

## **“The Prosperity of The Righteous” Psalm 128**

**TITLE.** *A Song of Degrees.* There is an evident ascent from the last Psalm: that did but hint at the way in which a house may be built up, but this draws a picture of that house built, and adorned with domestic bliss through the Lord's own benediction. There is clearly an advance in age, for here we go beyond children to children's children; and also a progress in happiness, for children which in the last Psalm were arrows are here Olive plants, and instead of speaking "with the enemies in the gate," we have "peace upon Israel." Thus we rise step by step, and sing as we ascend.

**SUBJECT.** It is a family hymn, a song for a marriage, or a birth, or for any day in which a happy household has met to praise the Lord. Like all the songs of degrees, it has an eye to Zion and Jerusalem, which are both expressly mentioned, and it closes like Psalms 125, 130, and 131, with an allusion to Israel. It is a short Psalm, but exceedingly full and suggestive. Its poetry is of the highest order. Perhaps in no country can it be better understood than in our own, for we above all nations delight to sing of "Home, sweet home."

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#### **THE BLESSEDNESS OF THE FAMILY THAT FEARS THE LORD**

The theme of these six brief verses is, "Blessed is every one that feareth Jehovah, that walketh in his ways" ([Psalms 128:1](#)), the same thought being repeated in [Psalms 128:4](#).

The date, occasion and authorship are unknown.

Delitzsch pointed out that, "[Psalms 127](#) and [Psalms 128](#) supplement each other."<sup>[1]</sup> The happiness and prosperity that men desire is represented in [Psalms 127](#) as "a gift of God," whereas in [Psalms 128](#) they are seen as a reward. [Psalms 127](#) stresses the gifts of God's grace, "while his beloved sleeps," as contrasted with the fruitless "day and night" activities of wicked men; and here God's blessings are seen as a reward of a faith that works through love. Barnes gives the following summary of what the psalm says.

It states in general ([Psalms 128:1](#)) the blessedness of those who fear the Lord. This blessedness is seen in: (a) their success in life; (b) a numerous, happy family ([Psalms](#)

[128:3](#)); (c) being permitted to see children's children ([Psalms 128:6](#)); (d) being permitted to see the prosperity of holy religion ([Psalms 128:5](#)); (e) seeing the prosperity of Jerusalem; and (f) peace upon Israel ([Psalms 128:5-6](#)).<sup>[2]</sup>

Estes says this is a wisdom psalm like the previous. *“This is a psalm that speaks of life under the blessings of the Lord.”* And who would not want a life under the blessings of the Lord. My belief is that as the Jews came home from captivity that the prophets wanted to teach the blessedness of being in God’s favor. Righteousness and obedience always puts us under God’s favor. The favor had been removed and the people suffered for their rejection of the ways of God. Even if we can’t pin down a time period for this psalm or a writer, we know that *righteousness in living* is the context. The blessings of God are important to us.

The last psalm tells us that unless God builds the house that the labor used is vanity. This psalm shows us what labor that is not done in vain looks like. This is an illustrative psalm. The answer to psalm 127 is psalm 128.

The psalm is divided into a wisdom statement and then a prayer. Key terms listed are Zion, Jerusalem, and Israel.

**Verse 1:** We are reminded of the Beatitudes in Matthew as we read *blessed* or *happy* is the man that fears the Lord. The bible says that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. If you have never looked at what the bible says about wisdom and fear, it is quite interesting.

#### **Ps 111:10**

10 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom;  
all who follow his precepts have good understanding.

NIV

#### **Prov 1:7**

7 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge,  
but fools despise wisdom and discipline.

NIV

**Prov 9:10**

10 "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom,  
and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.

NIV

**Prov 10:27**

27 The fear of the Lord adds length to life,  
but the years of the wicked are cut short.

NIV

**Prov 14:27**

27 The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life,  
turning a man from the snares of death.

NIV

**Prov 15:16**

16 Better a little with the fear of the Lord  
than great wealth with turmoil.

17 Better a meal of vegetables where there is love  
than a fattened calf with hatred.

NIV

**Prov 15:33**

33 The fear of the Lord teaches a man wisdom,  
and humility comes before honor.

NIV

**Prov 16:6**

6 Through love and faithfulness sin is atoned for;  
through the fear of the Lord a man avoids evil.

NIV

**Prov 19:23**

23 The fear of the Lord leads to life:  
Then one rests content, untouched by trouble.

NIV

**Prov 22:4**

4 Humility and the fear of the Lord  
bring wealth and honor and life.

NIV

To walk in the ways of God is a causative participle. The Lord causes us to continue our walk of obedience. The Hebrew *derek* refers to a *journey*, not just a simple *way*. The Greek word for road is translated with the same nuance in the NT. The idea is that this is a journey and a way of life in which a person walks. This is not a simple or temporary path, but a lifestyle of walking with God. The person that fears God and walks in a continual lifestyle of righteousness will be blessed and find favor with God. I take this to be promissory.

The fear of the Lord refers to respect and authority. God has the right to tell me what to do. He has full rule and reign over my life. I have been purchased with a price and no longer have the rights to my life and decisions. God owns me. In this day's climate that is not popular. But that is exactly why the unbeliever is not blessed and out of favor with God. He makes worldly, selfish, and ungodly decisions while practicing self-rule.

**Verse 2:** Have you ever noticed that people that don't work, don't have a lot? Many people spend their lives waiting on others to provide for them. I spoke with a man not too long ago who was getting along in years. He told me he preferred that the government stay out of his business. He didn't want their money or their help. He chose to provide for His own family. He only trusted the labour of his own hand.

May I say to you that this is God's way. I know there are many who need assistance and care. Many cannot provide for themselves due to health reasons or special needs. But the majority is not pulling their weight, in business, production, and even in the church. Twenty percent of the people do all the work.

The Hebrew word here is **yegiya`**, which refers to, you guessed it, work, produce, property, labor, and toil. There is nothing better than knowing that you worked to provide for your family. "*God will provide,*" does not mean that Kroger will bring groceries to the front door for free. Labor is what must take place to get somewhere in this life.

Well, brother Jerry I got you fooled... the government will give me money. The government has no money. And what they are taking from others will always run out. Listen carefully to me... it is your job to provide for yourself. It's not the churches job or the members of a church to work for you.

The favor of the Lord never rests on a lazy man's house.

**Prov 6:10-11**

10 Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep:  
11 So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man.

KJV

**Prov 6:10-11**

10 You say, "I need a rest. I think I'll take a short nap." 11 But then you sleep and sleep and become poorer and poorer. Soon you will have nothing. It will be as if a thief came and stole everything you owned.

Easy-to-Read Version

### **1 Tim 5:8**

8 But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.

KJV

May I say that if you work, God will provide. If you try, God will let grace abound towards you. I want to eat what my hands have worked for. Christian dignity speaks of participating in the process.

Now, we all need help occasionally, and you should allow your brothers and sisters in Christ to make hard times easier for you. That is the benefit of being in the body. We help each other. That's the household of faith. But Paul warns of those who take advantage.

Many of the Thessalonians thought that Jesus was coming so they sat down and quit working. They thought that it was eat, drink, and be merry time because Jesus was coming. No need to get tired now, we are going home. Here's what Paul said.

### **2 Thess 3:7-10**

7 For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example.

We were not idle when we were with you, 8 nor did we eat anyone's food without paying for it. On the contrary, we worked night and day, laboring and toiling so that we would not be a burden to any of you. 9 We did this, not because we do not have the right to such help, but in order to make ourselves a model for you to follow. 10 For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: "If a man will not work, he shall not eat."

NIV

Paul says... that if we want the favor of the Lord, and if we want a witness that reflects the favor of God, then we work until Jesus comes.

### **1 Thess 4:11-12**

11 Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business and to work with your hands, just as we told you, 12 so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependent on anybody.

NIV

Most of the people that cause problems on their jobs, at church and in society, are not working. Many people never do anything for the house of God.

### **2 Tim 2:20-21**

20 In a large house there are articles not only of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay; some are for noble purposes and some for ignoble. 21 If a man cleanses himself from the latter, he will be an instrument for noble purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work.

NIV

### **Heb 6:10-12**

10 God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them. 11 We want each of you to show this same diligence to the very end, in order to make your hope sure. 12 We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised.

NIV

“And it will go well for you.” The Hebrew is the word **towb**. This word means beautiful, cheerful, happy, merry, pleasant, wealth, joyful, sweet, welfare. You want a life like this? Work hard, walk in His ways, and fear the Lord. Then, “it will go well with you.”

Well, I think that’s as clear as I can say it. Best move on.

**Verse 3:** The greatest blessing for the Jews would have to be children. I guess it still is today with us all. Children are the future and the last psalm spoke of them as arrows in a quiver. Here we see that the wife is call a fruitful vine and the children will be olive trees.

The biblical days saw that the favor of God was evident on a people when they had children. Children were the great source of joy, help , and with the Jews... progenitorship. The passing down of one's name and family heritage was everything to the Jews.

The wife is spoken of as a nourished vine that produces a rich and blessed crop. She would be like Rachael, Leah, Zilpah, and Bilhah who produced the 12 tribes of Israel.

The children were compared to the healing olive trees. The anointing oil that gave so much ointment to heal wounds and heal dry skin was representative of the children. The oil that burned in the lamps were the eyes of the little ones that we loves so much. They bring light to us as they giggle round the table and play in the yard. Oh, the joy we have round the table of the Lord in our houses. The children are a heritage from the Lord.

**Verse 4:** How does all this joy and blessing come about? There in the text is the answer. The person that fears the Lord, walks in His ways, and works hard, enjoys this great joy and favor of the Lord.

**Eccl 12:13**

13 Now all has been heard;  
here is the conclusion of the matter:  
Fear God and keep his commandments,  
for this is the whole [duty] of man.

NIV



**Verse 5:** The psalmist now brings prayer into this passage. He speaks of the land and the future. To put Zion in the mix brings all the prophecies about her into play. First, Zion will need to remain for the prophetic words of God to be fulfilled. If Jesus blesses you from Zion then He has returns as He said He would, Zech. 14:4. Praying prophetically shows faith in the scriptures.

May you see the prosperity of Jerusalem now, and forever more. Jerusalem has been blessed in these latter days but not like the day that will come. In the latter days there will be blessings. All Israel will be saved and the mercy of God will fall upon her. The Lord Himself will reign from the citie,s world stage. The millennium will bring it all to pass.

The city of peace will finally live up to its name. What great joy to see your children's children. And many of us have seen our grandchildren's children. Four generations in one place is a blessing.

**Verse 6** says peace be with Israel. We have now left 127 and speaking with our enemies in the gates to have peace within the city. God, our prayer is that you give your people peace. Bless the land of thy people.