

Family: Building a Home God's Way

“Unless the LORD builds the house, those who build it labor in vain.” –Psalm 127:1

Let's begin with this thought: Only the Lord can build a family. You say, “Wait. This verse isn't talking about families. This is talking about building a house.” Well, this is not a course on Basic House Construction 101. This is about building families. And what Psalm 127:1 has to say about building families is this: it is impossible to build a family without God. Not only is it impossible, it is very painful... as you or those you know may have experienced. All of us have experienced this to some degree. It is a very painful process to try to build a family without God. True or false? The pain that results from that can be devastating to people and so I bring this good news to you: Unless the *Lord* builds the house... Unless the Lord builds the house... “*Unless the LORD builds the house, those who build it labor in vain.*”

HAVING IT ALL ISN'T ENOUGH

A recent article from the *Wall Street Journal* states that apparently some people are waking up to the need for God. The article was entitled, “Can You Go Back?” Subtitle, “More Professionals Returning To Church. Having It All Isn't Enough”. Here is an excerpt from the article about a man they interviewed named Kenny: “He's got a job with the top brokerage firm in L.A. A \$600,000 bachelor pad; a blue Jaguar with vanity plates. He's even a master skydiver. But last year he felt he needed something more. I thought, ‘Here I am. Forty-five years old and my life isn't going anyplace. I have a penthouse in Westwood; the right kind of car; and my life is empty,’ he says. So he did something really radical. He went back to church. Many people once felt the need for formal relationship

with God only when they got married or had babies or were about to die. Now people in their 40s and 50s are finding themselves at the peak of their careers, wealthy from the stock market, and still feeling something's missing." The article concludes, "After talking to many of these people, they were dissatisfied. They have landed on the moon and they're saying, 'Is this all there is?'" Many are returning in large numbers to God, hopefully embracing this truth: "Unless the LORD builds the house, those who build it labor in vain."

Now here's the truth. Your hopes and dreams for your family—all of it is so incredibly dependent upon God. Maybe as you read this, you are looking back through the history of your own life. All the milk that was spilt and the problems that went awry because of the fact that you didn't plug into this basic fundamental truth of Christian living: "Unless the LORD builds the house, those who build it labor in vain."

BUILDING A HOME IN VAIN

So in what ways do we try to build our families without God? Here's three:

1. *Through human effort.* "I'm a manly man. I get up every morning. I'm going to build my family. I have dreams and I'm going to make them happen. I'm going to work sixty-five hours a week and take short vacations with a cell phone in hand. I'm going to push my wife and I'm going to push my kids. I'm going to say things to my family like, 'The Smiths are winners. Without exception. Don't forget it. Now go out into the world and make us proud.' Just drive that point home and I will build my family through my own effort." That's a very bad plan.

2. *Through human wisdom.* Now I think we're probably all aware that the world's got a whole lot of ideas about how to build a family. But what breaks my heart is when I see the followers of Jesus Christ turning to the world for answers on how to build their families. I don't understand that. Let me just give you some examples of worldly wisdom available for you on building your

family. “Don’t let your kids cry when they’re babies. Don’t spank them when they’re small children. When they’re teenagers, give them lots of condoms and lots of privacy.” Am I telling you the truth? That’s what the world says on how to raise a family. Read up. See what it says. I wrote this down: “Looking to the world for how to build a family is like looking to Mrs. O’Leary’s cow for a Fire Protection Plan.” Bad plan.

3. Through human resources. “I know. We will buy our family. We’ll make lots of money and we’ll give our kids everything they want. We’ll put them through college and we’ll pay for their wedding and their honeymoon and the down payment on their first home.” This plan leaves a lot of broken hearts. A lot of destroyed lives. Someone trying to buy a family...very bad plan.

BUILDING YOUR HOME GOD’S WAY

“Unless the LORD builds the house, those who build it labor in vain.” This passage is not condemning human effort; it’s condemning effort apart from God. There’s a big difference there. So do you want the Lord to build your family? Do you? Because if you do, this is how you do it:

1) *Invite Christ into the center of your life.* Revelation 3:20 says, “Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in...” Christ cannot be the center of your home unless He is first center of your life. If you’d like to invite Christ into the center of your life, just pray this simple prayer with me right now from your heart:

Lord Jesus, I know that I am a sinner. I know that I have broken Your laws and I deserve only Your judgment. But I believe that Jesus died to pay the penalty for my sins. I believe that. So today I confess Christ as my Lord and Savior. I invite Him into the center of my life to be the Forgiver of my sins and the Savior of my soul. Lord Jesus, wash me and purify me. Cleanse my heart. Give me the strength I need to live now for You as one of Your followers.

Now if you’ve prayed that prayer in Jesus’ name, I promise you—

based on the authority of God's Word—that He heard you.

2) *Invite Christ into the center of your home.* You say, “Well I’m not the leader.” That’s all right. You’re the one who is reconciled to your Lord. You be the spiritual leader for your home. Invite Christ into the center of your home with this prayer:

Lord I acknowledge before You that I have been trying to build my home, my marriage, my family, my future in my own strength. I ask for Your forgiveness for that. I want to be a parent who depends upon You, who looks to Your Word for guidance, and who draws upon Your strength for victory. So, Lord, I give my family to You and ask You to be the Ruler and the Lord of my home. Make us a family in Your own way and in Your own time. Make us a family that loves You and follows You and serves You with whole hearts. May today be a turning point in my life for I determine that as for me and my house we will serve the Lord. You are a great and faithful God. We acknowledge Your goodness and we worship You today, risen Lord Jesus Christ, alive for us and for our families. Amen.

∴ CROSSWAY

Copyright © 2001 — 2013 Crossway. All rights reserved.

To learn more about Good News Tracts, visit www.goodnewstracts.org.