

# Receiving Children as a Gift from God

The Three “R”s of Parenting #1 - Pastor Gary Combs - July 16, 2023 - Psalm 127:1-5

**INTRO:** Good morning church! We are beginning a new series entitled, “The Three ‘R’s of Parenting.” You might remember the three R’s of learning, Reading, wRiting, and aRithmetic. So it is similar with Parenting, Receive, Raise up, and Release.. Today, we’re going to talk about the first “R,” “How to Receive Your Child from the Lord.”

Everyone has an opinion about parenting. Here are some funny parenting memes that we found online:



**Need:** Parenting can be a lot of fun. But let’s admit it. Parenting is no laughing matter! It is very challenging!

I still remember that panicky feeling when we left the hospital with our firstborn. My wife and I looked at each other with faces filled with love, joy and... FEAR! We were entering the ranks of parenthood for the first time. We were so thankful that my mom spent the first week with us to show us the ropes!

Being a parent is one of the most fulfilling and meaningful roles we can experience. But the fact is that parents often feel overwhelmed and under-qualified. We all go through seasons of feeling fearful, angry, frustrated, exhausted, and even at times, a desire to escape. I’ve heard parents say, “I wish my kid had come with an owner’s manual!”

Well, actually we have one in the Bible. God’s Word has a lot to say about children and parenting. So, for the next three weeks, we’re going to study God’s owner’s manual.

Now, I realize that not everyone here is a parent. Whether you’re single, married w/o kids, or you’re empty nesters, what the Bible teaches about parenting is still relevant. Because as a church family, we all can help support and encourage the raising up of the next generation. So, this series is for all of us!

**Trans:** We’ve had a little fun laughing about the challenges of parenting and admitting our shortcomings, but the truth is, it really matters how we think about our kids. The Bible says we are to receive them as a gift from God.

**BODY:** In Psalm 127, Solomon wrote about the necessity of recognizing the Lord as the One who builds families and watches over them. As a result, he wrote that children are to be received as a gift from the Lord. We can receive our children as a gift from the Lord. How can we receive our children as a gift from the Lord? The text gives **three steps** for receiving our children as a gift from the Lord.

**Read text: Psalm 127:1-5 (ESV)** 1 Unless the LORD builds the house, those who build it labor in vain. Unless the LORD watches over the city, the watchman stays awake in vain. 2 It is in vain that you rise up early and go late to rest, eating the bread of anxious toil; for he gives to his beloved sleep. 3 Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD, the fruit of the womb a reward. 4 Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the children of one’s youth. 5 Blessed is the man who fills his quiver with them! He shall not be put to shame when he speaks with his enemies in the gate.

## How to receive your child as a gift from God:

### 1. Recognize your need for God’s help.

**EXP:** (1-2) God is the Architect and true Builder of the family. Recognize your need for His help.

“**LORD builds**” (1) (“Yahweh”) - God is both Founder and Builder of the family.

“**House**” (1) (בַּיִת, *bayith, beth*) - house, household, home, family.

“**Labor in vain**” (1) (“vain” 3X) - To exert or expend oneself in wasted or empty effort. When we try to build our house our way rather than God’s, we not only labor in vain, we actually are destructive to our families:

Proverbs 14:1 (NLT) A wise woman builds her home, but a foolish woman tears it down with her own hands.

“**LORD watches**” (1) - Lit., “Yahweh keeps.” to watch over as a guard or watchman at the gate.

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“**Stays awake in vain**” (1) - Literally, “keeps watch in vain.” As parents we are to keep watch, but we can’t see every danger and enemy that besets our family. But God can!

“**Anxious toil**” (2) - “Worried work.” Working hard at parenting, but losing sleep over it because you’re not relying on God for help.

**ARG:** **God is the owner/builder/sustainer and we are His stewards.**

Psalm 121:1-2 (ESV) <sup>1</sup> I lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come? <sup>2</sup> My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.

**ILL:** If you’re going to build a house, don’t you hire an architect to draw up blueprints and hire a contractor to build it? You depend on the experts. How much more important is the building of your family?

**APP:** Where do you get your parenting advice? Have you defaulted to your own parent’s approach? Are you following the latest worldly advice. Or just winging it? Why not ask for God’s help. The family is His idea. He made us and He wrote the book on parenting. Will you recognize your need for God’s help?

## 2. Embrace your children as God’s blessing.

**EXP:** (3, 5) Circle “heritage” and “reward” in v.3 and “blessed” in v. 5.

“**Blessed**” (5) (אֶשֶׁר, *‘esher, asher*) - happy or blessed.

Psalm 127:3 (CEV) Children are a blessing and a gift from the Lord.

“**Heritage**” (3) (נַחֲלָה, *nachalah*) - inheritance, heritage, possession. This word is used over 200x in the OT to describe the inheritances given by God. Children are our legacy given as a gracious favor of God.

“**Reward**” (3) (שָׂכָר, *sakar*) - wages, reward, payment. Kids are a payment from God, they are our wages and our reward. God has given them to us for our good.

**ARG:** **Having and raising children is a blessing from God, both now and in the future.**

Psalm 128:3-4 (ESV) Your wife will be like a fruitful vine within your house; your children will be like olive shoots around your table. Behold, thus shall the man be blessed who fears the Lord.

**Understand the eternal value that God places on your child.** (Parents are raising eternal beings with eternal value)

Matthew 18:10 (ESV) See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I tell you that in heaven their angels always see the face of my Father who is in heaven.

“He gives children, not as a penalty nor as a burden, but as a favor. They are a token for good if men know how to receive them, and educate them. They are ‘doubtful blessings’ only because we are doubtful persons. Where society is rightly ordered children are regarded, not as an incumbrance, but as an inheritance; and they are received, not with regret, but as a reward.” - Charles Spurgeon

“You are not managing an inconvenience; you are raising a human being.” — Kittie Frantz, *Parenting is a sacred task*.

**ILL:** Moses’ parents considered him an extraordinary gift from God: In Hebrews 11:23 it says, “By faith Moses’ parents hid him for three months after he was born, because they saw he was no ordinary child, and they were not afraid of the king’s edict.” And he became the deliverer of Israel. Every kid has eternal potential.

**APP:** Do you view children as an interruption or inconvenience? Or do you see them as God’s blessing? Let God help you get the right attitude towards your children.

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## 3. Accept your role as God's shepherd.

**EXP:** (4-5) Circle "warrior" in v.4. Parents are to be like God's warriors, His representatives, fighting for our kids and families and shepherding them as belonging to God. Receive your children as gifts that God wants you to raise up for Him, aiming them like arrows for Him!

"Like arrows" (4) - Children are like arrows that we must launch towards God's target and purpose.

"Warrior" (4) (גִּבּוֹר, *gibbor*) - mighty man, champion, hero, warrior.

"Blessed" (5) (אַשֶׁר, *asher*) - happy or blessed.

"Quiver" (5) - A container (usually hung on the back) for arrows. Many suggest that the Hebrew archer carried five arrows in his quiver. I suppose the idea is "the more the merrier" when it comes to children.

"Gate" (5) - "The center of commercial, legal, and intellectual life" (Daniel Estes, *NAC Psalms*, p. 482). Neither the father nor his children will be put to shame in the culture for they were launched like godly arrows.

**ARG:** Jesus is the Chief Shepherd, but we are called to be His under-shepherds.

1 Peter 5:2-3 (NIV) <sup>2</sup> Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, watching over them—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; <sup>3</sup> not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.

**God chose Abraham and He has chosen us to direct our children to follow His plan for the family.**

Genesis 18:19 (ESV) For I have chosen him, so that he will direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing what is right and just...

**Stop trying to be your child's friend and be their parent, God's shepherd for His kids.** (If you'll be their Mom and Dad when they're young, you can be their friend when they're grown.)

"Parents must be willing to be in charge. Recognizing that God has called you as His agent defines your task as a parent. You shepherd your child in God's behalf." - Dr. Tedd Tripp



**ILL:** We shared the gospel and received responses at KidzFest this week. We shared the gospel with all the kids on Wednesday night and told them to talk to their parents about any decisions they may have made. We had \_\_\_\_\_ (RM) and \_\_\_\_\_ (W) indicate they wanted to follow Jesus and \_\_\_\_\_ (RM) and \_\_\_\_\_ (W) that they wanted to talk to someone. That's a total of \_\_\_\_\_ kids who made commitments!



- Hand open to God to receive your child from the Lord, hand holding your child's hand to raise them up in the Lord, and finally handing their hand into God's hand, releasing them back to the Lord.

**APP:** There is a war for our children. There are forces pulling them in many different directions, trying to snatch them out of the quiver before we can fire the arrow. Are you ready to launch your child towards God's identity and purpose for them? Will you accept your role as God's shepherd, fighting for your family?

**CONCLUSION:** Receiving your children as a gift from the Lord is the attitude we need as parents in order to live according to a biblical parenthood. But you can't do it alone. First, have you received God's greatest gift, Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior? The Bible says, "For God so loved the world that He gave" us His Son, Jesus. Have you received Him? And having received Him and depending on Him for grace...

Will you...

1. Recognize your need for God's help, depending on His authority and power as a parent?
2. Embrace your children as God's blessing, His inheritance and reward?
3. Accept your role as God's shepherd, protecting your children and aiming them at God's purpose?

Let's pray.