

# Family 101: Doing Family God's Way!

"Building a House... or a Home?"

*Pastor Jason Dennett's Notes*

## **PSALM 127 - A Song of Ascents. Of Solomon.**

*1 Unless the Lord builds the house, They labor in vain who build it;  
Unless the Lord guards the city, The watchman stays awake in vain.*

*2 It is vain for you to rise up early, To sit up late,  
To eat the bread of sorrows; For so He gives His beloved sleep.*

*3 Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, The fruit of the womb  
is a reward.*

*4 Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, So are the children of one's  
youth.*

*5 Happy is the man who has his quiver full of them; They shall not be  
ashamed,*

*But shall speak with their enemies in the gate.*

## **How would you define the word 'PRIORITIES'??**

- *"Managing your life according to what's most important, rather than what's most urgent."*
- **Henry Ford** - *"There is a certain weakness in most all humans: we want to do too many things at one time." Henry Ford would wake up and immediately think of dozens of things that needed to be done. So he got up and went for a run, to think about what is most important, rather than what was most urgent!*
- Looking to the future, make a choice, **what will YOUR priorities be** regarding our families/marriages?
- **Things you might THINK are important:**
  - Your job/occupation
  - Your status/position
  - Your Schooling/education
- **Things that ARE far more important than these:**
  - Your **RELATIONSHIP** with your wife/husband.
  - Your **RELATIONSHIP** with your children
  - Your **RELATIONSHIP** with your Creator
- **Harry Truman, 33rd President - Harry Truman Library, Independence Missouri**

- *1,300 letters personally written by President Truman to his wife. Every day they were apart, President Truman would write a letter to his beloved wife. Despite all of the URGENT things he had to do, he thought it absolutely IMPORTANT to sit down every day and write a letter to his wife.*
- **A couple in Atlanta, GA** - *Tickets to "My Fair Lady" on Broadway..Empty seat..Husband died. That relationship deteriorated!!*

## **Psalm 127 is a short psalm packed full of truth**

Hebrew poetry - "**Parallelism**"

To the Hebrew, it wasn't important to rhyme WORDS, but rather **IDEAS**.

Usually there is a statement, an amplifying statement, then a contrasting statement.

**2 Main Divisions:** *"A House built on VANITY vs. A Home built on VALUES"*

**V.1-2** describe the self-initiating labor—living for temporal things

**V.3-5** describe the home life, marriage, and family relationships as God pours out His blessing

**First part** priorities are projects and property; **Second part** focuses on people.

**First part** is the wrong focus; **Second part** is the right focus.

**A House built on VANITY vs. A Home built on VALUES**

You can build up projects for temporal profit, or you can build up people for both temporal and eternal profit

## ***A Song of Ascents. Of Solomon.***

**"A song ascents"** - songs for the upward climb

- There are 15 Psalms of Ascent - Psalms 120–134
- Used in two ways: **Corporately** as a nation during pilgrimage & **Liturgically** for the priesthood in the Temple.
- **Corporately** – *Every year, 3 times per year, the Jewish people would hike to Jerusalem for feasts, as they would walk/climb up to Jerusalem they would sing these 15 Psalms of ascent as a family and congregation.*
- **Liturgically** – *15 steps in the temple from the court of the women to*

*the court of the Israelites. The Levites would stand on those steps and sing out the Psalms of ascent.*

### **"Of Solomon"**

Son of King David

Qualified to write about **building cities!**

Qualified to write about **building families** (700 wives + 300 concubines)

Here, in verses 1-2, we see **"The House built on VANITY":**

**1 Unless the Lord builds the house, They labor in vain who build it;**

**Unless the Lord guards the city, The watchman stays awake in vain.**

**2 It is vain for you to rise up early, To sit up late, To eat the bread of sorrows; For so He gives His beloved sleep.**

Notice the 3 repetitions of the word **"vain"**

- This reminds us of the book of Ecclesiastes, also written by Solomon
  - There he used the word "vanity" or "vain" **35 times!**
  - *"Vanity of vanities, all is vanity"* - Nothing more empty or futile than this
  - A life without God is absolutely empty, meaningless, and absurd!!
- "Unless the Lord builds the house...Unless the Lord guards the city..."**
- **What city and house is he talking about?** Probably Jerusalem and the Temple (house of the Lord)
  - King David made Jerusalem the capitol of the nation and his dream was to build the house of the Lord
  - God did not let King David build his house, but promised that David's son, **Solomon would build the house of the Lord.**
  - Both King David and King Solomon were builders, they had a deep drive to build, be successful, expand the Israeli dynasty.
  - **As soon as Solomon became king he began building the house of the Lord:**

*Treaty with Phoenician King, Hiram of Tyre (1Kin 5 and 2Chron 2)*

*Stone and wood in exchange for Israel oil, wine, and wheat*

*30,000 woodcutters*

*183,000 workers*

*80,000 stone cutters*

*3,300 supervisors*

*7.5 years building the house of the Lord*

*13 years building his own house*

But at the Dedication of the temple in Jerusalem (1Kin 9:1-9), the Lord told Solomon that if the people ever turned away from following Him **"this house"** would become desolate and destroyed:

- *"And it came to pass, when Solomon had finished building the house of the Lord and the king's house, and call Solomon's desire which he wanted to do, 2 that **the Lord appeared to Solomon the second time**, as He had appeared to him at Gibeon. 3 And the Lord said to him: "I have heard your prayer and your supplication that you have made before Me; **I have consecrated this house** which you have built to put My name there forever, and My eyes and My heart will be there perpetually. 4 Now if you walk before Me as your father David walked, in integrity of heart and in uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded you, and if you keep My statutes and My judgments, 5 then **I will establish the throne of your kingdom over Israel forever**, as I promised David your father, saying, 'You shall not fail to have a man on the throne of Israel.' 6 But if you or your sons at all turn from following Me, and do not keep My commandments and My statutes which I have set before you, but go and serve other gods and worship them, 7 then I will cut off Israel from the land which I have given them; **and this house which I have consecrated for My name I will cast out of My sight.** Israel will be a proverb and a byword among all peoples. 8 **And as for this house, which is exalted, everyone who passes by it will be astonished and will hiss, and say, 'Why has the Lord done thus to this land and to this house?'** 9 Then they will answer, 'Because they forsook the Lord their God, who brought their fathers out of the land of Egypt, and have embraced other gods, and worshiped them*

*and served them; therefore the Lord has brought all this calamity on them.' ”*

*"Unless the Lord builds the house, it is vanity!!" - says Solomon*

**"Unless the Lord guards the city..." v. 1**

- Cities (as well as homes) must be guarded diligently.
- Solomon was not only a builder, he was a GUARDIAN.
- Archaeological Discovery in Megiddo: **"Gates of Solomon"**
- **Solomon fell away** from God, and the kings that came after him broke the covenant with God
- **God stopped protecting the city** and allowed it to be destroyed. In **586 BC**, Jerusalem was invaded and destroyed by Babylon, and the Jews went into captivity for 70 years.

***2 It is vain for you to rise up early, To sit up late, To eat the bread of sorrows; For so He gives His beloved sleep.***

Today, in our **MODERN** and **BUSY WORLD**, these verses could be addressed to the **WORKAHOLIC!!**

- [Article in Scientific American magazine by Urie Brofenbrenner](#) - *Examined American culture and problems facing American families. Warned of forces that are causing the family in American to deteriorate: "The demands of a job that claim meal times, evenings, and weekends as well as days, the trips and moves necessary to get ahead or simply hold one's own, the increasing time spent commuting, entertaining, going out, meeting social and community obligations, all of these produce a situation in which a child often spends more time with a passive babysitter than with a participating parent."*
- We all applaud hard-working, diligent, laborious parents...
- **BE CAREFUL** that our labor and our watching is not in vain—work on **PEOPLE**, not just property—have the right value system in your life and family!!
- **Here we see a forced, artificial lengthening of the day, v. 2**
- Managing time, push so much into 24 hours
- Build all day long, guard all evening long, toss and turn all night long
- Living Bible translation *"...fearing that you'll starve to death"*

- You're busy, but your bummed out; "eating the bread of sorrows"
- **1851 biggest marvel was STEAM!**
- *World's fair in London with thousands of new gadgets on display*
- *First prize was to given to the "greatest machine"*
- *The winning machines had **7,000 moving parts** all powered by steam*
- *The machine **did absolutely nothing**, it just moved and made **noise**—no practical value—lots of **activity**, no **accomplishment***
- **God has given us the "gift of sleep"**
- Go home, stop work, get sleep!!
- Sabbath was graciously made for man. (Mk 2:27)
- There IS a time to quit, not to worry and worship your work.
- **Biography: George Lucas, producer of 'STAR WARS'**
- *Portrayed as a young multimillionaire - restless, unfulfilled, frustrated.*
- *Not having a good relationship with his wife, not enjoying life, but couldn't quit!!*
- *Built an empire... while his home was in shambles*
- *Lucas had the wrong focus...do you??*

The first 3 verses were "**A House built on VANITY**"—vain, vain, vain

The last 2 verses are "**A Home built on VALUES**"—focus on people

You could say the Psalm now turns from making a Living to **enjoying your LIFE!!**

**3 Behold, *children* are *a heritage* from *the Lord*,  
The fruit of *the womb* is *a reward*.**

**4 Like *arrows* in the hand of a warrior, So are the  
children of one's youth.**

**5 Happy is *the man* who has his quiver full of  
them; They shall not be ashamed,  
But shall speak with their enemies in the gate.**

"**Behold**", stop and look, "Hey, check this out..."

#1 - The Home built on VALUES is about "**God-centered**"

## **RELATIONSHIPS!"**

**Four Central words are mentioned in these verses:**

- **"Lord"**, mentioned 3 times, implied 3 times.
- **"Womb"**, wife is mentioned.
- **"Children"** is mentioned twice.
- **"the man"** is mentioned as well.

This describes a **HOME**, the core family **RELATIONSHIPS**, with **GOD** at the center of their life!

- **Deut 6:4-9** - *"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one! 5 "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. 6 "And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. 7 "You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. 8 "You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. 9 "You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.*

Strip away everything else in life down to **the irreducible minimum**, you would have one thing left: **RELATIONSHIPS!**

- **VERTICALLY** - A relationship with God, or not
- **HORIZONTALLY** - Relationships with people, good or bad
- The **Old Testament** highlights this: Exodus 20 (10 Commandments)
- The **New Testament** highlights this: Matthew 22:37-39 (The "Great Commandment")
- Our **vertical relationship** with God spills over and effects our **horizontal relationship** with people in a positive way  
**Hudson Taylor, missionary to China said, "If your father, and mother, brother, and sister, if the very cat and dog in your house are not happier for you being a Christian, it's a question whether you really are."**

#1 - The Home built on **VALUES** is about **"God-centered" relationships**

#2 - The Home built on **VALUES** is about a **"God—given" heritage**



**"Children are a heritage from the Lord...a reward...like arrows in the hand of a warrior..."**

- *"A baby is a digestive apparatus with a loud noise at one end and no responsibility at the other end"*
- Kids (relationships) are the only earthly possession you can take to Heaven!
- **Some people, at this stage of our history, might dispute having more kids**
  - "There's **enough people** on earth already"*
  - "We live in such a **dark, dangerous world**, it's probably not the best time to have kids"*
  - "There's **terrorism and the threat of war** in Middle East"*
  - "**Economic problems** here at home"*
- **These reasons are exactly why we SHOULD be having kids**—  
this world needs the kind of children that Christians produce
- *What if the parents of **Elijah** thought that way?*
- *What if the parents of **Moses** worried about Pharaoh killing babies?*
- *God's plan, was a baby to be born, **Jesus Christ!!***

**How does the LORD view your CHILDREN??:**

- **"HERITAGE"** - "נַחֲלָה" or "**nachalah**" meaning **"a property, an inheritance, an estate"**
- **"REWARD"** - "שָׂכָר" or "**sakar**" meaning **"compensation, financial payment, a salary"**
- **"ARROW"** - "חֵץ" or "**chets**" meaning **"a weapon, an instrument of war, a defense"**

**Remember the historical backdrop of this period:**

David wanted to build the Lord a house, so he amassed finances & supplies...

The Lord said, *"No, you're not going to build me a house..."* (2Sam 7; 1Kin 5)

The Lord promised that He would build David a house!!

Was the Lord speaking of a material house?

No, a dynasty of SONS that will rule Israel, climaxing in the ultimate SON: Jesus Christ, the SON OF GOD!

*God promised David He'd build a **RELATIONAL** thing - a home!*

**3 MAIN PRINCIPLES to walk away with:**



- God's best gifts are **PEOPLE**, not property or projects!
- No amount of human effort can accomplish as much for your family as **THE LORD'S GRACE & BLESSING!**
- **RELATIONSHIPS FOCUSED ON CHRIST** will turn your house into a **HOME!**

**What are your priorities? Property? Projects? Or, People?**

Prospector's quote in Deadwood South Dakota: *"I lost my gun, I'm out of food, my horse is dead, and the Indians are after me...but I've got all the gold I can carry!" - What a fool!!*

*"If you are building your life apart from God, it's **vanity**; If you're adding worry on top of that, it's **insanity**; But if you are building upward to God and outward to people, that is **a thing of beauty**."*