

Summer Psalms
BUILDING A LEGACY
Thursday, July 31
Reading: Psalms 127-128

Psalm 127:1 *Unless the LORD builds the house, the builders labor in vain. Unless the LORD watches over the city, the guards stand watch in vain.*

What makes a legacy? Erma Bombeck was one of America's most well-loved writers. A homemaker, wife, and mother who wrote about the foibles and follies of everyday existence in the home, Bombeck parlayed her wit and wisdom into a successful syndicated newspaper column and a remarkable string of bestselling books. Yet as she talked about her success, she was quick to remind people that her most important contribution was not becoming a millionaire author. Despite her fame and fortune, Erma Bombeck maintained, "My legacy is going to be [my] three kids."¹

Psalm 127 and 128 extol the importance of family. Family was an important part of the festivals for Jewish pilgrims. They would travel together to Jerusalem and share in the feasts and services. They made sure their children knew that all these feasts pointed them to the Lord.

These psalms stress the point that human effort without the Lord is vain, empty, and worthless. It is useless to work long hours to try to get ahead (127:2). This is not a sanction of laziness or a condemnation of working.

What the Psalmist rebukes is the anxious spirit of those who toil restlessly as though they could ensure success by their own efforts, forgetting that God's blessing is needed to prosper those efforts, and that He is ever ready to give that blessing to those who trust Him".²

A life focused on work alone will never bring satisfaction or joy. To believe it all depends on us is in reality a lack of trust in God's care. Blessings and prosperity come to "all who fear the LORD, who walk in obedience to Him" (128:1-2). But notice how these psalms define blessing and prosperity. They are the results of a godly home. Time spent with family is crucial to a blessed life.

Psalm 127 calls children "a heritage from the Lord" and "a reward from Him." In Jewish society, the man with many children (especially sons) was highly honored. This gave him respect in the market and the courts as one who was blessed by God.

In Psalm 128, the godly wife is compared to a fruitful vine and children to olive shoots. The vine and the olive tree are used in the Bible as symbols of the abundant life. They are used as a picture of God's rich blessing. Olive shoots spring out from the original olive tree and take a long time to mature. But when they do, they will produce a crop for centuries.³ Likewise, children who are taught by their parents to love and live for God will have a godly legacy on which to base their life.

In God's sight, our legacy is not only marked by what we do, but more importantly by how we pass on our faith to the next generation. Are you actively teaching your children/grandchildren/etc. how to love God? How are you showing them how to live out their faith?

¹ Dave Branon. "Erma's Legacy" Our Daily Bread, August 16, 1994

² J. M. Flanigan. What the Bible Teaches – Psalms, p. 561

³ James Montgomery Boice. "Psalm 128" notes. Psalms, vol 3