

A WARNING TO PARENTS

Luke 11:11-12 ... “If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he [the father] give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion?”

Jesus spoke these words to compare earthly fathers to our heavenly Father. He asked the men he was speaking to if they would give their children stones, serpents, or poisonous scorpions in place of food. Any of these three substitutes will kill your child. The serpent example is especially poignant because the Bible associates serpents with Satan. He appeared to Eve as a serpent when he convinced her to disobey God. A good and godly father will not allow danger – especially Satan – near his children. The Bible has many instructions about family life and when Jesus talks of the church, he uses the family as a model of how the church should work. The concept of family is found throughout the Bible. That is our clue that God considers this an important subject.

Too many Filipino children have to deal with: 1) Parents who have left their families to work abroad, and 2) fathers who are present but not active leaders in the home. In both cases, parents are neglecting their responsibilities to their children. And, though I applaud women who are doing their best to raise their children in the absence of their husbands, that was not the way God designed the family. Some of you will be quick to say that parents work overseas to produce income. Please show me in the Bible where the God-given role of a father or mother is to abandon his or her children for many years and work in a faraway land so they can send a few Pesos to their kids.

If the goal of OFWs is to send money to their children instead of loving, training, and disciplining them in person, they may be feeding their children serpents. The devil is happy to train the children of absent parents, to entice children into lifestyles their parents do not approve of, and encourage those children to become bitter toward their parents. 34% of our population is under 14 years of age, and 52% is under 24. Millions of children within those age groups are being raised without parents. Some have been entrusted to grandparents who are too old and tired to monitor their wards properly. Some are being raised by uncles and aunts who care more about the money an OFW sends, than how the children develop. Much of the money sent home is spent by guardians on televisions, home furnishings, and motorcycles instead of dental care, food, and other necessities of the children for which it was intended. Others are being raised by their older siblings, who were also raised without parents and have distorted values as a result.

Your children need YOU much more than they need your money, and this is true if you work abroad or in just another town. Many OFWs work in places with a high cost of living and most of their paychecks are needed to pay their rent, transportation and food. What is left for their kids is not much more than if they were living and working at home. Sadly, many OFWs in their years of being away from their spouses, have also found new lovers overseas. In my opinion, which you may disagree with, the OFW phenomenon is a curse on the Philippines; it is destroying families and children, many of whom turn to drugs, crime and immorality as an alternative to healthy family life. Do you know children who are demonstrating disrespect toward their absent parents? Do kids you know turn against their OFW parents when the money does not arrive on time? Have you observed that some parents and children are virtually strangers due to years of separation?

If you are caught in this tragic problem – you are a distant parent, or the child of a distant parent, or you are raising someone else’s children – ask God to reinstate your family as he designed it. There is no greater responsibility God gives man than to raise godly children, which cannot be done through remittances.