

TAKEAWAY:

God alone gives fruitfulness and lasting blessing in the home; parents are faithful stewards, not sovereign builders. Faithful motherhood trusts God with what only He can build.

INTRODUCTION QUESTIONS:

- What is one lesson (positive or challenging) you learned from your mother or a mother figure in your life?
- What has been one way you have honored your mom or mother figure over the years?

UNDERSTANDING:

Have a group member read Psalm 127

- How did this sermon help you better understand this passage of scripture? Is there anything that was mentioned during the sermon that stuck out to you?
- In what ways are parents (especially mothers) tempted to rely on their own strength rather than God's?
- Read Proverbs 22:6 and Deuteronomy 6:4-9. What is the parent's responsibility according to these passages? Where does God's sovereignty come in?
- How does viewing children as "gifts of grace" rather than "achievements" change the way we approach parenting?
- The sermon says parenting is "stewardship, not ownership." How does this distinction change our perspective on discipline, decision-making, and letting go?
- OPTIONAL QUESTION IF APPLICABLE (Please use discretion) For those without children, struggling with infertility, or grieving wayward children: How does this sermon's message that "your value before God is grounded in Christ, not your motherhood story" bring comfort or challenge?

APPLICATION:

- What does it mean practically that "unless the LORD builds the house, those who build it labor in vain"? How have you seen this truth play out in your own life or family?
- What are some ways the church can better support mothers in various seasons - new moms, single moms, empty nesters, those who've lost children, those who never had children?
- What does it mean to "aim your children toward Christ" practically? What are specific, tangible ways parents can do this in daily life?

GO DEEPER:

The Go Deeper section has two potential functions. It can supplement your small group discussion by providing extra discussion material. You can also use these sections as short devotionals to carry you through the week until your next group meeting and to deepen your study of our text from this week.

Here are two "Going Deeper" discussion prompts that build upon the above provided questions without repeating them:

Co-Working with God:

- If God is the ultimate builder, how do we correctly define and measure "faithful stewardship" in our daily parenting efforts without slipping into either anxious over-functioning or spiritual passivity?
- In what specific areas of family life (e.g., academics, athletics, spiritual formation) do participants feel the greatest temptation to "build the house" through sheer willpower?
- For those experiencing the deep pain of wayward children, broken marriages, or infertility, how does the doctrine of God's sovereign building offer profound hope rather than condemnation? How does the absolute promise that "the Lord builds the house" provide an anchor for the soul when a family experiences profound spiritual, relational, or moral failure?
- If God provides the architectural blueprint for the home, what does faithful, daily "sub-contracting" look like for a parent in the trenches of child-rearing?
- What role does repentance play when parents humbly recognize they have built their family upon a foundation of worldly ambition rather than the grace of God?
- How does what God did in Christ ultimately redeem the inevitable mistakes, sins, and failures that are inherent in the fallen human parenting journey?
- How can believers discern when they are mistakenly enforcing their own rigid, perfectionistic family expectations under the guise of executing God's divine blueprint?

Navigating a "Crumbling House": For those experiencing the deep pain of wayward or estranged children, broken marriages, or infertility, how does the doctrine of God's sovereign building in Psalm 127 offer profound hope rather than condemnation?

- How does the absolute promise that "the Lord builds the house" provide an anchor for the soul when a family experiences profound spiritual, relational, or moral failure?
- How might God's sovereign timeline for building a spiritual legacy span multiple generations, extending far beyond our immediate, visible circumstances and current sorrows?
- In what specific ways can the local church or your life group function as an extended, vibrant family for those whose biological "houses" are currently a source of grief or emptiness?
- What role does repentance play when parents humbly recognize they have built their family upon a foundation of worldly ambition rather than the grace of God?
- How does the cross of Christ ultimately redeem the inevitable mistakes, sins, and failures that are inherent in the fallen human parenting journey?

Quotes:

- "Every child is born a little heathen. They are not morally neutral; they are bent toward sin. It's a hard truth to swallow, but if we don't see our children as God sees them, we won't take seriously the task of shepherding their souls." Jonathan Edwards
- "As Psalm 127 says, our children are a heritage from the Lord, an unmerited reward from him. The older our kids get, the more it becomes clear we can't control their destiny. It doesn't rest in our decisions or in theirs. Our children's future, their health, their skill, their will and desires for life... all this belongs to God." Tim Keller
- "Relentless, compulsive work habits ('work your worried fingers to the bone') which our society rewards and admires are seen by the psalmist as a sign of weak faith and assertive pride, as if God

could not be trusted to accomplish his will, as if we could rearrange the universe by our own effort." Eugene Peterson. He had a unique way of addressing our obsession with hustle, productivity, and addressing exhaustion through recreation rather than God. See his *A Long Obedience in the Same Direction*, but also his other writings.

- "Psalm 127 insists on a perspective in which our effort is at the periphery and God's work is at the center.... God did not become a servant so that we could order Him around but so that we could join Him in redemptive life." Eugene Peterson

PRAYER:

Pray for mothers to trust in the Lord for their strength in their duty as moms. Pray for the single mom, the hurting mom, the one who longs to be a mom, the mom's who have lost their child. Pray for that God would be near and comforting to them today.

Action Item:

For All: Write a note of encouragement to a mother in your life (your own mother, a spiritual mother, a young mom who needs support).

For Parents: Schedule a specific time this week to read Scripture with your children and pray together. Start small if this is new.