

How to Build A Household of Faith

Psalm 127

Introduction:

1) In Western Society and Culture, the home is facing serious and sustained assault. Its very existence in a real sense is at stake.

2) In an article in the *Australian* (Aug. 18, 2006) entitled, "It's breeding obvious, mate," Mark Steyn writes,

"Much of western civilization does not have any future. That's to say, we're not just speaking philosophically, but literally. In a very short time, France, Belgium, the Netherlands and other countries we regard as part of the western tradition will cease to exist in any meaningful sense. They don't have a future because they've given up breeding."

3) Things are beginning to look bleak on this side of the Atlantic as well. The Pew Research Center reported in June, 2007 that only 41% of Americans now view having children as "very important", to a successful marriage, down from 65% in 1990 (*World*, 7-21-07). Clearly building a household, a family, much less a household of faith, has vanished from the radar screen of secularized Europeans and Americans who no longer value what God values. Psalm 127 has a different perspective altogether.

4) • Psalm 127 is a psalm of ascent penned by Solomon who was both a builder and a father. It is a companion to Psalm 128 as the theme of family dominates both.

- In Jewish tradition Psalm 127 is recited as part of a thanksgiving service after childbirth.
- A wisdom psalm after the pattern of Psalm 1, Solomon challenges us to a "God-centered" focus in all aspects of human life, especially the life of the family.
- Psalm 127 easily divides into 2 major stanzas.

I. Let the Lord build your house. 127:1-2

- The words "unless" (2 times) and "vain" (3 time) drive stanza # 1.
- Themes of creating and conserving are prominent. In the areas of building, security and work only 2 possibilities are before us: either the Lord will be in our efforts and endeavors or they ultimately will be useless, in vain.
- Jesus said, "Without Me you can do nothing" (John 15:5).

1) Without the Lord you work and watch in vain. 127:1

- The verse is straightforward and an example of beautiful Hebrew parallelism.
Unless the Lord → builds → we labor → in vain.
Unless the Lord → guards → we stay awake → in vain.
- Build a house (home) and leave God out, you play the fool.
Build walls, set guards on them and leave God out, you play the fool.

2) **Without the Lord you will worry and wear out in vain.** 127:2

- If v. 1 is against overconfidence, v. 2 warns of being over worked. God is not against building a house, He is not against guarding the city, and He is not against hard work either as v. 2 makes plain. But do all this without God, and it is vain, empty, foolish.
- “To work harder is no answer... it can be a fresh enslavement” (Kidner, 441).
- Verse 2 basically says this, get up early and stay up late and work yourself to death and “eat the bread of sorrows.” Or, work hard, trust God, and He will give you blessed rest. It is all a matter of who you trust, what you trust. (cf. Ecclesiastes 5:12).

II. **Let the Lord bless your heritage.** 127:3-5

- The psalmist Solomon now zeros in on the blessings of a family.
 - God’s perspective is radically different, of a completely different way of thinking than the modern world. God gives the gift of children, and He gives them to be a blessing. There is no place for “planned parenthood” in this song. Children are a blessing from the Lord.
- 1) **See your children as a sign of God’s blessing.** 127:3
- “Heritage” (NASV, “gift”)
 - “From the Lord.” We get what we get and who we get from Him!
 - Blessed with godly children: here is true honor and wealth. Here is a building (v.1), here is security (v.1), here is something worth working for (v.2), while trusting the Lord every step of the way.
 - “It is not untypical of God’s gifts that first they are liabilities, or at least responsibilities, before they become obvious assets. The greater their promise, the more likely that these sons will be a handful before they are a quiverful” (Kidner, 442).
- 2) **See your children as a source of God’s protection.** 127:4-5
- Using the imagery of war, the presence of children in a family is akin to an army that provide security and protection. In the early years parents protect them. In latter years, they protect us, even to the point of confronting our enemies on our behalf if necessary (v. 5!). The city gate is where important legal business took place. A brood of godly sons to watch your back and fight beside you would be an asset indeed.
 - However, early attention and involvement is essential if future rewards are to come our way. Sadly too many parents have played the fool in this regard.

Conclusion:

- 1) Children need a daddy.
- 2) Illustrations
 - a) Young elephants need daddies.
 - b) William Tell and his example.