

**THE ART OF PARENTING
THE LAUNCH PAD
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PSALMS 127
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- SLIDE: There's an old saying that "God couldn't be everywhere at once, so he made moms." That statement may not be theologically accurate, but it does convey the right attitude toward motherhood – moms fill a place in our lives that no one else can fill.

I remember seeing a cartoon once in which a little boy was talking on the phone, saying something to the effect of,

- SLIDE: "That's right, Grandma. Mom's out of town, so me and Dad and Tommy and Sarah and Britney and Morgan and Duke—are here all alone."

That's the way it feels when "Mom" is away.

Pandemonium out there. We need all the help we can get.
Remember Steve Martin as the Dad in *Cheaper by the Dozen*.

VIDEO: CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN (1:19)

Psalm 127 is all about mothers and fathers and building a home in the midst of the problems and pandemonium of life.

- SLIDE: READ AND OVERVIEW PSALM 127.

(Got some mixing phrases and chiasms working in verses 3-5.)

Use several key words to get at the truth of these wise words from Solomon.

- SLIDE: "UNLESS THE LORD"

READ PSALM 127:1a: Unless the LORD builds the house, its builders labor in vain.

There's a condition on parenting. Who is the builder? Is it the television? It is Madison Avenue? The question is, "Is the Lord building your house, your family?" If not, the Scripture says, it's in vain, in vain, in vain. We can't work hard enough to make it succeed.

You can do it on your own; you can build a home that won't last—you can screw it up all by yourself—or you can partner with God and build something that lasts for several life times.

Psalm that begins with Empty Vanity ends with Great Fulfillment.

- SLIDE: The FOUNDATION

READ PSALM 127:1a: Unless the LORD builds the house, its builders labor in vain.

Some principles to keep in mind as you and God are building a strong foundation:

•SLIDE: ESTABLISH A STABLE HOME ENVIRONMENT INFUSED WITH CHRISTIAN VALUES

OVERHEAD: The true meaning of the word is pervasive: (pan-all-around-Demonium-Satan's work) John Milton in "Paradise Lost" named the capital city of Hell the city of Pandemonium.

We are coming out of a time when we were told that if marriage was not working out, mom and dad ought to go ahead and get a divorce because children were quite resilient and they could bounce back from almost anything.

They lied. Hurts can go deep.

Many of you here are products of a broken home. Anyone come out unscathed?

OVERHEARD: Pandemonium may look like Steve Martin in Cheaper by the dozen—but it may look like Bruce Willis and Michelle Pfeiffer in *The Story of Us*.

VIDEO: THE STORY OF US (1:44)

There is a huge price tag to making a marriage work. When we neglect a marriage, we're not just hurting ourselves, everyone else around us eventually pays a terrible price.

OVERHEAD: Three-way Triangle: The closer we get to Christ the closer we get to each other.

READ JOSHUA 24:14-15: "Now fear the LORD and serve him with all faithfulness. Throw away the gods your forefathers worshiped beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD. 15 But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your forefathers served beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD."

•SLIDE: IMPRINT DURING THE EARLY YEARS

READ DEUTERONOMY 6:1-4.

Brain development—interaction with social environment: Listening to mother's reading related to higher IQ: but only the mothers voice—not the day care worker

Imprinting in the early years—the importance of mom and dad.

“Keep religion neutral and wait until they are 18 or 19 and let them make up their own minds.”
Don’t wait until they are 18 or 19 to make up their minds. You will have taught them that
Christianity is not important.

Critical age of 8 to 12: Mom and Dad’s values accepted or rejected.

Christianity is more caught than taught.

●SLIDE: SET APPROPRIATE BOUNDARIES.

Teach child not to run across street. Why? Because you are mean and confining? NO. Because
you know running across the street is dangerous behavior.

When you are in a loving relationship you always want what is best for the other person.

READ DEUTERONOMY 10:12-13.

So you commit adultery, let marriage sour—divorce, devastated lives all around; steal from
parents; covet and get jealous. “Don’t you trust me? I love you. You will get hurt.”

One day your child runs across the street and it breaks your heart. “I am doing this for your own
good. Don’t go across the street again. You may get hurt.

One day your child runs across street. Hit by car. Months in recovery. “So many things I wanted us
to do together: “Circus in town, movies, soccer season.” All is put on hold.

Boundaries are for their own good.

Hard to set boundaries in our culture. Set the boundaries. Remember that you will expand them
soon enough.

●SLIDE: PRACTICE THE PRINCIPLE OF “WITH.”

*READ MARK 3:14: “Jesus appointed twelve—designating them apostles—that they might be WITH
HIM and that he might send them out to preach.”*

Jesus did not send them out until the final year of His ministry. They spent 2½ years just being
WITH Him.

In our culture we have lost the wonder of being with. We are so frantically wanting to go and do.

Imagine what people said to disciples during the first 2½ years? “What do you do here in
ministry?”

“Well, we are here with Him.” “Yeah, but what do you do?” “We just hang around with him.”

The only one who held a job during those 2½ years was who? Judas. I bet Judas never
embraced the wonder of with.

Where do you learn the wonder of “with”? You learn “With” at home—just hanging with your family.

Marilyn Tolson: Be With—teens when they call

●SLIDE: IMPART LIFE TO YOUR CHILDREN BY MEETING THEIR DEEPEST NEEDS (and avoid
the opposites).

Sovereign God could create Adam any way He wanted to and He chose to create Adam needy.
Babies have built-in needs. Food, air, water - and attention, affection, approval,

Affirmation (“Mama, look what I did!”)
Comfort (child falls and then looks around to see who’s looking.)
We never grow out of needing these things!

Acceptance—(Rejection)
Affection—(Abuse)
Appreciation—(Criticism)
Approval—(Condemnation)
Attention—(Neglect)
Comfort—(Hurt)
Encouragement—(Disappointment)
Respect—(Ridicule)
Security—(Instability)
Support—(Undermine)

Brie’s drive-by shooting: “I am so proud of how you are so self-reliant. How well you handle these difficult moments.”

“Well, Dad, you know, you are the one who made me this way.”

Don’t withhold these things until they do something special.

First public day of Christ’s ministry

First day on job. Goes for baptism. Voice: “This is my Beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.”

He hasn’t done anything yet!

Miss passage if we think the voice was for the crowd!

This is a loving father affirming His Son and that affirmation empowered his ministry.

Parents, try that! Stop child, look them in the eye. “I love you, I’m so proud of you. Glad you’re my son or daughter.”

Leave them standing there in awe! “What did I do?” Nothing! That’s what grace looks like, what affirmation sounds like!

Think of what you just did for your child: Acceptance; Approval; Encouragement, Respect, and Support.

Bill Clinton never had a dad to say, “Well done” to him.

Story, Brie and Bronwyn wanted to go to mall. Need for attention—not shopping. Did not want to go. Decided to spend time with her. No more taking work to the mall. “Be with me.”

Christmas present last year: picture of her and me in dancing in driveway:

(G6 picture of the picture frame) “Thanks for talking the time.”

Bronwyn’s need for attention was met.

Hours on the trampoline.

●SLIDE: The **PROTECTION** in the second half of verse one.

READ PSALM 127:1b: Unless the LORD watches over the city, the watchmen stand guard in vain.

You want the Lord watching your kids when they are out on their own.

- SLIDE: “Good Parenting is teaching your children to respond in a predictable manner when you are not around.”

Like my dog—trained to respond instinctively—by the street, her life may depend on it.

- SLIDE: The **DECOMPRESSION**. Sounds like a pressure packed lifestyle. Back off a little. Let’s do a little decompressing in verse two.

READ PSALM 127:1-2: Unless the LORD builds the house, its builders labor in vain.... 2 In vain you rise early and stay up late, toiling for food to eat — for he grants sleep to those he loves.

We have a new kind of panic syndrome in our country: it’s the parent who feels their children may miss some golden opportunity at age 6, and the child will be a failure the rest of his or her life. They cringe when some child prodigy at their child’s age has mastered the harpsichord, “my child is falling behind.”

“Hey, my kid is 10, but he hasn’t been in the Little League World Series; he hasn’t appeared on a nationally syndicated game show. He hasn’t even been to Space Camp, for goodness sake!” The pressure is incredible.

The Scripture says we need to decompress. Back off and trust that you and God can work this out on the right timetable. Instead of being panic-stricken, let God have His way in your family.

By the third or fourth baby we have this figured out: The Birth Order Of Children

- 1st Baby – You begin wearing maternity clothes as soon as your OB/GYN confirms your pregnancy.
- 2nd Baby – You wear your regular pajamas for as long as possible.
- 3rd Baby – Your maternity clothes ARE your regular clothes.

1st Baby – You practice your breathing religiously.

2nd Baby – You don’t bother because you remember that last time, breathing didn’t do a thing.

3rd Baby – You ask for an epidural in your eighth month.

1st Baby – At the first sign of distress – a whimper, a frown – you pick up the baby.

2nd Baby – You pick up the baby when her wails threaten to wake your firstborn.

3rd Baby – You teach your three-year-old how to rewind the mechanical swing.

1st Baby - You change your baby’s diaper every hour, whether they need it or not.

2nd Baby – You change their diaper every two to three hours, if needed.

3rd Baby – You try to change their diaper before it’s sagging to their knees.

1st Baby – You take your infant to Baby Gymnastics, Baby Swing, and the Baby Story Hour.

2nd Baby – You take your infant to Baby Gymnastics.

3rd Baby – You take your infant to the supermarket and the dry cleaner.

1st Baby – You spend a good bit of every day just gazing at the baby.

2nd Baby – You spend a bit of every day watching to be sure your older child isn’t squeezing, poking, or hitting the baby.

3rd Baby – You spend a little bit of every day hiding from the children.

- SLIDE: The **REWARDS** in verses three and five.

*READ PSALM 127:3 and 5: Sons are a heritage from the LORD, children a reward from him.
Blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them.*

Let me show you the tragedy that often happens in families.

God gives us children like beautiful packages with a bow on top.
What do you do with a gift? Shake it and rattle it, and imagine what's in it.

The One Thing You Don't Do Is Leave It Unopened.
Unfortunately, for too many parents, our children reach their teenage years and they are still
unwrapped.
They missed the rewards.

Golden years

Teen age years: Genetic rebellion gene to help children separate from their children.

Adult Friends: Moving into adult friend relationship through early twenties. Become friend and
mentor that they feel free to come to for advice and counsel.

●SLIDE: The **LAUNCH**

*READ PSALM 127:4-5: Like arrows in the hands of a warrior are sons born in one's youth. 5 They
will not be put to shame when they contend with their enemies in the gate.*

So what are we as parents designed to do?
Make arrows that are ready to shoot out into life.

Parents, we ought to straighten our arrows through discipline. We are to sharpen the arrows
through instruction. We are to aim the children by talking about faith and vision with them.
Parents are to aim that child. Parents are to talk about their children's future for the Master's use.

But the arrow has to be let go. That's what parenting is all about.

Ready to handle life at 18. Must release and expand boundaries when the time is right: All
boundaries off by age eighteen.

Practice handling money; etc.

By 14 to 16 to 17 the teaching is just about over. If you haven't done it by then it probably will not
be done by you. Depend on God and others.

It is hard to parent well, but it is worth it.
OVERHEAD: Graph of marital happiness

●SLIDE: READ PSALM 128 AS A CLOSING BLESSING.

Happy Mother's Day. We are dismissed.