

FBC POWELL, 5-28-17 AM NOTES  
"The Home as God Designed It"  
Psalm 127:1-5  
# 16 in Series, "Psalms: Medicine for the Soul"

I. The Building of a God-Designed Home (v. 1a)

The Hebrew word translated "vain" means "nothingness, emptiness, anything which disappoints the hope which rests upon it."  
—*The Complete Word Study Old Testament*

**John 14:2** "In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you."

**1 Peter 3:15b** says "to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you."

**1 Corinthians 15:10** "But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me."

II. The Protection of a God-Designed Home (v. 1b)

III. The Contentment of a God-Designed Home (v. 2)

**Psalms 127:2a (ESV)** "It is in vain that you rise up early and go late to rest, eating the bread of anxious toil..."

**Psalms 121:4** "Behold, He who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep."

IV. The Reward of a God-Designed Home (vv. 3-5)

"When God sees that in this poor old world a wrong needs righting or a truth needs preaching, or a benefit needs inventing  
—He sends a baby into the world to do it."  
—F. W. Boreham

A. The Proper Perspective Toward Children (v. 3)

B. The Proper Goal for Children (vv. 4-5)

A family is a perpetual relay of truth.

—Edith Schaeffer

## **Sermon 16: The Home as God Designed It**

### **Psalm 127:1-5**

The bottom line of Psalm 127 is this: Apart from the Lord, apart from looking to Him, trusting in Him and following Him, our lives will be pointless, peace-less, and fruitless. This truth is clearly seen in the realm of the family. The Hebrew word translated “house” in verse one can and, in this Psalm, does apply to a family. When the Bible speaks of “the house of Saul” or “the house of David” it is speaking of their family. In this Psalm we see a description of a home, a family as God intended it to be. We need to go to other passages to get more detail, but in broad strokes, here is a home as God designed it. May this be our model! May this be the type of home we put on display to our ungodly culture. May our homes be so different that they present a clear alternative to a culture mired in the emptiness of self-centeredness.

The heading of this Psalm says that it is “of Solomon.” This Hebrew preposition could mean that it was written “by” Solomon or that could be translated “for” Solomon. If it is “for Solomon,” it was probably written by David for his son.

In our culture, more and more couples are simply choosing not to have children. The reasons vary, and we certainly don’t have the right to make assumptions as to a couple’s reasons. There may be reasons that if we knew, we would grieve with them instead of berate them. But by their own testimony, many couples choose not to have children because of the stress they cause and how they get in the way of a self-centered life. For most young people heading into the establishment of a family, their model is a combination of their own home and the home presented in our culture. There is a third alternative. We can go the detailed instructions from the one who instituted the whole concept of the family in the first place. God has revealed all that we need to know about the design and functioning of a family in the Scriptures. There is an amazing amount of material in the Scriptures about the values, the roles, the care, and the repair of families. The Bible is more than a manual on home building, but it does tell us the basic principles of why and how the family was designed. As in every area, those who know Christ as Lord are to build their lives and homes in accordance with Scripture, and not the model we were raised with (unless you were so fortunate to have a biblical model) or the culture around us. My prayer is that our homes be so different that they present a clear alternative to a culture mired in the emptiness of self-centeredness. Make no mistake: a life characterized by self-centeredness instead of God-centeredness results in a wasted life to be regretted for all eternity.

### **I. The Building of a God Designed Home (v. 1a)**

Every home is built primarily based on someone’s blueprint, and someone’s values and philosophy. That someone may be Oprah, the latest hot selling self-help book, an individual’s “common sense,” the advice of friends or family, or a combination of all those. Any home built by any of the world system’s blueprint is built “in vain.” The Hebrew word translated “vain” means “nothingness, emptiness, anything which disappoints the hope which rests upon it.” [*The Complete Word Study Old Testament*, page 2371]

Realize that an enormous number of people claim to be an expert on building a home – talk show hosts, psychologists, authors, and even four times married movie stars. If one builds based on their “wisdom,” that person’s labor will be in vain. As Christians, we are to be *counter-cultural*. I love that phrase! We are not to be conformed to the culture (roughly the equivalent to the biblical word “world”); we are to be counter-cultural. The dictionary defines the word

“counter” used in this context as “to tend in an opposite direction; to be contrary to.” When it comes to the building of a home, we are to tend in the opposite direction of the world, the culture around us. We may be thought to be odd and out of touch, but the home built according to the culture is in vain.

Our Lord is a Master home designer and builder. He built the original home in the Garden of Eden before sin came into the world. The Lord Jesus is the builder of our permanent home. John 14:2: “In My Father’s house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you.”

Is the Lord the designer and builder of your home, or have you sought to build it on your own, with the help of the culture, and its instructions and examples? To let the Lord design your home is not just pious talk; it means that your commitment in every area is to be radically biblical. It means that no matter how much you may seem out of touch with the world around you, no matter how people and even extended family misunderstand you, you stay the course, and allow the Lord to be both the architect and the builder. Let me give you a caution here. Beware of those who go too far to the other side. There are some who add to the Scripture and are so intent on being different from the culture that they take approaches and methodology and call it Scripture, when they are going beyond Scripture. While we are to be counter-cultural, we are not to be isolated from the culture. We are “in the world, but not of the world.” We are salt and light in the world and that requires us to come in contact with the world. We are to be separate in our values, in our morals, and in our approaches, but if we are isolated, those in the world never see the difference and are never given occasion to as, 1 Peter 3:15b says, “to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you.”

Notice the balance in verse 1a – “the Lord builds,” and “they [primarily the parents] labor.” Who builds this God designed home? Is it God or is it the parents? The answer is, “Yes!” It is God that designs and gives parents the grace to carry out what He designs. We see that perfect balance in 1 Corinthians 15:10: “But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me.”

## **II. The Protection of a God Designed Home (v. 1b)**

What is a city? It is a collection of homes. The Psalmist is saying that the one who builds the home must be the one who protects it. The home – your home has a real enemy. This enemy is not just a symbol or the personification of evil. The enemy is a literal spiritual being, called in the Scriptures, Satan, the Devil, the evil one, the adversary, and several other names. This enemy focuses his attack on the homes of those who know Christ. Here is why he does that. He knows that if he can weaken the homes of those who are Christians, he has weakened the church. After all, the church is a collection of called out families. Every time a family in this church falls apart, our church is weakened. When a person in this church initiates an unscriptural divorce, that person drags the name of Christ through the mud in the culture that we are supposed to be an example for. By our giving in to the enemy in ending a marriage, we communicate to the culture that Jesus Christ is not sufficient for the most basic of all human to human relationships – marriage. The true strength of a nation from God’s perspective (the only one that counts) is the churches of that nation. As Satan weakens the churches, he has weakened the nation. Our strength as a country is not primarily in our military; it is in our homes. So Satan aims his big guns at the family – especially Christian families and especially the families of Christian leaders. We need a protector; we need a protector who is more powerful than our enemy. Who is it? Psalm 127:1a: “Unless the Lord guards the city, the watchman keeps awake in vain.”

Pray for the families of this church that the Lord would protect us. Pray as you hear of problems; pray as you see families buying into the world's values and bowing down to worship sports, recreation, and entertainment. Pray as you see families who are no longer counter-cultural but are being "conformed to the world" (Romans 12:2). In addition to praying for others, come before the Lord asking, in faith, that your family shows, illustrates the way that a God designed, Spirit empowered home operates.

### **III. The Contentment of a God Designed Home (v. 2)**

The Psalmist is speaking here of our tendency toward discontentment and materialism (those two usually travel together). He presents a picture of a person in the grip of anxiety, all stressed out, working more and more to keep up with a standard of living that is foolishly chosen thinking it will bring contentment. In reality, we find that it only brings greater discontent. What we see in verse 2 is a picture of a person who is always wanting more and more. That describes the lives of so many, perhaps the majority of those in our neighborhoods as well as many in this service. Life in so many homes is filled with stress; in that stressed out condition sleep eludes us. The stress, sleeplessness, and tension in most homes are so thick you could cut it with a knife! We are living above our means and instead of enjoying our possessions, they become our master and enslave us. There is no enjoyment in the things we are knocking ourselves out to possess. I like the ESV of Psalms 127:2a (ESV): "It is in vain that you rise up early and go late to rest, eating the bread of anxious toil..." We are not content with adequate shelter. We have lost sight of the fact that a house should be for shelter, not for show. We have been so blinded by materialism that we are no longer content with a used Ford. We think that our children must be seen as being precocious whether they really are or not. We must have children that are star athletes or musical prodigies. In our culture, it seems to always be more, and more, and more. It becomes vain, empty, useless, and our lives are nothing but "painful labors." We are such a discontent people! I'm not saying that we should become lazy. I am not saying that we should not seek to help our children to reach their full potential. I am talking about being content with whatever the Lord gives us. We rise up early, go to bed late and our lives are nothing more than "anxious toil" (ESV). That is *not* what a home designed and built by God looks like.

I think God gave us the need for sleep to keep us humble. Sleep is a humbling thing. We are never more frail, helpless, vulnerable, and weak than when we sleep. Sleep is a reminder that we are not God. Psalms 121:4: "Behold, He who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep." Because He never slumbers nor sleeps, we can! God can care for us even in the weakness of sleep! Notice the last phrase in verse 2. In the NASB, it is translated, "for He gives to His beloved even in his sleep." The ESV, and several other translations say, "He gives to His beloved sleep." Both of those are acceptable and accurate translations. I think that both are true! The point is that God is giving and providing even when we cannot. That is a picture of contentment in God's provision, whatever He chooses to give us. The point is that He is the provider. He is providing us sleep and He is providing even when we are sleeping.

I call on you to repent of the sin of discontentment! Discontentment forgets that the Lord is our provision.

### **IV. The Reward of a God Designed Home (v. 3-5)**

I know that there are those listening who desire children but cannot have them naturally. I in no way want to make the burden of infertility that you struggle under any heavier, but I need to proclaim these truths to those who have children or will have them or perhaps should have

them. F. W. Boreham, a well-known pastor and author in the late 1800's and early 1900's said, "When God sees that in this poor old world a wrong needs righting or a truth needs preaching, or a benefit needs inventing – He sends a baby into the world to do it." [Quoted in John Phillips, *Exploring the Psalms Volume Five*, page 68]

### **A. The Proper Perspective toward Children (v. 3)**

Today children are all too often seen as a penalty the Lord imposes on us or a burden we have to bear. That is not the biblical perspective. The world often says, "Children will make a rich man poor," but the biblical view is that "Children will make a poor man rich." The key word in verse 3 is the word "gift." This word can mean inheritance, or gift, but it can also mean possession or property. I think both of those meanings are applicable here and both are taught clearly in other places. Do you see your children as God's gift to you? Parenthood is a gift, not a curse. Even in the jokes we laugh at, we get a hint as to what people think about children. For example: "You spend the first two years of a child's life teaching them to walk and talk, and then you spend the next sixteen years telling them to sit down and be quiet." Here is another one many can relate to: "If your children are stressing you out, take the advice on the aspirin bottle: 'take two aspirin' and 'keep away from children'." We chuckle at those, but all too often that reflects how our culture views children. Children, however, are a gift of God to us.

While children are a gift from the Lord, ultimate ownership is still with the Lord. In reality they are His by right of creation. The proper perspective toward our children is that they belong to God, we are stewards of them and we will one day give an account to the owner as to how we have cared for these precious children that belong to the Lord. When you see yourself as a steward of these children that belong to God, it really does change your perspective of them and of your role as a parent. Just as your money and possessions aren't really yours – you are just the manager, even so these children that you call, "my children" aren't really, in the ultimate sense *your* children; they belong to God and you are the steward, the manager of these precious gifts.

When we stand before the Lord to give an account as to how we cared for His children, we aren't responsible for how they turned out, but we are responsible to the true owner as to whether we raised them according to His directions. In other words, our stewardship is not determined by what the children do, but by what we do in obedience, or disobedience, to the owner in raising them. There are some parents who are really poor stewards, but their children, by the grace of God, grow up to honor the Lord and walk with Him. There are some parents who have been faithful stewards whose children rebel and refuse to walk with God.

When we obey God in the raising of these children we will not always be popular with them. I ran across something in my files recently that illustrates the fact that you will be unpopular when you obey God in setting boundaries for them and sticking to it. Many years ago (January 26, 1997), one of the custodians gave me a note they found in the pew after the service. From the language it seems that it was a written conversation between two, maybe thirteen or fourteen-year-olds (they would now be thirty-three or thirty-four). Here are some excerpts from that note being written while I was preaching: "My mom hardly ever lets me go over to a friends house, I mean, give me a break. If I do, they come and get me as soon as I get up. I hate it so much. My mom won't let me go to a friend's house without talking to their parents. They need to learn to trust me more. I'm not in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade no more. It's not like I'm going to burn the house down or something. I am grown up enough to stay at a friend's house without their parents there... I wish they would let me grow up the way I want to." Sounds like some parents who were more interested in pleasing the owner than the children!

## **B. The Proper Goal for Children (vv. 4-5)**

I remember when Kathy and I were first married; we moved to Nashville and visited some friends one night. They had been married longer than we had and already had two children. The kids were completely wild and out of control. In the midst of the chaos, the father said, “We’re really good at production, but not so good in quality control.”

These gifts from God, for us to raise for Him, are compared to arrows of a warrior. What does an arrow do? It goes places you can’t go and accomplishes things you can’t accomplish. An arrow however has to be straight, polished, pointed, and propelled accurately toward the target. The task of the steward/parent is to straighten, polish, point, and propel the arrow toward the target. That involves seeking to lead your children to Christ, discipling them, modeling the Christ filled life, and building godly discipline into their lives. This preparing the arrows is a full time job! It is daylight till dark, twenty-four—seven, fifty-two weeks a year. Our family ministry team can’t prepare these arrows for you, but we want to come along side you to equip you and encourage you.

When parents see themselves as stewards, there is nothing more exciting than seeing their children go where the parents can’t go and become God’s arrows representing Him in the business world, education, medical, vocational Christian service, or as a missionary. Blessed are you when you have a quiver full.

### **Conclusion**

Edith Schaeffer, the wife of the Christian philosopher, Frances Schaeffer, said that *a family is a perpetual relay of truth*. We pass on to the children our love for Christ, our commitment to the mission, whatever the cost, and our heart for the lost nations. They go as arrows into the world representing Christ. Then your children raise their children with the same values and passion, the baton is passed to another generation, and that repeats itself until Jesus comes. The family is indeed a perpetual relay of the truth.