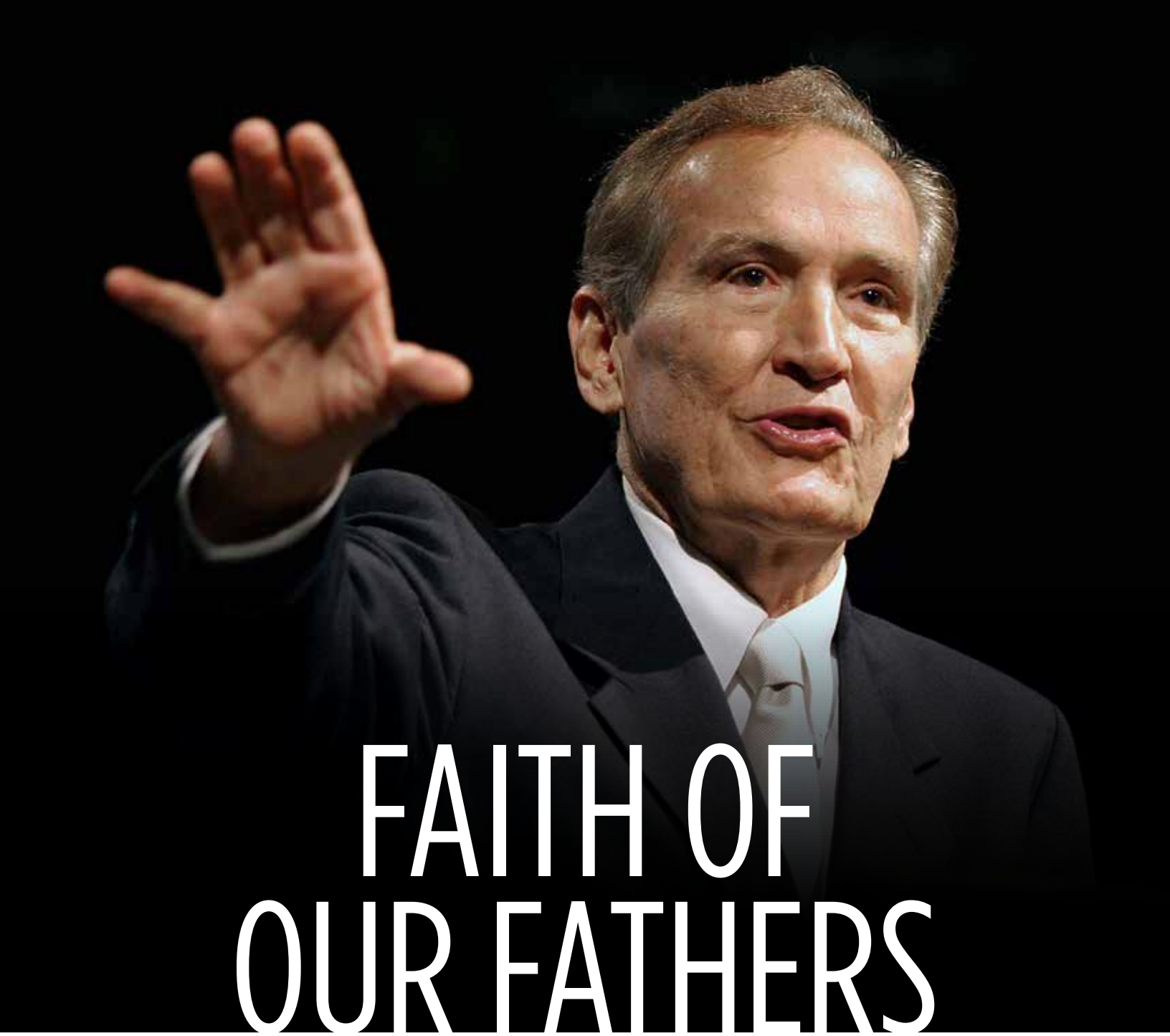

FAITH OF OUR FATHERS

Preaching and Teaching Resources

ADRIAN ROGERS

Faith of Our Fathers

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Faith of Our Fathers

SERMON REFERENCE: Psalm 128
LWF SERMON NUMBER: #1645

Perhaps the most difficult and profoundly rewarding role a man could ever commit to is being a good Dad. The faith of our fathers is what leads our families through the minefield of today's world.

Psalm 128 describes a faithful father in four ways.

First, it is his character.

If you fear God, you will walk in the way of God. Though we will inevitably make mistakes, we can be fathers who leave a legacy of integrity.

"When you eat the labor of your hands, you shall be happy, and it shall be well with you." (Psalm 128:2).

Second, a godly father loves his companion—his faithful, fruitful wife.

"Your wife shall be like a fruitful vine in the very heart of your house…" (Psalm 128:3a).

If the wife is the vine, you, as a wise father, understand it is your job to take care of your wife's love and needs, so she may meet the needs of your children and your household.

Third, a godly father leads his children.

"…your children like olive plants all around your table" (Psalm 128:3b).

In the Bible, olives symbolize fruitfulness and righteousness. This verse is a beautiful picture of how a godly father's righteousness is reproduced through his children.

A good father learns consistency in discipline and cultivates his children through quality time.

Finally, a godly father leaves a legacy.

"The Lord bless you out of Zion, and may you see the good of Jerusalem all the days of your life. Yes, may you see your children's children" (Psalm 128:5-6).

A generation raised by strong, God-fearing fathers makes a strong nation. America will not be changed until our families are changed; and our families will not be changed until the fathers are changed.

Adrian Rogers says, "You can't do anything about your ancestors, but you can do something about your descendants."

As fathers, we have an opportunity to make a lasting difference in the lives of our children, and our children's children; let us not waste it.

Life Application

Are you leading your family with character—do you love your wife and lead your children on the paths of righteousness? Consider the legacy you are leaving behind.

Faith of Our Fathers

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1) INTRODUCTION
   a) If you are a father, then yours is an awesome and a fearful assignment in the day and age in which we live because you must lead your family through a minefield.
   b) As we look around, there are the wrecks of families.
      i) The landscape is littered with debris:
         (1) The wounded
         (2) The maimed
         (3) The destroyed
      ii) Families have been blown apart by financial pressure.
      iii) Families have been devastated and shattered by immorality.
         (1) Our children live in an age where baby killing is called freedom of choice, sodomy is called sexual preference, and adultery is called an affair.
      iv) Families have been devasted by drugs and alcohol that is available everywhere.
         (1) Fathers have to lead their children through a minefield like this.
   c) People say that it is a jungle out there.
      i) But the problem is that in many homes when we open the door and go inside, it is a jungle in there.
   d) There is a big job to be done today, and it all begins with dads.
      i) America is not going to be changed until the homes are changed.
      ii) We will not change the homes until we change the dads.
      iii) The problem today is failing fathers and drop-out dads.
   e) Psalm 128 was written to fathers.
      i) It is a father's Psalm.
      ii) This Psalm tells us of the faith of our fathers.
   f) In today's message, we will look at Psalm 128, which talks about the godly and faithful father.

2) THE CHARACTER THAT HE LIVES (PSALM 128:1-2)
   a) Psalm 128:1-2
      i) These verses tell us that he is a God-fearing and a hard-working father.
   b) He has a fear of God.
      i) "Fear of God" does not mean that he cringes when he thinks of God.
      ii) "Fear of God" speaks of a reverence for God.
      iii) The fear of God has been described as "love on its knees".
      iv) A person who fears God the most, loves God the very best.
   c) A wife needs to see a fear of God in her husband.
   d) More than anything, children need to see a fear of God in their father.
      i) Every little boy wants to be like his dad.

ii) Every child needs a God-fearing father whom they can look up to.

e) Your kids need you to fear God.

i) They are facing humanism that tells them that man is the center of everything.

ii) They are facing materialism that tells them happiness belongs in things.

iii) They are faced with relativism that tells them that there are no absolutes and no fixed standards of right and wrong.

iv) They need a God-fearing dad.

3) THE COMPANION THAT HE LOVES (PSALM 128:3)

a) Psalm 128:3

i) "Fruitful vine" is a metaphor used to describe what a good wife is.

b) She is faithful.

i) Like a vine, she clings to her husband.

c) She is fruitful.

i) She is fruitful in all good works.

d) She is fragile.

i) Like a fruitful vine leans on the side of a house for support, a wife leans on and depends upon her husband.

e) The best things a father can do for his children:

i) First, fear God.

(1) Psalm 128:1

ii) Second, love their mother.

f) A husband can choose to love his wife.

i) It is not love that holds a marriage together; it is marriage that holds your love together.

ii) Make a commitment to love your wife.

iii) God has commanded husbands to love their wives.

(1) Ephesians 5:25

4) THE CHILDREN THAT HE LEADS (PSALM 128:3)

a) Psalm 128:3

i) This verse compares the children to olive plants.

(1) Olive plants need to be cultivated and cared for until it becomes an olive tree.

(2) The olive tree is a very productive tree in the Middle East.

(a) It is green.

(b) It is beautiful.

(c) It is productive.

(d) It is valuable.

(e) It is very stable.

(3) An olive plant, like any fragile plant, needs to be cared for and nurtured.

b) The problem today is phantom fathers, failing fathers, and drop-out dads.

i) They spend little time with their children.

ii) We kind of spawn them and pawn them.

(1) We have children, then, we leave it up to others to raise our children for us.

c) We have to cultivate the olive plants (our children).
  i) Ephesians 6:4
    (1) "Provoke not your children to wrath."
      (a) This verse has both a negative and a positive statement.
        (i) "Provoke" here means to exasperate, frustrate, badger, wound, and humiliate.
      (b) We can do this in two basic ways:
        (i) We can under-discipline our children.
          1. Proverbs 19:18
            a. A time is coming when it will be too late to discipline.
          2. We can under-discipline by just giving in to every demand.
          3. We under-discipline when we make empty threats; being inconsistent with discipline.
          4. We under-discipline when we scream at our children.
            a. This simply means that we are out of control.
        (ii) We can over-discipline our children.
          1. A father should be a leader and still be tender with his children.
          2. When a father chastens his child and does an overkill, down deep in the child's heart, he knows what the father is doing is not fair.
            a. The child can tell when the father is angry and just getting even rather than when the father is broken-hearted and disciplining.
          3. If we have all rules and no relationship, then there will be rebellion.
          4. If we have all relationship and no rules, then there will be chaos.
    (2) "Nurture" has the idea of cultivation, like you would cultivate an olive plant.
      (a) This takes discipline, instruction, demonstration, and time.
      (b) A father who does not spend quality time with his daughter greatly increases her chances to be either frigid or promiscuous.
        (i) If the father does not give her the love that she deeply desires, then she will find someone else who will give her what her dad should give her.
          1. She is looking for a father figure.
        (ii) The daughter will become vulnerable, or she will have a negativism toward men in general.

d) Children are like olive plants.
  i) They have to be cultivated.
  ii) They have to be cared for.

5) THE CONTRIBUTION THAT HE LEAVES (PSALM 128:5-6)

a) Psalm 128:5-6

b) Show me a generation that has God-fearing and hard-working fathers, men who love their wives, men who lead their children, and I will show you a nation that is a strong nation.
  i) "You will see the good of Jerusalem."
    (1) Psalm 128:5

c) A nation will not be changed until her families are changed.
   i) Families will not be changed until the fathers are changed.
d) Part of the legacy that he leaves is a healthy nation.
e) Psalm 128:6
   i) Not only is he talking about national security, but he is also talking about your personal legacy.
      (1) The idea is of the children's children living in peace because of the legacy of a godly grandfather.
f) Maybe you were not blessed to have a godly grandfather.
   i) We cannot do anything about our ancestors, but we can do something about our descendants.
   ii) By the grace of God, you can be a godly father.
      (1) You can see your children's children loving God, serving God, and praising God.
      (2) "Faith of our fathers living still."

6) CONCLUSION

a) The need of the hour is fathers who will be God-fearing, hard-working, who will love their wives and lead their children.
b) C.S. Lewis stated that everyone in the world falls into one of two categories:
   i) Those who look up to God in humble submission and say to Him, "Not my will, but Thy will be done."
   ii) Those who say to God, "Not Thy will, but my will be done."
      (1) This category of persons is those to whom God says as they slip into Hell, "Your will be done."
c) God is not willing that any should perish.
   i) 2 Peter 3:9
d) Do you know Jesus personally? If not, you can pray to Him today by asking Him to come into your life.
e) Call upon Jesus today. Repent (turn) from your sins, and turn to Jesus. Ask Him to forgive you of your sins, and acknowledge Him as Lord of your life.
   i) Romans 3:23
   ii) Romans 10:9-10
   iii) Romans 10:13
   iv) Acts 16:31
   v) John 3:16

Faith of Our Fathers

SERMON REFERENCE: Psalm 128
LWF SERMON NUMBER: #1645

Would you find in God's Word Psalm 128, Psalm 128? The title of our message this morning is, "Faith of our Fathers", "Faith of our Fathers". In just a moment we're going to read Psalm 128.

But may I say today that if you're a daddy, if you're a father, yours is an awesome and a fearful assignment in the day and age in which we live because you must lead your family through what I want to call a minefield. And I'm telling you it's very, very dangerous. And as you look around, there are the wrecks of families. The landscape is littered with debris: the wounded, the maimed, the destroyed. I see over here a family that's been blown to bits by financial pressure. Over here we see families that have been devastated and shattered by immorality. Our children today, oh, my dear friend, our children today live in an age where baby killing is called "freedom of choice". Our children today live in an age where sodomy is called "sexual preference". They live in an age today where adultery is called "an affair". And you've got to lead your children through a minefield like this.

Here are families that have been devastated and blown to bits by drugs and alcohol that is available everywhere. And, dads, I know that you want to bring your children and put them under your arms and somehow get them safely through. And the problem is, in many homes, we say, "Well, it's a jungle out there." Dear friend, when you open the door and come inside, it's a jungle in there. There's a job to be done today, a big one. And I want to say it very plainly and very clearly, it all begins with dad. America is not going to be changed until the homes are changed. You will agree with that. You'll not change America until you change the home. I'm going to tell you something else. You're not going to change the home until you change the dads in America. The problem in America today, very frankly put, is failing fathers and drop-out dads.

Now, Psalm 128 was written to daddies. It's a father's psalm. It tells of the faith of our fathers, listen to it, "Blessed is every one that feareth the Lord; that walketh in His ways. For thou shalt eat the labor of thine hands: happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee. Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house: thy children like olive plants round about thy table. Behold, that thus shall the man be blessed that feareth the Lord. The Lord shall bless thee out of Zion: and thou shalt see the good of Jerusalem all the days of thy life. Yea, thou shalt see thy children's children, and peace upon Israel."

Now there are several things I want you to see in this psalm that talks about the godly dad, the faithful father, the very first of which is I want you to see **the character that he lives**, the character that he lives out in his daily life. Look in Psalm 128 verses 1 and 2, "Blessed is every one that feareth the Lord; that walketh in His ways. For thou shalt eat the labor of thine hands: happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee." Here's a father, here's a dad, and it's very obvious that he is a God-fearing, hard-working dad. That's what verses 1 and 2 tell us. He's a God-fearing, hard-working dad. Now that's just a good start. He has a fear of God. Now a fear of God doesn't mean that he cringes when he thinks of God. The phrase "fear of God" used in the Bible, speaks of a reverence for God. Someone has described the fear of God as "love on its knees". And a person who fears God the most loves God the very best. But a wife needs to see in her husband a fear of God. Children need to see, more than anything else in their dad, a fear of God.

Some years ago, I read of a soul winner who had gone into a particular home to witness to a man, a daddy, about Jesus. And the soul winner was presenting the cause of Christ to this dad, and this dad was being very polite to him. He was nodding and saying, "Yes, I see. Yes. Thank you very much. I appreciate your coming by. Ah, yes, oh, yes, ah, we, we are familiar with that church. Oh yes, we've heard this and that." But the father, while being quite polite, was very diffident, very distant to the Gospel, and it was obvious that he was trying to get rid of this individual who had come in to witness to him. There was a little fellow down there on the floor, playing. The father was not even aware that the little boy was listening to the conversation that was going on. Finally, in defeat and despair, that man who was witnessing the cause of Christ left that house. And when he was gone, the little boy climbed up into his daddy's lap, put his arms around his daddy's neck, and said, "We don't want to be a Christian, do we, daddy? We don't want to be a Christian, do we, daddy?" Every little boy wants to be like his dad.

Did you know that I was sitting in a revival crusade, I was not saved, I was not born again. But I was sitting in a revival crusade because somebody invited our family. I was sitting here, and my dad was sitting here right next to the aisle. When the invitation was given, my dad stepped out and gave his heart to Jesus Christ. I was overwhelmed that my dad stepped out and gave his heart to Jesus Christ. Do you know who the next guy down the aisle was? A boy named Adrian Rogers, following his dad down that aisle to give his heart to Jesus Christ as his personal Savior and Lord.

I can remember when our first child came into this world, a boy named Stephen. He was born just like all kids are. I don't why they arrange to be born so very early in the morning, midnight almost, but he did. I'll never forget that experience. What an experience it was. You think it's hard on mothers. Listen, it's tough on dads. It's really tough on dads. Joyce gave me the elbow and said, "Adrian, I think it is time." I said, "Joyce, are you certain?" She said, "Yes." I jumped. We were living in a little house trailer, going to college at that time. We didn't have a telephone. Folks, we didn't even have indoor bathroom in that house trailer, much less a telephone. We had a common washhouse there that we used. And I jumped out of bed and I said, "Oh, we're supposed to call the doctor." And she said, 'Yes, call the doctor and tell him we're coming." I ran out to that little house out there where the telephone was, and it was in the middle of the night. There was not a soul around. And there was that little office house there. And I couldn't get in. It was locked. And I said, "Oh no, it's locked. I've got to get the doctor." Folks, I thought this was the biggest crisis since the dropping of the A bomb. And I ran back to my car, opened the car and got a tire tool, and pried open the window, as I remember, to get into that place to make a telephone call. And I skinned my knees going over into the window, and ran to the phone. Folks, it was a pay phone. I didn't have anything. I had to get back out and go back in and get a nickel or whatever it was and put it in that pay phone and call that doctor and get down there to the hospital.

And Joyce, she really did deliver fast. And I remember when that nurse came out and said, "Mr. Rogers, you're a daddy. You've got a son." I cannot tell you the joy in my heart. And God let me see that little boy and Joyce as they were on their way back to the room. And I went back to that little trailer that morning and got on my knees. I said, "Oh God, if I never preach a good sermon, if I never am a good pastor, if I never have any worldly possessions, if nobody ever hears my name, oh God," and this is what I prayed, "Oh God, I want to be a good dad. I want to be a good dad." And I tell you, I have a greater ambition and a greater desire to be a good daddy than I have to be a good pastor, and I want to be a good pastor.

But, my dear friend, I want to be a God-fearing dad that my children can look up to. Folks, I'm telling you, your kids need you to fear God. They're facing humanism that tells them that man is the center of everything. They're facing materialism that tells them that happiness belongs in things. They're facing all kinds of relativism that tells them that there are no absolutes, no fixed standards of right and wrong, and they need a God-fearing dad.

But now, wait a minute, look again, if you will. Look not only at the character that he lives, verses 1 and 2, but look at **the companion he loves**, Psalm 128 verse 3. "Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house." I love that. That speaks not only of his character, but his companion, his wife, like a fruitful vine. And I've thought of Joyce so many times under that metaphor, a fruitful vine, because that's exactly what a good wife is. Number one: She's faithful. Like a vine, she clings to him. Number two: She's fruitful, she's fruitful, and she's fruitful in all good works. Fruitful to bear children, but fruitful in every aspect. Like a fruitful vine, the Bible says. And she's faithful. She's fruitful. But she's fragile. You see, a vine needs the support that the house gives. And she's like a fruitful vine by the side of the house, leaning on and depending upon you, dad.

And I want to say again, the best thing, dad, that you can do for your kids, secondly, first of all, is to fear God; secondly, to love their momma. It's so simple. It's not all that complicated. Fear God, verse 1; number two: love your wife, that fruitful vine that God has given by the side of your house. You say, "Well, I don't know. My love is growing cold." Well then, friend, fire it up. You can choose to love your wife. Let me tell you something. It is not love that holds your marriage together; it's marriage that holds your love together. I mean, you make a commitment. You say, "I will by the grace of God." God has commanded you to love your wife.

But I want to move quickly past these verses to get at verse 3, the last part of verse 3 in Psalm 128, and look at it again, "Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house: thy children like olive plants round about thy table." Now we see the character he lives, the companion he loves, but now I want you to see **the children he leads**. "Thy children shall be like olive plants." Now if you lived in the Middle East, you'd understand why he talked about a child being like an olive plant. Not a full grown olive tree, but an olive plant; an olive plant that needs to be cultivated and cared for until it will become an olive tree. Now the olive is a very productive tree in the Middle East. It's green. It's beautiful. It is productive. It is valuable. And, friend, it is very, very stable. You can go to Israel, and go to the Garden of Gethsemane. They have olive trees in the Garden of Gethsemane that some believe are 2,000 years old, that may have been there when Jesus Christ prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane. Those are mature olive trees. But God's Word says that your children that you lead are going to be like olive plants round about your table. Now an olive plant, like any fragile plant, needs to be cared for. It needs to be nurtured. And that's the reason he says they're going to be like olive plants round about your table.

You know the problem in America today is phantom fathers, failing fathers, drop-out dads. Some of you spend such a little time with your children. I read a cartoon where a business executive said to his secretary, "Mrs. Chortel, I want to be a better father. Would you try to locate my children for me, please?" A lot of executives are just about that way. I read with a broken heart, I read and re-read this statistic: The average father in America spends 7 ½ minutes a week with his teenage son or daughter, 7 ½ minutes a week! I'm talking about face-to-face relationship. We live in America where we kind of spawn them and pawn them. I mean, we have these children. Then we leave it up to other people to raise our children for them. Dave

Simmons said, “They deposit their bottle-fed babies in kiddy-care covens and school cells, keep them in Reeboks, straighten their teeth, and call this child-raising.” We let somebody else do it. Friend, you’ve got to cultivate these olive plants.

That’s the reason that I want you to put in your margin by verse 3, Ephesians 6:4. Listen to it, “And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.” “Ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and the admonition of the Lord.” Now this verse has both a negative and a positive in it. The negative is this, here’s the negative to watch out for. He says, “Provoke not your children to wrath.” If you have difficulty with that translation, let me just give it to you in plain English. Don’t drive them nuts! “Provoke not your children to wrath.” The word provoke means to exasperate. It means to frustrate. It means to badger. It means to wound. It means to humiliate. And that’s what many dads are doing to their kids. And you can do this two basic ways: number one: by under-disciplining your child. Proverbs chapter 19 verse 18 says, “Chasten thy son while there is hope.” Friend, there’s coming a time when it will be too late. “Chasten your son while there is hope.”

Now let me tell you how you can under-discipline if you’re a dad and really provoke your child. You can under-discipline by just giving in to every demand. That’s the easy way. Or by making empty threats, not carrying out those threats. By inconsistency in discipline. Joyce and I haven’t been perfect parents, but we’ve got four wonderful kids. And one thing we’ve tried to do is to be consistent in our discipline. There’re certain things that they know they that know that they know are wrong. Two things in our family we don’t tolerate, period! One is dishonesty and the other is disrespect. We just will not tolerate that. And any of our kids can get in trouble in a skinny minute with me if they’re disrespectful to their momma. I will not stand for it and should not stand for it. We under-discipline sometimes when we are so inconsistent, we scream at children. When you scream at your child, do you know what that means? That just simply means you’re out of control! You’re out of control! You can under-discipline.

Or, of course, then you can over-discipline. You show me a father who says, “All right, then, pastor. You say you won’t put up with this and you won’t put up with that. Neither will I!” You show me a father who is a leader but not tender, and I’ll show you a family that still has problems. And some of you macho dads, you bully dads, need to listen. When you chasten your child and you do an overkill, down deep in his heart he knows what you’re doing is not fair. He may not be able to reason it all out, but he knows it’s unfair and he knows that you’re getting away with it just because you are bigger than he is and you’re stronger than he is. And he can tell when you’re angry and just getting even rather than when you’re broken-hearted and disciplining. I’m telling you, dads, you have all rules and no relationships, you’re going to have rebellion. And if you have all relationship and no rules, you’re going to have chaos. But the Bible says you’re not to provoke your children to wrath, but you are to bring them up in the nurture and the admonition of the Lord.

Now look at that word nurture and think about your child as an olive plant. The word nurture actually has the idea of cultivation, like you would cultivate an olive plant. Do you have a garden? I don’t have a garden, I’ll tell you why I don’t have a garden. I don’t like gardens. There’s too much weeding, too much hoeing, too much fertilizing, too much watering, too much care. It’s tough to have a garden. It’s easier for me to buy vegetables. And I’ve got some dear friends who bring me some, and I love them. I love these friends who’ve done that weeding and that hoeing and that watering. And if you love gardens, I’m proud of you. And, my dear friend, you’ve got another kind of a garden. You’ve got some olive plants. And it takes

that weeding, it takes that watering, it takes that fertilizing, it takes that cultivating, it takes that discipline, it takes that instruction, it takes that demonstration. And there's no way to do it without spelling love: T-I-M-E.

I read the other day that if a father does not spend quality time with his daughter, greatly increases her opportunities, her proclivities, her chances to be one of two things: either frigid or she's going to be promiscuous. If the father does not give her the love that she deeply desires, she's going to find someone else that is going to give her what her dad really ought to give her. She's looking for a father figure, and will become vulnerable, or else she will have a negativism toward men in general. You say, "Well pastor, I just don't have time." Well, friend, I believe you have time. If you don't have time, take time. You say, "I've got other things to do." Well, duties don't conflict. I'm telling you, dads, they're like olive plants. They've got to be cultivated. They've got to be cared for.

Now I want you to see not only the children that he leads, but I want you to see, last of all, **the contribution that he leaves**. Look in Psalm 128 verses 5 and 6, "The Lord shall bless thee out of Zion: and thou shalt see the good of Jerusalem all the days of thy life." Show me a generation that has God-fearing, hard-working fathers, men who love their wives, men who lead their children, and I'll show you a nation that is a strong nation. You'll see the good of Jerusalem. As I told you before, America will not be changed until her families are changed. And her families will not be changed until the fathers are changed. You'll see the good of Jerusalem. That's a part of the legacy that he leaves is a healthy nation. But, I want you to see the last part of it in Psalm 128 verse 6, "Yea, thou shalt see thy children's children, and peace upon Israel." Now he's talking not only about national security, but he's talking about your personal legacy. You will see your children's children. And the idea is of the children's children living in peace because of the legacy of a godly granddaddy. And that means all the more to me when, because of my six wonderful grandchildren that I love with a indescribable love. "Thou shalt see thy children's children." What a delight that is.

I had the privilege of spending some quality time with Bill and Gloria Gaither. Now, you know that Bill and Gloria Gaither have made, I suppose, a greater impact on Christian music in our generation than any people who live. I mean, they have just written the great, great music that our choir sings, and many of us have grown up on Gaither music. Well, when I was having coffee with Bill, he told me a story that I want to share with you because I thought it so perfectly fits in with what I'm about to say.

He said that back there in Indiana, in Alexandria, Indiana, when he and Gloria were first married, they were school teachers. They weren't in the ministry of music and they weren't doing concerts or writing music. They were school teachers. They didn't have very much money. But they wanted to build a house. They lived in a little town, and they thought, "Well, we need to build a house, and we want to have some acreage. We want about 15 acres." And so they drove around town and they saw 15 acres out there on the edge of the town, and they decided, "Well, we want that 15 acres." They asked around and found out who it belonged to, and it belonged to a Mr. Yule, who was a retired banker whose business mostly was acquiring; he didn't get rid of stuff, he just bought it and held it. And everybody knew that Mr. Yule liked to buy property, but he didn't like to sell property. But they decided they would go to Mr. Yule and ask Mr. Yule if they could buy that 15 acres.

And they took their daughter and dressed her up and put a bonnet on her to make her look cute to be a good little family, you know, and went in to see Mr. Yule and ask him, "Mr. Yule, would you consider selling us that 15 acres of property out there on the edge of town?" And Mr. Yule looked at them and he said, "Well," he

said, "I don't want to sell anything." He said, "I'm really not interested." He said, "What is your name, son?" He said, "My name is Gaither." He said, "Gaither!" He said, "Was your granddad Grover Gaither?" "Why," he said, "Yes." He said, "That's my granddad." He said, "He was?" He said, "Let me tell you about Grover Gaither." He said, "He used to work for me." He said, "I have never seen a harder working, more faithful, more dedicated man than your granddad, Grover Gaither." He said, "Son, you came from good stuff." He said, "Go away and let me think about it. Come back tomorrow."

Bill Gaither came back, whether it was tomorrow or a few days, I cannot remember. And the old man, Mr. Yule, said, "Well, I've decided to sell the property. How about $3500?" Gaither said I didn't know whether he meant for the whole thing or an acre, but I said, "Well, all right. That'll be fine." And he bought this piece of property, 15 acres, for $3500. It had a little stream through it, and they began to work around the stream. And they went out there and began to plant trees out on that 15 acres; a tree for one child, a tree for another child. They have a son named Benji, and they have the Benji tree there, and all of these trees. And through the years they have just planted on this 15 acres, until today, it's a very beautiful spot. That was 27 years ago.

Bill said to me, he said, "The other day, my son, Benji, who's now a grown boy just graduated from college, was going off to do some ministry in the inner city. The women were in the house, and Benji and I were just walking around in that beautiful piece of property. And Benji said to me, said, 'Dad, this sure is a pretty place, isn't it?' I said, 'Yes, son, it really is a nice place.' And then Benji said, 'Dad, how did we ever get this place? How did we ever get this place?' And Bill Gaither said, 'Benji, I thought you would never ask. I want to tell you how we got this place. Because of my granddad, your great-granddaddy, who was a faithful man, who was a good man, because of him, son, we're walking around out here today.'"

My dear friend, that's a beautiful story to me because I believe that's exactly what this psalm is saying, Psalm 128 verse 6, "Yea, thou shalt see thy children's children, and peace upon Jerusalem." I don't know what kind of a home you came from. Maybe you weren't blessed to have a granddaddy like Grover Gaither or a great-granddad. Friend, you can't do anything about your ancestors, but I'm going to tell you one thing. You can do something about your descendants. You can do something about them. You can say, "By the grace of God, I'm going to be a godly daddy, and I'm going to see my children's children loving God, serving God, praising God." One day, maybe, they'll sing and they'll think of us when they sing, "Faith of our Fathers living still." And the need of the hour, the need of the hour, the need of the hour is fathers who'll be God-fearing, hard-working, who will love their wives and lead their children.

C. S. Lewis, listen to me, I'm finished. But C. S. Lewis says there're two kinds of people in the world. Are you listening, dads, moms, children, listen to me. There are two kinds of people in the world. You can take all of the people in the world and just divide them up into these two categories. First of all, there are those who look up to God in humble submission and say to Him, "Thy will be done." That's the greatest, most wonderful thing you could do. Just look up to God and say, "God, Thy will be done. Save me. Fill me. Use me. I want, dear Lord, to fear You, to follow You with my family. Thy will be done." That's one category of person, those who say to God, "Thy will be done."

The other category of persons are those to whom God says, as they slip into Hell, "Thy will be done. Thy will be done." When God says to them, "All right, have it your way. Your will be done," as they go to Hell. Friend, God is not willing that any should perish. If you die and go to Hell, it's because you've refused the will of God and chosen your own will and God will have to say to you, "Your will be done." I wonder today, would

you like to say to God in Heaven, "Oh God, Thy will be done. Lord, I need You. I want You. I need to be saved. I want to become a child of God."

I want every head bowed and every eye closed. No one stirring. No one looking around. No one moving. If you're already saved, would you begin to pray for those around about you who may not be saved? Maybe you don't know whether they're saved or not. Just pray, "Lord, bless the person to my right. Bless the person to my left, that person in front of me, that person behind me. Oh God, right now, if, if they don't know You, Lord, help them right now that they might come to know You as their personal Savior and Lord.

And my dear friend, I want to tell you that Jesus Christ is knocking at your heart's door today and He wants to save you, and He will save you if you would pray a prayer like this, "Oh God, I know that You love me. I know that You want to save me. Jesus, You died to save me. I believe You're the Son of God. I believe that God raised You from the dead. I believe it. And I know that You paid for my sin debt. And I open my heart now and I receive You into my heart as my Lord and Savior. My prayer is that Your will will be done in my life. Come into my heart. Forgive my sin. Save me, Lord Jesus. Save me, Lord Jesus." You say, "Pastor, I can't remember all of that." Just put it in a short sentence. "Save me, Lord Jesus." He knows what you mean. "Save me, Lord Jesus."

Father, I pray that many, many today in this place will receive Christ as their personal Savior and Lord and be born again. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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