



When Our Children Suffer

By Fanny Pedraza

Seeing children grow in age and wisdom is such a happy feeling for parents! Each new skill they develop, each new task they accomplish, and every inch they grow fills us with joy and gratitude to God. We start visualizing them as happy, healthy youngsters and successful adults. The joy of parenthood!

Time passes, children grow and come to the “age of reason” when we consider them officially responsible for their actions. They start experiencing the sweet taste of succeeding and the bitterness of failing. They become aware, in a new dimension, of being hurt, not because someone takes their toy away but because someone crushes their ego, or unforeseen circumstances arise, health fails, things do not go as expected.

It is painful for parents to feel powerless when their children suffer. We wish we had a magic wand to make sorrow disappear! But some things are beyond our control and we have to hope, and wait, and pray for things to work out for their good. Life can be a roller coaster ride for parents who witness the ups and downs of their children. The challenge of parenthood!

With family support and strengthened by the lessons of faith they learn each day, children become equipped to overcome hardships; they learn that life is not a rose garden but at times, is a thorny path; that although they should expect and work for the best, they should be prepared to cope with the worst. When parents and children are firmly grounded in prayer and nourished by the Word, life’s bumps enrich their lives and they grow stronger.

My mother expected the best; nevertheless, she embraced suffering as part of her earthly journey. Her

endurance through painful situations was admirable! I learned from her to use negative experiences as life lessons that helped me grow. One cannot be compassionate or wise if one has not savored pain as part of life. I have tried to teach my children that each crisis they overcome is a dose of courage they take and that every battle they fight strengthens their spirit. By now they know that the cross is part of life and that by God’s grace, we are not to remain hanging on it but to have victory over it.

Children come to the realization that *everything works together for good for those who love God*, and that disappointments and failures are preludes of better things; that every dish in life’s menu is not sweet but that some have unpleasant flavors, and that our body and spirit are nourished by both.

For your personal reflection

Read and meditate: Philippians 4:13; Romans 8:28; Isaiah 41:10; Joshua 1: 9-10.

- Think of a time when you felt sad and weak. What were you going through then?
- How can the previous Scriptures bring you hope and strength during similar experiences?

To do as a family

Ask those who voluntarily agree to share some hardship they may be experiencing.


- Who do they hold responsible for it? Why?
- Which Scripture passage offers them hope and strength?

After each sharing the others respond by reciting Psalm 27:1.

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