

A GODLY HOME NEEDS A BLUEPRINT

(Dedicated to Every Mother Today on May 10, 2020, Mother's Day)

Psalm 128: 1-6 – Pastor Richard P. Carlson

Most marriages in America, begin with a big expensive splash. Yet, over half of all marriages, in this country, end in divorce, even among believers. To build a house, we need more than lumber, nails, cement, plumbing, electrical fixtures, and outlets. First, you need a blueprint before you need building materials. Then you need a builder, willing to closely follow that blueprint. God's Word has the only satisfying blueprint for a godly home. Some of you know you never started your home following God's blueprint. Some of you perhaps had His blueprint but you never followed it. God can do better than restore broken houses, flipping houses. God wants to flip homes, to take broken homes and make them godly homes rebuilt under His blueprint, the Bible. Many of our homes God has flipped, transformed, and our broken homes He has mended. In our parking lot are divorced couples who are remarried to each other, but not to the same person you used to be, but to transformed persons, whom God has changed. You see, wherever the enemy comes to steal, kill, and destroy, God is waiting to bring new life, in ways that to our logical minds, are ways past finding out. Let me say this to you all on Mother's Day. When two people could never make it on their own, please know if we open the Bible, God's blueprint, and closely follow it, nothing is impossible for Jesus.

Martin Luther said this psalm of comfort is for those who have experienced the crosses that come with married life. Parenting is one of the most precious ways Dads and Moms learn the secrets of the Lord. David declared in Psalm 25:14, "The secret of the Lord is for those who fear Him, And He will make them know His covenant." As we study this short psalm, do not be confused by our modern culture. Psalm 128 is God's delight for all of us as families. Moms, I pray this message will not single you out, or place an extra burden on you. God delights in godly wives and mothers. He longs to bless you all. Mothering is God's eternally settled in heaven plan for families. Psalm 128 is one of God's special texts that reveals God's plan for contentedness, peace, and His sweet spot of heaven on earth for families. I see in Psalm 128 four longings of the heart given to godly Dads, Moms, husbands, wives, as well as to all children, who seek also to know, love, and follow the Lord. What are these four longings God wants to plant in your life?

A GODLY HOME LONGS AFTER THE LORD. (I) This longing is expressed in this Song of ascents in verse 1,2 as the psalter cries out, "Blessed is everyone who fears the Lord, who walks in His ways. You shall eat the fruit of the labor of your hands; You shall be blessed, and it shall be well with you." By way of introduction, Psalm 120 through 134 are all songs of ascent or degrees. These 15

psalms were sung at the end of Jewish pilgrimages to Jerusalem. These annual family road trips in the days of David and many of the other psalmists, culminated in reaching the temple in Jerusalem, and climbing up the fifteen steps up into the temple, reciting one of these psalms of ascent on every step. Many suggest this psalm was written by King Hezekiah. If Hezekiah is the writer, what he is telling us is: “A godly home longs after the Lord.” This inner longing of the heart, the mind, the soul, and the spirit, is the important pre-requisite to God’s blessing in the home. The best literal translation of the first word of Psalm 128: 1 is “O how very happy...” This is the superlative longing of all longings—to long after God—which is first of all, the fear of the Lord, which is the beginning of wisdom, and secondly, an attitude of longing to walk in His ways.

At the top of the list of blessings for a home that longs after the Lord is the first blessing, in verse 2. “You shall eat the fruit of the labor of your hands: you shall be blessed/happy, and it shall be well with you.” The psalmist is declaring that resulting from a godly attitude and godly conduct, the first blessing God gives is daily bread and meat, regularly and abundantly provided by the mercy of God. And the second blessing referred to in verse 2 is the blessing of being able to work and longing to work. Families that fear the Lord, and long after God, long to work. Ladies, to know that your husband and you as well, have toiled with your own hands for the bread and meat on your table, adds to the satisfaction of enjoying each meal. Beloved, on this Mother’s Day, do you as dads and moms long after God, fearing and reverencing Him, and thus are you reaping the blessing of daily bread being provided by the joy of hard work that God has also provided?

Think with me about this first longing. The blessing and favor of God is found in the fear of the Lord. Think on this today, both Dads and Moms. Moms, you know that if your husband is fearing the Lord, a father’s love and a father’s leadership of your children has a radical affect on how your children grow up. Psalm 127 is the foundational twin psalm, the foundational blueprint before we can understand Psalm 128. Notice the man, the husband, the Dad is at the heart of a godly home. (Let me read it to you.) Then notice Psalm 128: 4. “Behold, thus shall the man be blessed who fears the Lord.” Dads, on this Mother’s Day, are you leading the way in your home for God? A man who is used of God, has the Word of God flowing from Him. He who is a man of God has had an encounter with the King of kings and Lord of lords. A man of God leads his family, both his wife and children in family Bible reading and times of prayer. A man of God knows God is counting on him to raise up in his family a community of faith to live out the truth of the Gospel. Men, on Mother’s Day, I am telling you that God ultimately is holding you responsible for your families’ spiritual welfare. Studies show that if both parents attend church regularly, 72% of their children will remain faithful. If only the Dad attends regularly, 55 % of the children will remain faithful. If only the mother is

faithful in God's house, the percentages plummet to 15%. Dads, on this Mother's Day, no greater gift could you give your wife than your willingness to start today to become the spiritual leader of your home, not just the breadwinner, but the Bread of Life spiritual leader. Men, do you know Jesus? Men, do you obey God's Word? Men, this is a practical impact you have on your wife, the mother of your children. Not only, do you bring home the bacon, and supply your wife with adequate security for living, but does your Christian leadership undergird your wife and children with your reverence for God? Men, your family needs more than food on the table. When you fear, know, and follow the Lord, your family will be blessed, happy, and it will be well with you all. Secondly,

A GODLY HOME LONGS FOR THE WIFE TO BE THE MOTHER OF CHILDREN. (II) No apologies are made here for God's Word. Verse 3a declares,

"Your wife will be like a fruitful vine, within your house." Certainly, some wives are providentially not given by God the gift of being a mother. But beloved, when couples choose not to have children for selfish reasons, this divine longing God gives for children is sadly put on the shelf. God's rich blessing of children is missed. No riches are as rich as the richness of having our very own children. When I look back on life, I can never find greater riches than God giving me a precious wife, Jinny and then allowing my wife to become the mother of our seven children, Amy, Heather, Gretchen, Audrey, Aaron, Nathaniel, and Amanda. Our culture laughs at us having over two children, and warns, and almost looks down, on women having children into their forties. At whatever age God opens the womb, He rejoices to give His rich gifts of children. No, beloved, a godly home longs for the wife to be the mother of children.

Verse 3 states this fruitful vine is "within your house." This draws attention to motherhood becoming a virtual pulpit, in this sphere of your wife's ministry to your children, where a godly mother makes your house a home. There in the home, as a gift from God, mothering is one of the highest callings on earth. This Hebrew word fruitful is **parah**. It means to bear fruit or to be fruitful in parenting children. When God created Adam and Eve, He blessed them in a married life together, yes, but He also bestowed a function for husbands and wives. We read about this in Genesis 1: 27-28. "So, God created man in His own image, in the image of God, He created him; male and female He created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them, (His first command to couples) "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion...over every living thing that moves on the earth." And though some Bible teachers may say, "The world is filled with too many people already," let me remind you Mothers, on Mother's Day, that God has another blessing in mind by the word fruitful. He gives that to us in Malachi 2: 15. Listen! This is a powerful word when our longings agree with God's longing. We read, "Did God not make them one, with a portion of the Spirit in their union? And

what was the one God seeking? Godly offspring. So, guard yourselves in your spirit, and let none of you be faithless to the wife of your youth.” If you have not become a mother, never forget God’s gift of mothering may come in other ways except by natural birth. God’s gift of mothering may come by adoption or fostering, or by spiritual grandparenting or great grandparenting. If those doors to mothering are not open, God may open other doors for you to spiritually mother younger women. Listen as Paul writes in Titus 2: 15, to older women, saying, “Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers/gossips or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good, and so train the young women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled, pure, workers at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled.” Ladies, please consider God’s desire for you to be a spiritual mentor, and a spiritual mom to younger women, to know the joy of mothering. Thirdly,

A GODLY HOME LONGS FOR CHILDREN TO SPREAD OUT AROUND THE TABLE AT MEALTIMES. (III The psalmist declares in verses 3b, and 4,

“Your children will be like olive shoots around your table. Behold, thus shall the man be blessed who fears the Lord.” Now, I know some of you are amazing single parents, whether dads or moms. Our country has millions of single moms. Can you possess this motherly blessing of having your children spread out around your table? Absolutely! It will be harder, but all things are possible with God. Paul reminds the pastor and superintendent of churches, his son in the faith, Timothy about his growing up in a spiritually broken home. By never mentioning Timothy’s dad, we do not know if his dad was deceased, or if he was an unbeliever. It is quite probable Timothy’s father was not saved. Paul speaks of Timothy’s upbringing in a Christian home, with only a Christian mother and grandmother’s influence. In II Timothy 1: 5, we read, “I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well.” Paul also tells us in I Corinthians 7: 13-14, we read, “If any woman has a husband who is an unbeliever, and he consents to live with her, she should not divorce him. For the unbelieving husband is made holy because of his wife, and the unbelieving wife is made holy because of her husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy.” Single moms, please hear the word of the Lord! God can overcome your lack of having a spiritual leader in a husband. You can with God’s help bring up sons and daughters who follow Jesus.

The image of olive shoots around the table is glorious and multi-generational. Many years ago, Jinny and I were in the Garden of Gethsemane, in Israel, where some of those massive olive trees, are over 3,000 years old, and are the same olive trees Jesus knelt beneath. These trees have fresh olive shoots clustering around the main trunk, which are green and flourishing. The psalmist conveys here a graphic and glorious picture of the good and godly home. As in a godly home, when the parents become grandparents and great grandparents, from their roots grow up

young plants to take their place when they grow old and die. But these young trees guard and cover the older trees with their presence and they come from the same major roots. These young shoots will someday be the main trees, but as they grow to maturity, they uphold, protect, and embrace their olive tree parents. Soon these surrounding younger trees will bear the load of fruit bearing which can no longer be demanded of the elderly or feeble parent. Beloved, in Christian homes following God's blueprint of fearing the Lord, so is the blessing for the Dad, verse 4, but also for the Mom, and in multi-generational families, each olive shoot contributes to the commonwealth and welfare of the whole, a beautiful sight, with which God will refresh the eyes of every generation. Beloved, eat meals together, spread out around your table. Pray for the food, laugh, love, and lift at every possible meal. If the Lord tarries, and your nest is empty, make plans for often gracing your lonely tables with children to bless and nourish and nurture. May it be the longing of our church to always be dedicating babies and doing Bible schools. May it be our hope and prayer and joy to hear the cry of babies in our sanctuary, not as a sound to abhor, but as the sound of God's motherly blessing.

A GODLY HOME LONGS FOR A LASTING LEGACY IN THE HOME AND IN THE NATION THROUGH ITS CHILDREN. (IV) We read in verses

5-6, ““The Lord bless you from Zion! May you see the prosperity of Jerusalem all the days of your life! May you see your children's children! Peace be upon Israel.” The psalmist in verses 5, 6 declares the blessing of God to the wider circle—to children, to children's children and to the nation of Israel, and we can pray that God will use our families to evangelize unsaved America. Godly families are to reach the far-flung ends of the earth. God's blueprint is for our individual families to be God's gift to reviving, renewing, and preserving the legacy of our nation. As go our families here in Sweetwater County, know that our family legacies will affect, or infect our nation. To add to the blessings of these four longings is verse 5, “May you see the prosperity of Jerusalem all the days of your life!” Verse 6 says in essence, “May you have the blessing of being a grandma or a grandpa.” “Indeed, may you see your children's children.” And deep within the 4 longings of our heart is a bountiful sweet spot. Peace be upon you—upon Israel, upon our church, the Israel of God.” And as we live in this country, there is no greater gift we can give to America then to marry in the Lord, to bring up children in the Lord, and have as many olive shoots as God will provide us, seated around our tables. May we pray for our own children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren, to surpass us in their love and devotion to Jesus. May we pray also that God's family blueprint would even yet preserve and return our broken nation to His only blueprint, the Bible. A Godly home longs after the Lord! A Godly home Longs for the wife to be the mother of children. A Godly home longs for children to spread out around the table at mealtimes. A Godly home longs for a lasting legacy, both in the home and in the nation through its children. May God give us Godly homes! Let's pray. Amen!