

PARENTING LESSON 1: CHILDREN ARE A HERITAGE

Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD, the fruit of the womb a reward."
(emphasis mine) Psalm 127:3 (ESV)

The first thing people see about children in Psalm 127:3 is that they are a reward from the Lord. As their reward, parents treasure their children by raising them in the best way they know. Well, we definitely feel that our children are a reward while they are still small and cuddly. A parent's heart melts when his or her young child reaches out to ask for food or asks for an embrace. But how come when they grow up, some children become like they are a curse to their parents and not a reward?

I believe this happened because parents did not understand the meaning of the word reward. They also failed to see children for what they really are. If you look at Psalm 127:3 closely, you will find that there is a more important word than reward, and that is heritage.

I learned that children are, first and foremost, an inheritance from the Lord. Meaning they belong to the Lord and He is their true Father. Therefore, my children can never be mine nor can they be my treasured possession. Pinaaalaga lang sila ni God sa akin. As a steward, God expects me to raise them according to His ways, not mine. My children were not always happy with the way I've raised them. Denise and Daniel were constantly afraid of me because I was very strict. I was strict because I felt that it was my responsibility to mold them to become what I want them to be, hoping that they will succeed in the process. But often my ways were hurtful, so my children resented me.

When I felt that I was failing, I cried to the Lord for help. He answered me by helping me understand Psalm 127 better. He made me realize that if I want to become faithful in my responsibility as a parent, I must study His ways and raise them accordingly. He showed me that I should not mold them into what I want but into what He wants them to be. He helped me understand that if I follow His ways, then I will succeed as a parent. And when I succeed, my children will become my reward. You see, we have to understand that a reward is something you get after doing a good job, not before the job.

My children are grown up now, and Peachy and I had never experienced the problems associated with raising teenagers or young adults. We have been like barkadas for a long time because we just enjoy each other's company. The blame is often placed on me for Denise not having had any suitors yet, kasi parati raw kaming magkasama. I am really glad that my perspective about parenting changed just at the right time when the situation was still reversible. Today, I believe my children are my

greatest reward in life. When I took care of them as a heritage from the Lord, God gave them back to me as my reward.