



**“UNLESS THE LORD...”**

PSALM 127:1-5

By Pastor Benny Ho

**Psalm 127: 1-5** – “Unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labour in vain. Unless the Lord watches over the city, the guards stand watch in vain. In vain you rise early and stay up late, toiling for food to eat - for he grants sleep to those he loves. Children are a heritage from the Lord, offspring a reward from him. Like arrows in the hands of a warrior are children born in one’s youth. Blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them. They will not be put to shame when they contend with their opponents in court.”

**Psalm 127:1** – “Unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labour in vain. Unless the Lord watches over the city, the guards stand watch in vain.”

To be self-sufficient seems  
empowering but it is an illusion.

# 3 KEY TRUTHS

1. THE VANITY OF SELF-RELIANCE

**Psalm 127:1** – “Unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labour in vain. Unless the Lord watches over the city, the guards stand watch in vain.”

# James Dobson:

“I have concluded that the accumulation of wealth, even if I could achieve it, is an insufficient reason for living. When I reach the end of my days, a moment or two from now, I must look backwards on something more meaningful than the pursuit of homes and land and machines and stocks and bonds. Nor is fame of any lasting benefit. I will consider my earthly existence to have been wasted unless I recall a loving family, a consistent investment in the lives of people or an earnest attempt to serve the God who made me. Nothing else makes much sense.”

"Unless the Lord watches over the city...", there is no real security.

**Lesson:** The Chinese people were so busy building the wall that they forgot to teach their children integrity.

**Psalm 127:2a** – “In vain you rise early and stay up late, toiling for food to eat...”

The psalmist calls this self-reliant striving “vain” or “empty, hollow, worthless or useless” because God is not in it!

# 3 KEY TRUTHS

1. THE VANITY OF SELF-RELIANCE
2. THE GIFT OF RESTEDNESS

**Psalm 127:2b** – “...for he grants sleep to those he loves.”

It is rooted in a deep theological conviction that God is sovereign, God is good, and He will bring His will to pass.

**Philippians 4:6,7** – “Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. <sup>7</sup> And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

Do you believe that our God is sovereign? Do you believe that our God is good? Do you believe that He can bring His will to pass?

# 3 KEY TRUTHS

1. THE VANITY OF SELF-RELIANCE
2. THE GIFT OF RESTEDNESS
3. THE GRACE OF RECEIVING

**Psalm 127:3** – “Children are a heritage from the Lord, offspring a reward from him.”

Solomon declared that our children are fundamentally a “heritage” or an “inheritance” and a “reward” bestowed by God.

**Psalm 127:1a** - “Unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labour in vain...”

**Psalm 127:4** – “Like arrows in the hands of a warrior are children born in one’s youth...”

**Psalm 127:1b** – “Unless the Lord watches over the city, the guards stand watch in vain...”

**Psalm 127:5** – “Blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them. They will not be put to shame when they contend with their opponents in court.”

They are not goals to achieve but  
they are gifts to receive.

They come from God's gracious  
giving and not our own grasping.

# William Ernest Henley: “Invictus”:

“Out of the night that covers me  
Black as the pit from pole to pole,  
I thank whatever gods may be  
For my unconquerable soul.

In the fell clutch of circumstance,  
I have not winced nor cried aloud.  
Under the bludgeoning of chance  
My head is bloody, but unbowed.

Beyond this place of wrath and tears  
Looms but the Horror of the shade,  
And yet the menace of the years  
Finds, and shall find me, unafraid.

It matters not how strait the gate,  
How charged with punishments the scroll,  
I am the master of my fate:  
I am the captain of my soul.”

**James 4:13-15** – “Now listen, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money.” Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Instead, you ought to say, “If it is the Lord’s will, we will live and do this or that.”

“In Christ alone, I place my trust  
And find my glory in the power of the Cross  
In every victory, let it be said of me  
My source of strength, my source of hope  
In Christ alone.”

"Unless the Lord..." is not a call to passivity. It is a call to a partnership.