

# God in the Everyday - *Psalm 127*

## **Introduction**

- You know, one of my favourite movie series of all time has got to be the Lord of the Rings. I love the story, such an amazing adventure, good vs. evil, with the fate of the world in the balance, and I love the books, but I think the movies do such an amazing job of really capturing the epic scale of this story, and they immerse you in the world that Tolkein created.
- But there's one complaint that I hear very frequently about these movies, and I'm willing to bet that of the people here who have seen them, some of you would probably share this opinion, and that is that people claim that 90% of these movies just consist of walking. People going from point A to point B without a whole lot happening.
- It's not altogether an unfair critique, I mean especially when you think about the longer versions of these movies, the extended version of the third movie is nearly 5 hours long. I still love them, but a lot of people would say that they're just too slow, that all the walking takes away from the "wonder" or "Adventure", and the movies end up being kind of boring.
- Because that's not how we think of grand adventures like that. We're used to stories that are a lot more fast paced, and focus more on the really high moments, and the really low moments, but not so much the moments in between. When it comes to movies and books today, those are the moments that will often get rushed past, or cut altogether. We get bored of just watching all the walking.
- And as we've looked at the Psalms of ascent, and how they describe our own journey in life, we've spent a lot of time looking at those fast paced moments. Where we find God in the extremes of life, the moments of incredible victory, as well as incredible struggle. The dramatic ups and downs that this life takes us through.
- But a question that we need to ask is, what about those moments of life, in our journey, when we're just walking?
- We've talked so much about where we see God in those extremes of our life, but not every day, and every moment is an extreme.
- So where is God in our everyday? Where is God in those normal days, when we're just "walking" through life? I think it's important to think about that question, because we're quick to look to God in those moments of incredible victory, or incredible struggle, but those in between moments, are the times that we don't tend to look to God as much.
- That's exactly what Psalm 127 talks about.
- This Psalm is a lot different from a lot of the songs that we've looked at up to this point.

- It is a Song of Ascent “Of Solomon”, and you can see his fingerprint all the way through this song. When you look at it, it actually has a lot of similarities to another book that is attributed to Solomon, with some common themes and ideas to those found in Ecclesiastes.
- It slows down the pace a lot and zooms right in on two different areas of life showing why it’s so important to remember where God is in those everyday moments, and those everyday areas of life.

## **God’s presence in our everyday life changes the way that we view our work: V. 1-2**

- The first area of life that this Psalm focuses on in V. 1-2 is our every day work, showing how God’s presence in our everyday life changes the way that we view our work.
- V. 1 begins to introduce us to this idea, by describing two different jobs, both a builder, and a watchman.

*“Unless the LORD builds the house,*

*those who build it labor in vain.*

*Unless the LORD watches over the city,*

*the watchman stays awake in vain.” - Psalm 127:1 (ESV)*

- This verse actually starts out with a familiar theme that we’ve seen already in a few of these Psalms of ascent, using similar language to what we find in passages like Psalm 124. That Psalms began with saying: *“If it had not been the Lord who was on our side”*, and now here we begin Psalm 127 with these words: *“Unless the Lord builds the house”*, and *“Unless the Lord watches over the city”*.
- They both have this same theme of presenting us with a view of where we would be without God’s presence with us, but while Psalm 124 was hi-lighting God’s presence with his people in the midst of an intense trial and struggle, this Psalm is presenting the need for God’s presence with us in the midst of just our every day work.
- Because the reality is, we have just as much desperate need of God’s presence in our life on the most mundane, normal days and moments, as we do in the moments when things are going off the rails. God’s presence is not just needed in disaster or victories exclusively, but in our every day work and tasks.

- And again, like we've seen before, the picture that we're given here in this Psalm, is that without God's presence, if he is not with us in our every day work, our work is utterly in vain. If God is not with them in their tasks, the builder builds in vain, a watchman watches in vain.
- God's presence is needed for their work to have any meaning or purpose.
- Because really, in the end, what is the point of our everyday work if we are viewing it as separated from God's presence in our life? Sort of a compartmentalized section of our lives. We've got God's presence over here in the spiritual matters of our lives, but over here is our every day work that's got it's own thing going on.
- Well V. 2 continues to broaden this point, from these two specific examples, to really all of work, talking about getting up early, going to bed late, the daily routine, and struggling to find some fulfilment in our "anxious toil". And again, it gives us that clear picture of our everyday life, and our everyday work outside of the context of a relationship with God. Serving to answer that question of what does our work accomplish apart from God.

*"It is in vain that you rise up early*

*and go late to rest,*

*eating the bread of anxious toil;" - Psalm 127:2a (ESV)*

- Are you seeing the similarities to Ecclesiastes here? This is the third instance of having this word "vanity" in this passage, which is so prominent in Ecclesiastes. "Vanity of vanities".
- It's such a common theme in Solomon's writings that we try so hard to find meaning and purpose in our work and life, but outside of God, it just can't happen.
- And this verse gives such a relatable view of life doesn't it? How many of us have had days that you feel could be accurately summed up by this verse?
- I know I have these days, where I so easily fall into this rut, or routine, getting up in the morning, going to work, coming home, going to bed, rinse and repeat.
- It can feel so repetitive, and can begin to be so discouraging. And you think, what is it all for? I know a lot of us have felt that during this pandemic, the challenge of being motivated to work when going to work simply means getting out of bed and sitting on your couch, or at your kitchen table.
- And this is the condition that so much of the world lives in. Working day in, and day out to provide for themselves, or try to find some purpose in life, but ultimately all of our hard work can never give us what we want. But without God, it will always end up being in vain, and we'll be left with nothing but "eating the bread of anxious toil".
- So that gives us a pretty good picture of what everyday life and work looks like without God, but then how does God's presence in our everyday life actually change the way that we view

our work like I said earlier? Because again, like I mentioned, we need God as desperately in the everyday moments of life as we do in the extreme.

- Well the reality is, that you and I were always created to work. It's part of the way that God made us. In the perfect world of Genesis 1&2, before the fall and sin entered the world, Genesis 2:15 tells us:

*"The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it." - Gen. 2:15 (ESV)*

- So God built work into his perfect creation, that mankind would work in this world. That work did not become difficult until after the fall, but the work was still there from the very beginning. It's a part of how we were created in the image of God.
- Paul later in the Bible, in Colossians 3:23, comments on how viewing our work in relation to God changes how we work. He says this:

*"Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men" - Col. 3:23 (ESV)*

- And so he's encouraging us, as believers, to view our hard, everyday work in the context of our walk with God, working for him rather than for men.
- And I think that Josh Moody sums up this shift of perspective really well in his book "Journey of Joy", as he comments on this Psalm. This is what he says about viewing our everyday work, what he refers to as "the daily grind" in the context of a loving relationship with God:
  - *"Your work becomes a love, a love for God, who has given you this opportunity to love him back. As Paul says, you do it "as for the Lord" (Col. 3:23), not as for men, but as for the Master. Everything is transformed by this perspective of being loved by God."*
- So viewing our life in the context of this relationship really does change everything. How we process the extremes of life, as well as the everyday
- The second verse ends with a promise:

*"for he gives to his beloved sleep" - Psalm 127:2b (ESV)*

- God is our reward, and the purpose behind our work.
- And he gives us such a beautiful rest. Rest from constantly trying to find fulfillment and purpose the vain, and anxious toil that will never and can never actually fulfill us the way that we want. Rest in the knowledge that we are perfectly fulfilled by a loving relationship with our creator, and that our everyday work, can be seen as an expression of our love and worship to him.

## God's presence in our everyday life changes the way that we view our family: V. 3-5

- So that's the first area of life that is hi-lighted in this Psalm, then as we come into V. 3-5 we see the second area of life that this Psalm focuses on. These verses may seem kind of disconnected from the first two at first glance. You probably wouldn't be surprised if I told you that these two little paragraphs came out of completely different songs, but in reality, they're closely related.
- It once again shows how God's presence in our life transforms how we understand a core, everyday element of our lives. The first two verses talked mostly about our work, and now these verses turn their attention to talking about our families.
- Look at these verses:

*“Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD,  
the fruit of the womb a reward.  
Like arrows in the hand of a warrior  
are the children of one's youth.  
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.” - Psalm 127:3-5 (ESV)*

- These verses show us how God's presence in our everyday life changes the way that we view our family, and to do that, it takes the position of a parent's perspective on their children.
- And look at the wording that's used here to describe children:
  - They are a heritage from the Lord
  - They are a reward
  - Like an arrow in the hand of a warrior
  - And blessed is the man who fills his quiver with them.
- We live in a culture that very much tends to downplay the importance and the value of family and children. But look at the beautiful picture that is given here in this passage, for how God designed families to operate.

- God designed family to be such a gift, and a blessing. He designed families to be something that would cause us to worship him.
- But many of you may look at these verses and find that they don't quite feel as relatable as the first two for one reason or another.
- Maybe you're sitting here and your experience with your family doesn't quite line up with what we see in these verses, either as a parent, or as a child.
- Well this passage is giving us a picture into the perfect way that God designed families to be, and how he designed the relationship between parents and children to look, but I'm sure many of us have had experiences that we feel might not measure up to this. And that is because families, like everything else, are affected by the sin and the brokenness of the world that we live in.
- Even look at Adam and Eve and their two sons Cain and Abel. I seriously doubt that after Cain killed Abel, these types of words were the first ones coming to Adam and Eve's mind.
- Family is such a gift from God, but family is also often messy, and hard.
- But what we have here in this passage, is something that we can be praying for for our families. I have a good friend that I pray with regularly, and he and his wife just had a little baby girl a few weeks ago. And back when he first told me that they were pregnant, each time we would pray together, we would pray that this would be true of their family. That God would be with them as parents, and that he would be with their daughter, and that is a prayer that we are still praying together each week. That God would be at the centre of their family in every day, and every aspect.
- And praying these things for your family doesn't automatically mean that family won't be hard, but it is an encouragement to trust God with every day and every part of your family.
- Or maybe you're sitting here, and you've never had kids. Maybe that's something that just hasn't happened yet, or maybe that's something that can't happen for some reason. Well there is still truth to be found in these verses for you as well.
- Well one of the things that you can be praying for is that you, as a child, would live this out for your parents. That God would help you to be that kind of heritage, blessing, and reward to your parents, and that he would use you as a blessing in their lives.
- But I also want to read you a quote from Josh Moody's commentary on this passage, as he talks about one application of these verses for those who don't have any children of their own:
- There are many examples in the Bible of the spiritual children that you can have. Paul, for instance, was a father figure for Timothy. When you tell someone the gospel, you may have the privilege of seeing a new birth, and that can be just as much, even more, of a blessing. You can invest in pastoral and discipleship work, ministry as heritage from God.

- So God has given a way for each and every one of us to live out the truth of these verses no matter where we are in life, by sharing the Gospel, seeing people come to Christ, and investing in discipling and teaching them as they grow in their walk with him.
- Family is a gift, but it is not always easy. But God's presence in our everyday lives changes the way that we view our families.

## Conclusion

- One of the things that I read as I was preparing this week was a quote by Charles Spurgeon, as he was not so much commenting on this specific Psalm, but all of the Psalms of ascent up to this point. He was looking at the opening for each of these Psalms of ascent, and hi-lighting the way that each one really does begin with a tone of praise and focus on God. Psalm 127 is not at all an exception, and I love so much what he said. - *"The Lord and the Lord alone is praised at each step of these songs of the ascents. Oh, for a life whose every step will suggest a new song to the Lord"*.
- *"Oh for a life whose every step will suggest a new song to the Lord!"*
- I love that line so much.
- Spurgeon's talking about all of the Psalms of ascent in this moment, but I think it so beautifully captures the heart of Psalm 127.
- Oh for a life where every little aspect of our everyday life is viewed in the context of our relationship with God, and causes us to worship, and rely on him.
- The truth of the Gospel, the truth of the love that God has shown to us through Christ, it gives new life and meaning for every aspect of life. It is not just meant for the extremes, the ups and downs, but it truly transforms our view of everything in our everyday lives, and every day should be lived in the context of God's presence with us and the gift that we have been given.
- And that is my prayer for myself, as well as for us as a church. That we would be people who live our lives in a way that every step will suggest a new song of praise to the Lord.
- That our relationship with God would be the essential foundation for our entire lives, and impact every aspect of it. That we would rely on God for help, and give him glory even in the smallest elements of our everyday life.
- At the end of it all, focusing on God's presence in our everyday life transforms the way that we view every part of our lives, and causes us to worship him.