

Dad: God's Divine Plan
Psalm 128

June 17, 2007

A. Father's Day

1. Scripture reading, Psalms 127-128 are about the F_____
2. Psalm 127 tells us
3. Psalm 128 tells us

B. God's Divine Plan is that Dad be a Man of In_____ Ps. 128:1

1. this means
2. Job showed this
 - a. Job 13:15a ... by his
 - b. Job 1:8, 42:7 ... by his
3. Psalm 128:1 tells us this should be seen in his
 - a. A_____ because he
 - b. A_____ described as
 - c. other examples of this are
(A) Genesis 5:24

(B) Genesis 6:9
 - d. to do this means I will have to

C. God's Divine Plan is that Dad be a Man of In_____ Ps 128:2

1. God planned for man to W_____
 - a. Genesis 2:15, for A_____
 - b. Exodus 20:9, for the nation of I_____
 - c. Ephesians 4:28, 2 Thessalonians 3:10, for ...

2. 1 Timothy 5:8, within the family, this means

D. God's Divine Plan is that Dad be a Man of In_____ Ps 128:3

1. Genesis 2:24, what is the relationship to be between spouses?
2. Ephesians 6:4, what is the father-child relationship to be like?
3. What does the picture of the wife in Psalm 128:3 describe?
4. What does the picture of the children in Psalm 128:3 describe?

E. God's Divine Plan is that Dad be a Man of In_____ Ps 128:4-6

1. what particular aspect should this take in the family
 - a. by the Israelite father (Deuteronomy 4:9, 6:1, 6-7)?
 - b. by the Christian father (Ephesians 4:6)?
 - c. how would you describe this to ideally take place?
2. how can this take place in his community (2 Corinthians 2:15-16)?
3. Psalm 128:6, what should be notable about this?

A. Father's Day

1. contrary to popular opinion

- a. Father's day was not established as a way that hardware, sports, and electronics stores could make a financial killing through the sale of all kinds of expensive new toys for dad!
- b. its origin is almost 100 years old – long before all those flat screen TV's, stainless steel BBQ's, and cordless tools ... actually, they DID have CORDLESS tools 100 years ago ... just about all of them were CORDLESS!
- c. Mrs. John B. Dodd, of Washington, first proposed the idea of a "father's day" in 1909. Mrs. Dodd wanted a special day to honour her father, William Smart. William Smart, a Civil War veteran, was widowed when his wife (Mrs. Dodd's mother) died in childbirth with their sixth child. Mr. Smart was left to raise the newborn and his other five children by himself on a rural farm in eastern Washington state. It was after Mrs. Dodd became an adult that she realized the strength and selflessness her father had shown in raising his children as a single parent.
- d. The first Father's Day was observed on June 19, 1910 in Spokane, Washington. At about the same time in various towns and cities across American other people were beginning to celebrate a "father's day." In 1924 President Calvin Coolidge supported the idea of a national Father's Day. Finally in 1966 President Lyndon Johnson signed a presidential proclamation declaring the 3rd Sunday of June as Father's Day. —{2}.
- e. Canadians (being Americans, though Americans are not Canadians) naturally adopted it at the same time!

2. our Scripture reading this morning is a pair of twin Psalms which have to do with the family ... Read Psalms 127 & 128

- a. the first of these Psalms is a reminder that everything in a family, just as in a city or country, depends upon God
- b. the second is used as a marriage song at Jewish weddings
 - (A) it provides God's ideal
 - (1) for the family

(2) particularly for the father

(3) it is God's divine plan for dad.

(B) Psalm 128 is today's sermon text; God's plan is ...

B. ... that Dad Be a Man of Integrity

1. 'Happy is every one who feareth Jahve, Who walketh in His ways' ⁻⁽³⁾.

Psalm 128: 1

2. Integrity

a. is used in the Old Testament

(A) to describe someone with a consistent faith

(B) one who 'not only talked the talk, but walked the walk'

b. Job was a man of integrity – though when his world caved in around him, his wife counselled him to let go of it

(A) he remained a man of deep-seated, unshakeable faith: 'Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him.'
(13: 15a NKJV)

(B) at the start of the book of Job, God commended Job as being 'blameless and upright, fearing God and turning away from evil' (1: 8b) and at the end as having 'spoken of Me what is right' (42: 7b)

c. a man of integrity is that man described by James as having faith that is demonstrated and perfected by works

3. God plan for a man

a. particularly as he fills the role of husband and father

b. is that he be a man of integrity

(A) in his faith: one who first of all has found new life and salvation through trusting in the finished work of Christ on the cross to take the punishment for sin

(B) in his life: one who lives in a way that is consistent with his profession of being born again, of being God's child

c. Psalm 128: 1 tells us this integrity

(A) one, will show in his attitude

(B) two, will show in his actions

4. fathers will be men of integrity in their attitude
 - a. the attitude given here is that of 'fearing God'
 - b. perhaps your version may translate this, or give a footnote, as 'revering God' or similar phrase
 - c. what is included in this word is the profound sense of awe and respect before God who is majestic both in His own person and in all that He has done
 - d. this is the underlying attitude of the man who repents of sin, turns to God, calls upon God, and trusts in God

5. fathers will be men of integrity in their actions
 - a. actions in the Bible, are often described not in terms of works, but in terms of relationships
 - (A) and the most descriptive phrase of the relationship that God desires take place between a man and Himself
 - (B) is 'walking with God' or 'walking in His ways'
 - (C) this morning in the Bible class we mentioned Enoch who 'walked with God; and he was not, for God took him.' (Genesis 5:24) and in the following chapter we read that 'Noah walked with God' (Genesis 6:9)
 - (D) so the question was posed, 'In order to walk with someone (rather than have them walk with you), what do you have to do?' – and the answer is, of course, you have to follow where they lead
 - b. fathers to be men of integrity in their actions will walk with God; they will follow where He leads; they will allow the indwelling Holy Spirit to control their lives

C. ... that Dad Be a Man of Industry

1. 'The labour of thy hands shalt thou surely eat, Happy art thou, and it is well with thee.' Psalm 128:2

2. it is popular to disparage work
 - a. to put down industriousness
 - b. the Protestant work ethic just isn't what it used to be!
 - c. the one carrying out his responsibilities may be laughingly labelled a 'workaholic' by his fellow-workers
 - d. one worker described their work day to me years ago saying, 'sometimes I sets and think; sometimes

I just sets.'

- e. yet we are responsible for how we use God's blessings of health, strength and energy
3. work is part of God's plan for man
- a. even before the fall of mankind by sin
 - (A) God had work for Adam to do
 - (B) one task was the naming of all the animals – that was a full day of work (Eve was not yet created so that Adam could not pass off any of it off on her!)
 - (C) another was 'to dress and to keep' (KJV) the garden
 - (1) to dress (or cultivate) is, literally, to serve
 - (2) to keep (or take care) is, literally, to preserve
 - (3) so Adam had serving and preserving tasks to do
 - b. and God's intent is shown again by 'Six days you shall labour and do all your work' (Exodus 20:9 NAS)
 - c. and in the New Testament, the theme continues,
 - (A) 'Let him who steals steal no longer; but rather let him labour, performing with his own hands what is good, in order that he may have something to share with him who has need.' (Ephesians 4:28 NAS)
 - (B) and 'For even when we were with you, we used to give you this order: if anyone will not work, neither let him eat.' (2 Thessalonians 3:10 NAS)
4. fathers will be men of industry providing for their family
- a. the Bible portrays the father as being primarily responsible for providing for his family
 - b. I emphasize that word 'primarily'
 - (A) on Mother's day we read from Proverbs 31; there mom did considerable providing, allowing her husband to meet judicial responsibilities in the gate of the city
 - (B) circumstances and situations may mean that much or all of this responsibility may fall upon mother
 - c. nevertheless, the onus is put on father that he not shirk this which is his special family responsibility
 - d. God's provision for the family's provision is the father:
 - e. Paul tells Timothy, 'But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith, and is worse than an unbeliever.' (1 Timothy 5:8 NAS)

f. how sad it is that so many men today – some professing Christians – do not live up to God’s plan in this respect

D. ... that Dad Be a Man of Intimacy

1. ‘Thy wife, like a fruitful vine is she, In the inner part of thy house; Thy children are like shoots of olive-trees Round about thy table.’
Psalm 128: 3
2. the form of solemnization of matrimony ^{–{4}}. begins
 - a. with these or similar words, ‘Dearly beloved, we are gathered together here in the sight of God, and in the face of this Congregation, to join together this man and this woman in holy Matrimony; which is an honourable estate, instituted of God in the time of man’s innocency, ...’
 - b. later it resumes, ‘Matrimony was ordained for the hallowing of the union betwixt man and woman; for the procreation of children to be brought up in the fear and nurture of the Lord; and for the mutual society, help and comfort, that the one ought to have of the other both in prosperity and adversity.’
 - c. no wonder that marriage is used as a picture of the intimacy that should exist between Christ and His church
 - d. as Paul goes on to quote from Genesis 2: 24, ‘For this cause a man shall leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.’ (NAS)
 - e. marriage should form the closest human relationship
 - (A) a relationship of love
 - (B) encompassing tenderness, consideration, protection, encouragement, and giving of oneself one to the other
3. and no wonder, too, that the parent-child relationship is used as an illustration of the intimacy that should exist between God and His precious, special people ... His children
 - a. this spiritual relationship between God and us
 - b. is to be our model, as fathers, between us and our children
 - c. Weymouth translates Ephesians 6: 4 in this fashion, ‘And you, fathers, do not irritate your children, but bring them up tenderly with true Christian training and advice.’

4. so this marriage-Psalm 128 gives a picture of the tender intimacy that God would have exist in the family
 - a. the wife **'in the inner part of thy house'**
 - (A) proceeding in security and serenity in every aspect of family life; not mere outward show, but inwardly
 - (B) on account of her husband's supportive relationship
 - b. the children **'round about thy table'**
 - (A) enjoying the community blessing of the family
 - (B) with family relationship
 - c. God's plan is one in which the whole family is fruitful and productive – there are two pictures of fruitfulness
 - (A) Nicole was telling me a few weeks ago that many of the doors of Jewish homes are quite ornate and may be carved with symbols of fruitfulness as clusters of grapes
 - (B) here the fruitfulness of the wife is depicted as a vine
 - (C) that of the children as **'shoots of olive-trees'**, not yet bearing olives, but growing in preparation of doing so
 - d. God's plan for the nuclear family – as it for the church, His spiritual family – is that it be fruitful ... which brings us to

E. ... that Dad be a Man of Influence

1. **'Behold, surely thus is the man blessed Who feareth Jahve. Jahve bless thee out of Zion, And see thou the prosperity of Jerusalem All the days of thy life, And see thou thy children's children — Peace be upon Israel!'**

Psalm 128: 4–6

2. this dad will influence his family

a. in what we have noted thus far, such a father

- (A) such a man of integrity
- (B) such a man of industry
- (C) such a man of intimacy

b. cannot help but influence the other members of his family

c. but in the Christian community as in the Jewish

- (A) there is a specific, particular influence dad is to have
- (B) the influence of giving the family a spiritual foundation
- (C) 'Only give heed to yourself and keep your soul diligently, lest you forget the things which your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life; but make them known to your sons and your grandsons.' (Deuteronomy 4:9 NAS)
- (D) 'Now this is the commandment, the statutes and the judgments which the Lord your God has commanded me to teach you, that you might do them in the land where you are going over to possess it, ... And these words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart; and you shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up.' (Deuteronomy 6:1, 6-7 NAS)
- (E) and we already read from Ephesians 6:4 which gives Christians the command to '... bring {our children} up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.' (NAS)
- (F) what God had said and what God had done are to be topics of family conversation on a daily ongoing basis, not just facts but 'the things which your eyes have seen' – sharing personal experiences of walking with God

3. this dad will influence his community

- a. it is from the influence of men such by this heading their families with godly lives
- b. that God would
 - (A) bring blessing from Zion
 - (B) bring about the prosperity of Jerusalem
- c. so this man will through his life and family be used of God
 - (A) to bring blessing to his church community ... and to make that community as source of blessing
 - (B) to bring to his own particular world – work mates, friends, relatives, neighbours – what Paul describes as a sweet savour or fragrance of Christ
- d. 'For we are a fragrance of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing; to the one an aroma from death to death, to the other an aroma from life to life. And who is adequate for these things?' (2 Corinthians 2:15-16 NAS)

4. this dad will influence his inheritance to – 'children's children'

- a. whether this be in a natural sense, or in a spiritual sense
- b. the man who seeks to follow God's plan for his life
- c. will leave a lasting inheritance to those who follow
- d. I dare say each of you can point back to such influences of such men in your life – they have passed on the torch to you to carry on.

F. Conclusion — Fathers, you have a high calling

1. do not be discouraged in the face of it
 - a. yes, Paul could ask, 'And who is adequate for these things?'
 - b. but he also went on to say, 'Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God' (2 Corinthians 3:5 NAS)
2. we have returned full circle: the way to follow God's plan for the father begins and ends with the walking with God in faith in our Lord Jesus Christ by the indwelling Holy Spirit's power

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Various English versions of the Holy Bible are used in this sermon. Some (for example, the AV, ASV, and NAS) seek to be strictly translations, while others (and especially PHIL) contain paraphrasing which involves a certain amount of subjective interpretation. Nevertheless, there is little material difference in meaning among these. Some prove slightly clearer on some verses than others. Looking at more than one version sometimes sheds additional light on any particular verse. Explanatory additions to the Bible text are shown in [square brackets]. The versions are identified as:

ASV	American Standard Version of 1901
AV	Authorized (King James) Version
NAS	New American Standard version © 1975 The Lockman Foundation
NIV	New International Version © 1984 by the International Bible Society
NKJV	New King James Version © 1979 Thomas Nelson Inc., Publishers
NLT	1996 New Living Translation © 1996 by Tyndale Charitable Trust
PHIL	New Testament Translation © 1972 by J. B. Phillips
RSV	Revised Standard Version © 1946, 1952 by the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U. S. A.
WEY	The New Testament in Modern Speech © 1902, 1912 R. F. Weymouth

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2. Origin of Father's Day, supplied by Roddy Chestnut, Kerux illustrations #6063
3. Translation of Psalm 128 by Franz Delitzsch, D.D., translated from the German by Francis Bolton, B.A., *Biblical Commentary on the Psalms*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1959, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company)
4. Book of Common Prayer, Church of England, *et alii*