

THE WRONG PRIORITY
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From Psalm 127. THE WRONG PRIORITY: APPEARANCES OVER FAITH, PART 1

The psalmist writes that human efforts, strength, purpose and vision are not sufficiently causal (v. 1.) We just think they are. The writer further teaches that the consent of God to the effort, and his power, are wholly causal and are absolutely necessary (v. 1.) "Unless" (v. 1) the consent of the Lord to "build" and to "guard" (v. 1) are the starting point; and "unless" the power of God is the foundation, then "vanity" is the net product.

This psalm forces a necessary distinction to be made between apparent causation and actual causation. Personal industry, self-discipline and hard work are not causal according to the psalm.

But this is not apparent! This is applied to economics (v. 2) and even to biology (v. 3)! Appearances testify to the human mind that such efforts are indeed sufficiently causal. But the Lord insists that He is the actual causation. The psalmist intends to elevate faith above appearances.

Faith tells us in the midstream of trials and distress that God is not the apparent causation, but that he is most certainly the actual causation! We are counseled not to rely upon appearances. Throughout Scripture people of true faith had the same thing in common: When the crunch came, their reasoning and behavior were not tied to appearances.

Let's keep our nerve up! Nothing is irreversible.

From Psalm 127. THE WRONG PRIORITY: APPEARANCES OVER FAITH, PART 2

#1. Scripture is given in order to make known to us what is not apparent. This is the rationale of Revelation. Therefore, faith overrules and overtakes appearances. A reading of Scripture is indicated in all of this.

#2. Question: What kind of faith displaces trust in appearances? Answer: It has to be a faith resting upon Scripture with such conviction and confidence that appearances do not overreach.

#3. The Israelites of the desert generation allowed appearances to superintend their faith. This is a perfected problem in the churches of today as well. It was historically manifest in the behavior of Israel; at the Red Sea (Exodus 13, 14) for example. Fear finds its headwaters in apparency.

#4. True faith is built upon and rests upon that which is not apparent yet revealed. This fact is unavoidable.

#5. Yet there is a kind faith that holds that disregarding the apparent is unnecessary, risky and foolish. This rationalistic urge is the attempt to avoid the textual dimension of faith.

#6. This is the greatest test of faith: to confront "the Red Sea experiences" of our lives and have our thinking and behavior corroborated by Scripture not appearances.

Biblical faith breaks the axis between appearances and reasoning. This pleases the Lord, and to this we are called. Today is a good day to start.