

Children, Heritage of The Lord

“Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, The fruit of the womb is His reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, So are the children of one’s youth. Happy is the man who has his quiver full of them.”(Psalm 127: 3-5)

Like the preceding verses, these are rich with familiar quotes and phrases. Much used, abused and misapplied. Some things this passage does not teach:

That large families are a sign of God’s approval.

That childless couples, or those with few, are objects of God’s displeasure.

That many children are a signal blessing, and few a curse.

That couples should have all the children biologically possible.

That birth control is sinful.

Upon their creation God commanded the man and woman to “be fruitful, and multiply and replenish the earth”. This command envisions a time when the job will be done. Certainly, 2 or 3 billion more couples in the world to do the job must surely release one couple from the whole responsibility. The economy of the time when the psalms were written was one in which the whole family participated in its industry: Farming, making shoes or other products and services, all provided immediate employment of children so that the more children in the home, the more it could produce. They were prized assets! All that is changed now. Parents are employed in outside industry. Laws forbid children to work, so they wallow in idleness or get into trouble. There were instances where God punished women with barrenness for particular sins, but those were rare exceptions. The more consistent rule with children is “in sorrow shalt thou bring forth children” (Gen.3:16). The soon-forgotten pain of childbirth is but the beginning of these sorrows. Parents will wail and weep more over their children than anything else in their lives.

So what is the message of these verses? They cannot be separated from the foregoing two. The psalm is one song, and its theme is absolute dependence upon the Lord for building the house, maintaining it, protecting and preserving it. Children are one of the greatest portions of what makes up a man’s “house”. When the Bible speaks of the “house being in order” or “ruling the house well” it has children in direct view. We do not choose our children. They are born to us. God gives them. We may imagine we have something to do with their number but, in the final analysis, all things are of Him. Tons of books and seminars now “teach us how to raise good kids”. They are worse than nothing. And nothing is about all we had until they came along. The Bible gives some, but scant principles of child rearing. Like arrows, they should be pointed in the right direction. But we may only point them. We may not compel them to be and do right. Good kids have come out of the worst homes and bad ones from the best. In the end, it is the mercy, kindness and power of the Almighty which we must trust for the beloved fruit of our loins. Except the Lord undertake for us we labor endlessly and sit up late only to eat the bread of sorrows. He gives His beloved rest.

- C. M.