

WALDON FENSTER



THE FUNNY, RAW AND REAL STORY OF RAISING SEVEN CHILDREN

WALDON FENSTER

ARROWS



INTRODUCTION

OUR CEILING THEIR PLATFORM

At the time I am writing this, Madison is eleven, Charlotte is nine, Titus is seven, David is five, Kennedy is three, and Emma is one. Baby number seven is expected to arrive in December 2026. That is the clean version. The real version is louder, funnier, messier, more expensive, more emotional, and more alive than a list of names and ages could ever explain.

There are six children already moving through our home with six different personalities, six different ways of seeing the world, and six different ways of exposing where Danielle and I still need to grow. The seventh is already changing our plans before arriving. Every child has expanded the family, but every child has also expanded the assignment.

Psalms 127 says children are a heritage from the Lord. It compares the children of one's youth to arrows in the hand of a warrior and calls the man with a full quiver blessed. I used to hear that passage mainly as a promise of abundance. Now I hear the responsibility inside it. An arrow is not decoration. It is not made to remain safely stored, and it is not valuable because it makes the warrior look impressive. An arrow is shaped for purpose, aimed with intention, and eventually released toward a place the person holding it may never reach.

That picture changed the way I understood fatherhood. Our children do not belong to us in the sense that possessions belong to us. They have been entrusted to us. God placed them in our hands for a season and gave us the responsibility to prepare them for assignments we cannot complete on their behalf.

An arrow must be strong enough to survive release, straight enough to hold direction, and sharp enough to matter when it arrives. But no two arrows in our quiver are identical. The same pressure that strengthens one child may bend another. The same explanation that reaches one may miss the next completely. Raising a large family has made it impossible to confuse consistency with sameness.

This book is the story of seven arrows, but it is also the story of the two people holding the quiver. Danielle and I did not receive finished children after becoming finished adults. We began building a family while God was still raising us. Our children have watched us learn marriage, faith, work, discipline, courage, patience, and repentance in real time.

We grew from one child toward seven faster than our confidence could keep up. Each new life changed the rhythm of the home and challenged something we thought we understood. The family kept asking us to become more organized without becoming rigid, more protective without becoming fearful, more ambitious without making achievement the measure of a child's worth, and more faithful without pretending we never had questions.

Along the way, we made decisions that placed our family outside what many people consider normal. We chose to bring children into the world at home. We chose to remain vaccine-free. We chose homeschooling. We chose to design the shape of our days instead of automatically accepting the shape handed to us. Those decisions created freedom, responsibility, criticism, pressure, and stories that deserve more honesty than a slogan can provide.

We did not make those choices because we believed we were smarter than every other parent or because every family should copy ours. We made them from conviction, prayer, research, experience, and the belief that God would hold us responsible for the decisions made inside our home. Some choices gave us exactly what we hoped for. Some revealed blind spots. Some required adjustment. None removed the need for humility, wisdom, or appropriate professional care.

This is not a medical guide, a homeschool manual, or a formula for producing perfect children. It is the record of what we chose, why those choices mattered to us, what they demanded, and what we learned when real life tested the theory. A family can make an unconventional decision for the right reason and still execute it poorly. It can also make a costly decision that turns out to be one of the strongest foundations it ever built. We have experienced both.

Homeschooling, for us, became about more than where education happened. It gave us a chance to ask a larger question: What kind of life are we building around our children while we prepare them to build lives of their own? Education could not be separated from character, responsibility, faith, practical ability, curiosity, or the way they watched us handle pressure.

The goal was never to make our children smaller so they would fit comfortably beneath our success. We wanted our ceiling to become their platform. Every lesson we had to learn the hard way, every relationship we built, every piece of territory we gained, every mistake we survived, and every truth God forced us to confront should give them a higher place to begin.

That does not mean handing them a life with no resistance. A platform is not a padded room. It is a stronger starting point. We want them to inherit tools without inheriting every wound, to receive access without losing hunger, and to understand that advantage creates responsibility. If they begin where we finish, then they should be prepared to travel farther, serve more people, take more territory, and build something we could not yet see.

Taking territory as a family is not about collecting property, attention, or status so the Fenster name looks important. It is about refusing to surrender the spaces God has assigned to us. Sometimes territory looks like a business, a community, or a physical place. Sometimes it is a dinner table where truth can be spoken, a marriage protected from division, a child taught to think clearly, or a pattern that stops with our generation.

The foundation of our family was never a flawless system. Systems helped, schedules helped, convictions helped, and clear expectations helped, but none of them could carry the full weight of a home. The foundation had to be faith, covenant, responsibility, forgiveness, and the willingness to return to truth after emotion, exhaustion, or pride pulled us away from it.

Some things worked beautifully for a season and then stopped working when the family changed. Some ideas sounded strong until a real child with a real personality stood in front of them. We learned that a rule can create order without creating wisdom, that freedom without responsibility becomes chaos, and that control can disguise itself as protection. We are still learning where those lines belong.

There are funny stories in these pages because a house full of children produces comedy faster than anyone could write it. There are moments that still make us laugh, moments that were humiliating when they happened, and moments when all we could do was look at each other and admit that whatever plan we had was no longer in control of the room.

There is drama too. A family this large does not move quietly through life. Personalities collide, plans collapse, emotions arrive without appointments, and private struggles sometimes become public before anyone is ready. There are intense stories we will not soften just to make the family look polished. The truth is more useful than the image.

Our children have seen us win and fail. They have watched us make decisions with confidence and then return to correct them. They have heard apologies. They have lived through changes in business, health, location, schedule, and vision. They did not get parents who had already figured everything out. They got to watch us grow up while we were asking them to do the same.

That reality can carry shame if we let it, but it can also become one of the most honest gifts we give them. They do not need the false story that strong parents never fail. They need to see what strong people do after failure. They need to watch truth interrupt pride, repentance repair distance, and faith become more than language used when everything is going well.

Arrows is not a collection of seven polished profiles written to prove that our family model worked. These children are still becoming, and so are we. Their stories belong to them as much as they belong to us, which means they must be told with love, truth, and the understanding that childhood should not be turned into content merely because a parent has a platform.

This book will tell the stories that explain the family we became: the decisions around birth, health, education, work, faith, risk, discipline, home, and expansion; the choices that built strength; the choices we had to reconsider; the moments that made us laugh; and the moments that made us fear we were not enough for the responsibility God had placed in our hands.

The quiver is not meant to remain full forever. That may be the most difficult part of the image. Parenting is a long preparation for release. If we do this well, the children we have protected will become people we trust to move beyond our reach. They will carry our instruction, but they will answer to God for their direction.

By the time baby number seven arrives in December 2026, the ages in the opening of this book will already be changing. That is how quickly the season moves. The child who once needed to be carried begins asking for independence. The parent who thought there would always be more time realizes the arrow has been in hand only temporarily.

So this is our attempt to tell the truth while we are still inside the story. Not after every child is grown. Not after every result is known. Now, while the house is full, the lessons are unfinished, and God is still shaping the people who are supposed to shape the arrows.

My name is Waldon Fenster. Danielle and I are raising seven children while God is still raising us. Our prayer is not that they remain beneath what we built, but that our ceiling becomes their platform, our lessons become their wisdom, and their lives travel farther than ours ever could.

These are our Arrows. Let's begin.