

Psalm 127 is a Psalm of Ascent that was written by Solomon. Now Solomon was given specific level of wisdom by God that was very, very rare (I Kings 3:11-12). God told Solomon that He gave Solomon so much wisdom and knowledge “so that there has been no one like you before you, nor shall one like you arise after you.”

So when we read that this Psalm is written by Solomon, it adds an extra interest to the investigation of it. This is the Psalm that Dan Duncan preached at the dedication of our new sanctuary. He did a tremendous job of expounding the Psalm and if you want you can go on line to our dedication service and listen to his exposition.

We are not sure what the background of the Psalm is. There have been various views on that point. The point of the Psalm is this:

UNLESS GOD SOVEREIGNLY BUILDS, GUARDS AND BLESSES SOMETHING, IT WILL END UP USELESS AND IT WILL NOT PRODUCE WHAT IT SHOULD HAVE PRODUCED.

This Psalm is designed to promote a conscious dependence on God in everything from building, to business and to children. One of the great privileges and great necessities that God’s people have is for God to be involved in blessing everything in life.

Now as we look at the opening couple of verses we cannot help but notice two realities:

(Reality #1) - The prepositional phrase “unless the LORD” occurs twice.

Now Solomon uses this phrase to communicate the necessity of having the Lord at the center of anything and everything that we do or attempt. He brings this up because most people do not realize this point. Most people believe in “self-reliance.” What people need to realize is that they are entirely dependent upon God for everything. Paul says God/Jesus Christ is “before all things and in Him all things hold together” (Col. 1:18).

(Reality #2) - That the noun “vain” occurs three times.

The Hebrew word “vain” is one that means it is totally empty in the sense of nothingness (William Gesenius, *Hebrew Lexicon*, p. 807). This specific word emphasizes something that is worthless (Brown, Driver, Briggs, *Hebrew Lexicon*, p. 996).

By choosing to use this word, Solomon is saying if God is not involved in the matter it will end up useless, worthless and worth nothing. The Lord is either in it or it doesn’t amount to anything.

J. N. Darby said unless the hand of the Lord and the Lord Himself is involved, it will result in nothing (*Psalm 127*, p. 203).

There are two main themes to this Psalm:

THEME #1 – Without having God in sovereign control, what one does is worthless. **127:1-2**

There are three clear vanity points Solomon makes:

Vanity Point #1 - Unless God sovereignly builds the house the work is in vain. **127:1a**

Now building anything does require work. God honors work. He does not honor sloth. But no matter how hard you work, without God's blessings it is useless and worthless. Unless God is in it, no matter what one's skill or strength or smarts, it will amount to nothing.

The noun "house" can refer to an actual house, it can refer to an entire family, it can refer to the Temple, which is the house of God. It can refer to a families pedigree and even a nation or building a dynasty (William Gesenius, *Hebrew Lexicon*, pp. 115-116).

So the first point Solomon makes is that unless God is at His proper place in building anything, you can labor all you want, but the end result is it won't be worth anything. Now Solomon had almost everything he needed to build the Temple. David, his father, had provided that for him (II Chron. 2-3). But David had also taught Solomon the importance of keeping the Lord in everything so he could succeed (I Kings 2:3).

Now Solomon kept the Lord first and he built the Temple and he also built beautiful homes. God blessed him. However, Solomon's son, Rehoboam, undid and lost everything Solomon did because he did not keep the Lord first in his life (I Kings 14:21-30). Without God in it, it ends up worthless.

Augustine said this principle should be applied to every minister who preaches any message. If God is not in it, it is worth nothing.

John Phillips said this truth should be applied "to every local church and assembly" (*Psalms*, Vol. 2, p. 484). No church is going to be built by super-programs or slick advertising or by clever commercials on radio or TV.

No church will be built that will last by crowd-pleasing music or smooth gimmickry. No church will be built by a well thought out marketing strategy or by huge donations or by some mission outreach program. No church that is useful will be built by quick seminars or weekend retreats.

Man can plan and organize and labor to make it go and to make it work. But the truth is, **in order for a church to be built that accomplishes real eternal lasting things, God must build it.**

God builds His church through prayer and careful teaching of His Word. In fact, Paul said the church is to be a pillar and support of the truth.

People labor to make impressive things for themselves and their families. But in the end most of it will turn out to be useless.

Vanity Point #2 - Unless God sovereignly guards the house the watching is in vain. **127:1b**

There is a need for watchmen to guard things, but unless God is in it the guarding is useless and worth nothing. The preservation and the protection of anything depends totally on God. This is what most do not realize. To most God is an afterthought. God should be the beginning thought.

We live in a country that has always had an impressive military. Those in the military guard us and protect us. But we have now done something that I fear will bring us down. We have taken God and the Bible out of schools. We are dismissing God from almost everything.

Now I think there is great wisdom in having a great military, but if you don't have God guarding, it is all useless.

Just look at what is happening to this country. The Borders are a disaster. Drug addicts and criminals are flowing into our country and our border agents can't seem to stop them. We have great people protecting our country, but they can't seem to stop them.

May I suggest that this country has done something horrible. It has done its best to remove the God of the Bible. There is much more talk of the demonic Islam religion than there is Biblical truth. Be warned; unless God guards the house the watchman keep awake in vain.

Vanity Point #3 - Unless God sovereignly bleses the house the worrying is in vain. **127:2**

There are those who desire to build a business or build something and they get up early and retire late. There are people who are willing to exhaust themselves in an attempt to make it a success.

Now there is nothing wrong with getting up early and working hard. Most successful people do that. God does not honor sloth. Good students are known to study early in the morning or late at night.

There are people who are so concerned about the success of what they are trying to build that they get up early and lie awake nights.

Many young couples think that life is all about them. They must get their education and they must accumulate their wealth and they must have a nice home and they must save some good retirement fund and they pursue this while leaving God out. The end result will be disaster. It won't amount to anything.

What this Psalm teaches is that you need something more than just this to succeed; you need God. You can work feverishly; you can fret; you can become a fanatic and in the end without God, it will not amount to anything.

What Solomon says is that unless God is in it, it is all for nothing. It is useless. You can build something, you can guard something, you can work and worry about something; without the blessings of God, it will not succeed.

But notice the end of **verse 2**, if God is in it not only is there success, there is rest. God blesses and his people enjoy His blessings.

Now having made the critical points concerning the uselessness of leaving God out, now Solomon takes up the subject of the blessedness of having God at the center of things.

THEME #2 – With having God in sovereign control what one does will be fruitful. **127:3-5**

God will bless and multiply those who keep Him at the proper place in all things:

Blessing #1 - God will give the gift of children as a fruitful reward. **127:3**

To many people children are not seen as a blessing, but as a burden. One of the heart-wrenching things to see for a parent who loves God is their children rebel and wander away from the very principles you taught them.

God gives you children and you do your best to bring them up in the things of God and then they repay you with defiance. They turn their back on your teaching and faith. In fact, the world has devoured so many children that many don't even want to have them.

But even with this, God's Word says children are an inheritance of God. The truth is God uses someone to get things back on track and that someone is some baby born somewhere.

Blessing #2 - God will give children as a strong protection. **127:4**

In Solomon's day, grown children normally cared for the parents in their old age. They defended them and protected them.

Children grow and become warriors, hopefully as a good protector of the parents. Children can grow to become like arrows who support their parents in old age and in the face of difficulties.

Blessing #3 - God will give children as a happy ambassador. **127:5**

Having a large family was considered to be an amazing blessing of God. What great happiness there is in watching one's children rise up to positions of righteous power and authority and not be ashamed.

Just imagine what it would have been like to be the father and mother of Joseph, Daniel, and Moses. Just imagine being the parents of Joshua, who would protect the entire nation. There is no question that this kind of child would bring happiness to the parent.