

Biblical Parenting Basics #1 – Faith in the Promises of God: Psalm 127

Introduction – Parenting, when you are in the midst of it, is a long, hard work. Serious Christians take seriously the work of marriage, family, and childrearing. In the midst of the long days (and nights) of this work, it is critical that we do not fall to the temptation of pragmatism, for as the Psalmist points out, the core issue is not a particular method or set of instructions, as important and helpful as those might be. The core issue for faithful childrearing is faith in God, in His promises, in His grace to His covenant people. Covenant keeping is always, at the center, promise believing (John 6:28-29).

The Vanity of Work and Expertise (vv1-2a) – Climbing the ascent to their beloved city, Israel sang her Psalms of Ascent singing of the city and its temple-house. The applications go to all of life (as Solomon describes in Ecclesiastes). The vanity of building a house, a city, or a nation if the LORD is not doing it is vain, like the tower of Babel. Protecting that city is vain if the LORD is not in it, as when Jesus declared the ruin of Jerusalem in the generation following their rebellion against Him. But note the Psalmist's first application: our households. Families are little nations and in the New Covenant we are the temple of the Holy Spirit. Homes are the places where the building blocks of the New Jerusalem are hewn.

Raw Materials – What do you have before you to build this household in and of yourself? Faltering, stumbling, fallen parents, and sinners for children who are by nature, objects of wrath (Eph 2:3).

Hard Work that Never Ends – But you are a hard-worker, you say. You've read the books/blogs, and you can succeed. Parenting, building and protecting a home is a task that is overwhelming and never ends. The temptation is to work harder, to try harder, to get up earlier and stay up later (actually and metaphorically). This is the person that says, "*unless I build the house...*" not "*unless the Lord builds the house.*" That man, when he eats, finds no satisfaction in his bread.

The Source of Faithful Childrearing (v2b) – Because of the vanity of working in our flesh, "*...so he gives his beloved sleep.*" This is a metaphor of the gift of faith. And it is faith in God, in His promises to us, which grants us such rest the world cannot understand (Psalm 3:5-6). With faith, it doesn't matter how faulty the raw materials are (in ourselves), or how dangerous the world around us appears.

What Are We To Believe? (Deut 30:6) – The promise of heart obedience is for us and our children (Acts 2:38-39). The Lord is building your household. Do you believe that? You are commanded to.

Given What We are Commanded – This verse teaches us that God is pleased to *give* His beloved this kind of sleep. We are commanded to have this kind of faith and told that without it we cannot please God (Heb 11:6). We are also told that this faith is God's gift to us (Eph 2:8-9, Phil 1:29). You cannot work up this faith – it is the gift of God.

The Rewards of Faithful Childrearing (vv 3-4) – It is faith that unites us to Jesus and makes us partakers of all His promises which are "Yes" and "Amen" in Christ (2 Cor 2:20). And what are His promises to us?

A Heritage – We are promised a multi-generational household of faith. This is confirmed throughout the scriptures, in Psalm 102:25-28, 103:15-18, Ezek 37:24-26, Luke 1:48-50, Acts 2:37-39.

Sweet Fruit – Fruit is the proper end of the tree, and godly offspring is the proper end of the marriage covenant (Mal 2:15). It does not come from our works apart from faith. This is a reward that comes by our faith. Spurgeon says, "*they are doubtful blessings only because we are doubtful people.*" And this reward is the fruit of the womb, the ordained praise of nursing infants (Psalm 8:2, Matt 21:16).

Sharpened Arrows – Spurgeon also says, "*A man of war is glad of weapons which may fly where he cannot.*" The rearing of children is a martial exercise. And its goal is stated in the next verse.

The Goal of Faithful Childrearing (v 5) – The goal is not that our children would simply turn out 'ok.' The Lord desires godly offspring because He is creating a new humanity, redeeming a culture, and securing the promised victory over the world. This Psalm has the Great Commission in mind and is rooted in the promises of God's victory through the faithful discipling of the nations. World evangelization is accomplished first through the training up of faithful generations in the Lord.

The True Rest of Faith – Some of you would rather trust yourselves than the Lord. This is the sin of pride; repent of believing such lies. Some of you are struggling to find faith; do not look to your circumstances or deep within yourself. You must look away to the object of that faith – He is pleased to give His beloved sleep. Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Plead the Word of the Lord – Quit assenting but then never doing anything. Psalm 127 informs your prayers. Pray for a lasting heritage. Pray for sweet fruit from the womb. Pray for sharpened arrows – a quiver full. Pray for these things because God is pleased to give them to you.

Act Upon (Within) the Word of the Lord – Evangelical faith in the Lord Jesus Christ does not produce laziness, but confidence in God. Having faith does not always change how much we work; it always changes *why* we work. By faith, go walk in that hard work He has prepared for you – but with an eye towards conquest.