

Children are Arrows

Psalm 127

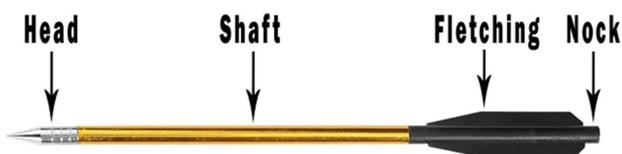
How do you view your children? Some see their children as an investment in their own future – like their pension. Others see them as an extension of their own self – and sometimes push their children to do or be what they would have liked to do or be themselves. Some tired parents see their children as a heavy burden and secretly envy those childless couples who enjoy life without the many cares and worries children bring. In Psalm 127 children are presented to us as arrows.

Ownership

To start with, we are told that children are “a heritage from the Lord” (v.3). A heritage is something we usually receive from our parents or grandparents; we enjoy it and work with it, and then pass it on to others. You are never owner of your children. The Lord temporally entrusts you with them. You may enjoy and work with them. Children are created to fulfill a divine purpose, not our dreams. Children are His property, never ours. Understanding this principle and agreeing with it, will shape the way you bring up our children.

Arrows

“Like arrows in the hands of a warrior are sons born in one’s youth. Blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them” (v.4,5). In this picture, children are compared with *arrows*. The *quiver* could represent the home. Perhaps the *bow* could be seen as the parent(s), the family or even the local church. The mighty man, or *warrior* is clearly a picture of God Himself. It is your and my privilege and responsibility to prepare the arrows so that, at the right time, the Lord Himself may shoot them off and accomplish His divine purpose.



Preparing the arrows

An arrow has 4 parts. Each of these may help us remember our goal in bringing up children.

1. **Shaft:** A good arrow requires a straight and polished wooden stick. These don’t grow like this on trees. Skilled and dedicated work is required. Like you, your children are born with a sinful nature. Christian morals and values must be shown and taught at home. If our children are to be good arrows, they must learn to love what is good, to love justice, truth and work. Good arrows love the Lord and value His word. The best place to teach and learn these things is at home (2Tim 1:5).

2. **Head:** A sharp head will ensure that the arrow will be effective. God has uniquely equipped each of us to live out His purpose for our life. If our children are to be effective in life they need to discover and develop their God given gifts and talents. They must learn how to love others. Without love, arrows will never be effective.

3. **Fletching:** These feathers may enhance the looks of the arrow, but they are not only decorative. The fletching helps the arrow stay on track. Our children must also learn to persist in the face of problems and disappointments; to “persevere” in what is good (1Tim 4:16); to stay on track, true to their calling and convictions, even if others around them go astray. Convictions are developed at home (2Tim 3:14,15).

4. **Nock:** The arrow cannot move by itself. The energy of the strong *warrior* needs to travel through the bow and into the arrow. The nock ensures that the arrow receives the energy it needs to accomplish its mission. Every child needs to learn to trust and depend on others, to share, to contribute to a bigger goal, to be a team-player, to allow God to bless them through others. We need each other. We also need the strength and power that only God can give. This dependence is something we all need to learn, and the sooner the better (2Cor 12:8-10; Col 1:29).

Together with God

God is actively involved in the growth and development of our children. As parents we play an important part, but God’s intervention is critical. The wonderful grace of God ensures that He can use us and our children even with our shortcomings. Perfect human parents don’t exist. Your will never be one. God is the only perfect Father, and even then, some of His children choose to live the wrong way. We seek His help in the raising up of our children while depending on His abundant grace.

Psalm 127 reminds us how urgently we need God. In it Salomon draws our attention to 4 areas. We need God [1] as we develop relationships and a career - build a house (v.1), [2] as we seek security - protect a city (v.1), [3] as we earn a living - work and produce (v.2), and [4] as we raise children (v.3-5). In the words of our Lord Jesus, “apart from me you can do nothing” (John 15:5).

Perhaps you are a parent, a Sunday school teacher, a youth worker or church leader. I would like to encourage you to see the children under your care as arrows. Use every opportunity to help develop these arrows. And when the time comes to ‘let them go’ – do so gracefully and joyfully - watching expectantly what the Lord will accomplish through our children’s lives.