

## Never Meant to Carry

by Jennifer McCaman

Almost every mom in Bangkok is a kangaroo. Like the lovable Australian marsupials, we carry our babies everywhere we go. Due to the broken sidewalks and lack of elevators, strollers aren't an option. Even if you can afford a taxi, you have to walk a few blocks to catch one, and there are some places they just can't fit through, making a baby carrier mandatory.

When my family first moved to Bangkok, this was by far the greatest shock on my system. Strapping my then 15-month-old, 20-pound son in a carrier and walking, sometimes two miles a day, was overwhelming, especially considering I didn't even own a carrier when we lived in the U.S. I wore Josiah in a carrier on the front, with a backpack on my back, and carried groceries on each arm. I felt like a pack mule. One bonus is that Bangkok moms never have to intentionally exercise because just going about a normal day in the city burns countless calories! After a morning in the city, I would come back to our apartment and crash. Every muscle hurt, and I couldn't get the air conditioning turned on fast enough.

As the weeks went by, I found myself getting stronger. I cried less and complained less. One day I was walking and I just felt in my spirit that God was teaching me something. Every time I placed my toddler in a carrier, it was like a physical picture of what mothers feel every day. We all carry our children.

We feel the weight of keeping our kids physically safe. Are they allergic? Do they eat healthy? Are they sleeping enough? We feel the weight of their emotional

well-being. Do they have enough friends? Am I too protective? If they cry, am I damaging them? Then above all we feel the weight of their spiritual growth. Am I modeling Christ for them? Do they see joy for the Lord on my face and in my actions?

Kids are such a joy, but they can be heavy—heavy on our backs, heavy on our hearts. Deep down, when my back was so sore and my legs were tired from Josiah's mere 20 pounds, I sensed God whispering to me, "You're not supposed to carry him." I knew that meant that He alone could really take care of my son. In Christ alone, God can lift the burden, the weight of our responsibilities, off our shoulders. He is the only one who can carry them. Our job is to lose ourselves inside of Christ, to die to ourselves and come alive in Him. We are stewards of our children, but God is their everlasting Father.

Every day when I came back to our apartment, the first thing I did was to put Josiah down and unstrap him from the carrier. I felt immediate relief. My back and my legs suddenly felt weightless and wonderful. I think many women are burdened with trying to live up to unrealistic expectations. It's a weight we weren't designed to carry. It's not good for marriages, for ourselves, or for our children. Yet day after day we strap on the burden.

If God has given you an assignment that seems too big to carry, that's because He never meant for you to carry it alone. He is more than capable of carrying any weight. His arms are stronger than ours and well-equipped for the task.

Jennifer McCaman and her family are adjusting to their new lives as missionaries/church planters in Bangkok, Thailand. Read more about her story at [jennifermccaman.com](http://jennifermccaman.com)



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