

Dedication

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Lately I've been seeing or hearing the word "dedication" quite often. It is mostly in the context of people doing or not doing what one should consider normal behavior, or as we say, just what one's duty was, as with the unprofitable servant. Today we will look at this attribute which is much admired in others but often not considered as important in our own lives. So today's title is simply Dedication.

According to The New World Dictionary, dedicate is *to consecrate or declare, to proclaim (1) to set apart for worship of a deity or devote to a sacred purpose; (2) to set apart seriously for a special purpose; devote to some work, duty, etc.; (3) to inscribe or address a book, artistic performance, etc. to someone or something as a sign of honor or affection; (4) to open formally a public building, fair, etc.; (5) Law to devote to the public use. And the word dedication means (1) a dedicating or being dedicated; (2) an inscription as in a book dedicating it to a person, cause, etc.; and (3) wholehearted devotion.*

It is the third meaning that we will concentrate on today but we'll also see what can be learned from some of the other meanings. First let's look at Strong's and Vines comments on this word. Dedicate in the Old Testament is Strong's 2596 chanak, and it is *a primitive root; properly to narrow; figuratively to initiate or discipline and it is rendered dedicate or train up. You might want to keep in mind the concept of discipline and train up. One who is dedicated has to have discipline to train up him or herself to do those things which are required, like it was hard to keep working on this message as there was so much else that was needed to be done in this time.*

This word is used in connection with dedicating a house or temple or in the following verse:

Proverbs 22:26. *Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it. (KJV)*

This indicates that parents are to dedicate their children to God and His way of life. It is really important for the child's sake once he has grown old (like us) that this is done.

Notice also the meaning of "to narrow."

Matthew 7:13. *Enter by the narrow gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leads to destruction, and many there be which go in by it.*

14) *Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it. (NKJV)*

We must be truly dedicated to find and enter that narrow gate that leads to eternal life.

The next word is #6942 qadash - a primitive root; to be or make, pronounce or observe as clean (ceremonially or morally) rendered as appoint, bid, consecrate, dedicate, hallow, be or keep holy, keep, prepare, proclaim, purify, sanctify, sanctified one or wholly.

Now let's look at Vine's for dedicate: qadash (as above) means to sanctify or be holy. This verb also appears in Phoenician, biblical Aramaic and Ethiopic. In Ugaritic it signifies sanctuary and in Old Babylonian it means to shine. Do we shine to God? We are to be the light of the world.

Qadash appears about 170 times in biblical Hebrew and in all periods of the language. In the primary stem the verb signifies an act whereby or a state wherein people or things are set aside to worship God. They are consecrated or made sacred. By this act and in this state or the thing or person consecrated is to be withheld from workaday use and to be treated with special care as a possession of God. In the passive stem the verb means to prove oneself holy. Another emphasis of this stem appears in Leviticus 10:3. To be treated as holy. There is an ethical, moral overtone here too for God desires His people to obey Him, to hate sin and to love righteousness. It is love, not fear that is at the root of Israel's relationship to their God. Finally this stem may be used as the true passive of the primary stem in the sense of to be consecrated or set aside for God's use.

In Joel 1:14 the verb is applied to Israel's holy days, Sanctify ye a fast, call a solemn assembly. Thus the word comes to mean to declare and to make proper preparation for. In this sense it is sometimes applied to warfare.

This stem may also be used of putting something or someone into a state reserved exclusively for God's use. Sanctify *unto me the first born, whatsoever opened the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and of beast, it is mine*. The first-born of every beast is to be offered up to God by being given to the temple or killed. The first son may be redeemed or bought back from the Lord or given to a temple as in the case of Samuel.

Qadash may also be used in the sense that making something or someone cultically pure and meeting all God's requirements for purity in persons or things used in the formal worship of Him.

In a related sense the verb means to set someone aside for divine service. Used in this sense the word describes the necessary step, proceeding ordination to the priestly office.

Qadash is also applied to the consecration of things by placing them in a state of ritualistic or cultic purity and dedicating them solely to God's use. The verb means to recognize God as holy as the only real source of truth and to live according to His laws.

In Ezekiel 36:23, qadash means to prove oneself to be holy or to demonstrate and vindicate one's holiness. In the causative stem the word means to give for God's use. *And it shall be upon Aaron's forehead that Aaron may bear the iniquity of the holy thing which the children of Israel shall hallow.* God's consecrating something or someone may also mean that He accepts that person or thing as in His service. *I have hallowed this house which thou has built to put my name there forever and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually.*

In a more emphatic nuance the word is correlative of election signifying God's appointing someone to His service. *Before you came forth out of the womb I sanctified thee and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.* Of course we all recognize that's in Jeremiah.

This verb also means to prepare to approach God. Some uses of the word include Genesis 2:3.

Genesis 2:3. *And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it (qadash) because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made. (NKJV)*

Does this surprise you? It did me as I wasn't prepared for the connection of being dedicated and God's sanctification of the Sabbath.

What it should do, though, is give us an indicator of how important dedication is in our lives.

Exodus 19:10. *And the LORD said unto Moses, Go unto the people, and sanctify them to day and tomorrow, and let them wash their clothes, (KJV)*

Here there is an indicator in that they were to wash their clothes. Not only were their clothes to be clean, but they themselves were to be clean and therefore holy. While we can't wash sin off, and just by taking a bath make ourselves sinless, we can allow God's presence in us to make us morally clean. We also see here that all the people were to be sanctified on this day and then they were to wash their clothes the next day that they were now clean in the eyes of God, and not only clean but holy.

Do we see ourselves as the holy people that God has made us? You see, we have to be holy for His Holy spirit to dwell in us.

Exodus 28:41. *And thou shalt put them (speaking of the holy garments) upon Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him; and shalt anoint them, and consecrate them, and sanctify (here's that word again) them, that they may minister unto me in the priest's office. (KJV)*

We see that both the priests and all the people are sanctified or dedicated – Aaron and his sons were made holy to serve the holy people of God. Today we are made holy to serve all of God's people for all eternity.

Exodus 20:8. *Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. (KJV)*

Here this same word is rendered, speaking of the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. All God's people are to keep or be kept holy just like the Sabbath day. This is not just some try-to-be-good-when-it's-convenient thing. This is to be like God in all our activities, all-of-the-time commitment. We can't be holy on a part-time basis. This is an all or nothing type of thing. We are either totally committed to God's way or not committed at all. As with many, we can fool other people but there is no fooling God.

11) For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea and all that is in them and rested the seventh day. Wherefore, the Lord blessed the seventh day and hallowed it. (KJV)

Now this same word for dedicate is said to be hallowed by God. This is to be made holy, that is, if we are dedicated to God and His way, we are holy to God.

Exodus 28:3. *And thou shall speak unto all that are wise hearted whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom that they may make Aaron's garments to consecrate him that he may minister unto me in the priest's office. (KJV)*

Here, speaking of Aaron as priest, this word is rendered consecrate which means *to set apart as holy*. We are consecrated and dedicated to God.

Exodus 31:13. *Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the LORD that doth sanctify you. (KJV)*

The Sabbaths are so that we may know that the Lord does sanctify or dedicate us.

1 Chronicles 26:27. *Out of the spoils won in battles did they dedicate to maintain the house of the LORD. (KJV)*

Here this word is rendered dedicate which here means to set aside for holy use of maintaining the house of the Lord. After a battle they took a portion of the spoils to give to God for maintaining of His house. This was much like Abram did after he had rescued Lot except there was no physical building at that time.

2 Chronicles 2:4. *Behold, I build an house to the name of the LORD my God, to dedicate it to him, and to burn before him sweet incense, and for the continual shewbread, and for the burnt offerings morning and evening, on the sabbaths, and on the new moons, and on the solemn feasts of the LORD our God. This is an ordinance for ever to Israel. (KJV)*

Here dedicate is showing that the house is to be built for God, for His use, and to provide things that are pleasant to Him. Today we are told that we provide these things as we find in Ephesians 5:2 which says:

Ephesians 5:2. *And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us, and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling aroma.(NKJV)*

When we walk in love and are truly dedicated to living God's way of life, that is what is truly pleasing to our heavenly Father.

Isaiah 13:3. *I have commanded my sanctified ones, I have also called my mighty ones for mine anger, even them that rejoice in my highness. (KJV)*

Do we put our names there when we read of God's sanctified ones? We have been called and set apart for the holy purpose of assisting Jesus Christ in bringing many sons to glory.

Zephaniah 1:7. *Hold thy peace at the presence of the Lord GOD: for the day of the LORD is at hand: for the LORD hath prepared a sacrifice, he hath bid his guests. (KJV)*

Hath bid is 6942, qadash. God has dedicated His guests. He will have long known and well prepared His guests. They are holy to Him. Perhaps we are on that guest list.

The next word is a New Testament word, 1457, egkainizo, from 1456; to *renew*, that is, *inaugurate*, rendered consecrate or dedicate. Vine's says a verb, primarily means to make new, to renew, to initiate or dedicate. It is used only twice. First in Hebrews 9:18 where upon neither the first testament was dedicated without blood and Hebrews 10:20 by a new and living way which He has consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say,

His flesh. All things were renewed for us that we may receive understanding in the ability to live His way of life, the way that leads to eternal life in the family of God.

The word dedication in the Old Testament is 2597 chanukka, corresponding to 2598; consecration and rendered dedication. An example is found in Ezra 6:16.

Ezra 6:16. *And the children of Israel, the priests, and the Levites, and the rest of the children of the captivity, kept the dedication of this house of God with joy, (KJV)*

Dedicating the house of God was an occasion for great joy.

The other Old Testament word is 5145, nezer, from 5144; properly something set apart, that is, (abstractly) dedication (of a priest or Nazirite); hence unshorn locks and rendered consecration, crown, hair, separation.

I've also wondered why it was something good for a Nazirite to have long hair but Paul told the Corinthians that it was a shame or dishonor for a man to have long hair. I think the answer lies in the concept that anyone other than a Nazirite was in effect pretending to be what he was not. The long hair was an indication that the man was holy to God. For anyone else to have long hair when he was not a Nazirite was like being an imposter. Also in Ezekiel 44:20, speaking of the priests,

Ezekiel 44:20. *They shall neither shave their heads, nor let their hair grow long, but they shall keep their hair well trimmed. (NKJV)*

God wants His dedicated people to be holy in all their behavior as it says in verse 23:

23) *and they shall teach my people the difference between the holy and the unholy and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean. (KJV)*

The next word is probably most known today for its meaning at this time of the year. This is a New Testament word, it is Strong's 1456 egkainia neuter plural of a presumed compound which means innovatives, that is specifically renewal, of religious services after the Antiochian interruption and is rendered dedication.

Vine's says, in the sense of dedication became used particularly for the annual eight day feast beginning on the 25th day of Kislev instituted by Judas Maccabeus, 164 BC to commemorate the cleansing of the temple from the pollutions of Antiochus Epiphanes hence it was called the Feast of the Dedication. This feast could be celebrated anywhere, the lighting of lamps was a prominent feature, hence the description, Feast of Lights. Westcott suggests that John 9:5 that says, *As long as I am in the world, I am*

the light of the world, refers to this. They placed their lights in a place that could be seen by the world passing in front of their homes.

John 10:22 is the only place it's used in the Bible, And it was at Jerusalem the Feast of the Dedication and it was winter. On most calendars it is called Hanukkah which is Hebrew for dedication. Also called the Festival of Lights. Hanukkah is a Jewish festival which is celebrated by lighting one candle a day for eight days. It is an eight-day Jewish holiday celebrated in either November or December. This year the Festival of Lights began on the evening of Tuesday, December 12, and ends on the evening of Wednesday, December 20. The holiday begins on the 25th day of Kislev, the 9th month of the year of the Hebrew calendar.

The word Hanukkah means rededication and honors the Jewish struggle for religious freedom. It dates back to two centuries before the beginning of Christianity.

When the second temple in Jerusalem was looted and services stopped, Judaism was outlawed. In 167 BC, Antiochus ordered an altar to Zeus erected in the temple. He banned circumcision and ordered pigs to be sacrificed at the altar of the temple.

Antiochus's actions provoked a large scale revolt. Mattathias, a Jewish priest, and his five sons led a rebellion against Antiochus. By 166 BC Mattathias had died and his son, Judah, took his place as leader. By 165 BC the Jewish revolt against the Seleucid monarchy was successful. The temple was liberated and rededicated. The Festival of Hanukkah was instituted to celebrate this event. Judah ordered the temple to be cleansed, a new altar to be built in place of the polluted one and new holy vessels to be made.

According to the Talmud, unadulterated and undefiled pure olive oil with the seal of the high priest was needed for the menorah in the temple which was required to burn throughout the night, every night. The story goes that one flask was found with only enough oil to burn for one day and yet it burned for eight days, the time needed to prepare a fresh supply of kosher oil for the menorah. An eight-day festival was declared by the Jewish sages to commemorate this miracle.

The Jewish historian, Josephus, narrates in his book Jewish Antiquities how the victorious Judas Maccabeus ordered lavish yearly eight-day festivities after rededicating the Temple in Jerusalem that had been profaned by Antiochus IV Epiphanes. Josephus does not say the festival was called Hanukkah but rather the Festival of Lights. "Now Judas celebrated the festival of the restoration of the sacrifices of the temple for eight days, and omitted no sort of pleasures thereon; but he feasted them upon very rich and splendid sacrifices and he honored God and delighted them by hymns and psalms. Nay, they were so very glad at the revival of their customs, when after a long time of intermission they unexpectedly had regained the freedom of their worship, that they

made it a law for their posterity, that they should keep a festival, on account of the restoration of their temple worship, for eight days. And from that time to this we celebrate this festival, and call it Lights. I suppose the reason was because this liberty beyond our hopes appeared to us; and that thence was the name given to this festival.”

Hanukkah is not a Sabbath-like holiday and there is no obligation to refrain from activities that are forbidden on the Sabbath. A large number of songs have been written on Hanukkah themes, perhaps more so than any other Jewish festival. Two of the best known are “Rock of Ages” and “Eight Little Candles.”

Now let’s look at the word dedicated which is from Strong’s Old Testament word 6944 qodesh and it means *a sacred place or thing*. Most often this is rendered holy or hallowed, which we will cover at another time. But in a related sense the verb means *to set someone aside for divine service*. Used in this sense the word describes the necessary step preceding ordination to the priestly office.

Turn to Deuteronomy 33:1.

Deuteronomy 33:1. *Now this is the blessing with which Moses the man of God blessed the children of Israel before his death.*

2) *And he said: "The LORD came from Sinai, And dawned on them from Seir; He shone forth from Mount Paran, And He came with ten thousands of saints; ... (NKJV)*

Here qodesh is rendered saints, those who are truly dedicated. In Isaiah 62 and verse 11 it says:

Isaiah 62:11. *Indeed the LORD has proclaimed to the end of the world: "Say to the daughter of Zion, 'Surely your salvation is coming; Behold, His reward is with Him, And His work before Him.' "*

12) *And they shall call them The Holy (or dedicated) People, The Redeemed of the LORD; ... (NKJV)*

We see here that we must be truly dedicated to God and His way before we can hope to be ordained to be a priest in the Kingdom of God.

In closing, we see in Jeremiah that a whole heart is what it takes to be truly dedicated to our God.

Jeremiah 24:7. *Then I will give them a heart to know Me, that I am the LORD; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God, for they shall return to Me with their whole heart. (NKJV)*

Today we have seen how important dedication is to a Christian. Being dedicated shouldn't be just a compliment someone pays you. It should be what we are all the time as it is the precursor to eternal life in the family of God. We must be truly dedicated to God in all our ways.