

Family Issues #4 – Faithfulness in Childrearing (*Psalms 127*)

Introduction – As we continue to see God bless our body with more and more little ones, we must remind one another of the promises God has given to us and reflect those in how we train our children up in the Lord. We too easily fall into the sin of pragmatism, thinking that if we just follow a well-developed, proven list of ‘how-to’s’, our children will turn out right. But, as the psalmist points out, the core issue is not our particular methods, as important as those might be. The core issue, the foundation of faithful childrearing, is faith in God, in His promises, in His grace to His people.

The Truth About Expertise (v1-2a) – This is one of the songs of ascents, sung as the people climbed the hills to worship in Jerusalem. They are singing of the temple-house and of their beloved city. But the context of the entire psalm also shows us that they are singing of households – little temples and cities that each family is building. In the New Covenant, we see that we are the temple (of God’s Holy Spirit) and that we are the New Jerusalem. Those physical structures were real, and yet we are the reality of what they represented. This is a psalm about our households, God’s households of faith.

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).

The Vanity of Faithlessness – Households must be built and they must be protected. The man or woman who thinks that they have just the right stuff, following just the right method or personality and that all they have to do is follow some blueprint are on the road to vanity – emptiness – tragedy.

Hard Work that Never Ends – 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.*”

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, that grant 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.

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 (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 Christ 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 2:17-19.

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 goal is to secure 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 through the training up of faithful generations in the Lord.

Applications Without a List – This is not a to-do list. You must think of this much more as a state-of-being. It is the place you must start and the place you must regularly return and reflect in order to faithfully train up your children in the Lord.

Hear the Word of the Lord – Some of you would rather trust yourselves than the Lord. This is the sin of pride and you are commanded to repent of believing such lies. Some of you are struggling to find that faith and you must cease looking inside yourself, for you will never find it there. 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 – 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.

Believe the Word of the Lord – You are commanded to believe the Word of God. He has promised his beloved sleep. He has promised your descendants to be in Christ as well. In you all the nations shall be blessed (Gal 3:6-9).

Act Upon (Within) the Word of the Lord – By faith, now go and walk in the good works that God has prepared for you.

Childrearing is not a crapshoot. It is a work of faith.

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