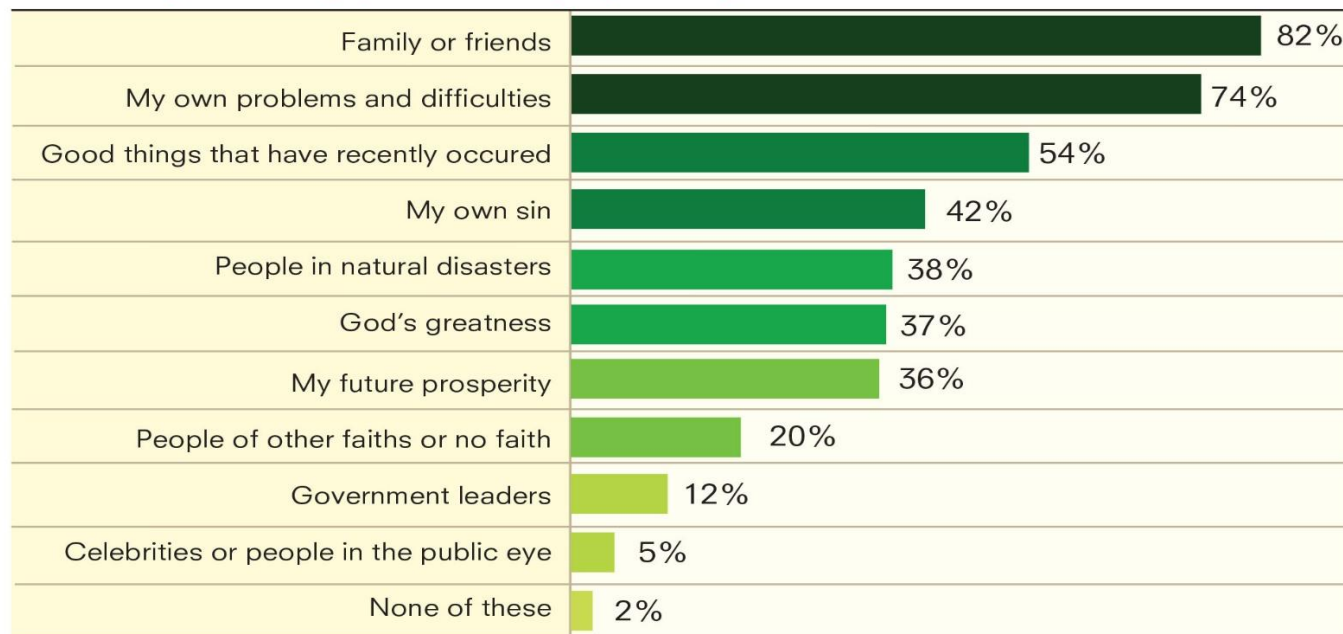


Pray the Bible: Pray for Family Psalm 127 FBC Canton Sunday am February 8, 2026

Introduction: Family needs are the hardest needs.

Among Americans who pray:

People typically pray for ...



LifeWayResearch.com

Note: Participants could select all that apply



Psalms of Ascent were to be sung as you went to Jerusalem 3x/year.

There are 15 of them...Psalm 120 to 135

- 1. Preparing your heart to worship takes time.**
- 2. Going with your family to worship is priority.**
 - a. It is best for your family, your community and your nation.
- 3. Worship is the high ground of your family's week.**

As you read your bible, you will pray your bible:

End aimlessness, begin focus
End boredom, begin strategy
End repetition, begin making sense
Become confident you are praying God's will.
Become certain of what the bible really says.
Become effective availing much.
Become consistent over time.

Let's pray for our families today....

I. The Lord builds based on obedience. V. 1, Matthew 7:24-27

²⁴ "Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: ²⁵ and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. ²⁶ "But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: ²⁷ and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall."

a. Obedience flows from the fear of the Lord.

Clear off for the foundation.

i. In vain:

1. Self-reliance. Colossians 2:6-7 "Rise up early, stay up late."

6 As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, 7 rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.

2. Busyness. Ephesians 2:19-22 "Bread of sorrows."

Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, 20 having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, 21 in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, 22 in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

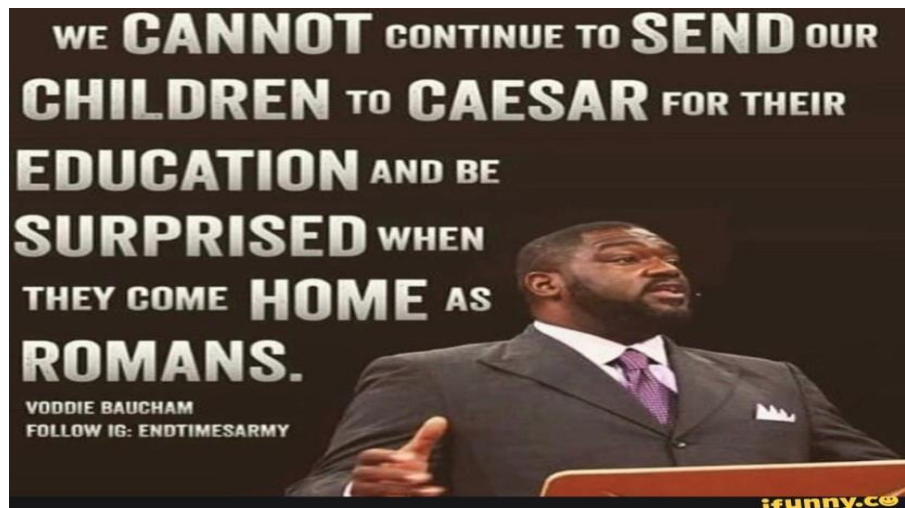
b. The Lord is the original life 360 guard. Psalm 139

i. Watchmen always warn knowing real dangers exist:

1. Digital raising.

Many parents are losing the battle against technology. Screens have become a normal part of our everyday lives. It is common to see young children consumed with phones, iPads, and televisions. From birth, screens are introduced to entertain, pacify, and occupy children. In many social environments, parents often rely on these devices to distract and quiet their toddlers. However, according to the World Health Organization (WHO), infants and toddlers should avoid screen time entirely until after 2 years of age, and children under 5 should have no more than one hour per day. This starkly contrasts with the norms of modern culture, making it feel like an uphill battle for parents. Nevertheless, I urge parents to remain vigilant in their role. Don't let technology raise your child.

2. Village raising.



a.

c. Beloved believers rest in the Lord. Matthew 11:28-30

iv. "If it is a vain act to build a house without God or watch over a city without depending on God to preserve it, then it is even greater folly to try to raise a family without God." (Boice)

II. Children; first casualties of a faulty foundation. V. 3-5

a. Heirlooms are theological gifts, not biological guarantees.

We are not reproducing at a rate to replace. We are getting married later, because we have downplayed the importance of marriage. We are not eating food, we are eating ultra-processed foods and therefore not healthy enough to reproduce.

i. What to do when the quiver is not full. Isaac, Samuel, Samson, John the Baptist

b. Arrows must be shaped and launched intentionally.

i. Holiness is the goal, not happiness.

1. When parent's goal is to make kids happy, then the child is less tolerant and more fearful.
2. There is no shame for the parents of a holy child.
3. The enemy of our souls, and their souls, will be silent by holiness.

- They must be carefully shaped and formed.
- They must be guided with skill and strength.
- They must be given care or they will not fly straight.
- They must be aimed and given direction; they will not find direction on their own.
- They are, in some respects, only launched once.
- They are an extension of the warrior's strength and accomplishment.

- They have potential for much good or evil.

i. **Like arrows**: “This similitude importeth that children must have more in them than nature; for arrows are no arrows by growth, but by art; so they must be such children, the knottiness of whose nature is refined and reformed, and made smooth by grace; and then they are cared for.” (Trapp)

iii. “We shall see them shot forth into life to our comfort and delight, if we take care from the very beginning that they are directed to the right point.” (Spurgeon)

c. Individual accountability to build and watch. I Corinthians 3:11-15

¹¹ For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. ¹² Now if anyone builds on this foundation *with* gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, ¹³ each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. ¹⁴ If anyone's work which he has built on *it* endures, he will receive a reward. ¹⁵ If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

Conclusion: Pray over families.

Fertility in the United States Is Below Replacement

March 4, 2025 19 min read [Download Report](#)



[Jonathan Abbamonte](#)

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SUMMARY

The total fertility rate in the U.S. has been below replacement for the past half-century. Childbearing in the U.S. transitioned to later in life and women are having fewer children. Decades of declining and sub-replacement fertility has caused the U.S. population to age. The total fertility rate is below replacement even after adjusting for the timing in births, an indication that women are unlikely to have the number of children that will result in population replacement. The fertility rate in the U.S. is not predicted to rise above replacement. Even so, the U.S. population is not expected to decline before 2100. But without a return to above replacement fertility, the U.S. will be dependent on immigration to prevent population contraction.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

The fertility rate in the U.S. is below replacement and is unlikely to rise above replacement-level fertility in the near future.

Decades of fertility decline and sub-replacement fertility in the U.S. has caused the population to age.

If fertility in the U.S. does not rebound, there is a possibility the population could contract before the end of the century.

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For decades, the total fertility rate in the United States has been below the replacement fertility rate—the level of fertility necessary for the current generation to replace itself.

Fertility is a key component of population dynamics. Along with mortality and migration, fertility plays a role in determining everything from population growth to the age structure of the population. Population dynamics, in turn, have important implications for economic growth, the size of the labor force, the solvency of Social Security and Medicare, old-age and child dependency, and population ageing.

High levels of immigration in the U.S. have so far largely staved off the effects of sub-replacement fertility. Population projections from the U.S. Census Bureau and the United Nations Population Division disagree as to whether the U.S. population will continue growing through 2100 or will begin declining before the end of the century. Without a substantial increase in fertility, the United States will continue to be increasingly dependent on immigration to slow down population ageing and prevent population contraction.

The following charts illustrate the state of fertility in the United States and projections for future trends in fertility.

The Total Fertility Rate: The Standard Measure of Fertility

The most common measure for fertility is the period total fertility rate. The period total fertility rate is the number of children that women on average are on pace to have if current age-specific fertility rates remain the same as women age through their reproductive years.¹

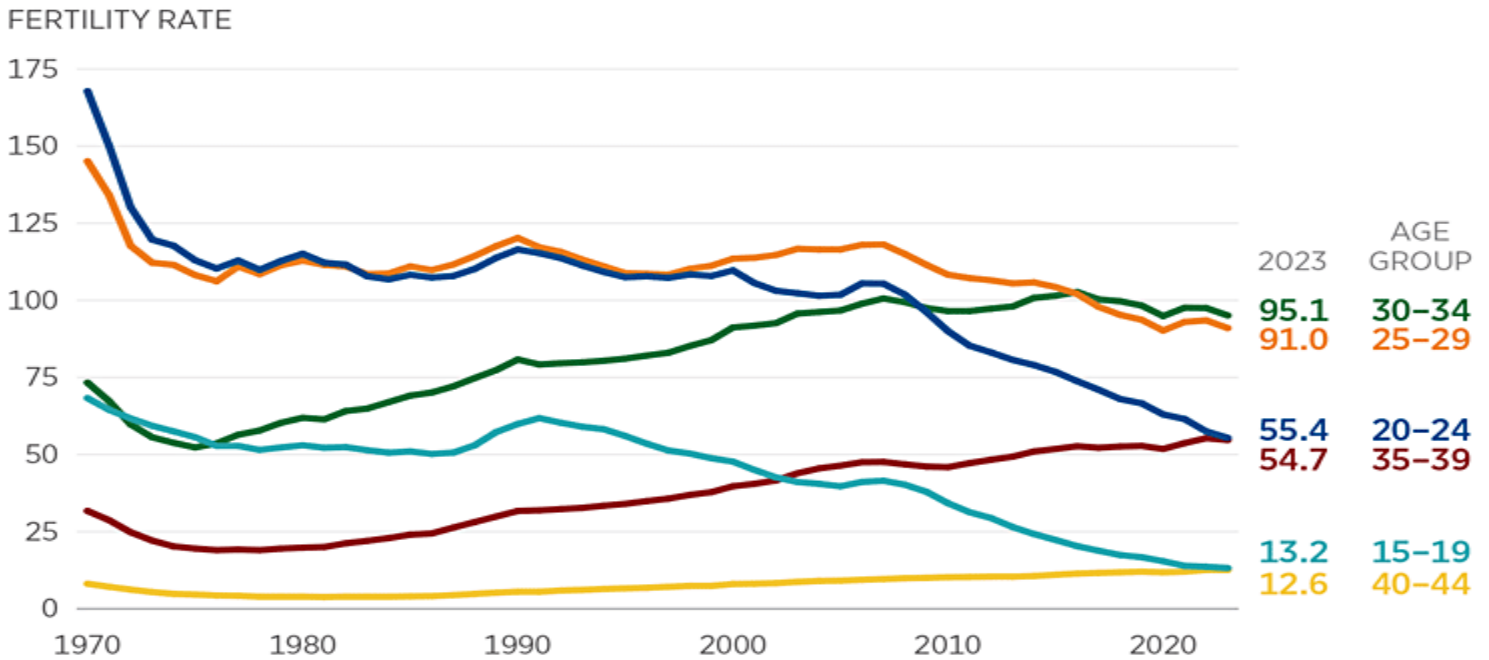
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It is an estimate of the average number of children per woman throughout their reproductive lifetime.

A key assumption of the total fertility rate is that women will continue to have children at the same rates at each age as seen in the observation year. But age-specific fertility rates change over time. In the United States, women in their twenties 10 years ago had more children than women currently do in their twenties. And women now in their thirties are likely to have more children than women in their thirties did 10 years ago. Over the past several decades, women in the U.S. have gradually delayed having children. This has caused fertility rates for women under 30 to gradually fall, and fertility rates for women over 30 to gradually rise. Chart 1 shows age-specific fertility rates by five-year age groups in the United States since 1970.


CHART 1

Age-Specific Fertility Rates by Five-Year Age Groups in the U.S.



NOTE: Prior to 1985, the National Center for Health Statistics based age-specific fertility rates on a 50 percent sample of births in some states.

SOURCES: National Center for Health Statistics. For more information, see appendix.

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The total fertility rate is not able to capture these changes in age-specific fertility rates over time. When women delay childbearing, the total fertility rate will tend to understate the number of children that women have by the end of their reproductive years. By contrast, when women transition to childbearing at earlier ages, the total fertility rate will tend to overestimate the completed number of children per woman.

Adjusting for the Timing of Births

Demographers have developed methods to measure fertility in ways that account for changes in fertility that occur as a result of changes in the timing of births. The Bongaarts–Feeney tempo-adjusted total fertility rate is perhaps the most widely used adjusted measure of total fertility. The Bongaarts–Feeney method²

[adjusts the birth-order-specific total fertility rate](#)³

[for changes in the mean age at birth at each birth order.](#) This accounts for the pace at which women on average are progressing through the number of children they are having.

Because the tempo-adjusted fertility rate adjusts for the timing of births, it is often a more accurate measure of the number of children women will have over their lifetimes.

The tempo-adjusted total fertility rate is plotted against the period total fertility rate in Chart 2.

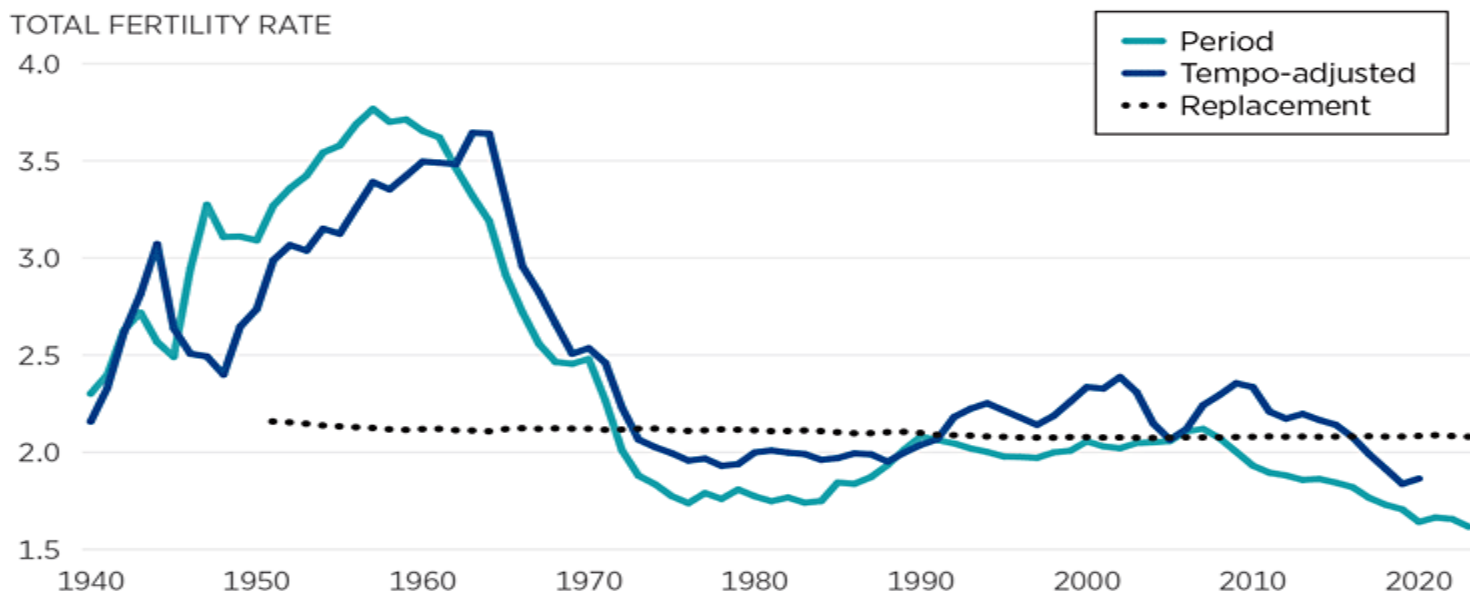
Since 2007, the tempo-adjusted fertility rate has been higher than the total fertility rate. This is an indication that women are delaying childbearing. As a result, the average number of children per woman will likely end up being higher than what the period total fertility rate appears to indicate.

The only time in the past 50 years that the total fertility rate has been above replacement was in 2006 and 2007. Since then, the total fertility rate has been below replacement. And while the tempo-adjusted fertility rate has historically been higher, since 2016, even the tempo-adjusted fertility rate has fallen below replacement.

Some of the decline in the total fertility rate in recent years has been due to women postponing births, but fertility is not declining as a result of postponement alone. Births postponed are becoming births forgone. As the tempo-adjusted fertility-rate time series appears to indicate, even after accounting for fertility postponement, the fertility rate is still below replacement. As a result, women who are currently in their childbearing years are unlikely to have the number of children that will result in population replacement by the end of their childbearing years.

CHART 2

Total Fertility Rate and Tempo-Adjusted Total Fertility Rate in the U.S.



SOURCES: National Center for Health Statistics; Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research and Vienna Institute of Demography; United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs; and author's calculations. For more information, appendix.

Cohort Fertility

The total fertility rate and tempo-adjusted total fertility rate are hypothesized measures of fertility based on the age-specific fertility rates in the period observed. These measures do not indicate how many children women, on average, actually end up having. In order to ascertain the actual average number of children per woman, it is necessary to resort to cohort fertility.

The most definitive measure of cohort fertility is the completed cohort fertility rate. The completed cohort fertility rate is the number of children per woman in a cohort when the cohort reaches 50 years of age. This measure indicates approximately how many children women, on average, ended up having over their childbearing years. Chart 3 shows the completed cohort fertility rate for U.S. women born between 1918 and 1971.

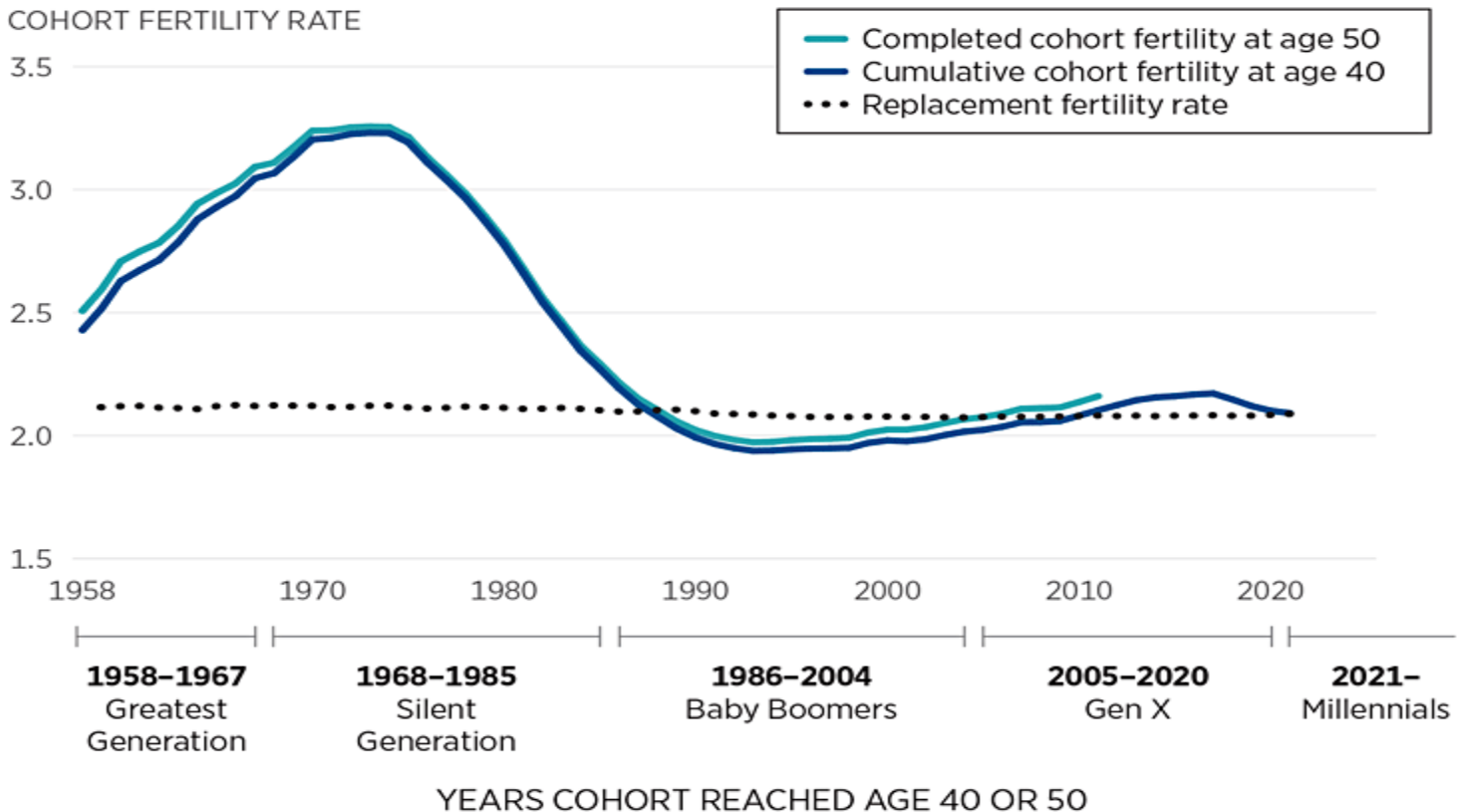
The main drawback of using completed cohort fertility as a measure of fertility is that it is far removed from the time when women are in their prime childbearing years (20 years to 35 years of age). Completed cohort fertility is a better measure of fertility levels from 15-30 years ago rather than in the present. If the aim is to draw conclusions about fertility within a particular year, period measures of fertility, such as the total fertility rate and tempo-adjusted fertility rate, are more appropriate.

Cohort fertility can be observed at any age desired, but as a measure of how many children women will have over their lifetimes, cohort fertility must be observed at the end, or close to the end, of the reproductive lifespan.


Setting the cumulative cohort fertility at age 40 (instead of at age 50 as with completed cohort fertility) still captures the vast majority of births women in each cohort will ever have, but births the cohorts have between ages 40 and 50 will be left out. As a result, cumulative cohort fertility at age 40 will be lower than the eventual completed cohort fertility. The benefit of this is that it shows cohort fertility for an additional 10 years out. Additionally, cumulative cohort fertility at age 40 is more proximate to the ages at which women are in their prime childbearing years. Chart 3 shows the cumulative cohort fertility by age 40 of U.S. women born between 1918 and 1981.

CHART 3

Cumulative Cohort Fertility at 40 and 50 Years of Age



SOURCES: Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research and Vienna Institute of Demography; United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs; and author's calculations. For more information, see appendix.

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Replacement Fertility Rate

The replacement fertility rate is the total fertility rate necessary to result in the long-run replacement of a population closed to migration. If the total fertility rate stays below the replacement fertility rate for a long period of time, the population will eventually shrink if there is insufficient immigration to account for the difference.

The replacement fertility rate is equivalent to the total fertility rate when the net reproduction rate is equal to 1.0. The net reproduction rate is the number of daughters that women on average have over their lifetimes, after accounting for female mortality from birth until their childbearing years. If the net reproduction rate is 1.0, the number of daughters is theoretically exactly replacing the generation of women in their reproductive years.

It is often said that replacement fertility is 2.1 children per woman. But in fact, the replacement fertility rate changes over time in response to changes in the number of daughters born relative to women of reproductive age and changes in female mortality.

Chart 4 shows replacement fertility rate estimates and projections as a five-year moving average from 1950 to 2100. They are based on estimates and projections of the net reproduction rate and age-specific fertility rates from the United Nations Population Division.⁴

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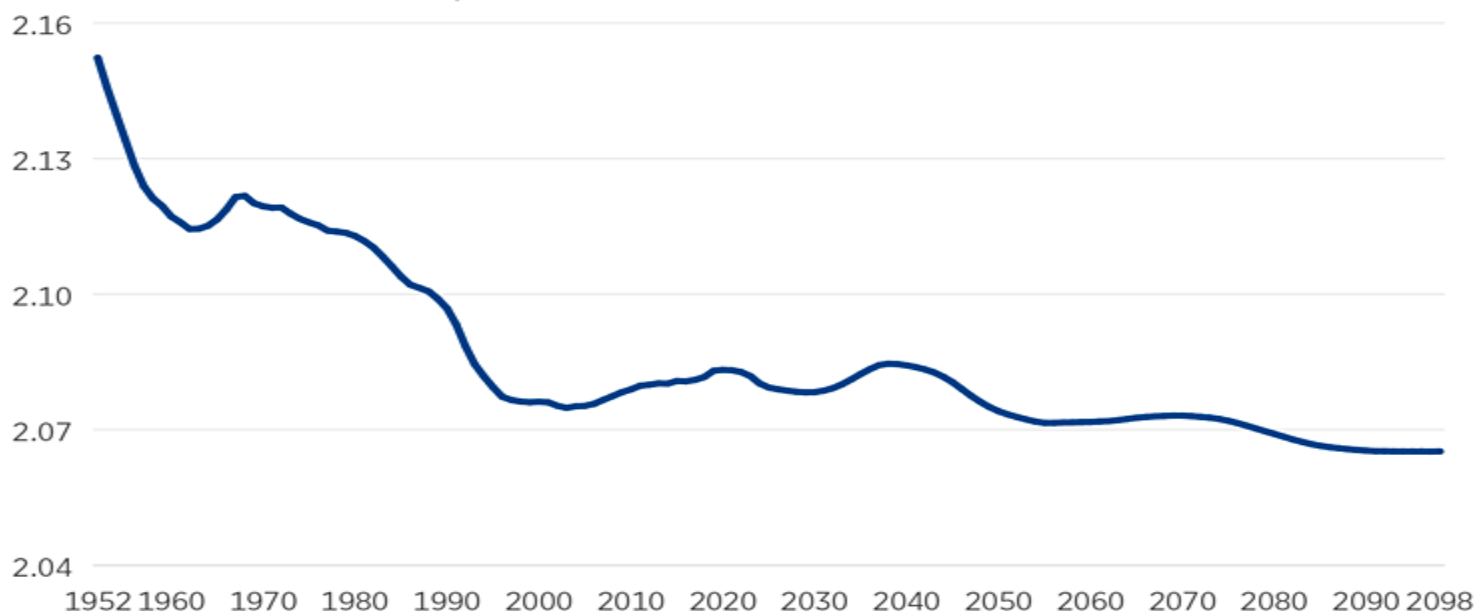
While there are several ways to estimate replacement fertility, the replacement fertility rate in Chart 4 was estimated under the assumption that age-specific fertility rates proportionally scale with the net reproduction rate.⁵

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CHART 4

Replacement Fertility Rate Estimates and Projections as a Five-Year Moving Average from 1950 to 2100

REPLACEMENT FERTILITY RATE, FIVE-YEAR MOVING AVERAGE



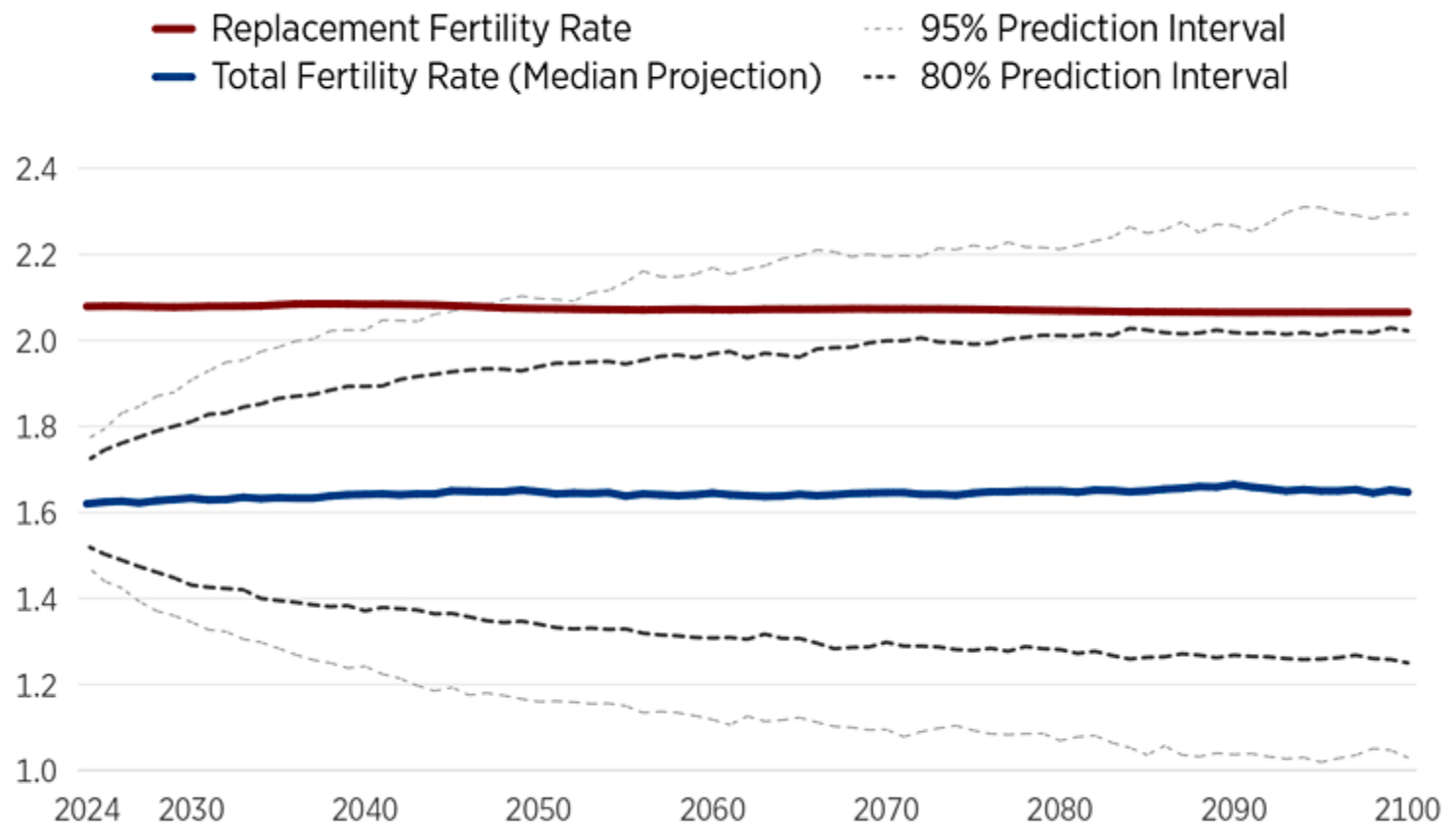
SOURCES: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, and author's calculations. For more information, see appendix.

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Projections for the Total Fertility Rate

According to U.N. Population Division fertility projections, the total fertility rate in the United States is predicted to remain below replacement until at least 2045. The U.N. Population Division's hierarchical Bayesian model of fertility predicts that there is a 95 percent chance that the total fertility rate will remain below the replacement rate until 2045 and there is an 80 percent chance that it will remain below replacement through 2100. The U.N.'s median projection of fertility predicts a slight and gradual rise in the total fertility rate through the remainder of the century.

Projected Total Fertility Rate in the U.S.



SOURCE: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs; and author's calculations. For more information, see appendix.

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Population Projections for the United States

It remains unclear whether the U.S. population will continue growing through 2100 or if the population will begin contracting sometime before the end of the century. Population projections from the U.S. Census Bureau and the U.N. Population Division somewhat diverge on this point. Population projections for the United States through the year 2100 from both the U.S. Census Bureau and the U.N. Population Division are shown in Chart 6.

According to the U.N. Population Division's current probabilistic population projections, the total population of the United States is projected to increase through at least the year 2034 with 95 percent probability under the medium variant population projection scenario and until 2042 with 80 percent probability. The median estimate of the medium variant projection continues to increase through to the year 2100, but after 2034, the uncertainty in the projections becomes wide enough that the possibility of population contraction thereafter cannot be excluded. The medium variant projection assumes median projected fertility (as shown in Chart 5), median projected mortality, and projected net migration levels.⁶

The U.S. Census Bureau in 2023 produced three population projections under varying assumptions about the future levels of foreign-born immigration.⁷

The U.S. Census Bureau's mid projection predicts the U.S. population will peak in 2080 and begin declining thereafter. Under the high immigration scenario (where immigration is set to be 50 percent higher than under the mid projection),⁸

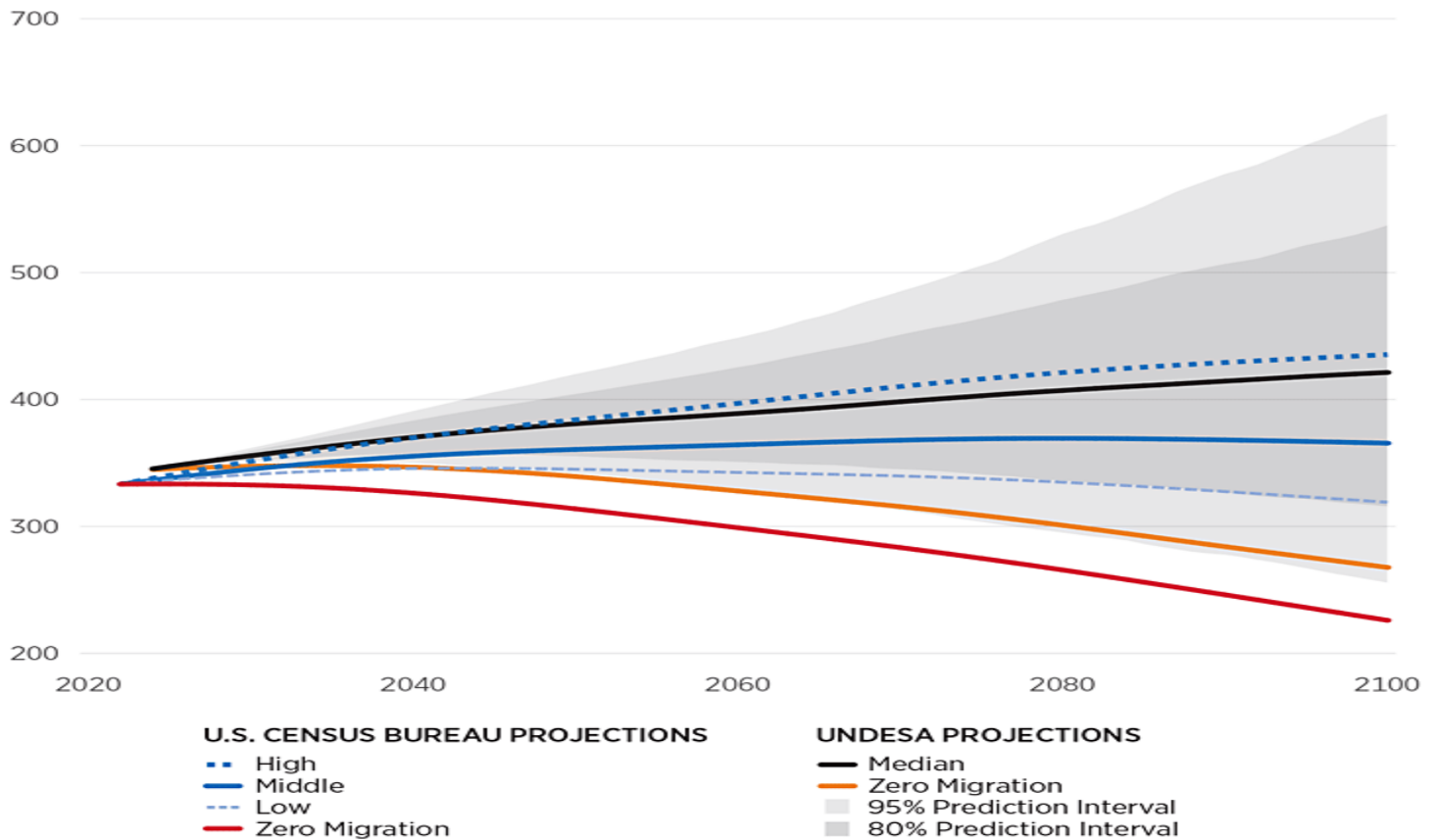
the U.S. population is projected to continue increasing through 2100. Under the low immigration scenario (where the change in immigration compared to the mid projection is set to be equal to the exponentiated difference in logs between the hi and mid projections),⁹

the U.S. population is projected to peak in 2043 and begin declining thereafter.


Much of the population growth of the United States through 2100 is expected to come from immigration. The U.N. Population Division's zero-migration projection shows how the population of the United States is projected to grow if no new immigrants came into the country and no U.S. residents left the country after 2024. Net migration is set to zero for this projection, but the fertility and mortality assumptions remain the same as the medium variant projection. The U.N. Population Division projects that, if net migration were to be hypothetically set to zero from 2024 and on, the total population of the United States would peak in 2034 and begin contracting thereafter. The U.S. Census Bureau similarly has a zero-immigration population projection that shows how the population is projected to change if there was no foreign-born immigration into the U.S. starting in 2022. The U.S. Census Bureau's zero-immigration projection differs somewhat from the U.N. Population Division's zero-migration projection as it does not make any assumptions about changes in emigration levels or domestic-born immigration. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, if foreign-born immigration were to be set to zero from 2022, the U.S. population would have already begun contracting in 2024.

Population Projections for the U.S.

TOTAL POPULATION, IN MILLIONS



SOURCES: U.S. Census Bureau, and United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. For more information, see appendix.

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The U.S. Population Is Ageing

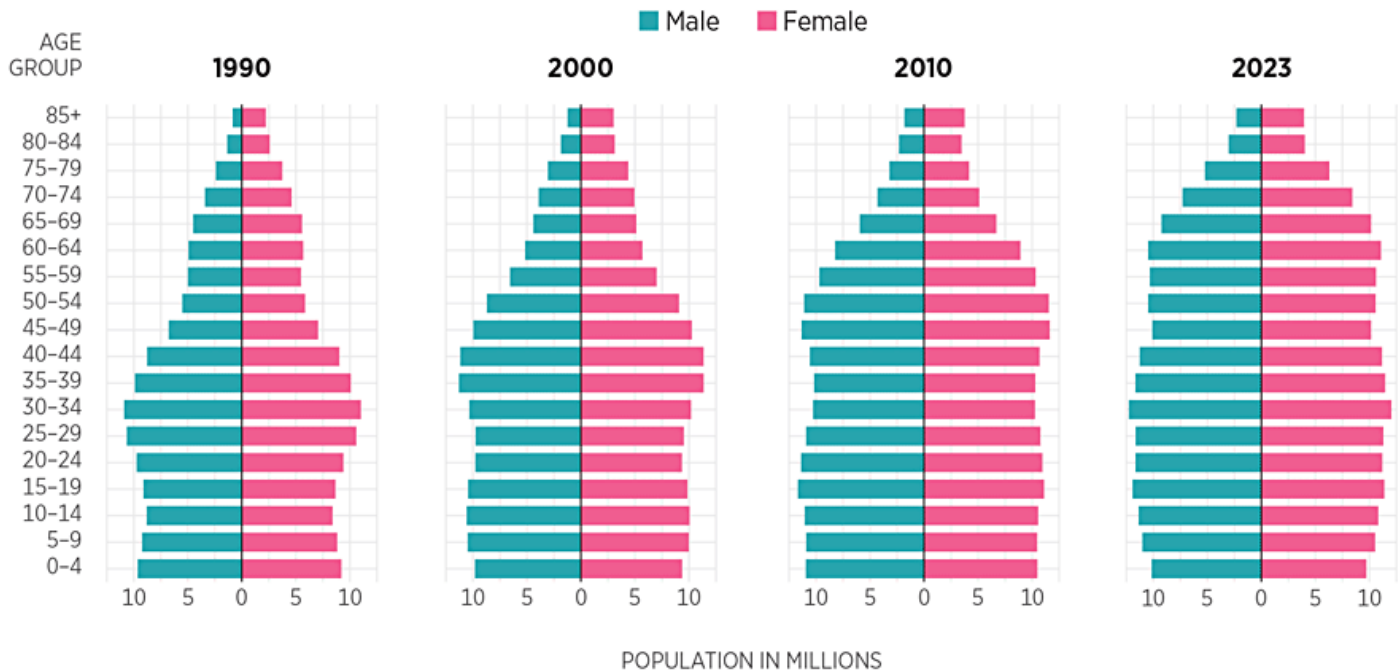
The fertility rate in the United States has been below replacement for most of the past 50 years. This has caused the U.S. population to age. Chart 7 contains population pyramids which show the age structure of the U.S. population by sex and by five-year age groups in 1990, 2000, 2010, and 2023.

In 1990, the population pyramid is wide at the base, bulging in the middle, and pointed at the top. This indicates that there were relatively large cohorts of children zero to nine years of age. The bulge in the center shows the baby boomers who were between 25 years and 44 years of age at this time. The gradual peaking of the pyramid indicates relative gradual diminishment of population size with increasing age.

As time goes on, the population pyramids become less peaked and more uniform across age groups. In later years, the population of older age groups are relatively larger compared to younger age groups. In 2023, the population pyramid is even tapering at the base as each successive five-year age group of children gets comparatively smaller relative to older age groups.

CHART 7

U.S. Population by Age and Sex



SOURCES: U.S. Census Bureau, State Population by Characteristics, and U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Census Intercensal Population Estimates. For more information, see appendix.

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Chart 7 shows that the U.S. population is ageing as younger cohorts are becoming smaller relative to older cohorts. The ageing of the U.S. population will threaten the solvency of Social Security and Medicare Part A as there will be fewer laborers per retiree to pay into the trust funds that finance these systems as time goes on.

Implications of Declining Fertility

Continued sub-replacement fertility could have unfavorable consequences for the size of the labor force, the solvency of Social Security, the solvency of Medicare Part A, and the social capital available for families to invest in caring for their elderly relatives.

Declining or sub-replacement fertility in a population closed to migration causes the population to age if life expectancy remains stable or increases. In a population that is open to migration, a population with sustained sub-replacement fertility and stable mortality will age if the age composition of net migrants does not make the population younger. If sub-replacement fertility is sustained for a long-enough time and if net migration is negative or insufficient to counteract sub-replacement fertility, the population will eventually contract.

The U.S. population has aged over the past several decades as a result of declining fertility and sub-replacement fertility. The population over 60 years of age today represents a larger proportional share of the total population than it did 30 or 50 years ago. Old-age dependency has increased and is predicted to continue increasing into the future.¹⁰

This, in turn, has led to fewer working-age adults per retiree, placing a strain on Social Security and Medicare.¹¹

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Continued sub-replacement fertility could eventually result in a smaller labor force if the number of births is too low and if more persons do not enter the labor force, if older workers do not delay retirement, or if the number of job-seeking immigrants drops. Continued sub-replacement fertility could also lead to increased social isolation and loneliness among the elderly as the population continues to age and fewer working-age adults are able to accompany, care for, and financially support persons of advanced age. Studies have shown that the prevalence of social isolation and loneliness are significantly greater among older adults who are living alone than among those living in multi-person households.¹²

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As sub-replacement fertility rates continue to prevail, and as a rising share of adults believe they are unlikely to have any children,¹³

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the number of older adults living alone will likely increase.

If the U.S. population were to contract, the issues associated with population ageing would be exacerbated and homes, businesses, and schools could be closed or abandoned in locations of depopulation, causing communities to become vacant or die out.

Without a change of course, fertility in the U.S. is not expected to rebound anytime in the near future. Unless the fertility rate rises above the replacement level, the United States will be dependent on immigration to prevent population contraction.

If the U.S. population were to contract, some of the unfavorable consequences of population contraction could perhaps be addressed through technology. Artificial intelligence and increased automation may be able to replace some of the lost labor due to population contraction. However, technology cannot account for the loss of social capital, increased social isolation, and the dying out of communities that occur when populations shrink.

If Americans decide that public policy should support an increase in the fertility rate, policymakers should address the obstacles that prevent married couples from attaining the number of children they would like to have. Americans' ideal family size is above replacement-level fertility,¹⁴

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so supporting married couples in achieving their desired fertility would at the very least narrow the gap between the total fertility rate and the replacement level.

Jonathan Abbamonte is Senior Research Associate in the Center for Data Analysis at The Heritage Foundation.

Appendix: References for Charts 1–7

Chart 1

Joyce A. Martin et al., "Births: Final Data for 2015," *National Vital Statistics Reports*, Vol. 66, No. 1 (January 5, 2017).

Michelle J.K. Osterman et al., “Births: Final Data for 2022,” *National Vital Statistics Reports*, Vol. 73, No. 2 (April 4, 2024).

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Chart 2

Period Total Fertility Rate (1940–1979):

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Period Total Fertility Rate (1980–2015):

Joyce A. Martin et al., “Births: Final Data for 2015,” *National Vital Statistics Reports*, Vol. 66, No. 1 (January 5, 2017).

Period Total Fertility Rate (2016–2022):

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Period Total Fertility Rate (2023):

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Tempo-Adjusted Total Fertility Rate:

Human Fertility Database, Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research and Vienna Institute of Demography, www.humanfertility.org (data downloaded April 22, 2024).

Replacement Fertility Rate:

Author’s calculations from: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, “World Population Prospects 2024,” <https://population.un.org/wpp/> (accessed January 2, 2025).

Chart 3

Cumulative Cohort Fertility:

Human Fertility Database, Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research and Vienna Institute of Demography, www.humanfertility.org (data downloaded April 22, 2024).

Replacement Fertility Rate:

Author’s calculations from: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, “World Population Prospects 2024,” <https://population.un.org/wpp/> (accessed January 2, 2025).

Chart 4

Author’s calculations from: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, “World Population Prospects 2024” (medium variant projections), <https://population.un.org/wpp/> (accessed January 2, 2025).

Chart 5

United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, “World Population Prospects 2024” (probabilistic projections), <https://population.un.org/wpp/> (accessed January 2, 2025).

Chart 6

U.S. Census Bureau Population Projections:

U.S. Census Bureau, “2023 Population Projections for the Nation by Age, Sex, Race, Hispanic Origin and Nativity,” November 9, 2023, Downloadable CSV File NP2023_D1: “Projected Population by Single Year of Age, Sex, Race and Hispanic Origin for the United States: 2022 to 2100.”

UNDESA Population Projections:

Author’s calculations from: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, “World Population Prospects 2024” (probabilistic projections and zero-migration projections), <https://population.un.org/wpp/> (accessed January 2, 2025).

Chart 7

U.S. Census Bureau, “Annual State Resident Population Estimates for 5 Race Groups (5 Race Alone or in Combination Groups) by Age, Sex, and Hispanic Origin: April 1, 2020 to July 1, 2023,” State Characteristics Population Estimates, June 2024.

U.S. Census Bureau., “Annual Resident Population Estimates for 5 Race Groups (5 Race Alone or in Combination Groups) by Age, Sex, and Hispanic Origin for States and the District of Columbia: April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2020,” State Characteristics Population Estimates, June 2021.

U.S. Census Bureau, “Intercensal Estimates of the Resident Population by Single Year of Age and Sex for States and the United States: April 1, 2000 to July 1, 2010,” State Characteristics Intercensal Population Estimates, October 2012.

U.S. Census Bureau, *US Census Intercensal Population Estimates*, distributed by the National Bureau of Economic Research, compiled by Jean Roth (last modified August 28, 2006), <https://data.nber.org/data/census-intercensal-population/> (accessed February 19, 2025).

Endnotes

[1] More specifically, the period total fertility rate (TFR) is defined as:
where a is the age group of females aged a to $a + \Delta a$ where Δa is a finite sequence from a to $a + \Delta a$ with discrete jumps by Δa , with a_{\min} being the minimum age the total fertility rate is calculated over (typically age 10) and a_{\max} corresponds to the age a -years less than the last year of the reproductive lifespan (the end of reproductive lifespan is typically defined as somewhere between 44 and 54 years), where Δa is the number of years in each a -year age group, and where $f(a)$ is the age-specific fertility rate where $b(a)$ is the number of live births to women in age-group a and $P(a)$ is the population of women in the corresponding age group.

[2] John Bongaarts and Griffith Feeney, “On the Quantum and Tempo of Fertility,” *Population and Development Review*, Vol. 24, No. 2 (June 1998), pp 271–291.

[3] The birth-order-specific total fertility rate for any given birth order is the sum of the age-specific fertility rates at birth order such that
where is the number of births to women in age group and where the birth order is .

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Authors



[Jonathan Abbamonte](#)

Policy Analyst, Center for Data Analysis

Don't Let Technology Raise Your Child

Strategic parenting in the digital age.

Posted February 27, 2025 | _Reviewed by Michelle Quirk

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KEY POINTS

- Parents often feel powerless to protect their children from the ubiquitous use of technology.
- No one is in a better position to help children develop healthy behaviors with technology than parents.
- Developing meaningful standards and leading by example are imperative.



Source: Kaku Nguyen / Pexels

Many parents are losing the battle against technology. Screens have become a normal part of our everyday lives. It is common to see young children consumed with phones, iPads, and televisions. From birth, screens are introduced to entertain, pacify, and occupy children. In many social environments, parents often rely on these devices to distract and quiet their toddlers. However, according to the World Health Organization (WHO), infants and toddlers should avoid screen time entirely until after 2 years of age, and children under 5 should have no more than one hour per day. This starkly contrasts with the norms of modern culture, making it feel like an uphill battle for parents. Nevertheless, I urge parents to remain vigilant in their role. *Don't let technology raise your child.*

As a parent of six, I understand the temptation of using technology as a digital babysitter. One thing that feels like a benefit of screens is parents feel like they have more control of their child's whereabouts and can ensure their physical safety. If children are staring at an iPad in their rooms or another space in the house, they are still reachable, and parents can see them. Technology engages children so effectively that they often remain stationary, minimizing concerns about external dangers. While this may seem like a safe option, we must recognize that excessive screen time can harm a child's cognitive and emotional development, which are equally as important to their overall well-being. Research by Twenge and Campbell (2018) confirms that increased screen use negatively impacts self-control, curiosity, task proficiency, emotional stability, and even social skills. Furthermore, sleep patterns are disrupted, which, in turn, further impacts their development (Law et al. 2022; Vandewater 2006). In other words, the notion that screens are harmless is simply inconsistent with the facts.

Another reason parents rely on screens is the need for a break or to manage other responsibilities. I completely understand; it is far easier to turn on the television or hand over an iPad than to provide constant entertainment. However, the solution is to avoid shouldering the burden of entertaining children at all times. Children need to learn to embrace boredom. According to Belton (2006), boredom fosters creativity, enhances mental health, and improves social skills. Teaching children to be comfortable with silence and to find creative ways to interact with their surroundings is essential for their development.

Parents should not allow convenience, culture, or comfort to dictate their parenting choices. Here are four strategies to reclaim authority over technology:

1. **Educate Yourself.** Familiarize yourself with available technologies and evaluate the costs and benefits of social media and screen use. Assess how technology affects your child personally. Education provides clarity—let your stance be based on facts rather than fear. A simple Google search can provide valuable insights. Do not let the world be your child's primary educator. Engage with your child by researching new platforms together. For example, if your child asks about Tumblr, explore it together instead of dismissing the inquiry.
2. **Communicate Clearly With a Fact-Based Approach.** Simply stating, "You cannot have a social media account until you are 18 because it is not good for you," is ineffective. Instead, explain the reasons behind your decision in a way that aligns with their personal growth and long-term goals. Providing a clear and constructive explanation fosters understanding and encourages children to develop a long-term perspective on their own well-being.
3. **Lead by Example.** Prioritize personal interactions over screen time. Minimize instances where your child seeks your attention only to be told to wait while you are engaged with a device. Demonstrate that human connection takes precedence. Create an environment where creativity and face-to-face interaction are the norm. Having practiced this approach for years, my children often notice how frequently people are engrossed in screens instead of engaging with each other. On a recent nature walk, they were

surprised by the number of people staring at their phones rather than appreciating the beauty around them. Their observation struck me because I had become so accustomed to the sight that I barely noticed it anymore. Leading by example establishes boundaries that children will carry with them even when you are not present.

4. Prioritize Relationships. Parents cannot live their children's lives for them. There will be times when children encounter new experiences without parental supervision. The key is to foster a strong enough bond that they want to share their experiences with you. As children grow, maintaining a solid relationship becomes even more critical. Building trust and open communication ensures that they turn to you for guidance rather than relying on external influences.

ARTICLE CONTINUES AFTER ADVERTISEMENT

In the digital age, strategic parenting is essential. While technology offers undeniable benefits, it should not replace active and engaged parenting. By educating ourselves, communicating effectively, leading by example, and nurturing strong relationships, we can raise children who are balanced, creative, and socially adept. Let us take back control and ensure that technology serves as a tool, not a substitute for parenting.

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AP ImagesCharlie Kirk

Charlie Kirk Understood: Government Must Have “No Role” in Education

by [Alex Newman](#) September 24, 2025

Charlie Kirk understood that without addressing education and stopping the escalating indoctrination of children, evil would win and the West would die. He told me so repeatedly. Homeschooling and getting the government out of education entirely is not just desirable, but essential, he argued.

In the aftermath of his brutal martyrdom on a college campus as he debated students, much has been said and written about Charlie’s politics, his engagement with college students and youth, his theological views, his beautiful family, his love for Christ, and his gargantuan impact on the nation. Those were all crucial parts of his legacy.

Far less has been said about his extremely passionate efforts on the education front. But as he told me multiple times, this is *the* key to winning the war and turning the tide. In particular, he believed that government must ultimately be removed from education entirely as parents reclaim their role from the state. Of course, Charlie understood that this was first and foremost a spiritual battle. In fact, in the last significant conversation I had with him, that was the first thing he pointed out. “The threat is demonic in its core,” he said, noting that the “unclean spirit” was simply taking “the form of the woke.”

The most important element of stopping the evil being unleashed against America and civilization, he said, is not physical. “First, it must be a spiritual transformation revolution,” Charlie explained, before jumping into the political and even personal components of the “right-wing revolution” he said was needed to “save the West.”

Charlie was correct, and I share his views on that issue 110 percent. Almost every talk I give, I remind people about what the Bible teaches on this. Flesh and blood people are not the enemy, as the Apostle Paul wrote in his letter to the Ephesians. Rather, spiritual powers and principalities are the real threat.

Then, we turned to education, a subject Charlie was passionate about and discussed many times on air here at Freedom Project Media with Freedom Project leader Dr. Duke Pesta over the years. In fact, one of Charlie's major books dealt with education, and he even created a whole division of Turning Point USA to deal with the crisis in education.

It was a great honor to have been invited to give keynote talks at his first major Turning Point event focused on education, and then at the second. His organization bought hundreds of copies of my book [*Indoctrinating Our Children to Death: Government Schools' War on Faith, Family, and Freedom — And How to Stop It*](#) to give to teachers, school board members, and other educators.

On my show about a year ago, [Charlie kindly praised my humble efforts](#) to expose what was happening in government schools and to help parents and churches protect the children. "You do a great job, and I have a lot to learn from you, and our educators love you, and [Turning Point USA Education chief] Dr. Hutz Hertzberg thinks you do a great job," he said.

Then, Charlie offered his own thoughts on what needed to be done. "We have the whole premise of education wrong," he explained. "You do not make children. You allow children to grow, and you have them grow into what they ought to be, and you give them direction and guidance, but children are not something to be engineered."

"They're not something to be configured," he explained. "They are to love learning more than anything else."

Then he got into the roots of the current "education" system. "You see, the Modern Education Project is Prussian at its core," Charlie explained. "It is focused on the administrative state, the administrative bureaucracy to try to make a population more subservient and obedient, but the form of education that we should be embracing is the classical form of education that is rooted in what is good, true, and beautiful or what is eternal rather than what is temporal."

Charlie expands on all this in his books, including [*Right Wing Revolution: How to Beat the Woke and Save the West*](#). In particular, Charlie argued that it was time for parents to reclaim their role as primary educators of their children — and get the government out of the education and child-rearing business entirely.

"The immediate way that we stop it, what is happening in the country when it comes to education, is we must have a renaissance and a revival of homeschooling in this country," he argued. "That is the first thing, is that we must continue to see that expansion. We must have more and more parents that are unafraid to homeschool their children."

"Then, secondly, [we must] understand the government has no role in education," Charlie continued. "I know that's a radical statement to say, but the government in education is one of the ways we have seen the destruction and the debasing of the nuclear family."

Finally, Charlie turned to higher education — a subject he knew well despite having not participated himself, as he spent endless hours on campuses debating students and bringing them the Gospel and biblical truth on every issue imaginable.

"When it comes to education, obviously the obvious thing, we must defund these woke universities — in fact, almost all universities, and we must build new stuff," he said. "Why are there not 100 Hillsdale colleges? It's great that there's one. Why are there not 100? I mean, we have 100 polytechnical woke schools across the country, but we don't have 100 Hillsdales."

“It’s because we need to think as entrepreneurs to start the next big and great thing, to pour into the next generation, and to understand what education actually is,” Charlie continued. “We are more than half of the country with conservative sensibilities and Christian values, but we are not more than half of the education space, and we need to try to fix that.”

In his book *The College Scam*, Charlie expanded his attack on these institutions of so-called “higher learning” that were destroying not just education but families and society. “We are way past any possibility of reform,” he said in the book. “The university industry is corrupt through and through.”

“No one will stand up and say, ‘Stop this cultural madness!’,” he said. “The students, parents, and taxpayers who pay for the system won’t say it because they don’t think there is any way around it. The academics, politicians, and financiers won’t say it because they *are* the problem.”

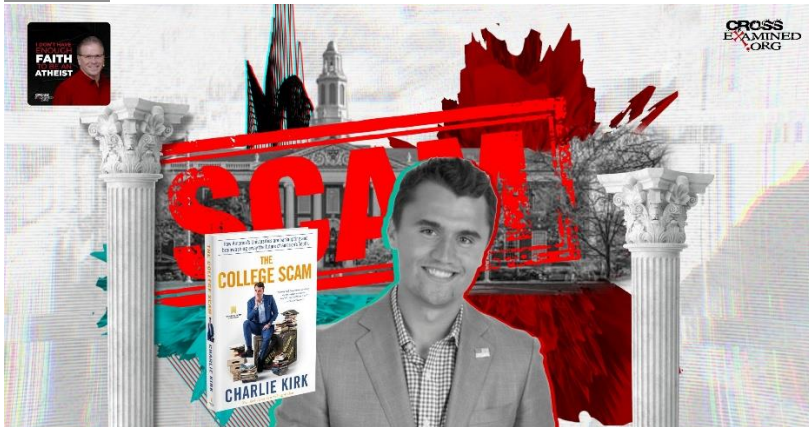
Aside from preaching the Gospel and bringing people to Christ, taking on the education Goliath and its role in propagating evil was a major part of Charlie’s efforts. As we honor him, it must remain a focal point of his legacy. There was nobody else at his level with the courage to honestly and clearly state the truths he was exposing.

Over the last week, many millions of Americans and Charlie Kirk supporters worldwide have declared in unison, “We are all Charlie Kirk now!” I echo that sentiment. Let us never forget that taking on the “education” beast destroying children, families, and societies was one of his top priorities. It must be among ours, too.

This article originally appeared at [FreedomProject Media](https://freedomprojectmedia.com). It has been republished here with permission.

The College Scam | with Charlie Kirk – Plus Q&A

PODCAST



Should you send your kids to college? Should you spend hundreds of thousands of dollars on a potentially useless degree while your child gets indoctrinated by those who are hostile toward the Christian faith? That’s the BIG question a lot of parents face today. But thankfully, our friend Charlie Kirk is here to help!

Charlie Kirk is the Founder and President of Turning Point USA, and his new book, [The College Scam: How America's Universities Are Bankrupting and Brainwashing Away the Future of America's Youth](#), gives us a well-documented ten-count indictment of why academia has lost all credibility. It's a must-read for every student, parent, and concerned citizen!

In this episode, Charlie shares with Frank what he sees happening at college campuses across the country and why every Christian parent should think twice before sending their high school graduate to a secular university. They also discuss the truth about some of the statistics being shared by the college industry (do graduates REALLY make more money?) and how to succeed in life *without* getting a college degree. Charlie is living proof that it's possible!

Frank also takes the time to answer some viewer questions, including those on studying philosophy and logical fallacies as Christians and how to respectfully push back against woke ideology in public schools.

To view the entire VIDEO PODCAST with Frank and Charlie, be sure to [join our CrossExamined private community](#). It's the perfect place to jump into some great discussions with like-minded Christians (including me) while simultaneously providing financial support for our ministry.

Resources mentioned during the show:

Charlie's		book: https://amzn.to/3DCg4II
Charlie's		website: https://charliekirk.com/
Turning	Point	Faith: https://tpfaith.com/
America	USA	Fest: https://www.amfest.com/

Greg Koukl's letter to the school board: <https://bit.ly/3D9lxyI>

If you would like to submit a question to be answered on the show, please email your question to [Hello@Crossexamined.org](mailto>Hello@Crossexamined.org).

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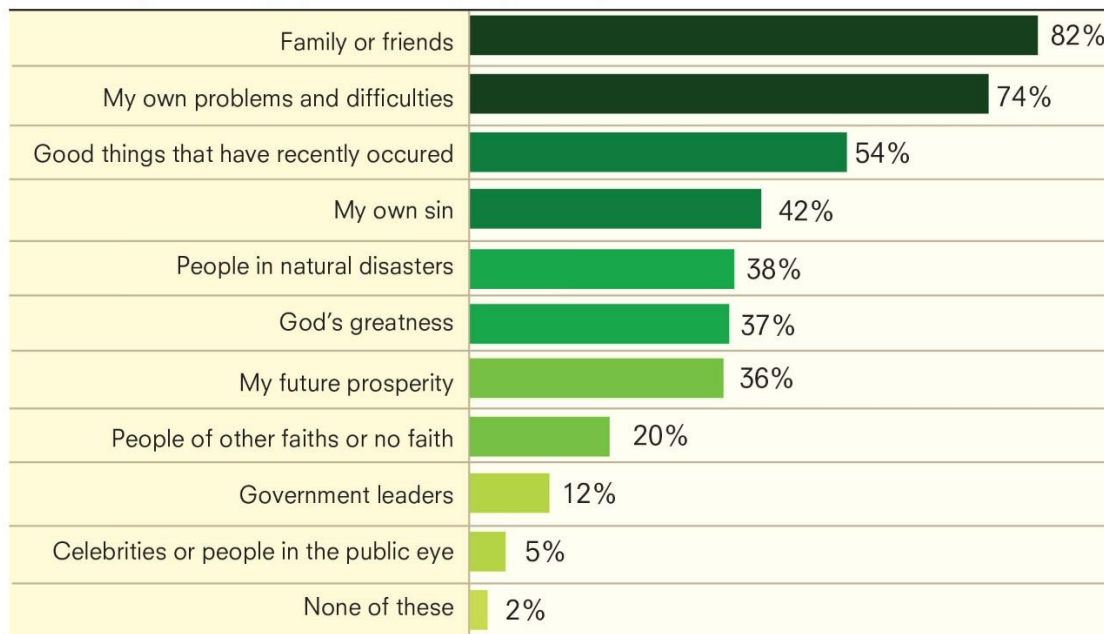
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Americans Pray for Friends and Family, but Rarely for Celebrities or Sports Teams

Culture | Lifeway Research | Oct 1, 2014

Among Americans who pray:

People typically pray for ...



LifewayResearch.com

Note: Participants could select all that apply



By Bob Smietana

Americans pray for their friends, families, and sometimes their enemies.

They ask for divine help in times of trouble but rarely praise God's greatness. And they seldom add politicians, nonbelievers, or even their favorite sports team to their prayer lists, according to a new survey from Nashville-based Lifeway Research.

"Most people pray when they need the red phone for help," said Ed Stetzer, executive director of Lifeway Research. "But their prayer life isn't a habit rooted in a relationship with God."

The online survey, conducted Aug.7, 2014, asked 1,137 Americans about the frequency and content of their prayers.

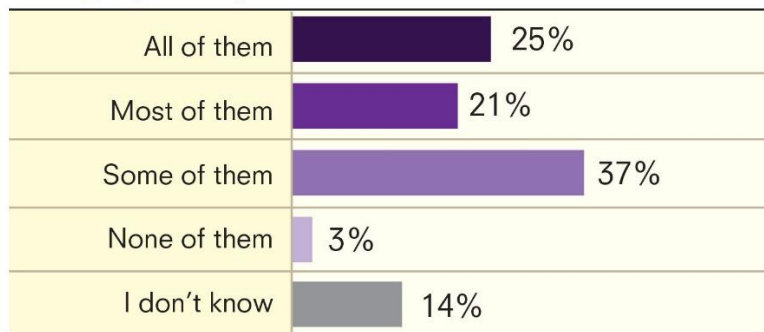
Among the findings:

Most prayers are personal.

When they pray, most Americans (82 percent) typically focus on their friends and family or their own problems (74 percent). Just over half (54 percent) pray about good things happening in their life, while over a third pray for their future prosperity (36 percent).

Among Americans who pray:

My prayers are answered



LifeWayResearch.com



Prayer works for almost everybody.

Most Americans who pray (83 percent) think at least some of their prayers are answered. That includes one in four (25 percent) who say all their prayers are answered, one in five (21 percent) who say most of their prayers are answered, and more than one in three (37 percent) who say some of their prayers are answered.

Few (3 percent) say none of their prayers are answered. One in seven (14 percent) “don’t know” if prayers are answered.

Politicians don’t have a prayer. Neither do parking spots.

Only about 12 percent of Americans who pray say they pray for government officials, while few (5 percent) pray for celebrities. Among other things people have ever prayed for are parking spots (7 percent), other people to be fired (5 percent), or to avoid being caught speeding (7 percent). Sports teams have

received a bit more prayer support (13 percent) while about one in five (21 percent) Americans who pray say they have prayed to win the lottery. Fifteen percent have prayed something bad they did will not be discovered.

Among Americans who pray:

Have you ever prayed for ...



LifeWayResearch.com

Note: Participants could select all that apply



American's prayers are not always biblical.

[See also](#) **Pastors in Different Protestant Traditions Face Unique Challenges**

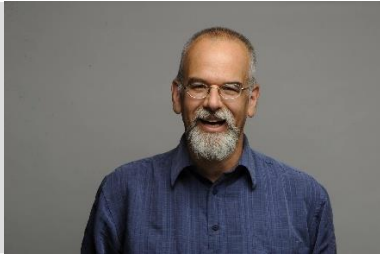
More than a third of Americans (37 percent) who pray say they have prayed for their enemies, and four in 10 (41 percent) have prayed for people who have mistreated them, which the New Testament instructs people to do. More than a third (38 percent) typically pray for people affected by natural disasters. But only one in five pray for people of other faiths or people of no faith.

Americans are persistent in their prayers.

About half of Americans (48 percent) say they pray at least every day, while a third (31 percent) say they pray several times a day. Overall, about two-thirds (65 percent) of Americans say they pray at least once a month.

That's a good start, says Max Lucado, author of *Before Amen: The Power of a Simple Prayer*, published last month from Thomas Nelson. Lucado, who partnered with Lifeway Research on the prayer survey, says the survey shows that prayer still has widespread appeal in American life.

"Prayer is not a privilege just for the pious or an opportunity for a chosen few," he said. "Prayer is God's open invitation to talk: simply, openly and powerfully."



Bob Smietana

[@bobsmietana](#)

Bob is the former senior writer for Lifeway Research. In September 2018, he joined Religion News Service, where he currently serves as a national writer.

Methodology: The online survey of adult Americans was conducted Aug. 7, 2014. A sample of an online panel representing the adult population of the US was invited to participate. Responses were weighted by region, age, ethnicity, gender, religion and income to more accurately reflect the population. The completed sample is 1,137 online surveys. The sample provides 95% confidence that the sampling error from this panel does not exceed $\pm 2.9\%$. Margins of error are higher in sub-groups.

[Download the research](#)

David Guzik

Study Guide for Psalm 120

THE PRAYER AND JOURNEY OF THE OUTSIDER

[Psalm 120](#) is the first of a series of 15 psalms each with the title, **A Song of Ascents**. The reason for this collection and arrangement is not precisely stated. Many different explanations have been given for these “degrees” or “steps” or “ascents”:

- The Stairs of the Temple Songs.
- The Step Songs.
- The Gradual Songs.
- The Progression Songs.
- The Procession from Babylon Songs.
- The Pilgrim Festival Songs.

James Montgomery Boice explained the first suggestion: “The Talmud says that the fifteen songs correspond to the fifteen steps between these courtyards (Middoth ii. 5; Succa 51b). Some have even supposed that the songs were sung by the Levites from these steps, though this is pure speculation.” Probably the best explanation is the last one listed, that these were songs for the people of God as they made the pilgrim journey to Jerusalem and the temple at the three appointed feasts (Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles).

[1 Chronicles 13:6](#) uses this phrase to describe the bringing of the ark of the covenant into Jerusalem; to bring up from there the ark of God the LORD. According to Charles Spurgeon (and many others), the word we translate **ascents** shares the same root with to bring up in [1 Chronicles 13:6](#). The same root word is used in the same context in [1 Chronicles 15:15](#).

“We shall consider them as songs sung by those pilgrims who went up to Jerusalem to worship.... These songs of desire, and hope, and approach are appropriate for the pilgrims’ use as they go up to worship.” (G. Campbell Morgan) This being likely so, then Jesus would have sung these songs on His many journeys to Jerusalem from Galilee.

“The author of these fifteen Psalms is not known; and most probably they were not the work of one person. They have been attributed to David, to Solomon, to Ezra, to Haggai, to Zechariah, and to Malachi, without any positive evidence. They are, however, excellent in their kind, and written with much elegance; containing strong and nervous sentiments of the most exalted piety, expressed with great felicity of language in a few words.” (Adam Clarke)

C. H. Spurgeon

Psalm 127

PSALM 127

Exposition

Explanatory Notes and Quaint Sayings

Hints to the Village Preacher

TITLE.—*A Song of Degrees for Solomon.* It was meet that the builder of the holy house should be remembered by the pilgrims to its sacred shrine. The title probably indicates that David wrote it for his wise son, in whom he so greatly rejoiced, and whose name Jedidiah, or "beloved of the Lord," is introduced into the [second verse](#). The spirit of his name, "Solomon, or peaceable," breathes through the whole of this most charming song. If Solomon himself was the author, it comes fitly from him who reared the house of the Lord. Observe how in each of these songs the heart is fixed upon Jehovah only. Read the first verses of these Psalms, from [Psalm 120](#) to the present song, and they run thus: "I cried unto the Lord," "I will lift up mine eyes to the hills," "Let us go unto the house of the Lord." "Unto thee will I lift up mine eyes," "If it had not been the Lord," "They that trust in the Lord." "When the Lord turned again the captivity." The Lord and the Lord alone is thus lauded at each step of these songs of the ascents. O for a life whose every halting-place shall suggest a new song unto the Lord!

SUBJECT.—God's blessing on his people as their one great necessity and privilege is here spoken of. We are here taught that builders of houses and cities, systems and fortunes, empires and churches all labour in vain without the Lord; but under the divine favour they enjoy perfect rest. Sons, who are in the Hebrew called "builders," are set forth as building up families under the same divine blessing, to the great honour and happiness of their parents. It is **THE BUILDER'S PSALM**. "Every house is builded by some man, but he that built all things is God," and unto God be praise.

EXPOSITION

Verse 1. "*Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it.*" The word [vain](#) is the keynote here, and we hear it ring out clearly three times. Men desiring to build know that they must labour, and accordingly they put forth all their skill and strength; but let them remember that if Jehovah is not with them their designs will prove failures. So was it with the Babel builders; they said, "Go to, let us build us a city and a tower;" and the Lord returned their words into their own bosoms, saying, "Go to, let us go down and there confound their language." In vain they toiled, for the Lord's face was against them. When Solomon resolved to build a house for the Lord, matters were very different, for all things united under God to aid him in his great undertaking: even the heathen were at his beck and call that he might erect a temple for the Lord his God. In the same manner God blessed him in the erection of his own palace; for this verse evidently refers to all sorts of house building. Without God we are nothing. Great houses have been erected by ambitious men; but like the baseless fabric of a vision they have passed away, and scarce a stone remains to tell where once they stood. The wealthy builder of a Non-such Palace, could he revisit the glimpses of the moon, would be perplexed to find a relic of his former pride: he laboured in vain, for the place of his travail knows not a trace of his handiwork. The like may be said of the builders of castles and abbeys: when the mode of life indicated by these piles ceased to be endurable by the Lord, the massive walls of ancient architects crumbled into ruins, and their toil melted like the froth of vanity. Not only do we now

spend our strength for nought without Jehovah, but all who have ever laboured apart from him come under the same sentence. Trowel and hammer, saw and plane are instruments of vanity unless the Lord be the Master builder.

"*Except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.*" Around the wall the sentinels pace with constant step; but yet the city is betrayed unless the alert Watcher is with them. We are not safe because of watchmen if Jehovah refuses to watch over us. Even if the guards are wakeful, and do their duty, still the place may be surprised if God be not there. "I, the Lord, do keep it," is better than an army of sleepless guards. Note that the Psalmist does not bid the builder cease from labouring, nor suggest that watchmen should neglect their duty, nor that men should show their trust in God by doing nothing: nay, he supposes that they will do all that they can do, and then he forbids their fixing their trust in what they have done, and assures them that all creature effort will be in vain unless the Creator puts forth his power, to render second causes effectual. Holy Scripture endorses the order of Cromwell—"Trust in God, and keep your powder dry:" only here the sense is varied, and we are told that the dried powder will not win the victory unless we trust in God. Happy is the man who hits the golden mean by so working as to believe in God, and so believing in God as to work without fear. In Scriptural phrase a dispensation or system is called a house. Moses was faithful as a servant over all his house; and as long as the Lord was with that house it stood and prospered; but when he left it, the builders of it became foolish and their labour was lost. They sought to maintain the walls of Judaism, but sought in vain: they watched around every ceremony and tradition, but their care was idle. Of every church, and every system of religious thought, this is equally true: unless the Lord is in it, and is honoured by it, the whole structure must sooner or later fall in hopeless ruin. Much can be done by man; he can both labour and watch; but without the Lord he has accomplished nothing, and his wakefulness has not warded off evil.

Verse 2. "*It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows.*" Because the Lord is mainly to be rested in, all carking care is mere vanity and vexation of spirit. We are bound to be diligent, for this the Lord blesses; we ought not to be anxious, for that dishonours the Lord, and can never secure his favour. Some deny themselves needful rest; the morning sees them rise before they are rested, the evening sees them toiling long after the curfew has tolled the knell of parting day. They threaten to bring themselves into the sleep of death by neglect of the sleep which refreshes life. Nor is their sleeplessness the only index of their daily fret; they stint themselves in their meals, they eat the commonest food, and the smallest possible quantity of it, and what they do swallow is washed down with the salt tears of grief, for they fear that daily bread will fail them. Hard earned is their food, scantily rationed, and scarcely ever sweetened, but perpetually smeared with sorrow; and all because they have no faith in God, and find no joy except in hoarding up the gold which is their only trust. Not thus, not thus, would the Lord have his children live. He would have them, as princes of the blood, lead a happy and restful life. Let them take a fair measure of rest and a due portion of food, for it is for

their health. Of course the true believer will never be lazy or extravagant; if he should be he will have to suffer for it; but he will not think it needful or right to be worried and miserly. Faith brings calm with it, and banishes the disturbers who both by day and by night murder peace.

"For so he giveth his beloved sleep." Through faith the Lord makes his chosen ones to rest in him in happy freedom from care. The text may mean that God gives blessings to his beloved in sleep, even as he gave Solomon the desire of his heart while he slept. The meaning is much the same: those whom the Lord loves are delivered from the fret and fume of life, and take a sweet repose upon the bosom of their Lord. He rests them; blesses them while resting; blesses them more in resting than others in their moiling and toiling. God is sure to give the best thing to his beloved, and we here see that he gives them sleep—that is a laying aside of care, a forgetfulness of need, a quiet leaving of matters with God: this kind of sleep is better than riches and honour. Note how Jesus slept amid the hurly burly of a storm at sea. He knew that he was in his Father's hands, and therefore he was so quiet in spirit that the billows rocked him to sleep: it would be much oftener the same with us if we were more like **HIM**.

It is to be hoped that those who built Solomon's temple were allowed to work at it steadily and joyfully. Surely such a house was not built by unwilling labourers. One would hope that the workmen were not called upon to hurry up in the morning nor to protract their labours far into the night; but we would fain believe that they went on steadily, resting duly, and eating their bread with joy. So, at least, should the spiritual temple be erected; though, truth to tell, the workers upon its walls are all too apt to grow cumbered with much serving, all too ready to forget their Lord, and to dream that the building is to be done by themselves alone. How much happier might we be if we would but trust the Lord's house to the Lord of the house! What is far more important, how much better would our building and watching be done if we would but confide in the Lord who both builds and keeps his own church!

Verse 3. *"Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD."* This points to another mode of building up a house, namely, by leaving descendants to keep our name and family alive upon the earth. Without this what is a man's purpose in accumulating wealth! To what purpose does he build a house if he has none in his household to hold the house after him? What boots it that he is the possessor of broad acres if he has no heir? Yet in this matter a man is powerless without the Lord. The great Napoleon, with all his sinful care on this point, could not create a dynasty. Hundreds of wealthy persons would give half their estates if they could hear the cry of a babe born of their own bodies. Children are a heritage which Jehovah himself must give, or a man will die childless, and thus his house will be unbuilt.

"And the fruit of the womb is his reward," or a reward from God. He gives children, not as a penalty nor as a burden, but as a favour. They are a token for good if men know how to receive them, and educate them. They are "doubtful blessings" only because we are doubtful persons. Where society is rightly ordered children are regarded, not as an incumbrance, but as an inheritance; and they are

received, not with regret, but as a reward. If we are over-crowded in England, and so seem to be embarrassed with too large an increase, we must remember that the Lord does not order us to remain in this narrow island, but would have us fill those boundless regions which wait for the axe and the plough. Yet even here, with all the straits of limited incomes, our best possessions are our own dear offspring, for whom we bless God every day.

Verse 4. "*As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth.*" Children born to men in their early days, by God's blessing become the comfort of their riper years. A man of war is glad of weapons which may fly where he cannot: good sons are their father's arrows speeding to hit the mark which their sires aim at. What wonders a good man can accomplish if he has affectionate children to second his desires, and lend themselves to his designs! To this end we must have our children in hand while they are yet children, or they are never likely to be so when they are grown up; and we must try to point them and straighten them, so as to make arrows of them in their youth, lest they should prove crooked and unserviceable in after life. Let the Lord favour us with loyal, obedient, affectionate offspring, and we shall find in them our best helpers. We shall see them shot forth into life to our comfort and delight, if we take care from the very beginning that they are directed to the right point.

Verse 5. "*Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them.*" Those who have no children bewail the fact; those who have few children see them soon gone, and the house is silent, and their life has lost a charm; those who have many gracious children are upon the whole the happiest. Of course a large number of children means a large number of trials; but when these are met by faith in the Lord it also means a mass of love, and a multitude of joys. The writer of this comment gives it as his own observation, that he has seen the most frequent unhappiness in marriages which are unfruitful; that he has himself been most grateful for two of the best of sons; but as they have both grown up, and he has no child at home, he has without a tinge of murmuring, or even wishing that he were otherwise circumstanced, felt that it might have been a blessing to have had a more numerous family: he therefore heartily agrees with the Psalmist's verdict herein expressed. He has known a family in which there were some twelve daughters and three sons, and he never expects to witness upon earth greater domestic felicity than fell to the lot of their parents, who rejoiced in all their children, as the children also rejoiced in their parents and in one another. When sons and daughters are arrows, it is well to have a quiver full of them; but if they are only sticks, knotty and useless, the fewer of them the better. While those are blessed whose quiver is full, there is no reason to doubt that many are blessed who have no quiver at all; for a quiet life may not need such a warlike weapon. Moreover, a quiver may be small and yet full; and then the blessing is obtained. In any case we may be sure that a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of children that he possesseth.

"*They shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate.*" They can meet foes both in law and in fight. Nobody cares to meddle with a man who can gather a clan of brave sons about him. He speaks to purpose whose own sons make his words emphatic by the resolve to carry

out their father's wishes. This is the blessing of Abraham, the old covenant benediction, "Thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies;" and it is sure to all the beloved of the Lord in some sense or other. Doth not the Lord Jesus thus triumph in his seed? Looked at literally, this favour cometh of the Lord: without his will there would be no children to build up the house, and without his grace there would be no good children to be their parent's strength. If this must be left with the Lord, let us leave every other thing in the same hands. He will undertake for us and prosper our trustful endeavours, and we shall enjoy a tranquil life, and prove ourselves to be our Lord's beloved by the calm and quiet of our spirit. We need not doubt that if God gives us children as a reward he will also send us the food and raiment which he knows they need.

He who is the father of a host of spiritual children is unquestionably happy. He can answer all opponents by pointing to souls who have been saved by his means. Converts are emphatically the heritage of the Lord, and the reward of the preacher's soul travail. By these, under the power of the Holy Ghost, the city of the church is both built up and watched, and the Lord has the glory of it.

Jamieson, Fausset & Brown Commentary on Psalm 127

The Book of Psalms
Commentary by A. R. FAUSSET
PSALM 127

[Psa 127:1-5](#). The theme of this Psalm, *that human enterprises only succeed by the divine blessing*, was probably associated with the building of the temple by Solomon, its author. It may have been adopted in this view, as suited to this series especially, as appropriately expressing the sentiments of God's worshippers in relation to the erection of the second temple.

1, 2. suggest the view of the theme given.

2. so he giveth his beloved sleep--that is, His providential care gives sleep which no efforts of ours can otherwise procure, and this is a reason for trust as to other things (compare [Mat 6:26-32](#)).

3-5. Posterity is often represented as a blessing from God ([Gen 30:2, 18](#) [1Sa 1:19, 20](#)). Children are represented as the defenders (arrows) of their parents in war, and in litigation.

5. adversaries in the gate--or place of public business (compare [Job 5:4](#) [Psa 69:12](#)).

Matthew Henry Commentary on Psalms 127

Psalm 127

This is a family-psalm, as divers before were state-poems and church-poems. It is entitled (as we read it) "for Solomon," dedicated to him by his father. He having a house to build, a city to keep, and seed to raise up to his father, David directs him to look up to God, and to depend upon his providence, without which all his wisdom, care, and industry, would not serve. Some take it to have been penned by Solomon himself, and it may as well be read, "a song of Solomon," who wrote a great many; and they compare it with the Ecclesiastes, the scope of both being the same, to show the vanity of worldly care and how necessary it is that we keep in favour with God. On him we must depend,

- I. For wealth ([v. 1, 2](#)).
- II. For heirs to leave it to ([v. 3-5](#)).

In singing this psalm we must have our eye up unto God for success in all our undertakings and a blessing upon all our comforts and enjoyments, because every creature is that to us which he makes it to be and no more.

A song of degrees for Solomon.

Chuck Smith Sermon Notes for Psalm 127

I. THE VANITY OF SELF EFFORT.

A. In building the Lord's house.

1. Look at programs man has instituted to build the churches.
2. Methods devised to proclaim gospel.
3. World fast becoming totally heathen.
 - a. Catholic Bishop 16% to 12%.
 - b. 50, 000, 000 added annually 2,000, 000 being reached 4%.
4. Figures like these usually presented to spur men into new programs.
"If the Lord build not the house they labor in vain."

B. In keeping the city.

1. Purpose of watchman.
2. Man's reliance on flesh.
 - a. Today we trust in retaliatory ability.
 - b. Some trust in U.N.
3. Today facing greatest perils.
 - a. Undreamed of destructive force of modern weaponry.
 - b. Russia's 100 Megaton bombs and missile systems.

- c. Red China's growing menace.
- 4. Such things usually presented to us by government to condition us to higher taxation.
"Except the Lord keep the city."
- C. To get up early or stay up late to advance our designs.
 - 1. Success stories how little successful men sleep.
 - a. How little many unsuccessful men sleep.
 - 2. He giveth His beloved sleep.
- II. THE TRUE PERSPECTIVE.
 - A. The Lord has promised to build His house.
 - 1. "Upon this rock I WILL BUILD my church."
 - 2. "The Holy Spirit added daily to the church."
 - 3. The paradox - if we would build the more, we must trust the more.
 - B. The Lord is our keeper.
 - 1. "He that keepeth thee will not slumber."
 - 2. If the Lord doesn't preserve us, all of our efforts are vain.
 - 3. If we would be safe, we must trust.
 - C. The Lord has promised prosperity.
 - 1. "Whatsoever he doeth shall prosper."
 - 2. True prosperity is not measured in dollars and cents.
 - a. "A little that a righteous man hath is more than the wealth of many wicked."
 - b. "Godliness with contentment is great gain."
 - 3. Prosperity not achieved by direct pursuit.
 - a. God's blessed man [Ps. 1](#).
 - 4. If you would be prosperous you must seek God more.

David Guzik

Study Guide for Psalm 127

GOD'S WORK IN BUILDING HOUSES, CITIES, AND FAMILIES

*This psalm is titled **A Song of Ascents. Of Solomon.** Most believe Solomon to be the author, yet it is possible that the psalm was composed by David for Solomon. Here, Solomon will be considered the author.*

"The strength of the Hebrew people in the past, and all that remains of it today, largely results from the keen sense which they ever cherished of the importance of the home and the family. The house, the city, labour, are all important to the conserving of the strength of the family." (G. Campbell Morgan)

A. Blessing upon daily life.

1. ([Psalm 127:1](#)) God's work of building and guarding.
**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.**

a. **Unless the LORD builds the house**: Solomon understood that the work of man had its place, but it was of little ultimate use without the work and blessing of God. Without God's work and blessing, **they labor in vain who build it**.

i. "No house-building is successful which leaves God out of account. How have we seen men build only houses, with care and at great cost, only to see them crumble to pieces because God was forgotten!" (Morgan)

ii. "A Latin motto says, *Nisi Dominus Frusta*. It comes from the first words of this psalm and means 'Without the Lord, Frustration.' It is the motto of the city of Edinburgh, Scotland, appearing on its crest, and is affixed to the city's official documents. It could be attached to the lives of many who are trying to live their lives without the Almighty." (Boice)

iii. It is *possible* that the **house** built here is actually a family. "It may also signify the raising of a family, especially because this section precedes a unit in which the family is emphasized as a reward from the Lord ([vv. 3-5](#)). In the Old Testament it is usual to speak of a family as a 'house' even as we speak of a prominent family as a 'dynasty'." (VanGemeran)

iv. "It is a fact that *ben, a son*, and *bath, a daughter*, and *beith, a house*, come from the same root *banah, to build*; because sons and daughters build up a household, or constitute a *family*, as much and as really as stones and timber constitute a *building*." (Clarke)

b. **Unless the LORD guards the city**: The watchman has his role and should stay **awake**, but God's work and blessing are needed to truly guard the city.

c. **Builds the house...guards the city**: It's especially meaningful that *Solomon* wrote this psalm, because he knew what it was like to both build a house and guard a city. Wise Solomon understood that though God welcomed and even commanded human effort and participation, His work and blessing were more important.

i. "These would be splendid words to cut into granite over the entrance to all our homes, and to emblazon in gold in all the meeting places of those in civic authority. But better still let them be written in the heart of those who make homes, and guard and govern cities." (Morgan)

ii. "Note that the Psalmist does not bid the builder cease from labouring, nor suggest that watchmen should neglect their duty, nor that men should show their trust in God by doing nothing: nay, he supposes that they will do all that they can do, and then he forbids their fixing their trust in what they have done, and assures them that all creature effort will be in vain unless the Creator puts forth his power." (Spurgeon)

iii. "They, above all men, ought to implore the divine grace and benediction, who are employed either in building or defending the spiritual house and city of God." (Horne)

2. ([Psalm 127:2](#)) The vanity of reliance on the strength of man.

**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.**

a. **It is vain for you to rise up early:** We gather that Solomon did not speak against hard work, because several of his proverbs praise the hard worker who rises early ([Proverbs 6:6-11](#)). From the [first verse of this psalm](#), we understand that Solomon intended the *trust* many put in their hard work and the anxiety that showed reliance on self, not God (**to eat the bread of sorrows**).

- i. **For you:** "He directs his speech to the persons forementioned, *the builders or watchmen*, of both which sorts there are many that use the following course." (Poole)
- ii. "But the psalmist decries this as an inferior way of life if the hard work is only for the purpose of providing daily food and clothing for oneself and the family. The higher way of life begins with trusting the Lord in one's work." (VanGemeren)
- iii. "Long hours do not mean prosperous work. The evening meal may be put off till a late hour; and when the toil-worn man sits down to it, he may eat bread made bitter by labour. But all is in vain without God's blessing." (Maclaren)
- iv. **Bread of sorrows:** "...living a life of misery and labours, fretting at their own disappointments, eaten up with envy at the advancement of others, afflicted overmuch with losses and wrongs. There is no end of all their labours." (Manton, cited in Spurgeon)

b. **For so He gives His beloved sleep:** Men who are affected by reliance on their own work experience the anxiety that comes with it. God's blessing is to give His loved ones **sleep**. They can be at peace knowing that God's hand is at work and His eye watches even as they sleep.

- i. **His beloved:** "...an allusion to Solomon's other name, Jedidiah, God's darling." (Trapp)
- ii. "There may be a cryptic reference to himself by Solomon in the words 'those he loves' ([v. 2](#)). In Hebrew the words are actually 'his beloved,' the name God gave Solomon according to [2 Samuel 12:25](#): Jedidiah, meaning 'Beloved of Jehovah.'" (Boice)
- iii. **Sleep:** "Begone, dull, worrying care! Let me rest sweet Faith and Hope, close mine eyes and still my heart; Jesus, give me sleep, and in sleeping give me my heart's desire, that I may awake and be satisfied." (Meyer)

B. Blessing upon the family.

"The labours of mankind, first in building houses and cities, and then in guarding and securing their possessions, are undergone, not with a view to themselves alone, but to their families, which they would establish and perpetuate." (Horne)

1. (Psalm 127:3) The reward of children.

**Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD,
The fruit of the womb is a reward.**

a. **Children are a heritage from the LORD**: Solomon considered the wisdom of trusting God in building a house (verse 1), but he also understood that a home is built by more than bricks and wood. He called upon all to see (**behold**) that children are a blessing.

i. "The Jew would ask, why is the house being built if it is not for the family? And why are the watchmen protecting the city if not for the families that live in it? Then as now, the family was the basic unit and most important element of society." (Boice)

ii. "Let the fruitful family, however poor, lay this to heart; 'Children are a heritage of the Lord; and the fruit of the womb is his reward.' And he who gave them will feed them; for it is a fact, and the maxim formed on it has never failed, 'Wherever God sends mouths, he sends meat.'" (Clarke)

iii. "He gives children, not as a penalty nor as a burden, but as a favour. They are a token for good if men know how to receive them, and educate them. They are 'doubtful blessings' only because we are doubtful persons." (Spurgeon)

b. **The fruit of the womb is a reward**: Sadly, though Solomon had 700 wives and 300 concubines (1 Kings 11:3), we know of only one of his specific descendants. Perhaps Solomon knew very little of this **reward**.

i. "This last was a fit lesson for Solomon, who, by so many wives and concubines, left but one only son that we read of, and him not of the wisest." (Trapp)

ii. "Like much of Solomon's wisdom, the lessons of this psalm, relevant as they were to his situation, were mostly lost on him. His building, both literal and figurative, became reckless (1 Kings 9:10ff., 19), his kingdom a ruin (1 Kings 11:11ff.) and his marriages a disastrous denial of God (1 Kings 11:1ff.)." (Kidner)

2. (Psalm 127:4-5) Children like arrows.

**Like arrows in the hand of a warrior,
So are the children of one's youth.
Happy is the man who has his quiver full of them;
They shall not be ashamed,
But shall speak with their enemies in the gate.**

a. **Like arrows in the hand of a warrior**: In many ways children are like **arrows in the hand of a warrior**.

- They must be carefully shaped and formed.
- They must be guided with skill and strength.
- They must be given care or they will not fly straight.
- They must be aimed and given direction; they will not find direction on their own.
- They are, in some respects, only launched once.
- They are an extension of the warrior's strength and accomplishment.
- They have potential for much good or evil.

i. **Like arrows**: "This similitude importeth that children must have more in them than nature; for arrows are no arrows by growth, but by art; so they must be such children, the knottiness of whose nature is refined and reformed, and made smooth by grace; and then they are cared for." (Trapp)

ii. "...ready winged with duty and love, to fly to the mark; polished and keen, to grace and maintain the cause of their parents." (Horne)

iii. "We shall see them shot forth into life to our comfort and delight, if we take care from the very beginning that they are directed to the right point." (Spurgeon)

iv. "If it is a vain act to build a house without God or watch over a city without depending on God to preserve it, then it is even greater folly to try to raise a family without God." (Boice)

b. **Happy is the man who has his quiver full of them**: If children are a reward ([verse 3](#)), then there is great blessing and happiness in having many children.

i. **Who has his quiver full of them**: "...who hath a numerous issue; which as it is a great blessing in itself, so Solomon's want of it made it more valuable in his eyes." (Poole)

ii. "A quiver may be small and yet full; and then the blessing is obtained. In any case we may be sure that a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of children that he possesseth." (Spurgeon)

iii. "I remember a great man coming into my house, at Waltham, and seeing all my children standing in the order of their age and stature, said, 'These are they that make rich men poor.' But he straight received this answer, 'Nay, my lord, these are they that make a poor man

rich; for there is not one of these whom we would part with for all your wealth.” (Hall, cited in Spurgeon)

iv. “Many children make many prayers, and many prayers bring much blessing.” (German proverb, cited in Spurgeon)

c. **But shall speak with their enemies in the gate:** The gate of an ancient city was a place of business and justice. This verse speaks of children of the godly having places of prominence and influence in their communities.

i. “As the arrows protect the warrior, so the godly man need not be afraid, when blessed with sons.... A house full of children, born before one becomes old...is a protection against loneliness and abandonment in society.” (VanGemeren)

ii. “Nobody cares to meddle with a man who can gather a clan of brave sons about him.” (Spurgeon)

iii. “The gate was the place where justice was administered, and where was the chief place of concourse. It is therefore improbable that actual warfare is meant; rather, in the disputes which might arise with neighbours, and in the intercourse of city life, which would breed enmities enough, the man with his sons about him could hold his own. And such blessing is God’s gift.” (Maclaren)

iv. “One can discover his ideal through his song. It is that of a prosperous city, its enemies kept outside its gates; and that of the secret of its prosperity as being the house well-built, in the spiritual and moral sense, and the families dwelling within such houses as being able to deal with its enemies in the gate.” (Morgan)

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