**Fruitfulness: Blessings from God**

In this series of articles we’re looking at our need for total dependence on God. Our text is Psalm 127. We’ve seen that, apart from God, anything we set out to do will ultimately result in futility or emptiness. There will be no lasting satisfaction in family, work or even our recreation without God being first priority in our lives. Today, I want to continue addressing this Psalm by looking—not at futility—but at a life of fruitfulness given to those who live in dependence on God. In this Psalm, Solomon shows us one aspect of this life-long blessing given in the children that God provides.

“Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD, the fruit of the womb a reward.” When God graciously chooses to give us children they should be received as a blessing. It’s crucial for a right understanding of these next few verses that the parents are seeking to acknowledge God and his blessings as well as seeking to honor him by raising our children in the “discipline and instruction of the Lord.” (Ephesians 6:4; Deuteronomy 6:4-9) Parents have a responsibility to raise their children to honor and obey God’s word. All of the provision that we give to our children; the times of taking them to piano lessons and ball practice; spending time with them in a myriad of ways—as good as these things are—will always be insufficient without God being the Head of our home. God intends that children be “like olive shoots around your table” (Psalm 128:3). This phrase provides a beautiful picture of new life and the perpetuity of covenant families from one generation to the next.

The Hebrew word translated “LORD” in our Psalm is the word “Yahweh.” This speaks of the covenant God who makes promises to his people. It’s impossible to look at the covenants in the Old Testament without recognizing God’s promised blessings to the family that trusts in him. From the covenant with Adam, Noah and Abraham; to Moses, David and then on into the New Covenant, “…the promise is to you and your children….” (Acts 2:38ff; Genesis 17:7). It’s important that we see the connection between the blessing of our children and raising them to honor and obey God because it connects to how the gospel goes forth throughout the generations (Psalm 22:30-31). King Solomon who wrote this Psalm also wrote Proverbs 10:1: “A wise son makes a glad father, but a foolish son is a sorrow to his mother.” In scripture the themes of wise versus foolish compare and contrast both godliness and wickedness. Parents, then, receive great blessings but they have a great responsibility in how they raise their children.

“Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the children (sons) of one’s youth.” (vs. 4) This verse is given to remind us that in ancient times godly sons would grow up to be wonderful assets to their father and mother; potentially, the more sons—who rarely went far from home in those days—the more protection in battle or in any difficulty that aging parents may face. Verse 5 continues to build the case for the blessing of children. “Blessed is the man who fills his quiver with them! He shall not be put to shame when he speaks with his enemies in the gate.” The picture here is one of law and justice. Court cases in Old Testament Israel were held in the gates of the city. The elders would meet with the people in order that judgements could be made in each case; exonerating the innocent while pronouncing sentence on the guilty (Deut. 21:9; 22:15, 24). The idea is one of godly and trusted men—well known for their truthfulness—who serve as witnesses on behalf of their father against any enemies who would speak against him. At we conclude this series, allow me to make some points of practical application.

—Do you see a pattern in your life of depending on God, especially in difficult times?

—Do you honor God with your work, e.g., as an employee or an employer; do you honor God by worshiping him on the Lord’s Day; are you ignoring or marginalizing God and your family simply to get ahead? Do you honor your aging parents?

—Do you think of your children as a blessing from God? Are you raising them to love the Lord Jesus and the church which he died for?

—Do you define success biblically? Any true success, lasting happiness, and fulfillment in life will only come as we’re trusting God through Jesus Christ. The degree to which we depend on God will determine whether we’ll experience futility/emptiness or fruitfulness in life.

Rev. Dr. Steve Jones is the pastor of Westminster Presbyterian Church PCA in Paxton, Illinois.