

The Man The Lord Blesses

Psalm 128

God intends that men bear the greater responsibility to protect those in need and to lead those we protect, especially as it relates to the life of marriage and family. Providing an Old Testament echo of the Christ-redeemed husband in Ephesians 5:25-33, Psalm 128 provides a picture of the man the Lord blesses.

Psalm 128 is a wisdom psalm and a companion to Psalm 127. As songs of ascent (Psalm 120-134) they were sung by families as they left home on pilgrimage to Jerusalem to worship *Yahweh* in the holy city. Interesting the psalm begins with a blessing and closes with a prayer.

Four times in the psalm we see the word “blessed” (v. 1, 2 [trans. “happy” in v. 2 in the *NKJV*], 4, 5). Utilizing two different but related Hebrew words, the psalm describes the man the Lord blesses and what some of those blessings look like.

Warren Wiersbe provides an insightful comment when he writes, “Like [Psalm] 127 and Jeremiah 29:4-7, this psalm deals with protection (v.1), working (v.2), the family (vv. 3-4, 6), and God’s blessings on Jerusalem (v.5). While the writer includes all who fear the Lord (v.1), the psalm is addressed especially to the man of the house (v.3)” (348).

I. Be clear about who you trust

128:1-2

- Psalm 128 begins on the same note as Psalm 1.
- The phrase “every one” informs us that all are blessed who 1) fear the Lord and 2) walk in His ways.
- “Blessed” carries the idea of “happy, fortunate.”

1) Trust the Lord in your walk

128:1

- What does it mean to fear the Lord and walk in His ways? Psalm 1 is instructive at this point. Stating the truths of that psalm in the positive it means:
 - to seek the counsel of the godly
 - to stand in the path of the righteous
 - to sit in the seat of the wise
 - to delight in God’s Word
 - to meditate on Scripture day and night

The Mosaic background of this is located in God’s covenant promises in Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28-30.

- What does it mean to walk in wisdom before the Lord as a father? Howard Hendricks who taught for more than 50 years on marriage and family at Dallas Seminary has some helpful advice in the form of some negatives and positives.

Negatives

Don’t:

1. Compare one child with another.
2. Use scorn, ridicule, or humiliation—especially in areas of their weakness.
3. Threaten withdrawal of affection and love.
4. Promise with bribes and rewards.
5. Discipline when angry.
6. Expect perfection.
7. Be afraid to say “no.”

Positives

1. Help them see that disobedience is primarily against God.
2. Impart the expectancy of obedience.
3. Help the child evaluate his disobedience.
4. Allow the child to express his own viewpoint.
5. Restore fellowship after the discipline.
6. Remember: the goal of discipline is not outward conformity but inward conviction.
7. Study the Lord as an example of the greatest disciplinarian.

2) **Trust the Lord in your work** **128:2**

- The godly man finds his prosperity as a result of a heart for God and the work of his hands. Hard work is a given. Enjoying its fruit is a gracious gift from God.
- Wonderfully the curse of Genesis 3:19 is turned to blessing in Psalm 128:2.

II. **Be committed to those you love** **128:3-4**

- Gregory of Nazianzus (329-389) also known as Gregory the Theologian was a church father who helped defend and define biblical and orthodox Christology. He also spoke eloquently to Christian marriage calling it “true companionship.”
- With the imagery of a fruitful vine and olive plants scattered all around the table the psalmist emphasizes both growth and fruitfulness for the man who fears the Lord. (cf. Mic. 4:4; Zech. 3:10).

1) **Be a blessing to your wife** **128:3**

- Because this man walks with God his wife flourishes like a fruitful vine in or beside the house. He sets her free to soar as a woman of God for the glory of God!
- Located rightly in the center of the home, she fulfills the calling of a Proverbs 31 lady because of the man of God who stands tall at her side! Fruitful and sexually charming (see Song of Solomon 7:8-12), she is unlike the unfaithful women of Proverbs 7:11 whose “feet would not stay at home.” No, she knows her man is her’s and she is his! Her attractiveness goes hand-in-hand with her faithfulness.
- Redeemed by grace from the curse of Genesis 3, her husband loves her and knows her (Eph. 5:25-33; 1 Peter 3:7), and she submits to him and respects him (Eph. 5:21-24, 33). Together they seek to educate and encourage their children (Eph. 6:1-4), and later their grandchildren to love and serve the Lord.

2) **Be a blessing to your children** **128:3-4**

- A man can bless his children in many ways. He can bless them by loving Jesus and teaching them to love Jesus. He can bless them by loving his wife, by loving their mother as he promised, “til death do us part.”
- The olive tree flourishes in a home with a godly dad and mom who are committed to each other. It would point to both longevity and productivity made possible because of the household of faith in which they, the children, were nurtured. They are not like the grass that withers and the flower that fades. No, these are the arrows of Psalm 127 who challenge their father’s enemies in the gate!

III. **Be concerned with where you live** **128:5-6**

The blessed life must be a life that reaches out to extend and share the blessings of God to others. This man will be concerned for his city and nation, his children and his grandchildren. He will recognize, as we must, that the family’s future is bound up in health and welfare of the nation. From marriage to being grandparents in only 6 verses!

1) Take an interest in your nation**128:5-6**

- At least 3 times in the psalms of ascent (120-134) the psalmists pray for the “shalom”, the peace, of their nation (Psalm 122:6-7; 125:5). Indeed many of the psalms end with a prayer for the land and the city (14:7; 25:22; 72:18-19; 106:48; 122:6-7; 125:5; 130:7-8; 131:3; 134:3; 135:21; 148:14). This may be a concise or “Readers Digest version” of the great Aaronic benediction found in Numbers 6:24-26.
- We should pray for our nation and her leaders (1Timothy 2). We should be active in promoting righteous and moral policies that invite the blessing of God on our land. If good and godly men do nothing evil will prevail.

2) Take an interest in your future**128:6**

- A man will be known by his children. He will be really known by his grandchildren. For both, he will seek to be a blessing fulfilling the charge given to him by God both in Deuteronomy 6:1-9 and Ephesians 6:1-4. He will investigate the Proverbs for wisdom and guidance, never forgetting that this precious stewardship from the Lord is all too brief.
- In a study entitled “What Makes a Good Home,” the Committee on Home Responsibility of the National Conference on Juvenile Delinquency is on record with this 14-point definition:
A good home for children may be a one-room apartment, a trailer, or a twelve-room house, but it is a good home for a child if...
 1. He is loved and wanted – and knows it.
 2. He is helped to grow up by not having too much or too little done for him.
 3. He has some time and some space of his own.
 4. He is a part of the family, has fun with the family and belongs.
 5. His early mistakes and “badness” are understood as a normal part of growing up; he is corrected without being hurt, shamed or confused. [Little sinners made in God’s image.]
 6. His growing skills – walking, talking, reading, making things – are enjoyed and respected.
 7. He plans with the family and is given real ways to help and feel needed throughout childhood.
 8. He has freedom that fits his age and his needs; he has responsibilities that fit his age, abilities and freedom.
 9. He can say what he feels and talk things out without being afraid or ashamed; he can learn through mistakes as well as successes. And his parents appreciate his successes rather than dwell upon his failures.
 10. As he grows older, he knows his parents are doing the best they can; and they know the same about him.
 11. He feels his parents care as much about him as they do about his brothers and sisters.
 12. The family sticks together and the members help one another.
 13. He is moderately and consistently disciplined from infancy, has limits set for his behavior, and is helped to take increasing responsibility for his own actions.
 14. He has something to believe in and work for because his parents have lived their ideals and religious faiths.

Conclusion

- Psalm 33:12 says, “Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord.” We could also say “blessed is the man whose God is the Lord.”
- Jonathan Edwards lived from 1703-58 and was and is America’s greatest theologian. God used him to launch the First Great Awakening. What of his family legacy? What did this man of God leave behind?

In 1900, A.E. Winship studied what happened to 1,400 descendants of Jonathan and Sarah Edwards by the year 1900. He found they included 13 college presidents, 65 professors, 100 lawyers and a dean of a law school, 30 judges, 66 physicians and a dean of a medical school, and 80 holders of public office, including three US Senators, mayors of three large cities, governors of three states, a Vice-President of the United States, and a controller of the United States Treasury. They had written over 135 books and edited eighteen journals and periodicals. Many had entered the ministry. Over 100 were missionaries and others were on mission boards. Winship wrote: “Many large banks, banking houses, and insurance companies have been directed by them. They have been owners or superintendents of large coal mines... of large iron plants and vast oil interests... and silver mines.... There is scarcely any great American industry that has not had one of this family among its chief promoters....” (Glimpses of Church History, #97).

Here indeed is a mighty example of the man the Lord blesses!