

“Psalms: Week 13 ”

SUNDAY, MARCH 30, 2025 - MICHAEL BOWERS



Summary - “Psalms: Praise and Worship”

This week we take a look at Psalm 127, and in doing so, we must realize how vital the tenets of this Psalm are for our homes and for the church body as a whole. If our homes are the epicenter of planting faith in our children, then make no mistake, the enemy is after our homes. The target, the bullseye for the enemy, is on the back of every parent, every child, every grandparent, and every relationship that impacts our homes. In addition to this, parenting and raising children is not a task for the faint of heart. It is hard work and we have a million ideas of what it will be like. There are thousands of opinions out there on how to do it right. Even books and videos to describe the process in great detail from clinical experts. If we put all of this together, we could easily begin to ask the question: How in the world is it possible to build my home and raise my children in today's world. The answer: The Lord builds the house. Not you, not your pastors, not a parenting book or video, but the LORD - the one who created and crafted each of us. The LORD, who created the heavens and the earth. The LORD, His Word must be placed in your home, The LORD. Church, the Psalms, whether 176 verses (Psalm 119) or five verses (this week in Psalm 127), are power-packed and a piece of a larger text, God's word (scripture), that coincides, expands, and reinforces what we are learning in Psalms. There is guidance for our homes, our families, and our roles as parents! Let's build our house on God's word, His works, and thank God for the gift God has provided for us in and through Jesus Christ.

Scripture - Psalm 127 “Unless the Lord build this house”

Unless 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. 2 It 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. 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 children₁ of one's youth. 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.

Key Terms - “Vain or Vanity” - Strong's Definition

Vain/Vanity: (נִפְּשׁ shâv'e', shawv; in the sense of desolating; evil (as destructive), literally (ruin) or morally (especially guile); figuratively idolatry (as false, subjective), uselessness (as deceptive, objective; also adverbially, in vain):—false(-ly), lie, lying, vain, vanity.

Key Apps, Websites, and Online Tools for Further Study

- <https://www.blueletterbible.org/>
- <https://www.biblegateway.com/>
- <https://biblehub.com/>
- <https://www.youversion.com/>
- <https://www.bibleref.com/>
- <https://bible.org/>
- <https://netbible.org/>
- <https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/>
- <https://www.desiringgod.org/>
- <https://www.gty.org/>
- <https://www.gotquestions.org/>
- <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/>
- <https://carm.org/>
- <https://dwellapp.io/>

Further Scripture Study

Deuteronomy 6:4-9; [Psalm 127](#); Proverbs 24:4; Matthew 11:28-30; Ephesians 5:1-2, 5:21

As you study the scripture verses provided for this week, study for right context and right questions...

Right Context:

- The verse itself and key word(s) that stand out in the verse (meanings)
- The verses around the verse, the section of scripture, the chapter, the book, old/new testament, and relation to the rest of scripture
- Author and Date (Who wrote the book and when?)
- Audience (Who is the book written to? Main characters in the story and/or text?)
- Main points and overall purpose of the book
- Historical background, cultural significance, setting, people, rulers, etc.
- Scripture references; let scripture interpret scripture as much as possible

Right Questions:

- What does this passage say?
- What does this passage mean to its original audience?
- What is this passage teaching me about God?
- What does this passage tell us about man?
- What does this passage demand of me? (Is there a command to obey? Is there a promise to claim? Is there a sin to avoid? How is this applicable to me?)
- How does this passage change the way I relate to people? (What actions must I take in response to this passage?)
- What does this passage prompt me to pray? (For God, for others, for my community, for family, etc.)

Key Thoughts

Where scriptures speak with repetition, we should listen. The phrase, in vain. (three times in two verses). Vain or vanity means emptiness or nothing. (vs. 1-2)

Vanity boasts of outward accomplishments, but it does not deliver inward peace. (vs. 1-2)

There are various ways to build a physical house or structure, but the foundation is the key element. How you build the foundation will dictate the entire stability and strength of the home.

Verse 2 is a compelling diagnosis of vanity, emptiness, and longing inside our homes based on one particular symptom: Anxiety. The anxiety evident in verse 2 is the worry that comes from believing, in our hearts, that this life and every decision in it is solely our responsibility. (vs. 2)

"But it is all pointless, "in vain," for I can work as hard as anyone ever worked, but all to no avail. I can do gospel work in the morning, noon, and night, seeking to build the church of Jesus Christ. But unless God himself is at work, nothing will happen. It's all pointless, fruitless, and crushingly destructive of my life."

John Piper says, "Sleep is the daily reminder that we are not God." Think about it. Have you ever considered sleep to be evidence of God being in control? The world works, turns, and functions without you for ⅓ of your life. God knew, in creation, the limits of the human body and how significant rest would be. But God also knew we would tend to attempt to outwork God and do life on our own, so guess what, vs. 2, the anxious need to rest, sleep, and admit we are not God.

Our homes should be filled with peace rather than anxiety. We must be asking and praying:

- What keeps me awake at night?
- Am I surrendering it on Sunday only to pick it up on Monday?
- What rhythms of rest do I have in my life?
- Are there devices keeping my mind racing all evening?
- Is my brain being filled with promises of peace and rest rather than Satan's lies of vanity and having more?
- Am I rising earlier, staying up later, simply to squeeze in a little more burden in place of God's gift to his beloved - sleep?

We, as parents and family, notice the impacts of anxiety. We must lean into these moments and make necessary changes to care for, redirect, and guide our children. And while we, the church, want to help and disciple you to have Christ-centered homes, you are with your children far more than us. (We have your children for about 104 hours a year, compared to your 8700.)

Key Thoughts

These are not moments to run from as parents; these are moments to step into. These are moments where we sit with our kids in their beds and pray over them, speak biblical truth to them, and make decisions that put them in places where truth, peace, hope, and praise will be poured into their lives more than fear, anxiety, worry, fame, and vanity.

Not all people are called to be married; not every married couple is led or able to have children. But all adults can value children, pray for them, and care for them.

Children are a blessing from the LORD. But let us say this: Children are a gift from God, but children make terrible gods. Our children are given to us to steward them for the Kingdom, not to be our saviors, nor are we to neglect them and let them figure it out on their own. (vs. 3-5)

Christ-Centered homes must have a foundation of Jesus Christ. (Ephesians 5:1-2, 5:21).

- If we want to bring peace into our home and see children as a blessing and delight, we as parents must have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. This is evident when:
 - We model a love for the Word of God.
 - When we count our kids as a blessing, we honor our spouse above our kids. I speak highly of my wife—she of me. We don't undermine each other to our kids.
 - This passage calls us to be a fragrant offering to others. That is not a cover-up cologne. That is genuine, a real relationship with Jesus Christ that pours out of me onto my wife and kids. And again, when I struggle, I go to them out of respect and love and apologize.
 - All of Ephesians 5 guides us in our families and homes. Our roles as husbands, fathers, wives, and mothers, and all of our relationships, are built on our surrendering our lives to Christ.

Christ-centered homes aim their arrows at the right target. (Deuteronomy 6:4-9).

- As Psalm 127:4 says, children are arrows in the hand of a warrior; we must aim our children in the right direction. We must direct them to scripture as their guide. We must guide them in the directions God's word has given us to guide them.
- Children are often terrible listeners but excellent imitators, so parents, your actions preach a louder sermon than anything you say. How you love, speak, address your spouse, and talk about others helps aim the arrows of your children toward the things of God.
- One of the most significant reasons for young adults leaving the local church and renouncing their faith is that we have given them nothing worth taking aim at with their faith. So, they denounce their faith and start searching for ideas that are full of action, full of faith, and full of life.

Key Thoughts

Christ-centered homes need a local church family to help launch their children. (Psalm 127:4-5).

- We must remember parents: Our children are not ours, they are a gift for us to steward from the LORD. That means we give them His word, we teach them, we train them, we launch them and we prayerfully support them each step of the way.

Jim Elliot, who died as a martyr on the beaches of Ecuador (69 years ago), to his parents when he told them he was going:

"I do not wonder that you were saddened at the word of my going to South America. This is nothing else than what the Lord Jesus warned us of when He told the disciples that they must become so infatuated with the kingdom and following Him that all other allegiances must become as though they were not. And he never excluded the family tie. In fact, those loves which we regard as closest, He told us must become as hate in comparison with our desires to uphold His cause. Grieve not, then, if your sons seem to desert you, but rejoice, rather, seeing the will of God done gladly. Remember how the Psalmist described children? He said that they were as an heritage from the Lord, and that every man should be happy who had his quiver full of them. And what is a quiver full of but arrows? And what are arrows for but to shoot? So, with the strong arms of prayer, draw the bowstring back and let the arrows fly-all of them, straight at the Enemy's hosts." ~Jim Elliot

Reflect & Respond

How do you see Psalm 127 in contrast with the culture of our world and especially our lives here in the United States?

What foundation are you building for your home and family? Is it one of vanity, culture, labor, and anxiety, or is it being built on the Lord and His truths? What does it look like for your house to be built on the Lord?

Have you been laboring in vain, rising early, retiring late, and missing sleep rather than trusting in the Lord and His provision? What is currently creating the most anxiety for you in your life? What burdens, people, worries, etc. are keeping you up at night? Are you attempting to shoulder them all on your own or are you trusting the Lord with them (Matthew 11:28-30)?

Do you more often see your children as gifts from the Lord or as burdens? How and to what target are you aiming them as arrows to be shot out into this world? If they were to be shot out right now, what target would they be heading towards? What may you need to adjust as a parent to make sure that they hit the right target?