

STRENGTHENING YOUR GRIP

HOW TO BE GROUNDED IN A CHAOTIC WORLD

STUDY SIXTEEN

Strengthening Your Grip on the Family

Psalms 127–128

I've discovered that if we're not careful, we'll spend our days preoccupied in a squirrel cage of activities and endless distractions. Instead, let's ask ourselves, "Why not spend some quiet time with one of my kids or grandkids?" Or maybe ask, "Shouldn't my family get my undivided attention for a change?" I'm suggesting it's time for us to take time.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

To build a house, workers must clear the land, level the ground, and dig trenches for the foundation walls. They pour concrete into steel-reinforced forms and wait for it to cure. And then, the framing begins—the walls, the floors, the roof trusses. Every stage takes days, weeks, or months and significant labor. Intricate instructions, heavy lifting, precise sawing, and nailing—building a house is hard work!

Building a *home* is even harder work. Raising a family in today's world is much more challenging than any construction project. Prioritizing family amid our busy schedules, maintaining good communication, and resisting selfish passions are not optional! We need an infallible blueprint, a foundation stronger than concrete, and a sturdy frame that will help all members withstand life's storms. To understand, build, and preserve the architecture of a home, we must regularly consult the Master Builder.

To strengthen our grip on what God intended for the family, we'll open our heavenly Father's construction manual—the Scriptures—and search for timeless principles in Psalms 127 and 128. These two ancient hymns offer a plan that can help us make our families strong.



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Psalms 127–128



PREPARE YOUR HEART

Prepare your heart to receive God's precious Word. As the psalmist David pleads,

*The commandments of the LORD are right,
bringing joy to the heart.*

*The commands of the LORD are clear,
giving insight for living. (Psalm 19:8)*

In your own words, ask the Holy Spirit to revive your soul and fill you with wisdom, joy, and insight for living as you study God's Word.



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

The Jewish pilgrims would sing their beliefs in songs as they went up to the temple mount in Jerusalem for religious festivals. The collection of fifteen Songs of Ascent in *Psalms 120–134* echo their pilgrimage of faith as they ascended the dusty hillside to worship.

Psalm 127, attributed to King Solomon, emphasizes the futility of human activity without God's blessing in the home. In *Psalm 128*, the psalmist builds upon that theme—highlighting that strong families constitute the structure of a moral society and a blessed nation.



Observation: God's Infallible Blueprint for the Family

Use your observational skills to explore the Architect's manual for His blueprint for the family.¹ Begin with a careful reading of *Psalms 127 and 128*. Note the four stages of family life: the foundational stage, the expansion stage, the child-rearing stage, and the stage beyond the home.

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Laying The Foundation—Psalm 127:1–2

Any home must rest on a firm foundation, both structurally and spiritually. As a newlywed couple begins their family, what principle must be central, according to *Psalm 127:1–2*? Note the words that are repeated. What do these verses emphasize? What roles does only the Lord fill?

When you have Jehovah as the central focus of your home, you can be sure that even in your sleep, He will give you the things you need.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Expanding on the Foundation—Psalm 127:3–5

How does God refer to children in *Psalm 127:3–5*? Note the four words that King Solomon used to describe children. What support beams of *value* and *identity* do these words set in place for children?

Child-Rearing Stage—Psalm 128:1–3

The psalmist draws an agricultural image to describe the child-rearing years. How are parents like orchard growers, according to *Psalm 128:1–3*? What are the blessings for parents “who fear the LORD” and “follow his ways” (Psalm 128:1)?

Your wife will be a “fruitful vine” type, but your children will be like little transplanted olive shoots, different from you and from your mate, men.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll

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Beyond the Home—Psalm 128:4–6

What about the empty-nest years after kids fly off to form their own families? An empty nest doesn't have to mean an empty life. Note the personal, corporate, and generational blessings. How would you summarize *Psalm 128:4–6*?

The Lord, Jehovah, is in the center. He does the training through your life. He does the loving through your heart. He does the releasing.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Interpretation: Understanding God's Plan for the Family

Use *interpretation* to find the meaning of God's plan for the family. In *Psalm 127:1–2*, King Solomon mentioned the futility of hard work to build a home without God. How would you explain these verses to modern-day readers?

“Unless the Lord Jesus Christ,” we would say today, “is brought into focus and is in constant emphasis during the beginning stages of the formation of that home, so much of it is in vain.” The only way to describe the meaning of the word vain is for you to just sort of let out a deep, guttural sigh, the sound that is heard in the hurting heart in most homes of America today. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Children are “a gift of the LORD,” “the fruit of the womb,” “a reward,” and “arrows in the hand of the warrior” (Psalm 127:3–4 NASB). How does the word *gift* help you understand God's perspective of children?

The Hebrew word for “gift” means “possession” or “property.” In other words, children are God's property, assigned to parents. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

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What does the phrase “fruit of the womb” express about raising children?

“The fruit of the womb” conveys the idea of that which takes care and time and nurturing and cultivation. It suggests attention, not neglect. It suggests interest, not irritation. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

What does the phrase “arrows in the hand of the warrior” teach about parents’ responsibilities toward their children?

You send it on its way so that it strikes the mark. And that reveals skill, time, attention, the cultivation of the skill, for which there is no school. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Explore the difference between Israel’s social structure and individualistic Western societies. Look up “*family life and relations*” in the free *Baker’s Evangelical Dictionary* at biblestudytools.com. Explain why these ancient people regarded a large family as a blessing from God.

“Blessed is the man whose quiver is full” of children (Psalm 127:5 NASB). “Blessed is everyone who fears the LORD” (Psalm 128:1 NASB). Explore the definition of *blessedness* in a Bible dictionary. How would you explain this term to a friend? What makes a family “blessed”?

Keep Christ at the center. See children as God’s precious gifts. Take time to teach them, guide them, pray for them, and show them through your love just how much God loves them.

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Correlation: The Family's Architect and Master Builder

God created the family. He saw Adam's loneliness and formed Eve from one of Adam's ribs after putting him to sleep (*Genesis 2:18–25*). Paraphrase Adam's joyful response when he saw his wife for the very first time (*2:23*).

Note the emotional, physical, and social tensions that Adam and Eve's disobedience brought to their home in *Genesis 3*. *Genesis 4:1–16* records the first pregnancies and the first children. Also notice the first murder. How does the fall impact our families?

The book of Proverbs is a rich source of practical wisdom for all stages of family life. *Proverbs 1:8–19* reports a father taking time to tell his son to embrace wisdom and resist peer pressure. *Proverbs 31:1–9* narrates a mother advising her son, a king, to be sober, fair, and an advocate for the poor and needy. What do both conversations emphasize about child-rearing?

God's blueprint for the family has His person and principles at its center. Spirit-led lives display mutual submission, sacrificial love, truthful instruction, and gracious interactions. How can we put into action these biblical principles? Let's find out.

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Application: Follow God’s Blueprint for the Family

In an era where the family regularly faces various spiritual and social storms, following God’s blueprint is crucial. What immediate steps can you take to put the Lord first in your family?

The Lord needs to be first. Be careful, be certain that Jehovah is put into the controls of your home early on. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Whether you’re a parent, grandparent, aunt, or uncle, you can communicate to the children in your family three key messages from Psalms 127 and 128: “You are a gift and reward,” “You are worth guiding,” and “You bring joy.” Share these gems of encouragement with your child and watch his or her eyes sparkle! In what ways can you communicate these messages?

Perhaps your family does not look like Psalms 127 and 128. How can you unload your cares and worries to God? Or perhaps God has never blessed you with children or with a spouse. If you’ve trusted in Christ, you are part of God’s family, the church. How can you rejoice over your heavenly Father’s love for you?

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In this *Searching the Scriptures* Bible studies series, we've strengthened our grip on sixteen subjects: priorities, involvement, encouragement, purity, money, integrity, discipleship, aging, prayer, leisure, missions, godliness, attitudes, evangelism, authority, and family. Do you have a tighter hold on these truths? Have you grown more confident in God's plan for your life? In what ways have you grown?

Strengthening your grip on biblical truth is a lifelong endeavor. Pick out a subject to review from time to time. Keep filling your mind with God's Word, and He will help you each step of the climb. Even though your spiritual grip might slip, remember, your heavenly Father will never let you go.



A FINAL PRAYER

Heavenly Father, thank You for adopting me into Your family. What an honor to have a perfect, loving, and caring Father! Thank You for Your protection, Your provision, Your guidance, and Your love! Thank You for Your precious Word that revives my heart and fills me with wisdom, joy, and insight for living. Help me to love my family sacrificially, to give them my undivided attention, to speak to them truthfully, and to interact with them graciously. In Jesus' name.

ENDNOTE

1. To learn more about Pastor Chuck Swindoll's *Searching the Scriptures* Bible-study method, go to the web page, "[How Does Pastor Chuck Swindoll Study the Bible?](#)"

For the 2025 broadcasts, this *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study was developed by Mirlenda Noëlliste in collaboration with Bryce Klabunde, vice president of *Searching the Scriptures* Ministries, based upon the original outlines, charts, and transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages. Copyright © 1981, 2025 by Charles R. Swindoll, Inc. All rights are reserved worldwide. Duplication of copyrighted material for commercial use is strictly prohibited.

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