

DEVOTION

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A man, a plan

read

“Unless the Lord builds the house,
the builders labor 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).

reflect

For most men, there’s something thrilling about the buzz of a table saw as it rips through a piece of timber. Men like to create things.

I never earned a woodworking badge, but I like to tinker in the garage from time to time. My most recent project was a “rustic” dining room table. I bought some lumber and glued it together to make the tabletop and began working on making a base for the tabletop. I had a rough plan on paper, but I thought I’d figure things out as I went.

As a result of not having a plan, or advanced woodworking skills, I ended up spending hours sanding the tabletop to try to get it level. The project took much longer than expected, and much of my labor was the result of not having a good plan before I started.

In the same way, if we as fathers try to build our families without God, it all will be in vain. God is the great Architect, and He has given us all access to His blueprints for our families: the Bible. We can follow His plan or we can wing it. In my case, winging it resulted in a table that looked way more rustic than intended.

It takes time to develop and follow a plan. It’s easy to get caught up in the busyness of life and just make it by day-by-day with no thought to your family’s future. And before you know it, your kids are all grown up.

As Joshua told the Israelites, we all have a choice whom we will serve.

“But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your

ancestors served beyond the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord” (Joshua 24:15).

“As for me and my household, we will serve the Lord” is a simple yet powerful statement. Fathers have a great responsibility to be the adults they want their children to become.

The Psalmist compares children to arrows. Having a full quiver is a blessing, not a burden. But fathers must instill the fear of the Lord in their children from an early age so that they will fly straight and true when they are sent out into the world like arrows.

“Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it” (Proverbs 22:6).

respond

- ▶ What specific steps can you take to be a better father?
- ▶ How can you make your family more Christ-centered?
- ▶ What’s the most important lesson to teach children?

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