

BIBLICAL FAMILY IN A MODERN WORLD: Building a House or a Home?ⁱ Psalm 127

INTRODUCTION:

Good morning! It is so good to see you guys here this morning. I do want to say a special welcome to those of you that are guests with us this morning. We are so glad that you are here. My name is Chris Wigley, I'm one of the pastors here at Trinity. If you are a guest, we'd love to get to connect with. You can provide information to us by texting the keyword, TBCMP, which stands for Trinity Baptist Church Mount Pleasant, to the number 94-000. When you send that keyword, a link will be sent back to you and that will take you to a form that is less 30 seconds to fill out. When you click "submit," it notifies me, and I always look forward to following up with our guests each week.

If text messaging isn't your thing, please swing by our information center located in the fellowship area, right out these doors in the lobby. We have a gift there for you just as a way of saying thank you for being our guest today. Again, we are thrilled you have chosen to worship with us today.

SERIES OVERVIEW:

Last week, we began a new teaching series, "A Biblical Family in a Modern World." We are looking at the topics of marriage and family according to God's plan. We began our study by looking at God's design for marriage and today we continue by looking at what it means to build a home, not just a house. So, I'd like to invite you to grab your bibles and turn with me to Psalm 127. We are going to look at all 5 verses this morning.

OPENING ILLUSTRATION: Fixer Upperⁱⁱ

I'm just curious, how many of you are fans of the TV Show, "Fixer Upper?" Chip and Joanna Gaines, the stars of the show, have created an empire as they have turned outdated houses into incredible homes. And for those of you that are unfamiliar with the show, each episode typically features a young couple that purchases a dilapidated home, and Chip and Joanna come alongside them and provide a new blueprint and plan for the house to turn it into a beautiful home. Chip is the contractor and Joanna's the decorator. And together they make a great duo in home building and renovation.

Now, once the plans have been developed, construction begins to execute those plans to build a house.

I know several of you are currently building or working on building a home for your family. You understand full well the pains of approving plans, monitoring progress, picking out finishings, all while staying within budget.

But the question we are asking today goes beyond the details of constructing a house. The question is, are you building a house or are you building a home? There is a difference as we are going to see this morning. God wants us to not just build houses. God calls us to build godly homes.

Last week we talked about God as the designer of marriage and family. He has a plan, a blueprint, as to how we are to build our homes. Psalm 127 gives us key insights as to what that plan is. In our passage this morning, we are going to examine how the Lord wants us to build our homes by looking at the foundations, the functions, and the finishings. That's our outline this morning.

I want to read the entirety of Psalm 127 and then work our way through understanding how to build a godly home. You follow along in your copy of God's Word. *¹Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain. Unless the Lord watches over the city, the watchman stays awake in vain. ²It is in vain that you rise up early and go late to rest, eating the bread of anxious toil; for he gives to his beloved sleep. ³Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb a reward. ⁴Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the children of one's youth. ⁵Blessed is the man who fills his quiver with them! He shall not be put to shame when he speaks with his enemies in the gate.*

MESSAGE:

Let's begin by examining...

1) The Foundations

Vital to any structure is the foundation upon which it is built. It is the most important aspect of building.

Before we dive into exactly what the foundation of a godly home is, there are a couple of interesting things about this Psalm that bring it to life. First look at the inscription prior to verse 1. It reads, "A Song of Ascents." Songs of ascents were songs that families would sing as they made their way to the Temple to worship, as they ascended the temple mount.ⁱⁱⁱ "Of Solomon," points to the author being king Solomon, king David's son.^{iv} The Bible describes Solomon as the wisest man on earth.^v What we know about Solomon is that he had quite a

bit of experience in building structures. Solomon built the Temple, he built cities, and palaces, and even vacation homes. He knew construction.

But to be the wisest person on earth, he had many failures. Though he was a great builder, he failed at relationships. In other words, Solomon built awesome houses, but he never built a home. It was later in his life that Solomon penned these words in Ecclesiastes 1, looking back on his life. *²Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher, vanity of vanities! All is vanity. ³What does man gain by all the toil at which he toils under the sun?* IOW, you can accomplish a lot and it not last.

It is far too easy for us, in our day and time, to build houses and never build our home. We live in a demanding world that requires so much of us and at what expense? Beloved, we must give attention to that which will outlive us, that being future generations. And there is no more important task that we should give our lives to other than building godly homes.

Another thing that is important in studying this Psalm is that it is broken into two parts. Verses 1 and 2 form the first section and verses 3 through 5 the second. It is a compare and contrast layout. The first section presents the wrong focus and the second details the correct focus. This is where we find the foundations for building godly families.

Let's read verses 1 and 2 again. *¹Unless **the Lord builds** the house, those who build it labor in vain. **Unless the Lord watches** over the city, the watchman stays awake in vain.* The word vain meaning emptiness.^{vi} *²It is in vain that you rise up early and go late to rest, eating the bread of **anxious** toil; for he gives to his beloved sleep.* In other words, living life extending workdays and worrying about provision only leads to a life of anxiety. This is the incorrect example.

The correct foundation we must lay for a biblical family is being rooted in The Lord. Unless The Lord builds. Unless the Lord watches. Unless you and I allow The Lord to build our homes we will only have houses. What does it mean to allow The Lord to build the home?

Well, remember in the Sermon on the Mount, in Matthew 7, Jesus talked about wise and foolish builders. The foolish builder built his house on the sand, but the wise one upon the rock. Jesus equates hearing His Word and building our lives upon His Word is building upon The Rock, a strong foundation. This is allowing The Lord to build the home. It is the foundation of a godly family.

Now, let's talk practically for a second. How do we do this? I heard a pastor once say, "God grows our children in the twin 'gardens' of family and church."^{vii} Biblical families are grown by harnessing both home time and church time. As a church, we have about 104 hours a year with your kids. But as parents, you have 8,736 hours a year. Together, we have 8,840 hours to influence the next generation. So, let's talk practically about those two environments.

First the home. The home, according to God's design, is the primary place your kids learn truth. God says in Deuteronomy 6:4-9, *⁴"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. ⁵You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. ⁶And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. ⁷**You shall teach them diligently to your children,** [parent responsibility] *and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. ⁸You 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.* That all is to take place at home.*

The second environment is the church. I read one family expert that said, "Every kid needs a tribe."^{viii} This is where the church comes in. Our kids become like the tribes they are apart of. It is our heart's desire to come alongside you in partnership to lay a foundation to building biblically rooted kids. But building relationships require two things: time and presence.

We must work to lay a strong foundation in our home. We do that by allowing The Lord to build the house. And The Lord uses both the home and the church to do that building. That's the foundation. Now, let's look at ...

2) The Functions.

Every house has certain ways things function. Some people have automated homes where you can turn on lights and set thermostats remotely. There are other times the house needs repair. These are the functions of the house.

When we apply that to developing a biblical family, by looking at the components of the home. Let's read verses 3 through 5. *³Behold, **children** are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the **womb** a reward. ⁴Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the children of one's youth. ⁵Blessed is the **man** who fills his quiver with them!* In these verses, we have the occupants. We have a man, verse 5. A wife, verse 3, fruit of the womb. And then children, also verse 3.

These are the focus of the functions in the home. A couple things that I want to point out for us this morning.

First, notice the contrast from the first two verses. The first section is filled with anxiety. The second section is filled with blessing. The first verses highlight the focus on building careers and houses and accomplishments. The second section focuses on investing in the family. Again, hear me, building a career to bless your family is a great thing, that's important. But the point of verses 3-5 is that building those things should not be at the expense of your family and building a home. Verses 1 and 2 highlight working tirelessly leading to anxiety and emptiness. But focusing on your family leads to blessing in verse 5. Building a home means that we focus on relationships and not on projects.

The second things that is important to point out is the Psalmist's view of kids. Notice how he labels children. Verse 3. ***³Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb a reward.*** When was the last time you saw your children as a heritage and a reward? I see you young moms and dads coming into church. It's obvious that you're just barely making it! We've been there. 30 minutes late, you're living on a prayer, just lucky that you were able to get yourself dressed. I want you to know, we are cheering you on! And it gets WAY better. I promise. You just keep hanging on and know that you are loved and that we got you!

But let's be honest. It's hard to see children as a heritage and a reward when you're changing dirty diapers, dealing with terrible twos, threes and fours, cleaning up after them, getting onto them, and on the verge of a nervous breakdown. Am I right? But here's the thing I need you to see. Your kids are a tremendous blessing. They are a gift from God. It is so vital for us, if we are going to build godly homes, that we never lose sight of that!

Many times, our society does not use these words to describe children. A lot of times we hear words like, children get in the way of life, they are a financial burden, a constant struggle. But this verse says that there is a blessing in having a quiver full of kids.

Now, there is not a quote, "right size," of a family that pleases God. We each are to be guided by the Holy Spirit and depend on His leadership to know what that is for our families. But the point is that we shouldn't desire to limit the number of children because kids are a burden. No! They're God's blessings.

I know that in a room this size, there are those of you that might desire children and for whatever reason you cannot have kids. You can still receive the blessing of a quiver full of kids by fostering or adopting. You can be involved in our church's kids and student ministries. You can be a mentor. The point is that we should have a desire for and prioritize children.

Kids are a precious gift from God, and we must see them that way. Biblical families see them that way. And when we see them that way, it changes our approach to our homes.

So, practically speaking, how do we focus on family relationships over earthly projects? Well, mom and dad, you and I have to prioritize those relationships. That means we must be present.

I've heard people say that quality time is more important than quantity time. And that is true. But quality is found in the midst of quantity. Family dinners, dad's being present, families having meaning conversations, dads dating their daughters are all a part of quality time found amid quantity time. This is why we created the "Have a Convo" resource. If you don't have one of these resources, you can pick one up in the _____ or you can download a copy on our church website at trinitytx.org/family. We are asking you to have quality conversation with your family by prioritizing time with your family.

So, we've talked about the foundation of building godly homes being founded upon The Lord and His Word. And we've talked about the functions of the home that kids are blessings, and we are to prioritize family relationships over projects. Now, let's turn and look at ...

3) The Finishings.

Every house has a foundation and functions. But some of the most tedious works are the finishings. And I want to focus on this part of a godly home by looking at the end game.

ILLUSTRATION: Mowing Straight Lines

When I was a kid, my dad came to me and said, "It's time for you to learn to mow the lawn." I was probably about 9 or 10 years old. One of the first things my dad communicated to me was his expectation that the lines left in the lawn be straight. It's gotta look good after you mow. Amen! But I struggled guiding the self-propelled mower. My lines were all over the place. That was the case

until my dad gave me some great advice. He said that the reason I struggled mowing straight lines was because my focus was on the wheels of the mower. I couldn't see the big picture to know where I was headed. He said something that has stuck with me. "Chris, you have to look where you want to go. You have to begin with the end in mind."

The same is true when it comes to parenting. Mom and Dad, we have to maintain the big picture for our kids by beginning with the end in mind. We have to keep our eyes on the target of where we are desiring them to go. And then we work from there. Look what our passage says about this. Verses 3 and 4 again. ³*Behold, children are a **heritage** from the Lord, the fruit of the womb a reward.* ⁴***Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the children of one's youth.*** I want to go back to the word heritage for a moment. The word translated as "heritage," carries the idea of an assignment. Our children are given to us by God with an assignment. The question is, "What is the assignment?" Verse 4. ⁴***Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the children of one's youth.***

What is the purpose of an arrow? An arrow in the hands of a warrior is to be released with purpose, direction, and aim so that it can make an impact. Parents, God has entrusted your children to you that you might prepare them to be released and to have an impact for God's Kingdom. Parenting in the home that God builds has a purpose, an aim.

Understanding this purpose affords us the opportunity to invest in our kids in the correct ways. Listen, 100 years from now it will not matter what they scored on the SAT. It will not matter how many rushing yards they accumulated. 100 years from now, it will not matter the number of scholarships they received. But 100 years from now, it will matter what they did with and for Jesus. Hear me. I'm not saying those things are bad or wrong. I believe God is saying those are ancillary. What is primary is them knowing Jesus and being prepared to be released for Kingdom work.

I heard a pastor say something that has stuck with me. He said, "Children are the only earthly items you can take with you to heaven." I really had to think about that. But it is true. I believe Scripture reveals to us that we will have a reunion in glory. Just as king David said at the death of his infant son, "He cannot come to me, but I will go to him." That, to me, is communicating the fact that our kids are the only earthly items we will be able to have in Heaven.

Now, that means that our kids will have to come to receive Jesus as their Lord and Savior. God doesn't have grandkids. He only has children. But in order for our kids to have the most opportunity to trust Jesus, we must expose them to the gospel from an early age. And listen, the Gospel is not just for getting saved. It is for living life. Truth is that I need the gospel every day.

But here's what I want us to see. There is a payoff. When we allow The Lord to build our homes, when we understand that our kids are God's blessing to us, and we focus on the end game, there is a great payoff, a blessing. Look at verse 5. ⁵***Blessed is the man who fills his quiver with them! He shall not be put to shame when he speaks with his enemies in the gate.***

The word "blessed," is a word that means happy, satisfied, blissful. Notice the difference between verse 5 and verse 2. In verse 2 there is anxiety and worry, and in verse 5 is a blessing.

Then the last sentence of verse 5. ***He shall not be put to shame when he speaks with his enemies in the gate.*** This seems like a strange way to end a Psalm on building a godly home. What does Solomon mean here?

Well, the city gate was the area of town where important legal business would happen. And it was helpful in that day to have a godly family to back you up.^{ix} In other words, there was a sense of pride in the family. When we allow God to build our home, not only will we be happy and blessed, but we will be proud of what God does in and through our family.

God desires for you to have a happy and blessed family. It is God's desire that you enjoy your marriage and your children. But we have to make a determination. Are we going to settle for the emptiness of just building houses or are we going to allow The Lord to build a home? ¹***Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain.***

CONCLUSION:

I'm going to ask Micah and the team to come back up and lead us in a time of response. When I look at the Psalm we just studied, I see a surrender. I see in someone the working so hard to build a life only to end up empty. But I also see a surrender. A coming to the end of themselves and finally saying, "unless The Lord."

Have you surrendered? Have you come to the point in your life where you have said, "God I yield it all to you?" Have you surrendered your family to Him? Well, I can tell you that the surrendering of our families to The Lord begins first with surrendering our lives to Jesus.

The Bible says that all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. And that sin in our lives separate us from God. But because of God's great love for us, He sent His one and only son, Jesus, to die on the cross for our sin. And that when we place our faith and trust in Jesus, we are forgiven of our sin and a relationship with God is restored. But the Bible says we must determine, in this life, to place faith in Christ. See, that's important because when you get that vertical relationship with God right, our horizontal relationships with everyone else falls into place.

Have you placed your faith in Jesus? Maybe you are here, and you have questions about what that is all about. Our elders will be here at the front and would love to visit with you about placing your faith in Jesus as Lord. You come this morning.

Maybe others of you have a prayer concern. We would love to pray with you and over you today. You come with that.

Still yet, maybe others of you want to take your spouse by the hand and begin praying for God to work in and through your family.

There is freedom in this place to respond to The Lord's prompting upon your heart. I'm going to pray, we will stand and sing, but let's all respond to The Lord this morning. [PRAY]

ENDNOTES:

ⁱ Works consulted in preparation for this message: Connor Bales and Todd Kaunitz, *Gospel in the Home: Turning Chaos Back into Order*, Houston: Lucid Books, 2016; Charles R. Swindoll, "The Strong Family," Zondervan: Grand Rapids, 1991; Jerry Pipes, "Building A Successful Family," LifeWay: Nashville, 2002; Skip Heitzig, "Playlist: Home," sermon preached at Calvary Church Albuquerque, August 31, 2014, accessed online: <https://calvarynm.church/connectwithskip/teachings/#/series/187/sermon/2520>; James Futral, "Sermon: Plans for Building a Christian Home – Psalm 127," published by LifeWay, January 1, 2014, accessed online: <https://www.lifeway.com/en/articles/sermon-plans-building-christian-home-psalm-127>; Ray Fowler, "Psalm 127 – Resting in God's Blessing," sermon published by Rayfowler.org, accessed online: [https://www.rayfowler.org/sermons/psalms-of-ascent/psalm-127-resting-in-gods-blessing/#:~:text=There%20is%20nothing%20wrong%20with,God%2C%20and%20go%20to%20sleep](https://www.rayfowler.org/sermons/psalms-of-ascent/psalm-127-resting-in-gods-blessing/#:~:text=There%20is%20nothing%20wrong%20with,God%2C%20and%20go%20to%20sleep;); Michael Youssef, *The God Centered Family*, published by Leading The Way, November 26, 2015, accessed online: <https://www.ltw.org/listen/teaching/the-god-centered-family>; J.D. Greear, "God and the Rest of the Week: Ready to Launch," sermon preached at Summit Church, January 5, 2014, accessed online: <https://summitchurch.com/message/ready-to-launch-psalm-127>.

ⁱⁱ Illustration inspired by Jack Graham's sermon, "A Song for the Family," accessed online: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YWTlv4gDguQ>.

ⁱⁱⁱ Ray Fowler.

^{iv} Enduring Word Commentary, accessed online: <https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/psalm-127/>

^v 1 Kings 4:30-31.

^{vi} Strong's Concordance, 7723, shav.

^{vii} J.D. Greear.

^{viii} Reggie Joiner, Parent Cue Podcast: Episode "Best Of PCL: Six Gifts Every Kid Needs," accessed online: <https://theparentcue.org/best-of-parent-cue-live-six-gifts-every-kid-needs/>.

^{ix} Warren Wiersbe, *Be Exultant: Praising God for His Mighty Works, and Old Testament Commentary on Psalms 90-150*, David C Cook: Colorado Springs, 2004, page 165.