

The Key to Successful Parenting
Psalm 27:1-2

Parents several generations ago “knew” how to bring up their children. That is not to say that they did not have problems or even that they knew what they were doing.

But what it does mean is that they by and large had few misgivings and uncertainties about what they were doing and it also means that when problems did occur, they were more inclined to blame their children, rather than themselves for those problems.

But then social science came to the “rescue” of those parents who until that point did not know they needed rescuing, and what did social science tell them? Social science told them what bad parents they had been. Telling them that the bed wetting, the temper tantrums, the lying, the stealing, the adolescent turmoil, and the host of other ills that may have afflicted their children were not so much their children’s fault as much as it was their fault in not having parented them correctly.

And what was the impact of all of this upon those parents? With an ever-increasing sense of responsibility to do things the “right way” those parents began to look for an authority to tell them what to do. And certainly there was no shortage of so-called authorities that were very willing to do just that and this very same phenomenon has continued on to this very day.

So in light of this plethora of so-called authorities, who are even now so willing to tell us how we should be parenting, it is important for us to exercise caution when listening to these various authorities lest we begin to think that if we pull the right levers and push the right buttons that we will be able to produce mature Spirit-filled children.

This is simply not true. Producing mature Spirit-filled children is not something that we in and of ourselves can do, but only God Himself. And if there is any doubt about this let me now read for you **Psalm 127:1-2**. **“Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it; unless the Lord guards the city, the watchman keeps awake in vain. (2) It is vain for you to rise up early, to retire late, to eat the bread of**

painful labors; for He gives to His beloved even in his sleep.” So based on these verses, could we conclude that producing mature Spirit-filled children is not something that we ourselves can do, but only God Himself? And I believe the answer would have to be a resounding yes!

So in light of this what would be the key to successful parenting? Based on Psalm 127:1-2 the key to successful parenting is surrendering ourselves to God.

And this morning we will be examining this key. And what is my hope for this message? My hope is that in examining this key to successful parenting, we might come to appreciate the fact, if we do not already, that surrendering ourselves to God is not only the key to successful parenting but the key to success in terms of all of life's endeavors, and therefore the doorway to unfathomable blessings if we would just simply by the grace of God choose to use this key.

So again, what is this key? Based on **Psalm 127:1-2** the key to successful parenting would be surrendering ourselves to God. And why is this?

First of all, surrendering ourselves to God is the key to successful parenting because God is sovereign over all things (Psalm 127:1).

Let me read for you **Psalm 127:1** and see if this is not so. **“Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it; unless the Lord guards the city, the watchman keeps awake in vain.”**

As we begin to examine this verse let us first of all consider who is speaking and to whom is he is speaking. The person who is speaking here is King David and he is addressing his remarks to his son Solomon. And why is David sharing these remarks with his son?

David is preparing Solomon for that future day when he would be the king and would not only have the responsibility for leading the nation of Israel but also the responsibility for the construction of the temple that King David himself was not allowed to build.

And what is the point that David is seeking to make to his son? The point that King David was seeking to make to his son in **Psalm 127:1** was that if

he was going to rule the nation of Israel and find success in doing so then he must surrender himself to God, for God is sovereign over all things.

So how did King David go about making this point of God's sovereignty to his son Solomon? King David initially sought to make the point of God's sovereignty by referencing the building of a house (Psalm 127:1). And what did King David say to his son about the building of a house? **“Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it.”**

So, what did David mean by this? When David told Solomon that unless the Lord builds the house they labor in vain who build it, he simply meant that if God wanted a house to be built and to remain then the house would be built and remain, but if God did not want a house to be built and to remain then the house would not be built and remain.

In other words, just because we might want to build a house does not mean that the house will be built nor does it mean that the house will remain just because we might want the house to be built or that we might want the house to remain. And why is this? It is because we are not the ones calling the shots. The one who is calling the shots is God who is sovereign in all things.

King David, after using the illustration of the building of a house to make the point of God's sovereignty, then went on to make the same point in speaking of a watchman guarding a city (Psalm 127:1).

So let us continue to read the verse. **“Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it; unless the Lord guards the city, the watchman keeps awake in vain.”**

So, what did David mean by this? When David told Solomon that unless the Lord guards the city, the watchman keep awake in vain, he simply meant that if God wanted the city guarded and to remain safe it would be guarded and would remain safe, but if he did not want the city to be guarded and to remain safe it would not be guarded and remain safe.

In other words, just because we might take measures to guard something so that it might be safe does not mean that the thing that we have taken measures to guard will remain guarded or remain safe, unless it is God Himself who wants it guarded and to remain safe.

And why is this? It is because we are not the ones calling the shots. The one who is calling the shots is God who is sovereign over all things. This is why.

So let me ask you this question. If God is sovereign over all things, can we resist God and win? And what is the answer? The answer is absolutely not! Because God is sovereign over all things, there is no way that we can resist God and win (Philippians 2:10-11). In fact, God in His sovereignty has decreed that at some future appointed time that every knee will bow of those in heaven, and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the praise of His glory. No one can resist God and win. Therefore, in light of the fact that we cannot resist God and win, it would behoove us if we want to be successful in our parenting to surrender ourselves to God.

And if we do this, would there be any reasonable expectation that He might bless us and treat us well in all matters of our life including our parenting? Absolutely! And this brings us to our second point.

Surrendering ourselves to God is the key to successful parenting because those who surrender themselves to Him will be blessed (Psalm 127:2).

Let me now read for you **Psalm 127:2** and see if this is not so. **“It is vain for you to rise up early, to retire late, to eat the bread of painful labors; for He gives to His beloved even in his sleep.”**

So does this verse teach us that God will bless those who surrender themselves to Him? Absolutely! So now let us go back to this verse and see if this is not so.

And the phrase that I would like us to focus on is the last phrase, **“For He [referring to God] gives to His beloved even in his sleep.”**

So let me ask you this question. Who are the **“beloved”** that David is telling his son Solomon that God will bless even in their sleep? The “beloved” are those who are wholly and completely surrendered to God and who are therefore actively seeking to lives pleasing to God (Psalm 1).

If there is any doubt about this let me read for you **Psalm 1:1-3. How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor**

stand in the path of sinners, nor sit in the seat of scoffers! (2) But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night. (3) He will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither; and in whatever he does, he prospers.”

So let me now ask you this question. Who is the one in this passage that King David said would prosper in whatever he does? It is the one who delights in God’s law and is therefore meditating on His law day and night, or in other words the person who is completely surrendered to Him and is therefore seeking to live a life pleasing to Him.

And it is this person that David is referring to in **Psalm 127:1-2** when he speaks about God giving to His **“beloved even in his sleep,”** for it is these kind of people that God pours out His blessings upon, pressed down and overflowing.

So, what is the significance of this phrase **“even in his sleep?”** This phrase “even in his sleep” is meant to highlight the internal bliss of the “beloved” when they are looking to God to supply their needs. And what is the source of this bliss? It is God’s promise to them. And what is that promise? Let me read for you **Matthew 6:33**. **“But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things [or in other words all those things necessary for life] will be added to you.”** God is not going to let his children starve or be without the basic necessities of life. He will supply for them.

So do those who have turned their backs on God and who are not looking to Him to supply for them have the same promise? No! And what are the words of David to these individuals at the very beginning of **Psalm 127:2? It is vain for you to rise up early, to retire late, to eat the bread of painful labors.”** In other words, David on behalf of God is saying to them, you may strive from early morning to late at night, and work very hard from early morning to late at night but you will never be able to enjoy the same blissful experience as my “beloved” for I will provide for them even in their sleep and they know it.

So in light of **Psalm 127:1-2**, what is the key to successful parenting? The key to successful parenting is surrendering ourselves wholly and completely

to the sovereign God of this universe so that He in His benevolence might bless us in everything we do including our parenting?

So how do we know if we are wholly and completely surrendered to God and thus under the control of His Spirit?

We will know that we are completely surrendered to God and thus under the control of His Spirit when we are filled with the joy of the Lord (Ephesians 5:18-19). Let me read for you Ephesians 5:18-19 and see if this is not so. **“And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit, (19) speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord.”** And where does this speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs and this singing and making melody in our heart to the Lord come from? It comes from the Lord and it always should be present. In other words, it should be present in the midst of our pain, in the midst of our sorrow and in the midst of our loss in light of the overwhelming blessedness that is ours in Christ.

So do you have this joy this morning? If you have it praise God for it is a telltale sign that you are completely surrendered to God and thus under the control of His Spirit.

We will know that we are completely surrendered to God and thus under the control of His Spirit when we are fully satisfied and feel no lack (Psalm 63:5).

We will know that we are completely surrendered to God and thus under the control of His Spirit when we, being fully empowered, are enjoying victory over sin (Psalm 63:8).

So are we wholly and completely surrendered to God? If we are then praise the Lord for He in His sovereignty will bless us.

Will He bless us with mature Spirit-filled children? He very well could for He is a merciful and loving God, but if He chooses not to bless us in this way we can still be assured that if we wholeheartedly and completely give ourselves to God and seek to honor Him in all areas of our lives, including our parenting, He will through His Spirit provide us an overwhelming sense

of joy, a wonderful sense of peace, and the strength to do His will in whatever circumstances we might find ourselves.

May God give us the grace to completely surrender ourselves to Him so that He might bless us not only in our parenting but also in every aspect of our lives.