

Psalm 127

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[0 : 00] One way to measure how important people consider this issue is to look at the money involved with it.! \$21 billion spent on home security systems every year. \$60 billion was sent on cyber security in 2021.

! Up from \$41 billion just a year before. \$60 billion. The stores and businesses cost retailers over \$68 billion a year.

Personal security is a \$300 billion business. As a matter of fact, you can have your own 24-7 bodyguard for \$500,000 or \$900,000 if they can make you pay that much. Also, to protect from financial tragedy, Americans spend over \$600 billion on property and casualty premiums, \$600 billion on life, annuity premiums, and over \$1 trillion in health insurance premiums every year. There are an estimated 12.5 million police officers in the world, most paid in taxes, \$2.1 trillion in health insurance.

The world's military every year. By the way, 72% of that, or \$800 billion, is in the US. \$1 trillion in health insurance.

[1 : 37] Now, according to the Bible, God cares immensely about our security. In the US. When the Lord placed people on the earth, He started with a man and a woman who were created to represent Him, uniquely to represent Him.

He started with a man, multiplying and filling the world with His creation, His children, bringing order to the earth through cultivation and natural resource and wildlife management.

Adam and Eve's disobedience didn't remove God's mandate, but the resulting curse did bring about a change in the difficulty of the mandate.

As a loving Father, as a sustaining Father, our Creator has a deep interest in His children's well-being in a world affected by the curse.

He delights to see His children enjoying the pleasures of His creation, and He blesses the fruit of hard work and diligence of building and of securing what is built.

[2 : 51] God has always encouraged His people to look to Him for their sustenance and security. And the family itself was designed by God as an essential part of His way of providing protection and security.

It's no wonder as well that when Jesus refers to the church that He is building, which is in reality the redeemed family of God, He mentions security right away.

He says, I will build my church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it. Our Heavenly Father wants us to experience His providence and protection in our homes and in our churches.

Psalm 127 is a wisdom psalm that gives us a glimpse of God's heart in the matter. It's a psalm that God included in the scriptures to remind us to trust Him for our well-being.

God wants you and me to completely depend upon Him to establish and maintain your life and your calling.

[4 : 16] He cares about you as a father cares for his child, and He wants you to know that you can trust His way of providing for and defending you.

God wants you and me to know that you can trust Him for your life and your calling. Now we find this psalm right in the middle, the Songs of Ascent, a series of psalms that are said to have been sung by pilgrims traveling up to Jerusalem.

These psalms encourage trust in and with fear of Yahweh, the Lord. This morning I'd like to highlight three important truths from Psalm 127 that the poet has given to encourage you to greater dependence on the Lord.

So let's look at verse 1 again. Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it may be the day.

Unless the Lord watches over the city, the watchman stays awake in vain. Now this psalm begins with a proverb.

[5 : 37] That's one reason why they categorize it as a wisdom psalm. The proverb serves as a merciful reminder and warning.

In it, God wants us, He warns us, that is, that it's possible to be deceived by a false sense of security. So the first truth then, is that God wants you to beware of a false sense of security. And by it, He wants to save you from what would otherwise be a wasted life. There's two main images here in this verse.

One is of laborers building a house, and one is of a watchman guarding a city at night. These are two very different tasks that are considered essential to human security.

We live in a physical world that can be very harsh at times and requires shelter. Cold, wind, rain, and heat bring death to many people every year.

[6 : 50] We also live in a world where thieves and violent criminals exist. And so we need protection. But notice the word that's used here to describe these two activities of building and protection.

He calls it vain. It doesn't say that building isn't or can't be done without God, but that apart from Him, these activities are considered vain.

Now, I don't know about you, but when I normally think of the word vanity, I used to think of it as describing something that's applied to more extravagant or excessive aspects of life.

Like a person spends all his time in front of the mirror or wondering if everybody is thinking about him or her. Positive.

But the psalm, in this psalm, the term is applied to some very essential aspects of life. The Hebrew word shab or vain is different from the word hevel or vanity that occurs 36 times in the book of Ecclesiastes.

[8 : 11] Yes, they're synonyms, but shab has a different usage. And it also has a poetic element in the sense that when you read the psalm verbally, it's a lot less creepy than heaven.

It's shab. Unless God is this shab the way the poet wanted to communicate to us. But not only does it refer to emptiness or wastefulness, but it's primarily used to describe falsehood and deceit.

In fact, the false prophets of Israel were described as bringing vain or false visions to the people. Same word, shab.

And so vanity, in this sense, here in Psalm 127, is used to describe something that isn't what it appears to be.

So in the context of this passage, we are warned that involvement in even the most basic needs of life can deceive us if God is not the one providing it.

[9 : 35] In these situations, any security we gain is really a false security. This kind of delusion is everywhere.

I remember as a young man in 1981, a report came out that listed the most ideal locations to live in the world. They were rated according to several different criteria, but security was one of its primary concerns.

And among the top five on the list were some beautiful islands off the coast of Argentina called the Bauchlin Islands.

One year later, on April 2nd, World News reported the headlines, Argentine forces invade the Bauchlin Islands. The ensuing two and a half months war with Britain claimed 1,200 lives.

Whatever security the islands offered was no, it didn't really exist. That's natural for us to feel secure in our accomplishments.

[10 : 52] We have prosperous cities. We have developed highly developed skills, nice homes, many churches, police, and a strong military.

But I wonder if it's possible that these things have masked an ever-increasing spiritual meaning. In our generation we've seen the church there are programs for every imaginable problem.

Never has there been as many marriage seminars and books available. But the results have been disappointing. Divorce among nominal Christians has officially surpassed that non-insuredness.

The passage here doesn't say that it's impossible to build or provide some sense of security but it does warn us that all our efforts all our goals our successes can amount to nothing.

In order to be truly dependent upon God we must be aware that it's possible to be met and misled by a private sense of security.

[12 : 14] There is here in these verses a second truth that God wants you to know. That truth is simply that God himself is your ultimate source of sustenance and security.

Not only should we be aware of a false sense of security but God wants you to be assured that he alone provides what you need and what he provides is what you need.

Look at these verses again verses 1 and 2 each stanza begins or each stanza in the verse refers to the Lord Yahweh unless Yahweh goes unless Yahweh watches and in verse 2 he referring to the Lord he gives there's a wonderful truth implied here and you have to look at it from the back side but it's true the God who created the universe and who appeared to Abraham and Isaac and Jacob is not some distant creator who left us to run our own lives he's the creator and sustainer of the universe he builds he secures he gives and he does this all the time of Yahweh and we are created in his image to work with him in his work but he is the owner the architect the general contractor the foreman the inspector and the maintainer is Shomer

Iskael the keeper of Israel now verse 2 reveals a further aspect of this truth about the Lord the vanity mentioned here is that of attempting to cram more work today than is necessary it is vain for you rising early going late to rest eating the bread of an anxious toil you might think of the typical workaholic something compels that person not to want to stop it could simply be a desire to provide well this activity is also vain because it defeats the person into thinking that this is necessary or advantageous to get ahead maybe even break you these persons might quickly rise to the top but often lose anything value to them like family and friends along the way the point of the passage is that what God says about this or actually what God says about himself it is vain for you to live like this because

God gives his beloved sleep God created us people who need to sleep!

[15 : 50] Now sleep is God's means for us to maintain health mentally physically sleep good night's sleep is necessary it rests the mind it allows the body to prepare itself well the sleep is a powerful illustration of dependence on God most of the vital aspects of our lives really we have no control over can we really be in control when we have to check out eight hours every single day what a vulnerable activity you don't have to work more than one day each day to meet your needs because God provides what you really need you don't have to work seven days a week just to survive because God provides what you need

I think Jesus emphasized this when he said seek first the kingdom of God and all of these things the things that you really need will be added to you now we must recognize that our involvement in our own sustenance and security is obvious but it's not enough our sustainer is the ultimate source of our well-being really there's only two ways to live you can either build with God or you can build without him you can either attempt to secure your life with God or without him and we know from the scripture that the Lord's favor is upon those who build with him and secure with him but he is against those who build without him when God is for us we call that grace when God is against us we call that wrath now think about it the all knowing omnipresent all wise all powerful infinitely good God is for you isn't that security enough but if God is against you all your building and attempt to secure your life will amount to nothing of course there is good news for those who build without him God has provided the way for anyone to move from wrath to grace that is the essence of the gospel of Jesus Christ that we love so much Jesus' death and resurrection satisfied the demands of justice against our independence when we believe in Jesus we are laying down our own false sense of self-sufficiency and we depend entirely upon him receiving

God's grace begins with a simple act of faith but it follows with a lifetime commitment of faith to build only what he is building to guard only what he is concerned about and to work within the means and gifts that he provides that is the Christian life God wants you to give him your complete trust God not only wants to warn us against the delusion of false purity and to show us that he is the only source of true security but in this song there appears to be something which I consider fascinating thirdly he gives us an important illustration of the role of children in how he provides security for us so the third point

God wants you to know that he gives children as a means to security look about look at what God says about verse three behold children are inherited from the Lord of the womb of the Lord now both of those terms are value terms used to describe how children contribute to God care for a family I know we get to summarize them as children are blessings but if we do that we're missing the point of this passage inheritance from the Lord or literally of the Lord and a reward generally we don't understand these verses as a little context right now in the period of the kings of Israel when

the psalm was written families depended greatly on children for their prosperity and protection against threats and in agrarian society children worked in fields and care for lives and as they grew they were essential for social security and the care of their elderly parents that was the way of life now most of us will confess children are blessings but practically many think of them as liabilities out of the cost of childhood the cost of feeding and clothing the child money needed for a good education and other wants needs it can be quite expensive in our society we hear more arguments against having children they're an inconvenience not ready they're a choice our perception of the blessings of children has changed when the

[23 : 01] Israelites sang this song on the way to Jerusalem during each of the three great festivals they understood exactly what they were saying God gives children for the prosperity and security of the family of the nation and of the fulfillment of the gospel there's something about God's choice of Abraham that affirms this when you think of Abraham what first comes to your mind father of all nations faith father of all nations right we have those terms to describe him and they're completely accurate when we think of him as a man of faith don't we by faith in God's command he left his homeland and his father's house to travel to command his promise to start all over by faith in God's command he trusted the Lord would give him a son even though he was 99 years old and also by faith he obeyed the Lord's test and offered up his son Isaac as a sacrifice fully believing that God was able to raise him from the dead but Abraham's role in redemptive history was so much more than a few amazing demonstrations of faith what was

Abraham's daily essential role in redemptive history he was a father he taught his family faithfully and this disciple them discipline that disciple them in the way of the Lord how do I do that right after God told Abraham that within a year his 90 year old wife Sarah would have a child and on his way to destroy the cities of the plain near the salt sea he said something that I think is amazing verse 17 of chapter 18 of Genesis the Lord said shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation and that all the nations of the earth will be blessed in him familiar with that phrase right that's the gospel that's what we are benefiting from to this day then he says for I have chosen him that listen carefully he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the

Lord doing righteousness and justice and then further so that the Lord may bring to Abraham what he has promised him the Lord himself here says that the accomplishment of his great plan of salvation required that a man Abraham command his children and household after him to keep the way of the Lord by human righteousness and justice be a faithful father God's way involves a godly heritage now look how up Scott describes Christ's children in verse 4 he calls them arrows in the hands of a mighty warrior there are plenty of things we can call children but why arrows an arrow was what a weapon of war you might be tempted to think of it solely in terms of hunting but really the mighty man's arrows were his protection they were his second amendment right as a weapon they had to be adequately prepared and available at hand they were the mighty man's defense they were meant to be aimed and fired at a threatening target a great warrior was one with a good aim and who made each arrow count in view of this it makes sense that an effective warrior would have more than 1.93 arrows in his equipment now does this description of children make you feel a little bit uncomfortable well the godless philosophy of our name says that children are individuals which are free to discover their own purposes in life and interests this is not god's perspective can you imagine a warrior taking his arrows and tossing them up in the air to see where they will go if you as a parent lay down your responsibility to train direct teach to guide your children someone else will if you don't take and aim your arrows at the appropriate target you can be sure that your enemy will take them and aim them back at you the end of verse 5 highlights the final way children become god's meaning of security notice here the image of a family having a convocation in the city perhaps these enemies were accusing the man falsely in court perhaps the man is being taken advantage of in business we really don't know from the context but what is clear is that this family man had his children with him riding the gate standing with him reminds me of Ben Cartwright the man facing a couple of renegades in the town just as the men talk and try to take advantage of old Ben you'd hear click click click three guns held by Adam Haas and little yo cocked and aimed from three different directions as a wisdom song psalm 127 doesn't address all the issues that the view of God's sovereignty raises God doesn't give everyone lots of children sometimes he doesn't give anything having and raising children doesn't well doesn't mean that they will all turn out well and sometimes we experience tragic loss and even the ungodly have children

God has good reasons for the truth of psalm 1.7 is still valid God wants you to completely depend on him to establish and maintain your life and calm cares about and he wants you to know that you can trust his way of providing to benefit from all this you need to be aware in some ways the deception of false security you need to trust that he is the only source for true security and what he provides is what you really need and he needs to value his way of providing children as a means of security a strong family will have a positive influence in the church in the community and in the world and a strong church family made up strong families can have a great impact for effective discipleship life transformation and the fulfillment of our evangelistic task in the world today so I would encourage to build what the father is doing protect what he cares about look to him alone for what he needs and value value to children in your life and service that's right a
[32 : 29] Thank you.