

## **“Vanity: A life Without God”**

### **Psalm 127**

**TITLE.** A Song of Degrees for Solomon. It was meet that the builder of the holy house should be remembered by the pilgrims to its sacred shrine. *The title probably indicates that David wrote it for his wise son,* in whom he so greatly rejoiced, and whose name Jedidiah, or "beloved of the Lord", is introduced into the second verse. The spirit of his name, "Solomon, or peaceable", breathes through the whole of this most charming song. If Solomon himself was the author, it comes fitly from him who reared the house of the Lord. Observe how in each of these songs the heart is fixed upon Jehovah only. Read the first verses of these Psalms, from Psalm 120 to the present song, and they run thus: "I cried unto the Lord", "I will lift up mine eyes to the hills", "Let us go unto the house of the Lord." "Unto thee will I lift up mine eyes", "If it had not been the Lord", "They that trust in the Lord." "When the Lord turned again the captivity." The Lord and the Lord alone is thus lauded at each step of these songs of the ascents. O for a life whose every halting place shall suggest a new song unto the Lord!

**SUBJECT.** God's blessing on his people as their one great necessity and privilege is here spoken of. **We are here taught that builders of houses and cities, systems and fortunes, empires, and churches all labour in vain without the Lord; but under the divine favour they enjoy perfect rest.** Sons, who are in the Hebrew called "builders", are set forth as building up families under the same divine blessing, to the great honour and happiness of their parents. It is THE BUILDER'S PSALM. **"Every house is builded by some man, but he that built all things is God", and unto God be praise.**

Estes calls this psalm a wisdom psalm. That is not surprising since the psalm is attributed to either Solomon or David. The superscription may be *for* or *to* Solomon. There are two wisdom sayings in this psalm. The vanity of living a life without God building that life is described. We are all builders of our own lives, homes, churches, governments, etc. Barack Obama said that we could not run the American government by

the principles of the bible (Sermon on the Mount). I guess he has never examined the “great” success that our government has displayed over the centuries when it left God out of the mix. What a terrible statement by a president of the United States. We may very well take the word house to mean life. Unless the Lord builds the life, house, government, nation, business, or church... your labor is vanity.

Solomon built the house of the Lord, but as we may clearly see as we read through 1 Kings (that which I just preached for us), that Solomon failed miserably in leading the nation of Israel spiritually. He builded a great temple for Yahweh but sinned greatly as well. Estes says that Solomon was an epitome of human success but failed in the end (p.479).

Spurgeon quickly reminds us of the subject. It is always about Jehovah. The first words of each of the songs of ascents speaks of Yahweh.

*“Observe how in each of these songs the heart is fixed upon Jehovah only. Read the first verses of these Psalms, from Psalm 120 to the present song, and they run thus: "I cried unto the Lord", "I will lift up mine eyes to the hills", "Let us go unto the house of the Lord." "Unto thee will I lift up mine eyes", "If it had not been the Lord", "They that trust in the Lord." "When the Lord turned again the captivity." The Lord and the Lord alone is thus lauded at each step of these songs of the ascents. O for a life whose every halting place shall suggest a new song unto the Lord!”*

I would like to add that the vanity of life without God is described in this psalm but the next (Psalm 128) speaks of the life that is prosperous for the righteous that do make God their chief architect and builder.

**Verse 1:** We start with the first important Hebrew word **im**. This is a *condition* word that may be translated as if, except, when, hence, and even, nevertheless. So, the *condition* that is presented is this... is God building something or is a man building it? Unless God is doing the building, the builders will build to vanity.

**Illustration:** Have you noticed that as soon as a person gives their life to Jesus that God begins to make changes in their life. Often times their jobs change or geographical location changes. They see many differences that they can't understand. God is just getting them in line with His building plans.

Many people have built great organizations and rich companies that the world swoons over. God may not be impressed at all. You can build a great big church and a beautiful house, but if God's not in it, you may find yourself miserable and in a bad situation. You may make a lot of money or have a lot of church members but be out of God's will. You can climb the ladder of success and when you get to the top find out the ladder is on the wrong wall. You can take a job or a church for the money and be so far out of God's will your entire family suffers for it.

You may marry the wrong person because of beauty and financial security... you may also be out of God's will. Is God building your house? Just because a person looks good in a pair of genes doesn't make them a good husband, wife, father, or mother... and certainly not godly.

With whom do you go into business. Can you build your business with an infidel that will not build as God wants? Can an unequally yoked marriage be good?

### **2 Cor 6:14-16**

14 Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? 15 What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? 16 What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God.

NIV

The word house is **bayith**. This can be a house, palace, family, temple, and I say even farther reaching terms like business or nation. The point being is that God is the best builder of spiritual lives.

**Isa 28:16**

16 So this is what the Sovereign Lord says:  
"See, I lay a stone in Zion,  
a tested stone,  
a precious cornerstone for a sure foundation;  
the one who trusts will never be dismayed.

NIV

**Josh 24:15**

15 But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your forefathers served beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord."

NIV

**Matt 7:24-27**

24 "Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. 25 The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. 26 But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. 27 The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash."

NIV

**Matt 12:25-26**

25 Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them, "Every kingdom divided against itself will be ruined, and every city or household divided against itself will not stand.

**Prov 3:33**

33 The Lord's curse is on the house of the wicked,  
but he blesses the home of the righteous.

NIV

**Prov 14:1**

The wise woman builds her house,  
but with her own hands the foolish one tears hers down.

NIV

**Prov 24:3-4**

3 By wisdom a house is built,  
and through understanding it is established;  
4 through knowledge its rooms are filled  
with rare and beautiful treasures.

NIV

**Isa 65:21-24 (Millennial context)**

21 They will build houses and dwell in them;  
they will plant vineyards and eat their fruit.  
22 No longer will they build houses and others live in them,  
or plant and others eat.  
For as the days of a tree,  
so will be the days of my people;  
my chosen ones will long enjoy  
the works of their hands.  
23 They will not toil in vain  
or bear children doomed to misfortune;  
for they will be a people blessed by the Lord,  
they and their descendants with them.  
24 Before they call I will answer;  
while they are still speaking I will hear.

NIV

Work done outside the will of the Master builder is vanity. Here vanity is *shav*. This means useless, false, lying, and figuratively idolatry. Building a life without God is idolatry. Wow!

### **Phil 2:1-11**

If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, 2 then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. 3 **Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit**, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. 4 Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.

5 Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:

6 Who, being in very nature God,  
did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,  
7 but made himself nothing,  
taking the very nature of a servant,  
being made in human likeness.

8 And being found in appearance as a man,  
he humbled himself  
and became obedient to death —  
even death on a cross!

9 Therefore God exalted him to the highest place  
and gave him the name that is above every name,  
10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,  
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,  
11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord,  
to the glory of God the Father.

NIV

We are also told that if God is not watching your house you can stay up all night to protect it but to no avail. The watchman had a grave job. He was in charge of the entire cities safety. He would at intervals cry out, “All is well.” The people got assurance from

knowing he was still on the job. If he fell asleep and an enemy penetrated the camp and harmed the city, the watchman would pay with his life.

Unless God is watching the nation, house, business, or church... the pastor guards it in vain. Your life needs to have God's eye on it. That means that you need to be in His will. A person in the will of God is safe.

### **Acts 4:25-26**

25 You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David:

"Why do the nations rage  
and the peoples plot in **vain**?

26 The kings of the earth take their stand  
and the rulers gather together  
against the Lord  
and against his Anointed One.'

NIV

### **Matt 15:7-9**

7 You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you:

8 "These people honor me with their lips,  
but their hearts are far from me.

9 They worship me in **vain**;  
their teachings are but rules taught by men."

NIV

### **1 Cor 15:58**

58 Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in **vain**.

NIV

Why labor for nothing. Why watch when you watch alone. Why guard a castle or bank account if God does not have His hand on it. His plan is always best. His will is always best. What He desires for us is always best. Let Him build your house.

**Verse 2:** How many men will miss heaven by trying to toil their way through life. They focus on the temporal, not the eternal. They will rise up early and stay up late to build their kingdom.

God, on the other hand, gives peace and sleep to those who trust in Him. When you build His kingdom, you have time for rest and blessing.

### **Matt 6:24-34**

- 24 No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.
- 25 Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?
- 26 Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?
- 27 Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?
- 28 And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin:
- 29 And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.
- 30 Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?
- 31 Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?



32 (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

**33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.**

34 Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

KJV

**Ps 127:2 (Bread of sorrows)**

2 It is a waste of time to get up early and stay up late, trying to make a living.

The Lord provides for those he loves, even while they are sleeping.

Holy Bible: Easy-to-Read Version,

**Ps 127:2 (Bread of sorrows)**

2 It is in vain that you rise up early and go late to rest, eating the bread of anxious toil; for he gives to his beloved sleep.

ESV

**Verse 3:** The first two verses reveal the uselessness of a human life built for human success. For the biblical man, or the Jewish man, in this case, the family foundation was in sons. The sons are called a heritage. The word *heritage* is **nachalah**. This refers to an inheritance, lot, portion, or possession. Children are a reward from the Lord. The word reward is **sakar**. This refers to salary, benefit, compensation, wages, or fare. It is quite obvious that children are a blessing from God.

The Jews believed in family. They passed everything down. They learned their lineages and knew from where they came. Their

ancestors were important. We, as Americans, are few and far between that know who our ancestors are. We will lose America because we have lost this very important part of life. The Jews knew of the patriarchs and the coming Messiah.

Even the eldest son was of more importance than the other sons. The eldest son was to receive the blessing. This is why the story of Jacob and Esau is so important. The elder would serve the younger.

**Gen 25:21-26**

21 Isaac prayed to the Lord on behalf of his wife, because she was barren. The Lord answered his prayer, and his wife Rebekah became pregnant. 22 The babies jostled each other within her, and she said, "Why is this happening to me?" So she went to inquire of the Lord.

23 The Lord said to her,  
 "Two nations are in your womb,  
 and two peoples from within you will be separated;  
 one people will be stronger than the other,  
**and the older will serve the younger."**

24 When the time came for her to give birth, there were twin boys in her womb. 25 The first to come out was red, and his whole body was like a hairy garment; so they named him Esau. 26 After this, his brother came out, with his hand grasping Esau's heel; so he was named Jacob. Isaac was sixty years old when Rebekah gave birth to them.

NIV

Esau's descendants became the Edomites. Today they are in modern day Turkey, Syria, and the Kurdish people of Iraq.

**Verse 4:** God gives a man protection through his sons. They are field workers and builders of nations. They become the strength of

the family in his latter days. Unfortunately these mores are disappearing in our day.

The warrior had one supreme weapon... that being his arrows. Sons build the family, and for the Jewish family, they were of utmost importance. It is not that daughters were not wanted, it was about their religious and form of progenitorship (The importance of ancestral line).

**Verse 5:** The bible says that a man who has lots of sons is like a man with a quiver full of arrows. A big family is a good thing. This is not a command for us to have 10 kids but is a simple description of the days of old. Family was very important in these days.

The sons will not be a watchman on the wall. They will contend in the gates. Life is hard and it is good to have children that can contend in the gates. These are the movers and shakers. Some people are not cut out for the city gates where the decisions are made and where the responsibilities are handed out. The man that has children that are in the mix of life having success and making a difference are important people. We need more children that can make a difference.

Teach the kids responsibility. Give them a place at the city gate. Teach them to make decisions. All positions of authority and respect are passed down sooner or later. Who will be there to take over. God uses the weak things of this world to shame the wise.

The foundations of life for our families is God. Our world is obsessed with human success and fortune. Pride and greed is the order of our day. Children that are godly and make a difference in this world are a better and more successful in life. The legacy we leave is more important than what we get praised for in this world. What is true success? It will be a challenge for us to teach

our kids to understand what a true successful life really is. Is God building our lives? Are we allowing Him to build our lives? Are our children the foundation of our lives. Is family important to us. *The most important thing we can do is help them understand that God must be a part of their building or it is all vanity.*

All we really want for our children is that they not be put to shame. In spite of all the effort and travail, a child may go astray. It is much easier on the parent that has done the right things before they go astray.