her Heavenly Father) wants her. And as concerned as I am, will be, there is a quiet confidence and assurance that there **IS** no safer place to be than in the center of God’s will, in the middle of God’s loving hands. **Where else would I want my children?** It matters not what is going on around them, what chaos may be swirling about or uncertainty – To be in the center of God’s will is the safest place any of us can be! So, as I say good-bye tomorrow at the airport, I will be confident in her Heavenly Father’s ability to care for her well being...

One final thought – Because this father’s day Kristen will be in Cambodia, serving Christ and serving people, can I just say how extremely proud I am as a Father to be extremely blessed with children who desire to honor God with their lives! I heard James McDonald

speaking yesterday, I didn't catch all he said, but this one thought just gripped my heart – I'm paraphrasing but it's simply this: *"I want the ones I love, my family to know that all I ask of them is not to please me... but to be pleasing to God – To love God, obey God, serve God... Everything else will take care of itself!"*

Will you join me in praying for Kristen as she travels and serves in Cambodia – And while you're praying for her, please also pray for Ashley, Brian, Joe, Leslie, Nathan and Sheray

Be Strong, Be Courageous, Be Fearless – and remember...

Christ **IS** All!

**Pastor Mark**