

The Blueprint of a Kingdom Man: Psalm 128

In the early 1700s, a Puritan Preacher by the name of Jonathan Edwards married a young Christian lady by the name of Sara. They were blessed with 11 children. The Lord used Jonathan and his preaching to bring a spiritual revival to America, which has been called “The Great Awakening.” Even though Jonathan was a busy clergyman and president of Princeton College, every night before bedtime he and his wife would spend an hour conversing with their children and leading them in devotions and praying with and for each of them.

Around this same time a man by the name of Max Juke married and started a family in the state of New York. However, his character and worldview was completely opposite Mr. Edwards. He could be described as a man of the world who had no interest in following or loving Christ, or being involved in the church. He was also described as a heavy drinker.

About a 150 years after these 2 men died, some sociologists studied over a 1000 descendants of both men. Mr. Juke’s legacy included: 7 murderers, 60 thieves, 190 prostitutes, and 90 other convicted felons, 440 who were addicted to alcohol, and over 300 who died prematurely. Incarcerating many of his descendants cost the government 1.2 million dollars.

ON the other hand, Jonathan Edwards legacy included: 1 US Vice President, 3 US Senators, a dean of a law school and a dean of a medical school, 3 state governors, 13 college presidents, 30 judges, 60 doctors, 75 military officers, 80 public office holders, 100 lawyers, 100 pastors, and 285 college graduates. The Edwards family did not cost the government a single dollar.

What made the difference? Why did one family experience so much of the blessing and the favor of God, and the other family so much sorrow, pain and spiritual darkness? It all started in the hearts of these two men. It all started with a decision to the most important question in life—whose blueprint for life am I going to follow? One was a man of the world—who patterned his life after the world’s blueprint. The other man was a Kingdom Man—who patterned his life after God’s Blueprint and Kingdom principles. That decision determined not only the direction and destiny of these 2 men, but for most of their offspring for the next 4 or 5 generations to come. That is called the dominoes effect.

So, there is a major lesson in this story for all of us here—especially the men. If you choose to follow God’s blueprint, you will begin to experience the treasure chest of blessings that God has for you—and for those who come after you for generations to come. If not, you are on your own! So this morning, one week after Father’s Day, we are going to take a look at the Blueprint of a Kingdom Man (person), as given to us in Psalm 128. Before I go any further, I want to give credit to Tony Evans. Some of the thoughts expressed today are directly or indirectly taken from his book called “Kingdom Man.” Also, even though this sermon is directed at the men in our congregation, many of these Biblical principles are transferable to the ladies and the girls as well—because truth is truth no matter your age, gender, station in life. What makes a Kingdom Man?

1. A Kingdom Man Fears God (Takes God seriously). 128:1-2

This is where it all starts. This is the choice that changes the trajectory and destiny of one's life--to fear God. That is what Isaiah 33:6 states. **"The Lord will be the sure foundation for your times, a rich store of salvation and wisdom and knowledge; the fear of the LORD is the key to this treasure."** The fear of God is the key that unlocks the treasure chest of God's blessings.

So what does it mean to fear the LORD? There are 2 aspects of fearing God. First, it means to have a healthy dread or fear of God; because He hates my sin and must judge it. And secondly it is also an overwhelming sense of wonder and awe for God and his undeserved love for me. That love caused Him to send His perfect Son to the cross to take the punishment for my sin in my place. To fear God means to acknowledge that He is LORD over all of my life—it means to align myself, my thoughts, my actions and my words underneath His control and authority. Simply put, to fear God means to take God seriously, as opposed to taking him casually.

This is the consistent teaching of God's Word. For instance, I Peter 3:15 declares, **"But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord..."** And then in Romans 12:1 God's Word tells us, **"Therefore, I urge you brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship."** To fear God is to get off of the throne of your heart and set Jesus Christ as #1 in your life. He does not want your left-overs. He wants your best. He wants your whole heart, your whole life, your whole body.

Example: What so many men attempt to do is to offer up to the LORD of Hosts and the KING of Kings their leftovers, and then wonder why He isn't blessing them. That was my dad for the first 35 years of his life. He was a casual Christian—at best. He was always giving God his leftovers. If he had any time left over, then he would go to church. If he had some money left over then he would put some in the plate. If he had some energy left over, then he would volunteer to serve. And because of this attitude he never really experienced the blessings or the favor of God in his personal life. That is until he had an encounter with the living God. One day through the ministry of CBMC he committed his life to Christ. He realized he had been pursuing temporary treasures rather than the Greatest Treasure of all. So, he got out of the driver's seat of his life and set Jesus there. I remember when that happened. Everything changed, for him and for our family.

- He started attending church regularly and making sure we all got there too.
- He started attending adult Sunday School class and eventually led it.
- He became a student of God's Word. After chores he would read and study the Bible.
- He led us in daily devos and prayer every evening at the supper table.
- Mom was thrilled, because she no longer had to take the lead.
- We saw what Jesus had done in dad's life and wanted that too. One by one all 5 of us came to Jesus and committed our lives to Him!

God cannot nor will not bless a man who is casual with God. However, if you will take God seriously, if you will choose to fear God, if you will align yourself under His leadership and Lordship, then He promises to pour out His divine blessings, benefits and favor upon you. What are some of those blessings? Verse 2 spells some of them out.

So God says that if you fear Him and walk in His ways, then He will bless you with the fruit of your labor (you will have the capacity to enjoy the benefits of your labor), pour His favor on you, and promises a glorious future with Him forever. Caution: This is not talking so much about financial prosperity as it is about the condition of your eternal soul. And so the first step in becoming a Kingdom man is to fear God, and bring all of life underneath the umbrella of God's rule and reign.

2. **A Kingdom Man Blesses and Leads His Family.** Psalm 128:3

When a man does that (fears God) then not only does God pour out His blessing, favor and protection upon him, but He does so upon the entire family, beginning with his wife. When you operate as a kingdom man she will become a fruitful vine. So, becoming a kingdom man starts by fearing God, but then it continues by blessing your wife by providing spiritual leadership for her. How? Paul tells us in Ephesians 5 that we have a 2-fold responsibility of leadership to our wives.

First, the husband is to sacrificially serve his wife. Paul states in Ephesians 5:25 & 28, ***"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her..."*** A kingdom man does not dominate his wife, he serves her! Biblical love is much, much more than an emotion. It is a verb, an action word. Our love for our wives should look like Jesus' love for us. We had a need for salvation, forgiveness of sins, and Eternal life. Jesus met that need by laying down his life. We too need to sacrificially serve our wives and be ready to meet her needs. We may never be asked to lay our lives down, but we need to lay aside our agenda, our interests, our plans, in order to serve & care for her.

Secondly, the husband is to sanctify his wife. Look at Ephesians 5:26. ***"...to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the Word."*** Like Jesus died for us so that we could be made holy, so a Kingdom Husband is responsible for sanctifying his wife. Sanctification is the process of taking someone from where they are into what they ought to be. It means to become more and more like Jesus in character, behavior and attitudes. It means discipling her and helping her grow spiritually. How do we do that? By taking the spiritual lead in the marriage and providing a place where she is safe to grow and develop into the New Creation God made her to be. We can do that by praying for her and with her, reading and studying the Word together, attending worship and Bible study together, etc. Actually, husbands, you are to be your wife's Pastor. And so you need to be a student of the Word!

Example: Tony Evans shares the true story of his dad becoming a kingdom man by blessing and giving spiritual leadership to his wife. He writes the following in his book "Kingdom Man":

"After my dad became a Christian, my mom did everything she could to make his life difficult. My dad couldn't even read his Bible until after my mom went to sleep because she would make his life so miserable when he did. But my dad was committed to aligning himself under God, so my father did everything he could to show love to my mom in spite of how she treated him.

Rather than divorce her, he loved her unconditionally. Day after day and month after month, my mom tried anything and everything to knock my dad's focus off of God and to make him stop loving her. But nothing worked. My dad was calm, consistent, and caring.

Around midnight one night, my mom came down the stairs with tears in her eyes. My dad was reading his Bible. When he saw her tears, he asked her what was wrong. She told him that she could not understand how the more she rejected him, was unkind to him, and tried to prove that believing in God was wrong, the more kind he was to her and the more he invested in the Word. 'I want what you have,' she said, 'because it must be real.' They both instantly got down on their knees, and my dad led my mom to Christ!"

But a kingdom man not only gives spiritual leadership to his wife, he is also responsible to spiritually nurture and disciple his children. Psalm 128:3b says, "**Your children will be like olive shoots around your table.**" I have read that if olive shoots are properly cared for and nurtured for the first 15 years of their life, they will produce olives for over 2000 years. Like olive shoots, children need to be spiritually nurtured and cared for also (18 years). And Dad, guess whose responsibility that is? Your wife's? No. God has designed a family to be nurtured and disciplined by you! Take a look at Ephesians 6:4. "**Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the LORD.**"

Even more significant is the context of this spiritual nurturing. Notice where these shoots are nurtured in verse 3. It is "around the table." A Jewish father raised his family around the table. You see, the table was not just a place for eating. It was also a place for spiritual nurturing your family. This was a place the family sat every day for meals, and this is where and when the father spent time teaching, listening, training and leading his family in daily worship and instruction from the Word of God. The way that children are led and spiritually nurtured is around the table. And dad, that is your responsibility!

Example: Even though my father was a first generation follower of Jesus, and even though he came to faith in Christ in his late 30's, he got this right. Dad realized how important it was to be present at family meals and to sit down together at the dinner table. 99% of the time, dad was there with us around the dinner table. And 99% of the time he led us in family devotions, reading and instructing us from the Word of God, and then praying for us and with us. That is where my siblings and I learned what it means to follow Jesus. That was where we learned how to talk to God. That is where we learned how to love the LORD and how to live out our faith in Jesus in a hostile world. My dad was a kingdom man because he took seriously the spiritual leadership of our family. The problem is too many men (and sometimes families) are "too busy" to do life this way. As a result, our children are not being disciplined in the faith and they are following the world's blueprint rather than God's blueprint. Men, do not let the enemy of our souls and our families talk us into neglecting the table. This is where life training and spiritual nurturing takes place, and we connect with each other and with the LORD. Fathers, whether its breakfast, lunch or dinner, make the time to lead your family around the table. A Kingdom Man leads his family.

3. A Kingdom Man is Connected to and Engaged in the Local Church. Psalm 128:5a

"The Lord bless you from Zion." A kingdom man (person) realizes that there are great blessings from being connected to Zion. We saw in verse 1 that God pours certain treasures upon those who fear God

and take Him seriously. Now we see in verse 5 that there are additional blessings that come from God only by being connected to Zion.

Question: what is Zion? In the Old Testament, Zion is where God's presence was found. It referred to a Mountain—Mt. Zion. It also referred to a city, Jerusalem. And it referred to the temple, which was in Jerusalem, on the Mountain called Mt. Zion. Zion was the gathering place where a father took his family to worship Yahweh, receive instruction from the Word of God, to offer sacrifices and to fellowship with those who served the same King and belonged to the same Kingdom—God's Kingdom.

So Zion, in the New Covenant of Jesus, is the community of followers and believers in Jesus Christ. Read Ephesians 2:19-22. God never intended us to do the life of faith alone. He knew it would be impossible. So at the moment of salvation, He placed you and me like living stones, into the household of God. He placed us on a solid foundation of the Prophets and Apostles, with Jesus being the cornerstone. He placed us right alongside our brothers and sisters in Christ, so that we can do this life of faith together, and grow together into a holy temple, and be built into a dwelling place for God (pour His favor and blessings upon us). When a man intentionally connects with and is engaged with his brothers and sisters in Christ in the context of the church God is able to pour additional blessing and favor upon us. However, when a man neglects or abandons his local church, he misses out on the blessings or favor that God wants to bring to him, as well as through him to his family. And because of this it will either take you and your family longer to arrive at your Spiritual destiny, or you will never arrive at all.

Example: Most of you are familiar with what is called the HOV (Highway occupancy Vehicle) lane in most of the major cities. The HOV lane has been set aside only for the use of vehicles with more than one occupant. If you are ever traveling alone, then you will need to travel with all the other cars who are alone in the mess that they create. However, if someone is with you, you get to take the private route bypassing the traffic messes caused by the mass of cars—getting where you need to go faster than the rest of traffic would have allowed.

Men, God has a special lane for those of you who intentionally link yourself with others in the body of Christ. It is a lane that will allow you to go farther and faster in His Kingdom than you ever could on your own. It is His Church. The degree that you are connected to and engaged in church will determine to what degree God will pour out Heavenly treasure, spiritual blessing and power upon you and your family.

4. **A Kingdom Man Positively Impacts His Community and Country.** Psalm 128:5-6

“May you see the prosperity of Jerusalem all the days of your life! May you see your children's children! Peace be upon Israel!” When God gets the heart of a man, God can use that man to positively impact his community, and his country!

Have you noticed the progression of God's work? God always starts working in the heart of an individual—usually in a man. Because when a man begins to fear God and take God seriously, that will positively affect his wife, his children. When a family begins to come alignment underneath the

Lordship and rule of Christ, then our churches are filled with kingdom men and women, and when our churches are inhabited by Kingdom men and women, then they will be impacting our communities and our country for God's glory and the sake of God's Kingdom. That is God's blueprint for Kingdom men, kingdom women, and kingdom families. Have you noticed the gradual breakdown of our families, law and order, and our moral compass in America? The breakdown is basically a man problem. We have a shortage of kingdom men! We need more men who take God seriously! We need more men who align themselves under the Lordship and leadership of Christ!

Example: We need more men like Ezra! God used Ezra to bring revival to the nation of Israel. God used Ezra to turn their hearts back to Yahweh—one man at a time, one family at a time, one community at a time, until it became a national movement of God's Spirit. In Ezra 7:10 we read about this revival. ***For Ezra had set his heart to study the Law of the LORD, and to do it and to teach His (God's) statutes and rules to Israel.*** So men, I leave you with this question: Which blueprint do you choose? The worlds or God's? It is never too late. Your race is not over. Fight for your faith, your family, your church, your nation.