

October 13, 2008

Psalm 127 (NASB)

**Unless the Lord builds the house,
They labor in vain who build it;
Unless the Lord guards the city,
The watchman keeps awake in vain.
It is vain for you to rise up early,
To retire late,
To eat the bread of painful labors;
For He gives to His beloved even in his sleep.**

**Behold, children are a gift of 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.
How blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them;
They will not be ashamed
When they speak with their enemies in the gate.**

This psalm reminds me of my lack of self-sufficiency. I'm not really an expert in any field, but those who are experts are just as helpless as I am without God. Our labors and designs for the future are worthless and empty without God's intimate involvement. That seems to be the basic teaching of this psalm. It's a good lesson for us to recall and reflect upon often. Our shelter, our protection, our daily provisions—all these necessities come from our God.

Even our posterity is secured by God's blessing. We cherish our children today, but children played an even greater role in the lives of people living thousands of years ago when this psalm was written. Children meant more strength for the family and the clan, more hands to help with planting and harvest, and more honor and prestige in the community. Children also meant the continuation of a family name and its attendant traditions. Even our future significance is a gift given by God.

Could we possibly give God a larger role than that which He acquires for Himself? He can give us everything that we need and desire as long as it reflects His will and His holiness. And so here we find a key. It isn't the same as finding a mythical lamp with a mythical genie. But it is similarly powerful. It isn't the same as keeping up with the Joneses, but it is much more fulfilling. What we've found, and what this psalm alludes to, is that common denominator which makes sense of everything about us. It's the providential blessing of a holy God.

My wife delivered our third child just over a week ago. A little boy—our first. I'm reminded how much God has blessed us, and I'm humbled by the recognition that without God, we would be nothing. Our children rely on us for shelter, protection, and daily provisions. But without God, we could not give them what they need. I am so grateful that we have a loving and a providing God. May we never forget Him.

Praise His name,
Patrick Barber