

## Labor In The Lord

*“Unless the Lord builds the house, They labor in vain who build it; Unless the Lord guards the city, The watchman stays awake in vain. It is vain for you to rise up early, To sit up late, To eat the bread of sorrows; For so He gives His beloved sleep”* (Psalm 127:1-2)

This entire Psalm is rich with familiar and often quoted phrases. Not only are these much used, but they are much abused and misapplied. It will be helpful to note what is **not** taught here:

1. That one should not engage in building work. That things and people should not be “built up”, increased, solidified, or made secure.
2. That we should take no security precautions. For persons, houses, or communities. No walls, fences, sentries. That we should not watch, pray, be vigilant.
3. That we should retire early and sleep late. That it is spiritual to wallow around carelessly, spend large portions of our day in lazy sloth.

What is taught here:

A key word in the text is “vain”. We are being told that God is the **effective** factor in all enterprise. What we attempt to accomplish, procure and secure without Him will all be futile, empty and useless, irrespective of how hard, earnest and diligent we apply ourselves to it.

We must not consider ourselves “builders”. Builders rejected Christ, the Chief Cornerstone because He did not fit into their plans. On the other hand, we are agents of the One Builder, God. As such we are taught to be responsible, diligent, and industrious. But only God’s favor, blessings, and providence will see anything accomplished, and make it prosper.

In vain shall we buck God! As we cannot bring anything into being, no more can we hold it, secure it, protect it. Only God can do that, and He can **invincibly** safeguard it. We are taught to watch over and care for people and things, to not squander the resources with which God has entrusted us, to be good stewards of them. But if God is ready to tear down, abolish, to bring something to an end, we shall not prevail against Him. Hard, tireless labor, night and day vigil, pouring all our resources and strength into the project to keep it going will not save it.

Therefore we should joyfully, diligently, heartily pursue our responsibilities with an eye to our Master’s empowering Hand, and approving Countenance. Then when we have done all that we understand to be our duties and privileges, lie down and sleep and rest in peace. That is what it is to “enter into His rest.” Don’t take your anxieties to bed with you. He who keeps Israel does not slumber nor sleep. Nothing can be lost.

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