

SONGS FOR ALL SEASONS FROM THE PSALMS

The Significance of Songs Selected Scriptures



LET'S BEGIN HERE

Let's face it. Families today are in trouble. Our society used to honor values like faithfulness, honesty, integrity, moral purity, and kindness. Now, however, our society seems indifferent, even hostile, to the mainstays that once promised stability.

To make matters worse, most families spend little time actually *being* a family. The race to keep pace with technology, the pressure to take part in every extracurricular activity, and the drive to possess more stuff all splinter valuable hours for investing in what matters most at home.

No matter the endeavor, without God as our guide, we'll eventually veer off course and end up lost at sea like ships with faulty rudders. We need God to correct our course.

Psalms 127 and 128 provide the encouragement we need to put the Lord at the helm of our families, and they show that blessings come if we keep Him at the center of our lives and endeavors.



LET'S DIG DEEPER

1. A Quick 'n' Dirty Analysis

It's no surprising revelation to anyone when this statement is made: "Today's family is in trouble." But let's refrain from pointing fingers. No perfect family exists because no perfect person exists. No matter how good and committed and dedicated we may be, we're fallen creatures, and we give birth to fallen creatures. The pollution that invaded creation when Adam and Eve disobeyed God in the garden has corrupted every person and every family.

Even though our society is advancing with ever-increasing high-tech gadgets and state-of-the-art medical techniques, deep within the human heart the most profound evil resides. But in spite of our polluted hearts—our sin nature—God's Word and His grace change us. As we put His truth into action by the power of the Spirit, God makes us better wives, husbands, and parents.



Quotable

Are you waiting

for a great

voice before

you sing?

God hears

your heart.

So sing!

— Charles R. Swindoll



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Selected Scriptures

Psalms 127 and 128 paint a lovely mural covering one scene of the home after another. Each psalm represents a progression of family life as time unfolds, as life is lived with one another, as God views each stage of family life.

2. A Divinely Provided Progression (Psalms 127–128)

King Solomon opened Psalm 127 with a warning. If God is not guiding each endeavor, our efforts have little or no value. God must remain the essential factor in each life-stage, from singleness to marriage to parenting. Without Him, happiness and security are mirages. The Lord graciously superintends and gives prosperity and protection. To deny Him access to family life is to forfeit His blessing and invite disaster.

In the busyness of starting a family, it's easy to lose sight of what really matters: our relationship with God. In the early years of marriage and parenting, we allow crazy schedules to crowd out our time with the Lord. And once God loses His place in our daily routines, survival eventually becomes the dominant mode.

In response to our efforts at self-sufficiency, God gives the quiet miracle of new life: children. Children are a gift and a reward—they come from Him and reveal His generous blessing. When we raise our kids with this awareness, we honor the Lord. And when we raise them to become godly adults, we pass along the heritage of blessing to the next generation.

In Psalm 128, Solomon showed us the responsibilities we must embrace as a family in order to partake of God's blessings—we must fear the Lord and walk in His ways (Psalm 128:1). The Lord's blessing first comes in a profound satisfaction in our work and in God's provision for our families. As we teach our kids to respond with gratitude to God's grace and provision, their faith will flourish.

As each family obeys the Lord and receives His blessing, each family will reap the reward of faithfulness! Parents find fulfillment as the source of love and nurture (the vine), and kids, full of promise and potential (olive shoots), learn to walk faithfully with God.



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A CLOSER LOOK

Worry or Blessing?

Psalm 127 contrasts the anxieties of life (Psalm 127:1–2) with the blessings of life (127:3–5). Those who love life and give life to others will find themselves surrounded by gifts—their children. While many today do desire and yearn for children, it has become increasingly common for couples—even Christian couples—to choose to remain childless. Such a choice, when made despite good health and reproductive ability, is akin to becoming a fruit tree that bears no fruit. It denies the nature that God gave us at creation—not to mention His command to humanity to be fruitful and multiply (Genesis 1:28). Our commitment to have children in the context of marriage mirrors our confession of new life in Jesus. When physically capable couples affirm life by giving it, they also affirm their commitment to others outside of themselves—a commitment that stands at the very heart of our Christian faith (Matthew 22:39).



LET'S LIVE IT

Getting our families back on course takes some reflection. The psalmists wanted us to examine the place God holds in our individual lives and in the everyday lives of our families. Take some time right now to reflect on both areas, getting as accurate a picture as you can.

Priority 1: Your God

Is the Lord your first priority? Do you have a healthy fear of Him? Do you have established times of prayer and meditation on His Word? Does He take first place in your career; your ministry; your political, financial, and social decisions?

Priority 2: Your Family

How is your relationship with your spouse? Does your husband or wife receive the time and care he or she needs and deserves? Do you pray together? What about your kids? Do you invest time in their lives so they'll reverence the Lord and walk in His ways when they're grown? Are you committed to regular church involvement with your entire family?

Are you trying to bless yourself, or are you allowing the Lord to bless you and your family?



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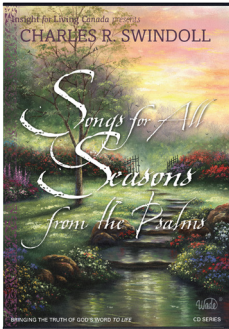
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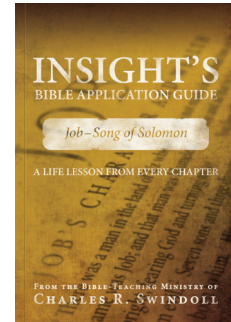
Tools for Digging Deeper



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from the Psalms**
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