

**\* The Heights Baptist Church \* Series: The Psalms \***  
**\* Topic: Let God Build Your House \* Psalm 127 \* 7/27/25 \***

MAIN POINT

Following Christ requires recognizing our utter dependence upon God for salvation, for strength, and for pointing our children to Christ.

INTRODUCTION

**English military commander Oliver Cromwell said, “Trust in God, and keep your powder dry.” (The powder here refers to gun power.) What do you think he meant by this comment, and how well do you think it aligns with scripture?**

We see here that we as Christians have a responsibility to serve God by doing His kingdom work, but we need always to remember that it is God and not us who actually produces the results.

UNDERSTANDING

In ancient Israel, devout Israelites were required by the Law of Moses (Deuteronomy 16:16) to embark on pilgrimages to Jerusalem three times a year. They would celebrate the feasts of Passover and Pentecost in the spring, and the feast of Tabernacles in autumn. The people would generally travel in groups for safety, and as they started ascending up the mountain to Jerusalem, they would sing these “Songs of ascent.”

Psalms 120-134 are grouped together as the Songs of Ascent. Our lesson today will be looking at Psalm 127, which is one of these Psalms. Psalm 127 is introduced as “A song of ascents. Of Solomon.” Charles Spurgeon said in his commentary on this Psalm that it can be translated as “For Solomon.” This would make either Solomon the author (of Solomon), or David the author (For Solomon).

ASK VOLUNTEERS TO READ THE FOLLOWING VERSES, INTRODUCING THESE PSALMS OF ASCENT

**Psalm 121:1:** I lift my eyes to the mountains—where does my help come from?

**Psalm 122:1:** I rejoiced with those who said to me, ‘Let us go to the house of the LORD’.

**Psalm 123:1:** I lift up my eyes to You, to You who sit enthroned in heaven.

**Psalm 125:1:** Those who trust in the LORD are like Mount Zion, which... endures forever.

**Psalm 134:1:** Praise the LORD, all you servants of the LORD, who minister... in the house of the LORD.

**How would you summarize what the “Psalms of ascent” are about, based on the introductory verses these Psalms?**

They are helping the pilgrims focus on God as they hike up Mount Moriah to the temple.

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ PSALM 127:1-2

**How would building a house be especially relevant for Solomon?**

Solomon wasn’t just building any house, he was chosen to build God’s house in Jerusalem.

**According to the psalmist, what would make our labor be “in vain” in verse 1?**

**What efforts are we warned about being in vain in verse 2?**

## **How do we practically apply these lessons from verses 1 and 2?**

Those who build a house must “labor” and those who guard a city must actively “watch over” it. The point of verses 1-2 is that such efforts are worthless if they are not carried out in faith, trusting God to bless the work and make it beneficial. These verses call us to consider the goal of our work. And we need to avoid excluding God while making hard work and busyness our goal in life. Paul made these points this way: “my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain” (1 Cor. 15:58).

## **How do we manage the balance between trusting God and working wholeheartedly?**

No task succeeds apart from God’s will. While building a physical structure—probably specifically the temple in Jerusalem—is the example being used here, the lessons apply to any endeavor. We should work hard at our marriages, families, serving in the church, and making disciples. But we need to trust God for the results, remembering it is He who produces the results (1 Corinthians 3:6-9).

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ MARK 10:13-16

## **What is the primary difference between the way Jesus and the disciples saw the children?**

**What kinds of things does this teach us about the nature of God’s kingdom? What kinds of things does it teach us about the nature of God’s grace?**

## **What does it mean that unless we become like little children, we cannot enter the kingdom of heaven?**

Jesus held out open arms to welcome the children. We must be like little children to enter the kingdom. God builds His kingdom on childlike characteristics: trust, love, innocence, lack of power, lack of pretension, lack of credentials. Faith is the awareness of our spiritual helplessness that leads to humility before God, trust in Him, and obedience to Him.

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ PSALM 127:3-5

*Note to study leader: The remainder of this Psalm talks about our children. Consider helping the people in your class who don’t have kids or whose kids are grown up to consider how they can apply these verses to helping the next generation grow in their walk with Christ. Possibilities might include serving in children’s ministries, or helping with grandkids, nieces, nephews, etc.*

## **Verses 3-5 shift to the topic of children. How does this naturally flow from the first two verses?**

Unless the LORD builds the house, its builders labor in vain. This applies to building our families. We can rest after working hard because we can trust the Lord to be our provider in all things.

## **What descriptions of children are given in these verses, and what lessons can we learn from them?**

- **Children are a heritage and reward from the LORD (verse 3).**
- **Children are like arrows in the hands of a warrior (verse 4).**
- **Children will keep you from being put to shame when opponents contend with you (verse 5).**

We need to remember what a blessing it is to be allowed to carry out the mission from God to raise our children in the Lord. Arrows can be aimed at a target and shot much further than we can reach on our own. Children who have been raised faithfully and choose to follow the Lord carry on God’s mission to future generations. And our children will continue to grow in strength and wisdom as we age and become less capable. They will one day be able to care for us when we are no longer able to care for ourselves.

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ DEUTERONOMY 6:4-9

**What do you think it means to “impress” God’s commandments on your children (v. 7)?**

**Parents usually are the primary means God uses to supply love, instruction in the Lord, discipline, and training in their children’s lives, especially early in their lives. What kinds of activities can we as parents (or grandparents, or Sunday School teachers) do to help us train our kids in the Lord?**

Faithful parenting is incredibly important and very difficult. Psalm 127 challenges parents to seriously take on the task of teaching their children about God and pointing them to a relationship with Jesus.

**How do we balance trusting the Lord to guide and grow our families with our responsibility to parent diligently?**

Are we parenting unto the glory of God, or are we working for selfish gain? Prayer should be an integral part of our lives, since it is God who produces the results. And yet God commissions parents to raise their kids in the right way. This takes effort and intentionality on our parts.

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ COLOSSIANS 3:20-21

**Why do you think it is so important for kids to learn to honor and obey their parents?**

Our kids have a sinful nature, just like us. By teaching our kids to honor and obey us, they learn to control themselves and submit to authority. And their ultimate authority is God.

**What particular warning is given to fathers in this text? What does this look like?**

Paul challenged fathers to avoid actions and words that drive children to despair or resentment. Christian parents must discipline their children in love, not out of anger, and not while making impossible demands.

*“I know that my father loved me—but he did not seem to wish me to see it.” John Newton*

**While good parenting skills are very important, why shouldn’t we place our faith in those techniques? What is insufficient about such an approach to parenting?**

This question returns to Psalm 127:1-2. Unless the LORD builds the house, its builders labor in vain.

APPLICATION

**Is there any area in my life where I am trying to build my house by trusting in my own abilities and efforts, rather than trusting God?**

**Are there any patterns of thought or behavior that are not consistent with being childlike in your approach to God? What are some practical ways you can counter those?**

**How often do you talk to your family about spiritual things? About the gospel? What steps could you take this week to make such conversations a more consistent part of your daily life?**

PRAYER

Close your group time in prayer. Ask God to help us turn our eyes on Him and trust Him rather than trust our strengths, weakness, or efforts. Ask Him to help us humble ourselves before Him and look to Christ for the strength to live for Him. Thank God for the children He has given the members of your group. Pray that God would help us to more consistently point our families to Christ with our words and actions.

## COMMENTARY ON PSALM 127

127:1. No task succeeds apart from God's will. While building a dwelling is the literal meaning here, a house could also refer to a household or family, connecting this verse to verses 3-5.

“If the model and design be laid in pride and vanity, or if the foundations be laid in oppression and injustice (Hab. 2:11, 12), God certainly does not build there; nay, if God be not acknowledged, we have no reason to expect his blessing, and without his blessing all is nothing. Or, rather, it is to be understood of the making of a family considerable that was mean; men labour to do this by advantageous matches, offices, employments, purchases; but all in vain, unless God build up the family, and *raise the poor out of the dust*. The best-laid project fails unless God crown it with success. See Mal. 1:4.” Matthew Henry Commentary on Psalm 127

127:2. Humanity struggles to provide for its needs, working hard to have enough food (lit “eating the bread of toil”; Psalm 80:5; Genesis 3:17; Isaiah 30:20), and struggle to find meaning in life apart from God (Eccl. 2:1-11). This fulfillment can only be met through a relationship with God through Christ. The Lord provides rest by blessing the work of the godly.

We see that “the LORD grants sleep to those He loves”. It is through a relationship with God through faith in Christ that we receive the peace of God, which transcends all understanding (Phil. 4:6-8). All striving outside of this creates stress that can rob us of sleep.

It is worth noting that while we are spiritual beings, we live in chemical bodies. And if we are having difficulty sleeping do to a chemical imbalance in our brains, it isn't wrong to seek medical help for physical ailments, all the while trusting God for the results (Verse 1).

127:3. Children come from God (Genesis 30:2; Deuteronomy 7:14). In their culture, sons would be counted on to continue the family lineage, and continue the work as parents became too old to carry it out. This culture did not have welfare, 401K's, social security, Medicare, or retirement homes. All of these things required children to meet these needs.

“This points to another mode of building up a house, namely, by leaving descendants to keep our name and family alive upon the earth. Without this what is a man's purpose in accumulating wealth! To what purpose does he build a house if he has none in his household to hold the house after him?” Charles Spurgeon Commentary on Psalm 127

“*Children are a heritage, and a reward, and are so to be accounted, blessings and not burdens; for he that sends mouths will send meat if we trust in him.*” Matthew Henry Commentary on Psalm 127

127:4. A full quiver of arrows represented prestige and protection. Like arrows for a warrior, children were useful in an agricultural society.”

“Let the Lord favour us with loyal, obedient, affectionate offspring, and we shall find in them our best helpers. We shall see them shot forth into life to our comfort and delight, if we take care from the very beginning that they are directed to the right point.” Charles Spurgeon Commentary on Psalm 127

127:5. The man who had many children also enjoyed respect in Near Eastern society.

“They (children) can meet foes both in law and in fight. Nobody cares to meddle with a man who can gather a clan of brave sons about him. He speaks to purpose whose own sons make his words emphatic by the resolve to carry out their father's wishes.... He who is the father of a host of spiritual children is unquestionably happy. He can answer all opponents by pointing to souls who have been saved by his means. Converts are emphatically the heritage of the Lord, and the reward of the preacher's soul travail. By these, under the power of the Holy Ghost, the city of the church is both built up and watched, and the Lord has the glory of it.” Charles Spurgeon Commentary on Psalm 127