

The Whole Family Unit, Headed by the Father must Be Godly.

How blessed is everyone who fears the LORD, Who walks in His ways.

Psalms 128:1 (NAS)¹

We cannot survive as families without this blessing from Jehovah. Psalm 128 is addressing the father² of the home in this passage but it clear that everyone in the family is referred to by the use of *everyone* along with the reference to godly fear. This is the family unit – ones comprised of believers. We should view the Christian family unit as the “Jerusalem” of the missionary effort – that is, our evangelistic effort should begin at home and go out from there.

Note the two-fold emphasis:

- Everyone in the family unit should fear the LORD
- Everyone in the family unit should walk in His ways – that is obey His commandments.

What is Godly Fear?

So what *is* godly fear? We’ve covered this before. First, let me share what godly fear is *not*. It is not an unreasoning, blind fear that forces a person to blind obedience to a set of rules – a fear of retribution should any supposed rule be broken. Nor does godly fear drive people away from a close intimate relationship to God. Rather, godly fear is a two-fold experience. First godly fear recognizes who and what God is. That He is the creator of the universe – that He is the creator of all living beings including the person who fears God. A wonderful example of this experience is found in [Psalm 139](#) where the person who fears God recognizes the Sovereignty of God in his life (vs’ [1-12](#)).

An example of a God fearing man is found in [Acts 10:1-4](#). Cornelius was a Gentile - a Roman Centurion in fact. It was said of him that he was devout and a God fearing man. This is key in understanding fearing God. It is not that one lives in terror of God knowing His tremendous power and ability to judge of sin – but to be drawn to God in this fear is the key. Cornelius was such a man and because of this he was bless greatly by God by being the contact through which the gospel was to come to the gentiles.

A God fearing person recognizes that God has a direct hand on his life *including his formation as a life in-vitro*, See vs’s [13-16](#). Note also the fear and wonder of God in verse 14 **“I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Wonderful are Your works, And my soul knows it very well.”** Psalms 139:14

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² See vs. 4; Behold, for thus shall the man be blessed Who fears the LORD. Psalms 128:4 (NAS)

(NASB). *Secondly, It's important to note that godly fear does not drive one away, rather draws one toward God.* While in that close communion, the sovereignty of God is recognized and obedience to God's will is observed – out of love not unreasoning terror.

Most commentators make reference to the previous chapter – 127. Chapter 128 is a natural extension of 127. So, we can use the picture of building the household as inferred to in ch 127 much as the contractor would build a home except the decorations in this home are the members who are in right relationship with the LORD.

The problem with many homes these days (and during the days of Jesus) is that the family unit *as led by the godly father* is a vanishing species. Part of John the baptizer's ministry was the restoration of the godly family.³ Please note Luke's reference to the problem of Jesus' day *and ours*:¹⁷ **"It is he who will go as a forerunner before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, TO TURN THE HEARTS OF THE FATHERS BACK TO THE CHILDREN, and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous, so as to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."** Luke 1:17 (NAS). Key to this revival was the turning of the hearts of the fathers *to the children*.

The Result of Godly Living: There Will Be Fruit from Dad's Labors.

When you shall eat of the fruit of your hands, You will be happy and it will be well with you. Psalms 128:2 (NAS)

When we think of work we as fathers usually think of our jobs. But that is not the whole scope of our labor. True, a significant part of our lives is our vocation – our jobs but this passage expands the vocation of the biblical dad to include every member of his family. Work? Sure – being a dad in a biblical family is work – meaning that dads who take their responsibility seriously *work at it*. It is not enough to be the best welder, the best CPA, or the most successful CEO of a company – effort in behalf of the family must be put into by a godly dad. If we will honor the LORD in this matter, He will see to it that the results of our labor will be positive will yield fruit. We must understand the time when this passage was written – psalm 128 was written in a agrarian setting so there was real definitive work involved. To slack from that work meant disaster for the family. We should view our relationship with the LORD and our family in the same light – this is a matter of life or death of the family – we fear the LORD we must put Him first in our lives our family members should see this and thus emulate the same dedication.

Let's look at the results of this right relationship with the LORD.

Happy = Our word blessed. Fortunate – of having received good from the LORD's hand and knowing it.

well (good) = that which fulfills one's expectations. Health, well-being. Joseph uses

³ Read Mal 4:5, 6; Luke 1:17.

this word when he referred to the good that came out of his brothers evil intent.⁴

I must make this point – the results of good from dad’s labor is a corporate issue within the family. Just as it is with any business, if the members of the family do not sign onto dad’s policies there will be division and dilution of good results and sometimes this may break a family apart.⁵

Life Within an Godly Home.

³ Your wife shall be like a fruitful vine Within your house, Your children like olive plants Around your table. Psalms 128:3 (NAS)

Interesting picture we have here – that of a successful business – a well tended garden. That is the picture of biblical times success. Jesus used the vine to depict LIFE⁶ and so it would be good to bring this emphasis into this lesson. A biblical, godly wife will literally be the “life of the party” – I hasten to say not a frivolous party but within the home, the godly wife who has take from the godly husband’s example will carry out his labors and be a helpful hand in its success. Boice⁷ points out that in biblical times the fruit of the vine brought forth images of joyful and refreshing times. It gladdens the heart of a man ([Psalm 104:15](#)). The olive shoots imply young plants – a good example of the children. They are to yield food and oil – a very important staple of any home. Children have the responsibility of following dad’s godly lead and being a part of the home’s success *and witness within the community*. But it takes years of careful cultivation by dad and mom to bring this fruitfulness to success.

The Key to Family Success Is a Father Who Is Godly.

⁴ Behold, for thus shall the man be blessed Who fears the LORD. Psalms 128:4 (NAS)

This is the key! Dads, we must commit our lives to the LORD. There is no other way to make it as fathers.

The Final Conclusion of the Matter.

⁵ The LORD bless you from Zion, And may you see the prosperity of Jerusalem all the days of your life. ⁶ Indeed, may you see your children's children. Peace be upon Israel! Psalms 128:5-6 (NAS)

This final blessing from the psalmist has a national flavor to it. I think this a fitting conclusion to the matter. National blessing and security starts from the home of the

⁴ "As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for **good** in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive. Genesis 50:20 (NAS) My emphasis.

⁵ See [Proverbs 12:24](#)

⁶ See [John 15](#).

⁷ [Psalms](#), Volume three, page 1128. By James Montgomery Boice.

godly – it sort of goes full circle – if the home honors the LORD He will in turn honor the home – nations are made of homes, it's that simple. The nation that contains godly families is in a position to be a blessing. All this starts from the dad who honors the LORD.

Some additional notes about family life in the godly home.

With a divorce rate that competes with the unbelieving world I feel that I must make some observations about the godly home that are, in my mind, important.

- Authority in the godly home is important. In fact if there is a lack of authority the Christian home will disintegrate. Read [Ephesians 5:22-30](#) for this. The father is the head of the household – period! Please do not get upset over this statement – rather read further on and see that along with authority comes responsibility. The relationship between the father and Christ is clear. Although the father is head – he is also the one who gives the most to his wife and family – to the point of sacrifice. Please note verses [28, 29](#): an interesting play on words is found here where the husband loves his wife as his own body and nourishes her accordingly. The word nourish here is more often used in conjunction with the mother who nourishes the child tenderly. Old Testament usage see especially LXX usage of this word refers to the rearing of the child including caring for the child before birth.⁸
- Right relationship with the Lord by all members of the home is important. Confession of personal sins before the Lord and then apology to offended family members goes a long way for maintaining a godly family. I must say that utilizing 1 John 1:9 must **never** become “old hat” if I may use that expression. It is one of the important dynamics of any family that will keep it together.
- Submission to each other keeping in mind the order of “chain of command” is important. The father as head is to protect the soul of his wife – to be kind but not a wimp. He must maintain authority over the children in his home but not to exasperate the with bullying or unreasonable rules (see [Eph 6:4](#)). **Children – no matter how old they are must obey their parents – they must honor their parents** – read [Eph 6:1-3](#).⁹
- Finally, honor is the byword in a godly home. Read [Rom 12:10; 1 Thess 4:4](#) including Eph 6:1-3 and many other passages, Garry Smalley a family relationship minister of note puts a big emphasis on honoring each other in the family. He maintains that this simple practice of honoring each other is the basis for the godly, successful family.

⁸ See notes on *ektrepho* in [THE COMPLETE BIBLICAL LIBRARY](#), Delta - Epsilon volume, pg 362.

⁹ As children move out from mom and dad's home there is a different relationship – that of independence. But that doesn't excuse them from responsibility of honoring their parents.