

**Psalm 128 — The Family: The Way God Designed It To Be! The Happy Joys of  
Fearing God & Walking in His Ways in the Home!**  
**詩篇 128 — 家庭: 按神設計的方式! 在家中敬畏神並遵祂而行的喜樂!**

**\*\*READ THE TEXT\*\***

**INTRO-**

*Introductory Illustration*

**This was one of the favorite psalms of Martin LUTHER.** Did you know that Martin Luther proposed to Katherine von Bora on June 10, 1525 & then later *that same night* they had the marriage ceremony & consummated the marriage! [*engagement & marriage the same day!*]

- 2 weeks later (June 24), Martin & Katherine decided to have a public ceremony for ‘out-of-town’ guests (including *his own parents!*) who could be notified of the union & come for the celebration. :)
- As fiery & theological & daring as Martin Luther was. He was a domestic, family man who loved his precious wife & lived as a God-fearer in the home before the eyes of his wife, children, and guests.
  - Katherine bore 6 children -- 3 sons & 3 daughters (Hans, Elizabeth, Magdalene, Martin, Paul, and Margaretha)
  - In addition to their 6 children, Martin and Katherine would often also house nephews, relatives, university students and other guests. ***The household could at times number as high as 25 people staying together & eating together!***
- Martin **LOVED** home life -- he would tell the family stories, teach them songs/games, play melodies on his instruments, instruct them in the faith.
- Luther said about Psalm 128 that the Holy Spirit is the best poet & speaker.
- If this culture has any hope of change, the church must change. And if the church is to change, the families need to be reformed. And if families are to be reformed, men leading spiritually at home **MUST** begin to be priority.
- **HERE** the reformation must begin.
- We must strive to have homes that fear the LORD in all things, at all times, in all circumstances, and with all our members.
- **Here’s what God says about a FAMILY -- essential components in a family unit as He designed it:**
  - The Husband
  - The Wife
  - The Children
  - The Labor/Work/Toil
  - The Society
  - The Legacy/Grandchildren

- The Religion/Worship
  - *And all of this is governed by & enshrouded with the fear of God.*

### Background to Ps 128

- And -- this is A text for everyone>>>
  - ✓ **marrieds** -- of course, live in the fear of the LORD
  - ✓ **young people** -- set it upon your heart to fear God for your future well-being
  - ✓ **singles** -- live as a God-fearer & pray for the families in the Church
  - ✓ **divorced/widows** -- thank God for where God has you & encourage the flock.
  - ✓ **ALL believers** -- to pray for the blessing of God on family, the church, on society.

Matthew Henry says: "A church in the house will be a good legacy, nay, it will be a good inheritance, to be left to your children after you. Reason directs us to consult the welfare of posterity, and to lay up in store a good foundation for those who shall come after us to build upon; and we cannot do this better than by keeping up religion in our houses. A family altar will be the best entail; your children will for this rise up, and call you blessed, and it may be hoped they will be praising God for you, and praising God like you, here on earth, when you are praising him in heaven."

The key word in Ps 128 is '**BLESSING**' (vv.1, 2, 4, 5)

*A word on our 'hermeneutic' [proper interpretation] –*

- Ps 128 does NOT promise utopia. It doesn't promise some sort of pain-free, trial-free, conflict-exempt FAMILY life.
- Ps 128 is poetry; it is wisdom literature. It is meant to give the general principle, the guide, the ideal, the GOAL. It is as Spurgeon called it: "The Family Hymn" (Ps 128, p.2/2:97)

**THESIS** — what does it look like in the family where the FEAR OF THE LORD exists?

## **I. THE MAN LEADS THE FAMILY TO FEAR THE LORD! (1-2, 4)**

**A.** Note how it begins with the man's duty -- the fear of God. We must ALL do this -- but especially the heads of households who head at home!

**B. Matthew Henry** writes: "Proceed in the right method; first set up Christ upon the throne in your hearts, and then set up a church for Christ in your house. Let Christ dwell in your hearts by faith, and then let him dwell in your houses; you do not begin at the right end of your work, if you do not first give your ourselves unto the Lord... Let the fear and love of God rule in your hearts, and have a commanding sway and empire there, and then set up an altar for God in your tents; for you cannot do that acceptably till you have first consecrated yourselves as spiritual priests to God, to serve at that altar."

**C. The Blessing (1a)**- how many are blessednesses [אֲשֶׁר־י]

**D. The Fear of the LORD (1b)**

1. The person who fears God - takes God seriously, reverences Him deeply, and honors Him greatly (Lawson)

**Think of a God-fearer this way...**

You think rightly about God. [mind]

You worship humbly before God. [worship/awe]

You live supremely for God. [conduct/life]

You trust confidently in God. [trust/confidence]

**"To be a God-fearer is to live with 'all seriousness' in full devotion to the LORD" (Kraus, 458)**

2. The psalms are about *fearing God* (Ps 1.1, 2:12; 119.1-2)

3. To fear God includes a proper *contemplation* of God & a proper *conduct* before God  
(v.1b - *walking in His ways!*)

**E. Eating the fruit of his hands (2)**

1. This speaks of God's provision through hard labor/work. The OPPOSITE is the divine curse under the old, Mosaic covenant - Lev 26.16 & Deut 28.30-33

**F.V.4 - the summary -- true happiness (v.2, 4)**

1. True happiness & blessedness comes in *walking close to Christ*, loving your *Christ*, worshiping your *Christ*, fearing your *Christ*, exalting your *Christ*, and living for Christ's glory in your home! He lived for you! So you should live for Him!

2 Cor 7.1 - we must perfect holiness in the fear of God

Phil 2.12 - work out your salvation w/ fear & trembling

Rev 14.7 - eternal gospel: "Fear God & give him glory"

**II. THE WOMAN IS FRUITFUL IN WORKING IN THE HOME! (3a)**

The Godly home as designed by the Lord includes a **WIFE** who *works at home*, who is *fruitful*, and who is *godly in her labor*, faithfulness & submission to her husband.

The **primary** abode of the Godly woman is at **home** fulfilling domestic duties.

A. This makes much of the woman being "a home bird. . . . She keeps at home, and so keeps the home." (Spurgeon)

B. This verse -- along with some others in the NT Epistles -- speak of the particular domain of the wife being *in the home*. The house is her kingdom. She is the queen of the home. Her calling is NOT to be out & about, bringing in the \$\$.

C. **v.3a**- The idea of 'within her house' מִן־אִשְׁתֶּךָ בְּבֵיתְךָ פְּרִיָּהּ בְּיָדָי בֵּיתִי בֵּיתְךָ -- has to do with 'in the heart of your house' -- which refers to the wife directly -- she makes her WORK IN the home and she is a PURE WOMAN inside the home (*contrast w/ the adulterous, winking, loud, boisterous immoral woman of Prov 7.11*).

1. Prov 7.11 - she is LOUD and wayward; her feet do NOT stay at home.

2. HERE - the attractiveness of the wife is wholly matched by her faithfulness, fruitfulness

**O may God give us MORE women who work hard in the home as their main headquarters of Christian ministry & service to God!**

**III. THE CHILDREN ARE GROWING AND STRONG AS THEY FEAR THE LORD (3b)**

This psalm likens children to **olive plants** -- An Olive Tree is valuable and profitable as it can produce olives for centuries; indeed, these trees can last longer than any other fruit-producing tree/plant.

A. Around a table -- speaks of sharing, community, well-being, conversation, worship, caring, togetherness. ***Do we even eat together as families with our children?***

B. Note the following elements we find:

1. The **STRENGTH** of children

2. The **GRAFTING** of children

3. The **CONNECTEDNESS** of children

4. The **MEALS** with children

5. The **DURATION** of children

C. **Olive trees** - refers to vigorous, healthy, and joyous, abundant, fruitful, enduring life.

**D.** Consider: Children are like Olive Shoots -- strong and in due time continue the work of the main original tree/shoot.

1. Though the olive tree may not bear after it has been planted for 40+ years, it is a symbol of **longevity** and **productivity** (durability, plenty, stability, productivity).

2. \*SO are the children within the household of faith.

▶ They are NOT like **grass**, which is here today & gone tomorrow.

▶ They're NOT like the **wind** which quickly comes & quickly passes.

▶ They're NOT like the **morning dew** which refreshes the ground & then dries away.

▶ They're NOT like a **flower** which looks beautiful & then quickly withers in hot, dry seasons.

▶ **They are olive trees that in due time produce lasting fruit.**

As Luther said: “All **married** people should know this. They can do no better work and do nothing more valuable either for God, for Christendom, and for all the world, for themselves, and for their children than to bring up their **children well!**”

**\*\*Let us sit at our tables w/ our kids & train these olive shoots!**

#### **IV. THE NATIONAL & PERSONAL WELL-BEING COMES TO THOSE WHO FEAR THE LORD! (5-6)**

**Please listen carefully** = Note vv.5-6 are prayers for prosperity \*\* [not hard/fast//sure//certain promises!]. This is *wisdom literature; the ideal, the goal, the general principle*.

##### **A. V.5 - The blessing of the Lord in life**

1. v.5 - teaches that God's blessing goes WITH his people even when they're NOT in Jerusalem (VanGemen,917)

##### **B. V.6 - the prayer to see the posterity**

1. Even Solomon said this: Prov 17.6 — Grandchildren are the crown of old men!

##### **C. V.6b - final prayer for God's people**

FOR US -- let us **APPLY THIS PSALM** —

- ▶ Strive toward this [*pursue this*]
- ▶ Pray for this [*pray for this*]
- ▶ Counsel toward this [*show others to do this*]
- ▶ Encourage toward this [*encourage others*]
- ▶ Train toward this [*train children/youth for this*]
- ▶ Submit to this [*submit to God's \*perfect\* design*]

#### **Matthew Henry has it so well:**

All agree that masters of families who profess religion, and the fear of God themselves, should, according to the talents they are entrusted with, maintain and keep up religion and the fear of God in their families, as those who must give account; and that families, as such, should contribute to the support of Christianity in a nation, whose honor and happiness it is to be a Christian nation.

#### **CONCL-**

*Concluding Illustration*

**A final word comes from Charles SPURGEON:**

“If we want to bring up a godly family, who shall be a seed to serve God when our heads are under the clouds of the valley, let us seek to train them (the kids) up in the fear of GOD by meeting together as a family for worship.”