

God In Our Family Life

Psalm 127-128

MEMORY VERSE

PSALM 127:3

“Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD, the fruit of the womb is His reward.”

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

Blocks (either wooden or cardboard).

A sheet of blank drawing paper, crayons or markers, 1” strips of construction paper, glue sticks and scissors.

Twenty Ping-Pong balls and masking tape.

ATTENTION GETTER!

Building Strong Families

For this activity, you will need some blocks (either wooden or cardboard). Have the children work together to build a “house” or tower out of the blocks. When the house is done, introduce today’s lesson by reading Psalm 127:1. God wants to be the center of everything in our lives—including our families. If He is the center of our families, our families will be blessed. We must build our families on the strong foundation of Jesus. If we do not, our families will not be able to stand when problems come.

As you are explaining this, remove one brick at a time from the base. When you remove a few bricks, the whole house will come tumbling down. If we do not build our families on the Lord and His Word, our homes will be weak. **God wants to bless our families.**

LESSON TIME!

Have you ever wondered why you were born as a baby and did not come into this world as an adult? And why do you live with your parents for at least the first 18 years or so of your life? Why do we have families anyway? We find the answers to these and many other questions about our family life in the Word of God. God has much to say about families.

God put children with parents because He wanted the moms and dads to train their children in the His ways. In Ephesians 6:4, parents are instructed to “bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.” What is the children’s responsibility? God instructs children to obey their parents. Ephesians 6:1-3 states, “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this right. ‘Honor your father and mother,’ which is the first commandment with promise: ‘that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth’.” When children obey their parents, they are pleasing the Lord.

In Psalm 127 and 128, the psalmist celebrates the blessing of children and families and reminds us that if God is the center and foundation of our families, our families will be strong, fruitful, and enduring. **God wants to bless our families.**

PSALM 127

Unless the LORD builds the house, they labor in vain who build it; unless the LORD guards the city, the watchman stays awake in vain.

It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows; for so He gives His beloved sleep.

Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD, the fruit of the womb is a reward.

Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, so are the children of one's youth.

Happy is the man who has his quiver full of them; they shall not be ashamed, but shall speak with their enemies in the gate.

Psalm 127 talks about the three most common pursuits of a family man: building, providing security, and raising a family. Each one of these areas of life is a source of major concern, sometimes anxiety.

It is believed that Solomon wrote this psalm. He certainly did find out in his life the truth of verse one. Though gifted with wisdom and used by God to build a great palace and temple, Solomon backslid in his later years. Rather than experiencing what a family ought to be, he dishonored God by his 700 marriages! His wives led him astray and caused him to worship other gods. He had built his home on something other than the Lord and it ended up being vain or empty. His disobedience brought all kinds of problems into his life.

The most important thing in our family life is our relationship with God. For this reason, our choice of who to marry is of vital importance—does he or she have a relationship with God? If the person we marry is not a Christian, there will be problems and conflict. Once married, both the husband and wife need to remain as close as possible to the Lord in order to build a relationship centered on Jesus Christ and obedience to His Word and to later raise their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

If we are not willing to allow the Lord to build our houses, then everything we do is empty and for nothing. Solomon reminds us that it is the Lord who should build the house—our parents should teach us the ways of God, His words, and His principles for living a life that pleases Him. In Luke 6, Jesus exhorts us to be like a wise man who builds his house upon the rock. Jesus wants to be “the Rock,” the foundation of our own lives and our families.

The psalmist reminds us in verse two that the Lord grants sleep to His beloved. What a wonderful thought when you lay your head on your pillow at night. The Lord does not tell us to “take it easy, don't work so hard.” Rather, He says, “You showed effort today, now rest. The outcome depends on Me, not on you working harder.” It is His delight to give good gifts to His children. He wants us to have restfulness in our lives, not worry or anxiety. You may not feel you have much to “keep you awake at night,” but parents carry many responsibilities. If you notice, your parents are not sleeping because they are troubled over finances, car trouble, etc. respectfully remind them of Psalm 127, vs. 2. God desires to give us the rest we need and the strength that will follow.

Verses 3-5 remind us of the great love the Lord has for children. Children are one of His greatest gifts to a married couple—His reward! God is the One who gives the gift of children. (See stories in Genesis 20:17-18; 21:1-2; 29:31; 1 Samuel 1:19-20; 2 Samuel 6:20-23; Luke 1:30-36 for background). In Old Testament times, a father who had a large family was considered very blessed by God.

Not only are children a great gift, but the psalmist describes them as arrows in the hand of a mighty warrior. A warrior uses his arrows to wage war. This world is a battleground, and we are called to put on God's armor and be a warrior for Him. When parents train their children in godliness, their children will be warriors for Christ and affect their generation with the Gospel of Christ.

In the Old Testament, the city gate was the center of community life. It was where disputes were settled and business was transacted. A man with a large family had a position of influence there. A man with his life full of children had security that his sons would help take care of his wife and daughters and help him with the land or the flocks and herds. If you are fortunate enough to belong to a big family, praise the Lord for your brothers and sisters, and show your appreciation and care for them. God wants us to care for our families.

The Bible presents a very different picture about children than what we see so often in our society. Children are almost seen as a problem or inconvenience. So many children are unwanted, unloved and uncared for. How we need to see children and families the way that the Lord does!

Family Portraits

For this craft, you will need a sheet of blank drawing paper, crayons, or markers, 1" strips of construction paper, glue sticks, and scissors. Have the children begin by making the frame for their picture. Take 1" strips of construction paper (any color) and glue around the edges of the drawing paper. Only glue a 1/2" width around the paper to leave more room for their picture. Next allow the children to draw a "family portrait." Have them include the whole family, including themselves. If they would like to, they can punch two holes in the top and tie yarn or string to be able to hang the picture in their living rooms (or refrigerators).

PSALM 128

Blessed is every one who fears the LORD, who walks in His ways.

When you eat the labor of your hands, you shall be happy, and it shall be well with you.

Your wife shall be like a fruitful vine in the very heart of your house, your children like olive plants all around your table.

Behold, thus shall the man be blessed who fears the LORD.

The LORD bless you out of Zion, and may you see the good of Jerusalem all the days of your life.

Yes, may you see your children's children. Peace be upon Israel!

Psalm 128 has a few things to say about family life, also. The man will be blessed who fears the Lord and walks in His ways. What does that mean? Throughout the Bible, we learn that obedience brings God's blessings upon us. There are two paths that we can choose to walk on. We can either obey God and have a life of blessing, or we can disobey God and have a life filled with problems. This is true of our families also. If our whole family follows God and His Word, then the whole family will be blessed. If we disobey God and refuse to do what He wants, the natural consequence will be problems.

The psalmist goes on to describe in detail those blessings to those who fear the Lord and walk in His ways. When the family sits down together to share and enjoy God's blessings, they will be happy and all will be well with them. Are our homes happy? Is all well with us? Peace and happiness should be the experience of our family as we come together. **God wants to bless our families.**

The Word says your mom (or 'the wife') will be like a fruitful vine and the sons like olive shoots. When a family is committed to following the Lord, fruitfulness and joy will be the result. Unfortunately, there are many families that are miserable because they refuse to allow God to be the center of their life. If God is at

the center, the relationships within the family will be blessed. Love will bind them together, each one preferring the other person in the family as better than themselves.

The psalmist concludes with a blessing including a blessing for the future generations of the family. God's desire is that our families will be blessed, strong, and enduring so that we may see our children's children. May we learn to pray for our families. May we build our homes upon the strong foundation—Jesus Christ, the Rock. **God wants to bless our families.**

Ping Pong Balls

For this game you, will need 20 ping pong balls and masking tape. Clear the floor of the room. With masking tape, make a line down the center of the room. Split the children into two teams equally. Have them stand on either side of the line. Place 10 ping pong balls on each side of the line. The object of the game is to be the team with the LEAST ping pong balls on your side of the line. The children may NOT touch the ping pong balls with their hands. They may only blow them to their opponent's side.

When you say "go," allow the children to blow on the ping pong balls. Allow one to two minutes of play. When you say "stop" have all of the children immediately stop blowing. Count the balls on each side of the line. The group with the LEAST amount of ping pong balls on their side wins. Play a few more rounds if time allows.

PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer for our families. Pray that the Lord would strengthen them. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the Gospel, give them opportunity.