



new life fellowship

**Sermon Title: The Illusion of Control**  
**Speaker: Sherin Swift, Connections & Equipping Pastor**  
**Scripture: Psalm 127**

<sup>1</sup> Unless the Lord builds the house,  
the builders labor in vain.

Unless the Lord watches over the city,  
the guards stand watch in vain.

<sup>2</sup> In vain you rise early  
and stay up late,  
toiling for food to eat—  
for he grants sleep to<sup>[a]</sup> those he loves.

<sup>3</sup> Children are a heritage from the Lord,  
offspring a reward from him.

<sup>4</sup> Like arrows in the hands of a warrior  
are children born in one's youth.

<sup>5</sup> Blessed is the man  
whose quiver is full of them.

They will not be put to shame  
when they contend with their opponents in court.

(NIV)

**Sermon Outline:**

There are two overarching themes that the Psalmist refers to in this Psalm. He talks about our work and our children. Right away, the Psalmist lets us know that human effort can only take us so far. Our plans will fall short if they are not in alignment with God's will. The success of labor or work is directed by God and not by our own will.

In our own effort, we try to control the way things should happen in our lives, and the message we receive from the culture we live in is to hustle. We are told to work harder, stronger, and longer so that you can succeed. We believe we must give up more and more of ourselves to be successful.

The truth of the Gospel is that God gives us the gift of rest. God's invitation is not to work harder or longer, he invitation to us is to rest. Depriving ourselves of rest will not help us achieve our goals any quicker. Instead of feeling rested, we end up exhausted, frustrated, and disappointed.

People in the ancient world struggled with the same issue we struggle with today – trying to seize control. Grasping for control is a human condition, one that we have struggled with for centuries. We all have times where we look to seize control in our lives. God wants us to know that rest is for our prospering.

**We are called to be faithful with our part of the work, and we trust God that it will be effective.**

We cannot overwork or over function to ensure success. Goals are a good thing, but control is an illusion.

The second big theme in this Psalm has to do with children. Many of us try to hold onto our children forever, but we were never meant to do so. We only have a finite amount of time with our children, and we are called to trust that we have prepared them for this work and release them out into the world.

When it comes to our children, the invitation for us is to surrender control in this area to God, knowing that He is the one in control and directing our children. We need to trust that God will guide them to their destination.

Whether it is work or children, we can do everything right in our own power but cannot guarantee the outcome. This means that we cannot own either success or failure.

**We can trust that God will be faithful without fail, even when our faithfulness is lacking.**

God is faithful and perfectly good and will not set us up for failure. Even when we fall short, God is the one that will bring results.

**“We do not lose control of our lives. What we lose is the illusion that we were ever in control in the first place.”**

**---Barbara Brown Taylor**

God gives us the guarantee is the He is in control and that He is good. It is God who is working things out for our good and we can trust that God will be faithful.

**Sermon Summary:**

This Sunday, Pastor Sherin Swift, Pastor of Equipping & Connections, leads us in a sermon on The Illusion of Control. Today Pastor Sherin explores the ways scripture speaks to us regarding control in the areas of our work and children.

**Sermon Questions:**

1. Do you feel an invitation from Christ in today's scripture passage? Do any of the words resonate with you? If so, why?
2. Are you living your life with the illusion that you are in control? We cannot control everything in our lives. Being honest with yourself and God, where are you living your life with the illusion that you have control? Why are you grasping at control and where do you need to let go of that need to control?
3. What is your current lifestyle like – it is one where you can find rest in Christ or one where you are unable to rest? Are you trying to do things that God has never asked you to do? Journal your answers to these questions, surrendering them up to God in your time of silence.
4. Find time this week to have some pray for you, share with them those things that you are carrying and the ways you have been trying to take control.