



Psalm 128 NASB
Blessedness of the Fear of the LORD.
A Song of Ascents.

¹ *How blessed is everyone who fears the LORD,
Who walks in His ways.*

² *When you shall eat of the fruit of your hands,
You will be happy and it will be well with you.*

³ *Your wife shall be like a fruitful vine
Within your house,
Your children like olive plants
Around your table.*

⁴ *Behold, for thus shall the man be blessed
Who fears the LORD.*

⁵ *The LORD bless you from Zion,
And may you see the prosperity of Jerusalem all the days of your life.*

⁶ *Indeed, may you see your children's children.
Peace be upon Israel!*

O.H.M.S. these initials used to be on official mail coming from the Government – On Her Majesty's Service...how wonderful it would be if we put that on any letter we sent - O.H.M.S. on His Majesty's Service...representatives of the High King of Heaven, ambassadors for the Christ, showing forth the life of heaven on the earth.

The psalmist starts this psalm by telling us how blessed we will be if we reverently fear the Lord **and** walk in His ways.

Sooner or later in our ascent into the heart of God, the upward call into an ever deepening relationship with Him, the mountain up which we climb, the issue of the reverent respect and awe of the Lord, *'the fear of the Lord'* will be highlighted and we will become acutely aware of the necessity to 'get our fear in the right place'.

The reverent respect and fear of the Lord carries with it the concept of honour, which is so lacking in our society today. Honour, love, fear and honour – a sandwich -

1 Peter 2:17 NASB

¹⁷Honour all people, love the brotherhood, fear God, honour the king.'

There are many misconceptions about what the fear of the Lord is and it is *'better felt than told'* but the Psalmist here tells us that we are blessed if we get our fear in the right place because if we fear **Him** we will fear nothing else and we walk in His ways as a matter of course...we will also honour all people and love the brotherhood...

This may cause a major readjustment in our thinking – particularly if we are 'anti-establishment', but without a proper fear of the Lord and following His ways, we will lack the wisdom we so desperately need to thrive in the service of the Lord – O.H.M.S.

There are two brilliant promises for a right view of God and a right walk with God, those who trust in, lean on and rely upon Him *'You will be happy and it will be well with you'*.

The true fear of the Lord is more than love and reverent respect – we can see this from the Apostle John's reaction – the disciple whom Jesus loved - when he sees the risen Lord on the Isle of Patmos -

Revelation 1:9 – 18 NIV

⁹ I, John, your brother and companion in the suffering and kingdom and patient endurance that are ours in Jesus, was on the island of Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. ¹⁰ On the Lord's Day I was in the Spirit, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet, ¹¹ which said: "Write on a scroll what you see and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea." ¹² I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me. And when I turned I saw seven golden lamp-stands, ¹³ and among the lamp-stands was someone like a son of man, dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest. ¹⁴ The hair on his head was white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire. ¹⁵ His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters. ¹⁶ In his right hand he held seven stars, and coming out of his mouth was a sharp, double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance.

¹⁷ When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. Then he placed his right hand on me and said: "Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. ¹⁸ I am the Living One; I was dead, and now look, I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades.'

John, 'the disciple whom Jesus loved', falls down *'as though dead'* when he sees the risen Lord. He adopts the position...flat on his face...

Mark 5:33 NIV

³³ Then the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell at his feet and, trembling with fear, told him the whole truth.'

In my reading of the scriptures, whenever the Lord appears to people, their reaction is one of falling face down before Him or trembling with fear...

One of the things we must get hold of then, is a **proper** fear of the Lord...I love Him with all my heart, but I fear Him too...the fear of the Lord speaks of both commitment and obedience, whatever He says, we do – instantly. I understand that the angels are instant in their obedience, how much more His own...

Proverbs 1:7 NKJV

⁷ *The fear of the LORD is the **beginning** of knowledge, (emphasis mine)
But fools despise wisdom and instruction.*

Ouch, **fools** despise wisdom and instruction...better not do that then or you might prove yourself a fool and that wouldn't do!

When it says '*the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge*', it is saying before you can comprehend Who God is, you have to **entrust** yourself to Him, you need to make a commitment of your heart, your faithfulness and your obedience to Him before you can come to **know** Him because there are no casual friends in the Kingdom...He is not found by the half-hearted seeker, the deep things of God come to those who by diligently seeking, find Him. This doesn't imply that He doesn't love you or won't love you fully just the same – this is a matter of maturing in the things of God, growing up into all things, not staying a baby Christian all your life.

And if the fear of the Lord is just the *beginning* for us, surely we must make it our business to get that as a priority before anything else.

Why not ask the Holy Spirit right now if you do have a correct fear of the Lord, or if your fear is actually misplaced and is in something else, fear of loss, fear of poverty, fear of sickness – whatever...and then ask Him if He will begin to teach you the fear of the Lord, in getting your fear in the right place, you will not fear anything else – that could be a relief for some.

A right

fear of the Lord is the key to blessing and prosperity for the family and the nation...

So, as we continue our climb, the Father begins to reveal more of His heart towards those around us our immediate family and the nation.

When we commenced our climb we were more concerned about our own walk and relationship with Him, in our immaturity we were **self**-centred; now He expands our vision to show us His desires for the wider community, but He begins in the heart – the heart of the home and family relationships.

These two Psalms, 127 and 128 are often linked together because what the Psalmist is saying in them both is that family should have top priority in our spiritual pilgrimage.

Both psalms picture the ideal of family life from God's viewpoint.

For most people, the major event in their lives will be marriage and then subsequently, raising a family. The family unit provides excellent soil for maturity and spiritual growth.

There **are** those, whom God calls to ministry outside of marriage, but for most of us God has ordained marriage as the ideal and children are seen as a great blessing from God...blessed is the man who has his quiver full of them...

Psalm 127:3:5 NASB

³*Behold, children are a gift of the LORD,*

The fruit of the womb is a reward.

⁴*Like arrows in the hand of a warrior,*

So are the children of one's youth.

⁵*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.'

Woe betides us fathers if we put 'ministry' before care of our families...because as we go up and grow up in God, we begin to see more and more clearly that the institution of marriage and the family is in the forefront of God's mind.

After Him, it is family, not ministry, because He is a '**family man**' and He will not trust you with His children if you cannot be trusted with your own...

1 Timothy 3: 1 – 10 NIV

¹ *Here is a trustworthy saying: Whoever aspires to be an overseer desires a noble task. ² Now the overseer is to be above reproach, faithful to his wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, ³ not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. ⁴ He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him, and he must do so in a manner worthy of full respect. ⁵ (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?) ⁶ He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. ⁷ He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap. ⁸ In the same way, deacons are to be worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain. ⁹ They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience. ¹⁰ They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons.'*

Marriage was His idea, procreation was His idea, and the sanctity of one man one wife, is His ideal...

Genesis 1:28 NIV

²⁸ *God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground."*

Families, the Psalmist is saying, have top priority in our spiritual pilgrimage and they are the first order of ministry and maturity.

After loving the Lord with all our heart, soul mind and strength, we put our families first...

Marriage is divinely sanctioned by God, as such it is holy in the sense that both partners are set aside for each other and for God, so here in these psalms we see children are a heritage from the Lord... we are to bring them up in *'the fear and admonition of the Lord'*, remembering that they were His before they were ours, for everything comes from Him.

Children are to be seen as a blessing to us too, not a nuisance!

The symbols used in **Psalm 128:3** that they are *'like olive plants'* are compelling - they are indicative of God's blessing upon His people and their consequent prosperity.

People are of enormous value to God whether small or great, children or adult, they have an inestimable value.

Children are builders - the future of the family and the community rests upon them. They are on loan to us from God to be cared for, guarded and instructed in loving faithfulness by their parents...

Two principles are clearly stated here in both Psalm 127 and Psalm 128 –

- 1) We come into these things when we understand that the Lord must do the building or we build in vain...
- 2) We come into these blessings through the fear of the Lord...

With disobedience inevitably will come separation and inevitably, suffering.

The psalmist tells us that you can put all your effort into doing things but it will be vain unless the Lord is working and you are working with Him to His agenda. Notice, it does not say that you should not build, but unless the Lord is building with you, leading you in bridal partnership nothing eternal will be produced.

So the Lord must build, and this is a spiritual house, a spiritual building not a religious building and the issue is barrenness versus fruitfulness – without Him we can do nothing, which includes raising our families – **how** we need His wisdom for this. Oh how we need to be walking closely with Him, seeking His heart moment by moment for our precious children over whom He has appointed us guardians and stewards...

As we look at the world around us and the devastation that has been caused to the family we recognise the work of the destroyer who strikes at the very epicentre of God's creation.

God says 'one man with one woman' - Satan says, 'same sex relationships'; God says 'marriage – preserve the sanctity' – Satan says, 'do as you like inside or outside the marriage bed'...God says, 'be fruitful and multiply' but children are created, disposed of or reared without any values or moral guidelines...

And something else that is apparent here in these two psalms is the striking connection between the welfare of the family and the welfare of the nation. As goes the family, so goes the nation...as goes the family, so goes the church...the nation of God, the community of the faithful ones bearing fruit because they abide in the Vine.

Psalm 128: 4 – 6

*⁴ Behold, for thus shall the man be blessed
Who fears the LORD.*

*⁵ The LORD bless you from Zion,
And may you see the prosperity of Jerusalem all the days of your life.*

*⁶ Indeed, may you see your children's children.
Peace be upon Israel!*

As we grow up in God in all things, we find that He doesn't want to be a supplement, an addendum, a post-script to our lives, the 'bank manager in the cupboard', but an essential, connected, part of them.

As a loving Father, He is concerned with **every** aspect of our life. He doesn't do 'time share' – 'Sunday is His day and the rest of the week I do my own thing...'

So another one of our major adjustments is to walk daily in the admonition to trust Him with all our hearts and not lean upon our own understanding, to acknowledge Him in everything...

Proverbs 4:5 – 10 NIV

*⁵ Trust in the LORD with all your heart
and lean not on your own understanding;*

*⁶ in all your ways submit to him,
and he will make your paths straight.*

*⁷ Do not be wise in your own eyes;
fear the LORD and shun evil.*

*⁸ This will bring health to your body
and nourishment to your bones.*

*⁹ Honour the LORD with your wealth,
with the firstfruits of all your crops;*

*¹⁰ then your barns will be filled to overflowing,
and your vats will brim over with new wine.*

Getting down to the nitty gritty of everyday life it must be, God first and then the family, God first and then our work; God first and then our gifting, God first and then our recreation, as in all our ways we place Him first in our lives.

The rebirth from above has located us in a unique position – no race of people before on earth has occupied the place in the affections of God which the church does.

He has placed us *'in'* the Christ, seated us in heavenly places with Him; all things are ours, every blessing *'in'* the Beloved.

We stand in Father's affections in the same place as the Son...He loves us, as He loves Jesus...

As a result, if we put anything or anyone else in first place, we will find ourselves struggling and living life at a much lower level than He intends – living in measure not fullness for He is a God whose name is 'jealous'. But this is not the irrational jealousy of a worldly lover, but the jealousy of a Lover who yearns over us, who has our very best interests at heart, who really does know what is best for us, if we will but heed Him and acknowledge His right to our lives...

Many blessings and safety in all kinds of situations are the promise for us –

Psalm 91 New Century Version

Safe in the LORD

¹ *Those who go to God Most High for safety
will be protected by the Almighty.*

² *I will say to the LORD, "You are my place of safety and protection.
You are my God and I trust you."*

³ *God will save you from hidden traps
and from deadly diseases.*

⁴ *He will cover you with his feathers,
and under his wings you can hide.
His truth will be your shield and protection.*

⁵ *You will not fear any danger by night
or an arrow during the day.*

⁶ *You will not be afraid of diseases that come in the dark
or sickness that strikes at noon.*

⁷ *At your side one thousand people may die,
or even ten thousand right beside you,
but you will not be hurt.*

⁸ *You will only watch
and see the wicked punished.*

⁹ *The Lord is your protection;
you have made God Most High your place of safety.*

¹⁰ *Nothing bad will happen to you;
no disaster will come to your home.*

¹¹ *He has put his angels in charge of you
to watch over you wherever you go.*

¹² *They will catch you in their hands*

so that you will not hit your foot on a rock.

¹³ *You will walk on lions and cobras;
you will step on strong lions and snakes.*

¹⁴ *The Lord says, "Whoever loves me, I will save.
I will protect those who know me.*

¹⁵ *They will call to me, and I will answer them.*

I will be with them in trouble;

I will rescue them and honour them.

¹⁶ *I will give them a long, full life,
and they will see how I can save."*

It would be a 'no-brainer' not to trust ourselves to Him in everything with a promise like that...

And this is what we are learning as we travel – that He can be trusted with everything, with all that we hold precious and dear, because it was He who gave it to us in the first place – we are but stewards.

Giving Him our heart every day is putting it in the safest possible hands...

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