

## Psalm 127

Psalm 127 tells us that **all worthwhile things come directly from God**. That includes whatever we are trying to build or maintain. That also includes our efforts to build a blessed family. The bible describes our substance and impact in this world like early morning condensation or *a morning mist*. It is just there for a moment and then it disappears, leaving everything the same after it evaporates. Hopefully its presence is pleasant. God lets us experience a personal impact on this world; but in truth, it quickly vanishes. I have been in many situations where I developed what is called a *messiah complex*. That means I wondered how things would keep going without my involvement. It's humbling to see that things went much better without me than I thought.

*Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit"; whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that."* (James 4:13-15)

Abraham is given to us as the best example. His faith made him a super saint. He let God orchestrate his life and his incredible journeys. It is our nature to settle down; but God has tasks for us and developmental journeys.

Abraham was just prayerfully along for the ride. Naturally capable men like King Saul tried to be *superman*; but they were lacking in faith. They were head and shoulders above the competition.

To be honest, it's helpful to get in *over your head* from time to time, in order to see how involved God is. He sends me allies with critical and timely information and solutions every day. All I have to do is process that information and take action.

### Human Limitations and God's Infinite Ability

**Read Psalm 127:1-2:** This psalm addresses how so many of us labor in vain. We get up early; and put all of our energy into our projects. It consumes our days and our awake hours. Worrying about tomorrow can keep me up at night. My life has many moving parts. We can certainly *try* to build a life for ourselves and our family on basic common sense and hard work. We can attempt to build a business with our natural skills and opportunities. Everyone in the world is doing these kinds of things to the best of their ability. Ultimately, our success or failure will

come down to God's will and his involvement. God has a plan; and it will be done, regardless of what I get wrapped up in.

We are told that God can *create*; but man can *only make* something.

*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. (Genesis 1:1)*

Blue Letter Bible lists the word used for *create* here in Hebrew as: **bārā'** (H 1254)

*Bara* is to craft something out of nothing. God is known for bringing things into existence that did not exist before. *Bara* refers to supernatural creation *ex nihilo* (Latin for "out of nothing"). The same is true in the New Testament. Faith involves enough intellectual honesty to see that I am not the one pulling all of these strings in my life. The New Testament references to God's original and ongoing creation similarly.

*(as it is written, "I **have made you** a father of many nations") in the presence of Him whom he believed—God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did; (Romans 4:17)*

***Tithēmi*** (G 5087) *To set something up or place it for use.*

Man cannot make something out of nothing. We do not have the power to bring things into existence. We are stuck *trying* to manipulate the first two Laws of Thermodynamics. God packed a fixed amount of energy into all things; and everything is wearing out.

**Law #1: The conservation of energy** (whatever energy you bring will never go away). If you bring fire to boil water; all of that energy is captured and remains in the steam and surrounding area.

**Law #2: Entropy.** Everything is in the process of breaking down and slowing down and decaying. Our planetary gravity and the rocks that have been formed are all wearing down and slowing down.

All that we can do is re-combine things and manage things to create a favorable result. In truth, we cannot even do that, without God behind the scenes. Adam did not make the trees; he managed them and took the fruit as he needed. We all are supposed to work to put food on the table. It is a blessing; or God would not have appointed it to us. The fruit trees are for us. The only thing that we have power over is obedience...that's really about it.

*Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it. (Genesis 2:15)*

For me; God seems to always honor my full attention and prayerful effort to a matter. I may not even make the right decisions; but God will take my misguided efforts and make me end up at the desired destination. He usually gives me personal contacts who are able and willing to help me get it done.

What does God think of what man can make? What God has made is good. We strive for significance; but God has told us to just manage his affairs on earth. Our extra touch or *flair* is not always a necessarily a good thing.

*Therefore it shall be, when you have crossed over the Jordan, that on Mount Ebal you shall set up these stones, which I command you today, and you shall whitewash them with lime. And there you shall build an altar to the LORD your God, an altar of stones; you shall not use an iron tool on them. You shall build with whole stones the altar of the LORD your God, and offer burnt offerings on it to the LORD your God. (Deuteronomy 27:4-6)*

Only under special circumstances does God have mankind craft something to please him. He gives us tools according to the job at hand.

*Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: “See, I have called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah. And I have filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, to design artistic works, to work in gold, in silver, in bronze, in cutting jewels for setting, in carving wood, and to work in all manner of workmanship. “And I, indeed I, have appointed with him Aholiab the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan; and I have put wisdom in the hearts of all the gifted artisans, that they may make all that I have commanded you: the tabernacle of meeting, the ark of the Testimony and the mercy seat that is on it, and all the furniture of the tabernacle— the table and its utensils, the pure gold lampstand with all its utensils, the altar of incense, the altar of burnt offering with all its utensils, and the laver and its base— the garments of ministry, the holy garments for Aaron the priest and the garments of his sons, to minister as priests, and the anointing oil and sweet incense for the holy place. According to all that I have commanded you they shall do.” (Exodus 31:1-11)*

The disciples were in awe of Herod’s temple and its huge stones. It was a miracle of human engineering and architecture. Jesus was not. In fact, he would let the

Romans tear it down. He was more excited about the little temple of love that Ezra had built.

*Then as He went out of the temple, one of His disciples said to Him, "Teacher, see what manner of stones and what buildings are here!" And Jesus answered and said to him, "Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone shall be left upon another, that shall not be thrown down." (Mark 13:1-2)*

### **How Do We Build?**

The first two verses of this psalm are widely quoted for ministry-building. Manmade marketing plans to fill the pews require effort to bring them in...and it will take effort and manipulation to try to keep them from leaving. Pastor Chuck Smith used to say that if you have to *win them* into the pews you will have to keep *winning them* to stay. It is better to draw close to God personally to get onto God's page. God already has the blueprint for his ongoing projects. We just naturally merge into his projects as we commune in the Holy Spirit.

*No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you. You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you. These things I command you, that you love one another. (John 15:15-17)*

That takes the pressure off. All I have to do is draw close to God and wait for further instruction. Sometimes I draw close to God; but I take action before God answers my question. We can get *trigger happy*, and get out there to *save the day* when God has not instructed us to.

*Saul reigned one year; and when he had reigned two years over Israel, Saul chose for himself three thousand men of Israel. Two thousand were with Saul in Michmash and in the mountains of Bethel, and a thousand were with Jonathan in Gibeah of Benjamin. ... Then the Philistines gathered together to fight with Israel, thirty thousand chariots and six thousand horsemen, and people as the sand which is on the seashore in multitude. And they came up and encamped in Michmash, to the east of Beth Aven. When the men of Israel saw that they were in danger (for the people were distressed), then the people hid in caves, in thickets, in rocks, in holes, and in pits. And some of the Hebrews crossed over the Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead. As for Saul, he was still in Gilgal, and all the people followed*

*him trembling. Then he waited seven days, according to the time set by Samuel. But Samuel did not come to Gilgal; and the people were scattered from him. So Saul said, “Bring a burnt offering and peace offerings here to me.” And he offered the burnt offering. Now it happened, as soon as he had finished presenting the burnt offering, that Samuel came; and Saul went out to meet him, that he might greet him. And Samuel said, “What have you done?” (1 Samuel 13 various verses)*

Saul went through the motions of honoring God; but in the end he was the only pilot driving. Abraham is our prime example of faith; and yet even he got sucked into a plan to help God out and make a baby outside of God's plans. The result of that is still being felt by millions of Arabs and Jews to this day. God puts in over our heads for a reason.

There are examples of men trying to copy what God is doing in their own abilities (and to their own glory). God uses mysterious and natural elements and random circumstances to accomplish his will. God does not need our marketing savvy or to be defended by any attorney. He is at work everywhere. The natural mind of man is not in tune with the timing and unknown directions of the Holy Spirit.

*And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force. (Matthew 11:12)*

*Therefore when Jesus perceived that they were about to come and take Him by force to make Him king, He departed again to the mountain by Himself alone. (John 6:15)*

*“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves. (Matthew 23:15)*

The bible shows us how to be successful builders of our own lives and how to rebuild the lives of others...and for that matter, how to do anything. **We need to begin by getting onto God's page.** We have to relax about our *great plans*; and be quiet before the LORD. We can spend too much time with the microphone than sitting by the speaker. God has told us to gather as a body of believers in unity of purpose. God will give us the tools to carry out his work according to the situation at hand in his timing. We cannot run his work.

*When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them*

*divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. (Acts 2:1-4)*

### **To What Degree Am I Spirit Led**

There is a word picture vision of the future found in Ezekiel 47. It is based on the millennial reign of Christ. A man is seen in the spring-fed river just outside of the new temple that is in Jerusalem. This man has a measuring line in his hand as he gradually goes forth from the temple into the world.

*Then he brought me back to the door of the temple; and there was water, flowing from under the threshold of the temple toward the east, for the front of the temple faced east; the water was flowing from under the right side of the temple, south of the altar. He brought me out by way of the north gate, and led me around on the outside to the outer gateway that faces east; and there was water, running out on the right side. And when the man went out to the east with the line in his hand, he measured one thousand cubits, and he brought me through the waters; the water came up to my ankles. Again he measured one thousand and brought me through the waters; the water came up to my knees. Again he measured one thousand and brought me through; the water came up to my waist. Again he measured one thousand, and it was a river that I could not cross; for the water was too deep, water in which one must swim, a river that could not be crossed. (Ezekiel 47:1-5)*

The point is that he begins to face the world, after having just been with the LORD. In the beginning, he is taking *baby steps* and is standing in his own strength; with minimal influence from the Holy Spirit's outflowing river. In obedience, he goes further into deeper water, and loses some level of control...as the river pushes him towards his destiny. As he continues to faithfully step out, he finds himself completely directed by the flowing river. This is a perfect picture about God being in more control instead of us. We might think that we are supposed to cross rivers; but sometimes God is telling us to just go with it. We are generally not comfortable not knowing where all of this will end up.

A classic example of a man who was following God's directions was Joshua. God gave him all kinds of tests to confirm who was making all of this military genius happen. He had priests blow horns as they spent a week circling around Jericho. That is about as counter intuitive as it gets. Even Joshua found himself grabbing the wheel back from God and taking control himself. He ran into a soldier with his sword drawn at Jericho. He asked the man if he was *with him* or *against him*. That

man just said “No”. Joshua was asking the wrong question altogether. He said that he was God’s General. In other words, Jesus had the plan, and it was being given little by little to Joshua as needed. We tend to relate to God by inferring: *Are you with me on this thing or not?* That should not be our question. It should be: *“What are you doing?” “How can I help?”*

*And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, a Man stood opposite him with His sword drawn in His hand. And Joshua went to Him and said to Him, “Are You for us or for our adversaries?” So He said, “No, but as Commander of the army of the LORD I have now come.” (Joshua 5:13-14)*

**Read Psalm 127:3-5:** Human life is precious to God. A day is coming when the universe and the earth will be burned up; and nothing will be left except God and his people. All of the animals, all of nature and all of the planets will have served their purposes. We have the privilege to raise up the next generation.

Children are compared to arrows in a quiver. There could be a number of reasons that children are like arrows. You *carry them on your back* until it is their time to fly away. They are supposed to go far beyond our own footsteps and accomplish things that we were never able to get to. Our job is to try to help them figure out a target that suits them. We need to point them in the right direction. Being reckless with a youth can become hazardous to whomever they encounter. I nicknamed our daughter *my little arrow*. My prayer for her was to have a faith that far exceeded my own. I prayed that God would use her in a much greater way and use her much more in his kingdom. God has answered that prayer.