

## 8. Why your kids are like olive plants

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*Family Matters*

By Robert Rohlin

**Bible Text:** Psalm 128:3

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I'll ask you to turn in your Bibles to Psalm 128 this morning. We're really just going to look at one verse but it's a verse that is quite significant to me. I don't know what your experience is but my experience is that every time it seems like I open the word of God, there's something in there that wasn't there last time I looked. It's like he keeps sneaking stuff in there. Do you all ever get that impression? Just a second ago, I opened my Bible and, of course, Richard has preached a fairly lengthy series on the divided kingdom which was excellent and I just happened to open my Bible and there was the story of Uzziah as king of Judah that went in and he burned incense in the temple and he wasn't supposed to and because of that, leprosy came upon him while he was still there and then because of that, his son Jotham, followed the Lord but he never went to the temple because he was, I think, scared the same thing would happen to him. Then that passed down to the people in the sense that the people became more ungodly even though they had a godly king because they never saw their godly king go to the temple. I'll tell you what, by the way, I appreciate you men for coming to the church with your families because it does make a difference for your children to actually see you here, not just drop them off at the curb as I've seen a lot of dads do in the past.

But I want to share with you just some things about parenting. Last week I talked about the most important thing you can teach your children and it's reverence and I had a kind of an interesting, ah-ha moment. I don't know how often you have those but I had kind of an ah-ha moment and so after Sunday service while I was back in the Fellowship Hall, a mom came up to me and she was very excitedly showing me that her daughter had been taking notes on my sermon and that's pretty neat when you hear your kids are listening and you know that they are listening. Then this mother said something to me that stuck in my brain. She said it's also about the relationships and I thought, "Well, you know, that's in next week's sermon but it's very true that it's about the relationships." We need to teach them reverence but we also need to have their hearts.

Then I was listening to Rick W. come in here and talk to the fathers last Sunday afternoon and in a quiz he gave to the fathers, there were questions that actually went to 3 different areas and as I thought about those 3 different areas, I thought, "You know, those 3 different areas are the keys to being a good parent." And so I want to share with you just kind of this ah-ha moment and you've probably already had this ah-ha moment but

I'm slow to catch up sometimes. But effective parents have 3 key characteristics. One is they teach their children the fear of God. And if you haven't heard last week's sermon, I encourage you to go out there and listen to it. Just before I forget, I went out and looked, I'll tell you this afternoon why I went and looked at this number but I went out and looked and 310 people had downloaded that sermon since last Sunday and that's an encouragement to me and I'll tell you why that's such a big deal later this afternoon.

But they teach their children the fear of God and then they keep their children's hearts by remaining emotionally connected to them. You see, it's not enough to just teach them spiritual truth, you need to have their heart. You need to be emotionally connected with them. They need to know that you love them. All the truth in the world won't matter to kids if they don't feel mom and daddy love them and all the truth in the world won't matter to kids if they don't think their mom and daddy love one another. That's so crucial and so important. The fact is, the best thing you can do for children is to work on your marriage and to have a strong marriage.

The third thing is that you need to be physically present with them. Most children spell love t-i-m-e. In other words, it's being there and spending time with them. And that's hard. You know, we've got several dads in this audience including myself that travel a great deal and how are you there? You need to be physically present and I'm blessed that when I'm not traveling, I get to work from home and so I can be physically present but even then, a lot of days I'm in my office all day and it's wonderful to be able to come out occasionally and grab the first kid I see and hug them. It's important that you hug your kids. It's important that you love them. And a lot of men are not wired to be affectionate and if you are one of those guys and you're not a hugger, let me tell you something: become one. Become one. I don't care if you weren't raised that way, you need to start learning to hug your children. Just because you weren't raised that way, you need to change because kids need a dad who hugs them and loves on them and will sit there and put their arms around them. It means a lot to your kids. So don't withdraw physical affection from your children. It will mess them up.

So it's like a 3 legged stool, if you kick any one of the legs off, the whole stool falls over and as a dad or as a mom, you need to teach your children the fear of the Lord. You need to be emotionally connected with them and you need to be affectionate with them and be present in the important moments of their lives. And if you fail to do any one of those things, you can lose it. Now, I won't put a guarantee on this concept and say that if you do all these things I can promise you your kids will turn out okay. The fact of the matter is that your children do have their own individual depraved natures like you do. They can make wrong decisions when they grow up and they can do stupid but let me tell you this: if you don't do these 3 things, I think you're virtually guaranteeing their failure. If you do these 3 things, you're giving them the best shot you could give them. If you don't hear anything else I say today, if you would remember those 3 characteristics of an effective parent and if you've had a parent like that, children, go tell them how much you appreciate that because they are a rare exception in this world. There aren't many like that. Let them know how much you appreciate that.

Now, I want to talk about a Bible verse that one day just made me go hmm. I don't know, there are a few things in the Bible that have bothered me for a lot of years. I am still wondering and if some of you have a keen insight into this and my son probably should do a series on this, maybe he can explain it to me, but exactly why did Pharaoh want to spend one more night with the frogs? Will somebody please help me with that one later. You know, because Moses could have asked God to remove the frogs and they'd be gone and Pharaoh's wanting to spend one more night. I'll tell you, I was so disappointed when I found out the name of the frog God. I forget what it was but they have another God named Hapi, that should have been the frog God. It wasn't but it should've been. At any rate, why spend one more night with frogs? You know, I've had people ask me before, "Did Adam have a belly button?" You know, you kind of worry about things like that.

You know, a lot of major issues but in Psalm 128:3, we have this Scripture verse and it's one of these things that is amazingly simple until you really start chewing on it and it says this, this is talking about the godly man. The fact is, just for a little context, let's go ahead and look at Psalm 128 and let me read the whole thing. It's a short Psalm.

1 Blessed is every one that feareth the LORD; that walketh in his ways. 2 For thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands: happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee.

By the way, you notice this Psalm starts with, "Blessed is every one that," what? "Fears the Lord." That was last week. Now listen to this next verse,

3 Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house: thy children like olive plants round about thy table. 4 Behold, that thus shall the man be blessed that [what?] feareth the LORD. [kind of funny. Glad we talked about that.] 5 The LORD shall bless thee out of Zion: and thou shalt see the good of Jerusalem all the days of thy life. 6 Yea, thou shalt see thy children's children, and peace upon Israel.

He says you'll have blessings that go down to your grandkids. But one day we were reading this during our family Bible time, we were living back in Duncanville at the time. I well remember the day and verse 3 bothered me because I could kind of figure out the first half of that verse, "thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house." I thought, "Okay, my wife has had kids. She's fruitful and God has blessed us with children. I can kind of get that but why were my kids like olive plants?" Now, I kind of understand this today because it's just a poetic language and if you've ever seen olive trees, when olive trees grow, they have these little olive trees that pop up off of the roots so the roots go out and then the little olive trees pop up off of the roots as they extend. Of course, when I used to work, I used to work on a tree farm and we called the tree that sprang up off of a root of its parent tree, we called that a sucker. And so what he's really saying here is that when you get married and you have this wonderful marriage, all of a sudden all these little suckers start popping up everywhere, you know? That really was what he was intending to show. He was really just intending to show that that was...we

have a slide that is advancing on its own for some reason. If anybody else has a clicker, please put it away.

I thought about that, why would God pick olive trees of all things to compare my children to? And so I did what every good homeschooling father does when they come across something in Bible study or in homeschooling that they don't understand, they ask the kids to research it and write a paper about it. And so I went into the computer and I got on the Internet and I printed a whole bunch of things about how to raise olive trees and then before I left, the only 2 that were really capable of this task at the time were Richard and Melody and I passed them and I said, "Here's the information about olive trees. When I come home from work today, I want you to tell me at least 25 ways that children are like olive plants," and when I came back, they didn't do 25, I think they only had 19 but that was pretty good. And I began studying this further and further and found out there were indeed a multitude of ways that children are like olive plants, so much so that I believe if you know how to raise olive trees, you know how to raise kids.

So what we're going to find out today is: what does the Bible say about olive trees? What do we know about raising olive trees? And how does that translate to raising children? So first of all, you need to understand this is a God-ordained analogy because in Psalm 128:3, he says, "Thy children like olive plants." In other words, he stuck the word "like" in their meaning he's making a direct comparison. This is what you'd call in English a simile. It is a comparison between 2 things and it means that because we're comparing 2 things, they both have common characteristics in hand. So God said, you know, "I picked this." Now, I honestly believe that the Psalmist when he wrote it probably just in his mind had this idea that, "Oh yeah, just like olive trees spring up from the olive tree, you know, if you've got a godly parent, you should have all these little kids springing up around the house and reflecting the same thing." Richard, I have no idea why this is advancing itself so if you can maybe, if you notice anything, let me know. Do you know what? There may be timings on it. That's probably what it is. Donald, I don't know if you unchecked the timings but you might want to do that.

So, it's a God-ordained analogy so let's talk about, first of all, why this is an important analogy to understand. First of all, in the garden of Gethsemane, there are trees there that are 2,000 year old olive trees. Now, that's a pretty old tree. And those trees grew from seedlings that were there when Christ prayed in the garden of Gethsemane so you're seeing trees today that were there just getting their start as Christ was praying his prayer. I think that's important because if children are like olive plants, one of our jobs is to build a generational ministry. We are to have a legacy of service to God by making and keeping vows and training the next generation to do so.

In Jeremiah 35, there is a story about Jonadab and the Rechabites and, of course, this was an interesting story because God tells Jeremiah, he says, "I want you to invite this particular family and in the temple I want you to serve some wine and we're going to use this as an illustration." So he brings them in and serves them wine and he says, "Drink," and they say, "Oh no, we can't do that." He said, "Our forefather, Jonadab," which was like 5 generations back, "said that he told us that we were never to drink wine, we were

never to live in anything other than a tent." The fascinating thing about that is that 5 generations later, people were still keeping that vow in that family and that was the only clan in all of the tribes of Israel that never went into captivity. Why? Because they kept their vow and they abstained from alcohol. They lived in a tent. They didn't have any cities for people to attack so they lived in a great deal of peace.

Now, I want to build a generational legacy for my children so first thing we need to understand when we have kids is why do we have them? Some of you know that we recently went through a remodeling crisis at our house. We didn't want to. It was not one of those planned remodeling things. It was that we had a plumbing problem we didn't know about that existed for a long time and then when we went to do something else, we discovered the problem, discovered we had mold growing in our walls. We had to tear out sheet rock, had to scrub things down and it was just kind of one of those unplanned nightmares. But as we're going through that whole process of doing those things, you know, I commented to someone that we were down to one dishwasher and they said, "With 6 kids at home, what do you need with a dishwasher anyway?" So some people may think that that is the purpose of having children is to have dishwashers and lawn mowers and things of that nature but the Bible specifically gives us a list of at least 6 reasons to have kids. They are to be imprints of Christ. They are to be introducers to Christ, illuminators of God's word, imparters of blessing, imparters of beauty, and an inheritance of joy. All of these come from passages about olive trees so let's look at those passages real quick.

First of all, there is the cherubim in the temple were constructed of olive wood overlaid with gold in 1 Kings 6:23 it says, "And within the oracle he made two cherubims of olive tree, each ten cubits high." Now, these cherubim, if you read on in this passage in 1 Kings 6, had 4 different faces. Now, sometimes when you see cherubim in the temple, they only have 2 faces. In this particular case, they had 4 faces and normally the 2 faces you would see would be a picture of a lion and a picture of a man representing the fact that Jesus is the lion of the tribe of Judah and he's also the Son of Man. It's a picture of his dual nature as both God and man. However, in the Holiest of Holies and when they appear to Ezekiel in Ezekiel 10, they have 4 faces. There is the lion where he's the king on the throne of David, it shows the Lordship of Christ. There is the man which pictures the humanity of Christ. There is the ox which pictures the servant hood of Christ. There's the eagle which is the deity of Christ. By the way, these 4 animals each correspond to one of the 4 Gospels as well. You see the lion corresponds to the Gospel of Matthew which shows him to be the legal heir to the throne of David. There's the Gospel of Luke which corresponds to him being the Son of Man. Then there's the Gospel of Mark which pictures Christ as our supreme servant. Then there is the Gospel of John which depicts Christ as the Son of God.

So there is a principle here and something you need to remember as parents is that academics are important but they should not ever be the primary goal of home education or raising your children. Sometimes we make it about that. We make it about their math grades or their English grades or their, do they understand geography? Have they read the Bob Jones books on biology? Do they understand all that? We make that the deal about

home education but let me explain: the real purpose of having children is to build them into imprints of Jesus Christ. They need to become imprints of Jesus Christ. So I kind of crafted a mission statement for what it means for me to be a parent and that is that the primary goal of our home education and parenting is to build into the lives of our children the character of Christ so that when the world sees them, they see him. Now see, that's really what it's all about. I want when people look at my kids and when people look at your kids, I want them to think about Jesus. Now, if they are doing that, it won't matter that they don't understand Bernoulli's principle real well or it won't matter that they don't know how to measure specific gravity of a substance. But it will be important that they represent Jesus Christ. In 2 Corinthians 5:20, it says, "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." So we're to be ambassadors. An ambassador represents the one that he is there for and so our children are representatives of Christ.

Now, I had a nice chat with my girls. Girls have such a weird way of talking to their dads because they sit down and we're at dinner and my girls just started asking me little questions. And then they asked more questions, more questions. Suddenly I feel like I'm sitting on the witness stand and I'm being grilled and what it was is my girls had been talking and they understand that when they are out they represent me and not just representing Christ, they represent me and so they wanted to know my opinion about some things on their dress and on their colors and the styles and earrings. I had about an hour and a half long of girl talk and that was, I almost went out to amazon.com and bought myself an eyelash crimper after it was over. It was more estrogen than a man should be able to handle. But at any rate, it was good talk. But our children do reflect us but as children of God, they are children of the kingdom and they need to have a royal bearing. We call it deportment and posture and presence. And they need to have a heart of compassion for fellow human beings. They need to have a servant's heart to serve others and want to make them successful. They need to have a mind that's occupied by thoughts of God and his majesty.

Now, there are 3 ways you need to teach children to know Christ. First of all, you need to teach them photographically through the Gospels. By that I mean, you need to teach children, especially when they're young, you need to make all their Scripture memory kind of stay maybe in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. You need to read them the stories about Jesus to the point that they're like the bedtime stories you read at night are stories out of the Gospels. So they get to the point when they are in a situation, they can kind of see the answer to that question, what would Jesus do? They can picture it going on in their minds. Then after they're a little older, you need to teach them Christ interpretively through the epistles. The epistles explain Christ. All those books that Paul wrote, they explain Christ but they're abstract thoughts. They are not just concrete stories so it takes a little more maturity to get your mind around the epistles. Then all throughout their childhood both when they are young and when they're old, they need to learn Christ experientially through prayer. That is, they need to see mama and daddy praying. They need to hear the families pray. They need to see God's answers to prayer. They need to journal what God did in response to those prayer requests.

So, let me give you some suggestions here and that is to focus in early childhood, their Scripture meditation on the Gospels and particularly on the commands of Christ. The 49 commands of Christ would be a great place to start with your children. Then as they get older and they start asking questions about life or the world, make sure that Christ is the center of every answer you give them. "In the beginning was the Word," the Logos, "and the Logos was God and the Logos was with God." We get our word "logic" from that. There is no real logic despite what the world tells you, there is no real logic or real explanation for anything apart from Jesus Christ because he is the foundation of logic. He is the Logos and we need to understand that he has to be part of the answer to everything.

Then you may have some life opportunities that come up. You may have situations come up. Look for answers in the Psalms and the Proverbs and the epistles. Then as a family, practice kneeling, praying and crying out together. I just remember when Christiana was just, she's still enough of a baby, she could toddle. She could walk a little bit but she liked to be carried most of the time and yet someone called us about a situation and I got all the kids to come in the great room in our house and we knelt down to cry out to God for that and Christiana squirmed, wanted out of her mother's arms because she wanted to get down on her knees with the rest of them. Even a baby still in diapers can see that example and want to follow it. They need to be given that opportunity.

Now, some key tasks in helping kids become an imprint of Christ. One is: in conversation. You need to make Christ a part of every conversation. Christ needs to seem real to them. I remember a church member in East Dallas where I used to pastor one time told me she said, "Christ seems so real to your kids." Well, at that time the only cartoons they ever got to watch were Bible cartoons and so those were the stories they heard all the time and it was real to them. Christ was the subject of every conversation. You know, one of my failures as a dad over the years, I haven't always maintained a consistent devotional time and an orderly disciplined way of life in our house. The Rohlin family is largely reactive to everything and not proactive about much at all. I wish we were different about that. And yet, Richard told me one time, he said, "Dad, it doesn't really matter because Christ was a part of every conversation." So maybe you don't have the best organizational skills, it doesn't matter as long as Jesus is part of every conversation. That's even more important than the schedule.

Then compositions. I want you to look at something with me. Would you turn in your Bibles to 2 Chronicles 20 because I want to point this out and I know a lot of people don't share my viewpoint on that and that's fine but I just want you to see from Scripture why I think the music that you play in your home is so important. 2 Chronicles 20, if you don't remember it, is the children of Moab and Ammon and half the kids of Mount Seir, the people of Mount Seir are all coming against King Jehoshaphat to battle. Jehoshaphat is freaking out and so he calls all the people together and they pray and they call this brilliant prayer, by the way, probably one of the best prayers recorded in Scripture. It says in verse 4 that they came out of all the cities of Judah to seek the Lord. In verse 6 he says, "O LORD God of our fathers, art not thou God in heaven? and rulest not thou over all the kingdoms of the heathen? and in thine hand is there not power and might, so that none is able to withstand thee? Art not thou our God, who didst drive out the inhabitants of this

land before thy people Israel, and gavest it to the seed of Abraham thy friend for ever? And they dwelt therein, and have built thee a sanctuary therein for thy name, saying, If, when evil cometh upon us, as the sword, judgment, or pestilence, or famine, we stand before this house, and in thy presence, (for thy name is in this house,) and cry unto thee in our affliction, then thou wilt hear and help." And I love this next statement, let's jump down to verse 12. He says, "O our God, wilt thou not judge them? for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon thee." He says, "God, we don't know what to do. We're overwhelmed but our eyes are on you." That's the best prayer, one of the best prayers ever prayed in my opinion.

Now, the interesting thing here though is how the battle worked out. So look down in verse 21, "And when he had consulted with the people," this is Jehoshaphat, "he appointed singers unto the LORD, and that should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army, and to say, Praise the LORD; for his mercy endureth for ever." So they started singing. Their song, the first verse went, "Praise the LORD; for his mercy endureth for ever." Second verse went, "Praise the LORD; for his mercy endureth for ever." Third verse, "Praise the LORD; for his mercy endureth for ever." Not very original by the time you get to the 9th or 10th verse but look what happened in verse 22, "And when they began to sing and to praise, the LORD set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, and mount Seir, which were come against Judah; and they were smitten." What conquered these people? The singing of praises to God. Is music important? It sure was to them.

But you also need to look a little deeper into that passage: who is Ammon and Moab, by the way? Do you all remember the story of when the angels came and told Lot he needed to get out of Dodge because basically Sodom and Gomorrah and all the 5 cities of the plains were going to be destroyed and Lot says, "Oh." An angel says, "Go up into the mountain," and Lot says, "Oh no. We can't go to the mountain. That's too dangerous. What about that little city over there, Zoar? You don't need that city. I know it's one of the 5 cities you're going to destroy but could you just leave Zoar there? We'll go live there because, life is too unsure up in the mountains. At least they've got a grocery store in Zoar." And so the angel says, "Okay, you can go to Zoar if you want." So they go into Zoar and just as they're leaving Sodom and Gomorrah, all of a sudden the earth begins to break up and fire is coming out of the ground and volcanic salts are spraying up into the sky and there is ash everywhere. All of a sudden, people in Zoar, you know, back in this day and time, they didn't understand about plate tectonics and they didn't really understand anything about Israel's God or Lot's God and so all they see is that these cities have just been destroyed at the same time that the strangers came to town. So they begin to look at the strangers just a little strange and Lot suddenly notices that everywhere he goes, people are whispering and they're looking at him like, "There's that guy. He's the one that made it happen." And he thinks, "I'm not safe here."

So now he doubts God's ability to take care of him in Zoar so guess where he decides to go? He got this brilliant idea, "I'll think I'll go to the mountain." It's kind of where God told him to go to begin with, right? And so he goes up in the mountain and on the way



back, of course, now Zoar's getting destroyed too and, of course, you know the story, Lot's wife looked back and she turned into a can of Morton's Salt. Now they get up there and it's just Lot and his two daughters. He couldn't get his son-in-laws to come with him but he gets up there and now you've got Lot and his daughters and his daughters, actually, they had been there so long they think that is the whole world. They don't know there's any other world outside and so they begin to doubt. I wonder where they got that from? They got it from, dad, didn't they? They began to doubt and they say, "Do you know what? We're not going to have anybody to take care of us. We're going to be the last two people on earth and dad's going to die and then we're going to die. Nobody will be around to take care of us. We at least gotta have some kids," and so they get their father drunk and they allow him to father their children and those children are Ammon and Moab. They represent doubting and fear.

Then the children of Mount Seir, who are those? Those are the descendants of Esau. Those are the ones who Esau sold his birthright for a pot of flesh. It's the principle of being controlled by the flesh. Now, let me put this in perspective for you. Why did I go into that whole historical background? Parents, think about your kids for just a minute: do you have any kids in your family right now who seem to be plagued by doubts or fears? Do you have any children in your family right now that seem to be making very flesh-based decisions rather than following the Holy Spirit of God? Then I want to challenge you to do what defeats those particular kind of enemies and that is to play godly, soothing music, preferably the great hymns of the faith because I'm convinced we need music that doesn't sound like the world's music to fight these enemies that come from the world. That needs to be a big part if you want your children to turn out well.

Then the commands of Christ. "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me," John 14:21. Jesus says, "I will love them. I will manifest myself to them." Don't you want Christ to reveal himself to your children? Then teach them Christ's commands. By the way, that is the definition of discipleship when we were given the Great Commission to go to the whole world, what were we supposed to do? "Teach them all things whatsoever I have commanded thee." So you need to teach the commands of Christ in order to fulfill discipleship.

2. Your children are meant to be introducers to Christ. By the way, the doors of the temple were also made of olive wood. In 1 Kings 6:31-33 we find this out and so you couldn't even get into the temple without going through doors made of olive wood. In Psalm 52:8, the Psalmist says, "But I am like a green olive tree in the house of God: I trust in the mercy of God for ever and ever." So think of this: it's the olives that opened the doors to the presence of God. One of the things that your children need to be doing is that they need to be introducing people to Jesus Christ. You need to teach them how to do that. You need to teach them how to share their faith. Teach it by example. Teach children how to share a spoken testimony or a written testimony. How to lead somebody to Christ maybe with a tract or the way I prefer to do it is I just use one verse of Scripture, Romans 6:23. That's the way I prefer to lead people to Christ. By the way, if you want some training, go to [mayishare.com](http://mayishare.com). That's one word [mayishare.com](http://mayishare.com). One of my friends, Dr. Duke Heller who is the one that invented dental implants so if you have one of those

or know somebody who's got one, Duke Heller invented those and he became a Christian after one of his patients asked him. He was a full-time Deacon at the Methodist Church and he asked him if he had a relationship with Christ and he was insulted and then later he began to realize that he didn't actually know Christ and so he now has this site and you can go and watch videos of how to share Christ with people. He'll talk about the FORM which is family, what's the O? Occupation, R is recreation, retirement, M is money. There are some questions that you can ask in those areas that will always point out a need and then you can use that need to begin talking to people about Jesus Christ.

Then, our children need to be illuminators of God's word. In Exodus 27:20 it says, "And thou shalt command the children of Israel, that they bring thee pure oil olive beaten for the light, to cause the lamp to burn always." So they took olive oil and they got olives and they beat the olives, got the oil from that and that's what powered the lamps inside the tabernacle and then later, that's what powered those lamps inside the temple. They were burning olive oil. By the way, it's significant that olive goes into the lamp. In Proverbs 6:20-23, it says this, "My son, keep thy father's commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother: Bind them continually upon thine heart, and tie them about thy neck. When thou goest, it shall lead thee; when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee; and when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee. For the commandment is a lamp." Just a little parenting hint there: it says that the father is supposed to give commandments and the mother is supposed to give laws. The father's commandment is a lamp, the mother's laws are the light. What does that mean? It means that dads are supposed to give the over arching guiding principles for the family of how he wants the family to operate and how he wants the children to grow up and kind of some basic rules of the road. But it's the mother who has to make these schedules to say, "Okay, your father wants this. This is how we're going to carry it out. It means that by 8 o'clock you've got to be dressed and downstairs and ready for wisdom search and it means that you're going to have to do your music lessons at this particular time of the day." In other words, she's the one that makes the rules in order to carry out the objectives set by the father and the fascinating thing about that is that when that also helps you know which parent is supposed to discipline the child. When they break the father's commandment, the father needs to discipline the child. When they break the mother's law, the mother can discipline that child. It's a fascinating thing.

But notice this: they are supposed to illuminate the word of God. That is, they are to shed light on the word of God. How do we do that? We produce light when we are following the commands of Christ in spite of our difficulties. Children need to know that whenever they have a difficulty, they need to figure out which command of Christ they really need to be following to resolve that difficulty. And also your children need to share rhemas or insights. One of the things I would encourage you to do is if you, parents I know you don't have a lot of time. I certainly don't but when you pick up your Bible in the morning, just say, "God, I'm going to read this until you give me one thing." Now, he may give you one thing in 3 verses. It may take you 3 chapters for him to talk to you but say, "I'm going to read until I get one thing," and then that night at dinner, you can sit down and ask what everybody's one thing was that the Lord taught them that day. You need to be prepared to share so that they know what it sounds like to share any insight into Scripture that God

gave you, something that spoke to your heart. And let them talk about what God spoke to their heart. Now, don't be surprised if it's not always an accurate interpretation of Scripture. That's okay. Especially the little ones. They sometimes come up with some interesting things. That verse in Psalm 6 where David says, "All night I made my bed to swim," does not mean we should all have waterbeds but just nod, smile and go on. Let them share insights from Scripture. And what will happen is as we do that, the children begin to have the light of God in their eyes and you see that spark in their eyes. You know what I'm talking about. You meet a Christian and you see that, you think, "Man, they're on fire from the Lord," and you got that impression in the first 30 seconds. Why? You saw something in their eyes. That's what we want for our children's eyes.

Now, by the way, your children are your credentials for other people to listen to what you have to say. I know some very fine pastors and very fine ministers that say some very good things and yet even though what they're saying is based on the word of God, a lot of times people will say, "Well, but he's not a dad. But he's not married." You know, and quite frankly when I speak on the subject of being a parent, I do so with great fear and trepidation but I also do so knowing that my credentials are here. All 8 of my kids are here today. All 3 of my grandchildren are here today and the 2 kids that married into my family. You know, so what a blessing that is for me. It doesn't mean that they are perfect but it does mean that I'm proud of how they've turned out because God has been gracious to us.

So some key tasks. Have at the dinner table, by the way, do you know that families that eat dinner together 5 times a week, eat one meal together 5 times a week, their children are only 20% as likely as the normal population to wind up in prison. Just eating dinner together. Even if you weren't sharing rhemas, even if you weren't homeschooling. Just having families sit down to dinner is enough to keep your kids out of prison. That's pretty impressive. And so, at the dinner table, have each member share something that they learned that day, something that God taught them. It could be a biblical insight gained from the study of God's word. It could be a rhema that God gave them during memorizing Scripture. It could just be how something happened to them and how it benefited them even though they didn't like the trial they got.

Your children are also meant to be imparters of blessing and so God designed olives to bless the widows, the fatherless and the strangers in the land. Listen to this and according to the law, by the way, the only tree, do you see that hook there that is down on the left-hand side? That's a device they used to beat olive trees with so when the olives were ripe, some of the olives were up a little too high so they got this long pole, it's got a hook there so that they can actually grab one of the branches and then they'll shake the branch rather violently to get some of the olives to fall off of those upper branches and this is called a beating or a shaking. And according to the law of God, the only tree you were allowed to do this to in the Old Testament was the olive tree. And look what it says in Deuteronomy 24:20, "When thou beatest thine olive tree, thou shalt not go over the boughs again: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow." So any fruit that was left on the tree after you had shaken it was left to benefit the stranger, the fatherless and the widow, particularly he mentions those class of people.

So here are some key tasks for teaching your kids to be a blessing to others. First of all, bless your children verbally. Say good things to them. Now, let me tell you a little secret and some of you need to really listen up here, let's start with marriage first. You husbands, when you criticize your wives verbally and say bad things about them, especially when you use those words that should never be used in marriage, "Well, you always do so-and-so. Or you never do such-and-such." When you do that, you're going to program them to fulfill that. What you need to do is look for one thing that you can bless. You will always get more of what you bless. Or you can just simply say, "May the Lord bless you today to," whatever it is that they need blessing with. "May the Lord bless you today. I know you have an awesome work load. May God give you a mind for knowing what to do in what order today and may God bless you with cooperative children to do it." Now dad, that 30 seconds of speech before you leave the house can make all the difference in your wife's day. Okay? But she needs that very thing.

The same thing, parents, if you are constantly criticizing one of your kids for some character flaw, don't be surprised if they live out that character flaw and yet I've noticed that they can get around other families and somebody in that family will say a good word to them about something and that kid changes. Suddenly he's doing chores there he'd never do at home just because he gets a little praise. Fruitful olive trees in Haggai 2:19 and Nehemiah 9:25. It says that if you had a fruitful olive tree, it was a reminder of God's blessing.

So engage children in family ministry. If you get an opportunity to do something as a family and I know some of you go to nursing homes and that's wonderful. Some of you care for the elderly, that's wonderful. Engage them in family ministry. Let me tell you one of the secrets I have discovered from watching a whole lot of homeschooling families for the last 30 years: when children are engaged in ministry while they are still at home, they're far more likely to be faithful to the Lord after they leave home. Now, if all they did while they were at home is go through the homeschooling curriculum and keep a bunch of rules, they usually don't do that after they leave. But if they are involved in ministry, they'll stay in it and that's so crucial. That's so key for you to do.

A little story, my son taught an awesome lesson today in our Bible study time and the fact is, I didn't realize, I guess it was one of those verses that I've read several times and I just glossed over it. I did not realize that after, you remember when Saul goes and fights the Amalekites and comes back and he's got some sheep he didn't kill that he was supposed to and he's got King Agag that he was supposed to kill any didn't and he's basically kind of keeping some of the best of the best for himself? I never realized and I don't know why I missed it in that passage that Saul went to build a monument for himself so Richard brought that out. I thought, "Man, that's awesome." I had to go and double check in my Bible to make sure he wasn't just pulling one over on me but do you know what? An awesome things that is to get those insights. You know, Richard surrendered to preach right after our family was involved in a family ministry activity. We went, some students had come over here from China and they were having a seminar with some Chinese churches in the area and they asked us if we'd come do kind of like a children's

institute for Chinese students and we went and did that and it was just very shortly after that. That experience did something in Richard's heart. He wanted to be involved in the ministry and it wasn't long after that that he came. I remember him walking in the room and he says, "Mom and dad, I've got something I need to talk to you about." I said, "Hold on 1 minute, son," and I got a piece of paper and I wrote something down, folded the piece of paper up and stuck it in my pocket and I said, "Go ahead, son." And so he says, "I feel like God is calling me into the ministry." So I take out the piece of paper and I unfold it and right there, I had written, "God is calling Richard to preach." He's like, "Well, how did you know?" I said, "Son, you know God usually clues your mom and me in on stuff before he lets you know. It's okay." We could see it coming. I didn't want to call him into the ministry, I wanted to make sure God did. But he did that. So look for special opportunities.

Then imparters of beauty. Those who by repentance maintain a right relationship with God will display the beauty of a bright countenance. Hosea 14:6 says, "His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive tree, and his smell as Lebanon." So dads, I want you to teach your children by example what a repentant heart looks like. This is in the context, by the way, of maintaining a right relationship. It's in the context of repenting. If you want to see a dad who is an effective dad, find a dad who is willing to admit when he's wrong. Find a dad who's willing to humble himself and to ask his family's forgiveness. That's so crucial and that's so important. You need to do that. By the way, anybody here actually enjoy asking forgiveness? It's not fun. Have you ever noticed that? It's just not fun. It's not fun to go to someone and say, "God convicted me," actually I'm pretty good at doing this because I've done it so many times. But you know, it's not easy to say, "Judy, God has convicted me. I was a real jerk this morning when I did such-and-such," and God's doing that whole conviction about me being a jerk fairly often. But you know, that's painful. But you know, it doesn't matter what you want to say about me and I've been in the ministry long enough that people have said plenty about me, if you want to say I'm a lying, cheating thief, that's okay. Do you know why? Because the Bible says that in my flesh dwelleth no good thing. There is not a sin out there that in some measure I haven't committed simply because Jesus said there were things that if you even looked after a woman to lust after her you'd already committed adultery. You know, if you ever thought about holding up a 7-Eleven because you couldn't pay the bills that month, you were already a thief, okay? So you can't accuse me of anything that I'm not guilty of in some measure somewhere in my heart. There is nothing good in my flesh but that's not who I am in Jesus Christ and so I take comfort in the fact that I can very quickly die on the cross and confess my sins and put myself up on the cross where Jesus died for my sins and then experience that resurrection.

By the way, let me tell you a little secret about cross dying: does anybody remember what happened to the other 2 people on the cross that didn't happen to Jesus? It was so significant that this thing didn't happen to Jesus that there is an Old Testament prophecy that said it would not happen to him and it didn't happen to him but it did happen to the others. What was that thing? David? (His legs weren't broken.) Right, so normally what happened is, these people keep pushing up on the nails in their feet to keep breathing and after a while, the Roman soldier starts to think, "Man, the bells about to ring. It's time for

me to go home," so they'd come and they would break the legs so that the person couldn't do that anymore and then they would die very quickly. But Jesus, they didn't have to do that with. Let me point out a principle here dads: if you don't make things right soon after you've messed up, God's going to break your legs, okay? In other words, if you get on the cross quickly and die and ask forgiveness, it's going to be good but if you let things go too far, you're going to lose your family, you're going to lose your marriage, God's going to have to humble you in a way, actually what he's going to do is he's going to humiliate you so that you can experience what it means to be humble. It will be like having your legs broken. So my advice, guys, is when you do wrong, climb on the cross as quickly as possible and ask for forgiveness. That's what you need to do.

They are to be imparters of beauty. Well, I thought I was going to get through this sermon but I'm not going to. So here's what we're going to do: next week, I'm going to tell you how to raise an olive tree. So this week what we told you is, there are some purposes for olives in the Bible which God specifies for you and these purposes are that your children are to be imprints of Christ, just like the cherubim. They are to be introducers to Christ like those doors that open the way into the temple. They are to be illuminators of God's word, they need to be like the lampstand in the tabernacle or temple. They are to impart blessing. They are to impart beauty to others' lives. And they are an inheritance of joy. Don't ever forget, folks, that children, the fruit of the womb is his reward and children are the heritage of the Lord. But next week I want to talk about now that we know what they're for, what do we do with them? Specifically what does the Bible say about how to raise olive trees and how is that like how we should raise children? Then if I don't finish that message or if I do finish that message we'll go on but I doubt it but the week after that, I'm going to tell you the 3 things that kill olive trees and all 3 of them represent the 3 enemies of your children's hearts and I'm going to show you what you need to do to keep the hearts of your children.

Let's stand, please. So we're spending 3 weeks on olive trees because I think that that one passage of Scripture is probably the most significant passage in the Bible that I've found on how to raise children and if we understand how to raise olive trees, you'll understand how to raise your children. So we'll finish up in these next 2 weeks.

We want to have a time of fellowship to follow and then we're going to have a blessing on the food and a time of fellowship and then I want to, we'll all meet back in here promptly at 1:45. We have some people planning on making some presentations, saying some things, a few musical specials and I don't know, there is a rumor that we might have found, have we found that piece of...? We have some special Griffith video that we want to show you and so we want to give a chance to Chris to share and Amy if she'd like to, just to share what this church has meant to them. It has been a wonderful, sweet fellowship between the 2 of us.

Let's go to the Lord in a word of prayer. I'm going to ask Brother Dan Hall if he'll lead us in prayer, please sir.

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2  **Effective parents have 3 qualities**

- They teach their children the fear of God
- They keep their children's hearts by remaining emotionally connected to them
- They are physically present with their children and affectionate towards them
  - Like a 3-legged stool, lacking any of these three qualities can damage your children.
  - Having all three qualities does not guarantee success, but without these three qualities, success is the exception rather than the rule.

3  **The Olive Plants Around Your Table**

Psalm 128:3

*Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house: thy children like olive plants round about thy table.*

4  **A God-Ordained Analogy**

Children are “like” olive plants:

- Purposes of Olive Trees
- Propagation of Olive Trees
- Provision for Olive Trees
- Production of Fruit and Olive Oil
- Pruning of Olive Trees
- Protection of Olive Trees
- Preserving the Harvest

5  **The Importance of Understanding God’s Analogy**

- Garden of Gethsemane today has 2000+ year-old olive trees that grew from seedlings that were there when Christ prayed in the garden.
- KEY: We are to build a generational legacy of service to God by making and keeping vows and training the next generations to do so.
  - Jonadab & the Rechabites – Jeremiah 35:1-5.
  - The glory of old men is their grandchildren (Proverbs 17:6).

6  **Purposes of Olive Trees**

Imprints of Christ

Introducers to Christ

Illuminators of God’s Word

Imparters of Blessing

Imparters of Beauty

Inheritance of Joy

7  **1. An Imprint of Christ**

- Cherubim in Temple were constructed of olive wood overlaid with gold.
  - *And within the oracle he made two cherubim of olive tree, each ten cubits high* – 1 Kings 6:23
- Faces of the Cherubim – emblems of the Almighty

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8  **Imprint of Christ explained**

- Normally portrayed with two faces – Lion & Man – picture of the God-Man Jesus Christ
- Portrayed with four faces in the Holiest of Holies and to Ezekiel (Ezekiel 10:20-21):
  - Lion – King on Throne of David; Lordship of Christ
  - Man – Humanity of Christ
  - Ox – Servanthood of Christ
  - Eagle – Deity of Christ

9  **Imprint of Christ principle**

- Academics are important but are not to be the primary goal of parenting or home education.
- MISSION STATEMENT: *The PRIMARY goal of our home education and parenting is to build into the lives of our children the character of Christ so that when the world sees them, they see Him.*

10  **2 Corinthians 5:20**

- Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.
- Our children should reflect:
  - A royal bearing – they are children of the King.
  - A heart of compassion for fellow human beings.
  - A servant's heart to serve others and make them successful.
  - A mind occupied by thoughts of God and His majesty.

11  **Teach children to know Christ:**

12  **So . . .**

- Focus early childhood Scripture meditation on the Gospels.
  - Memorize and meditate on the Commands of Christ.
- Explain things with Jesus as the reference point for all truth – the *Logos* .
  - Search the epistles, Psalms, and Proverbs to explain life "opportunities."
- Practice kneeling, praying, and crying out as a family. (Even toddlers will kneel if they see the rest of the family doing it!)

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13  **Imprint of Christ — key tasks**

14  **2. Introducers to Christ**

- The doors of the Temple and their posts were made of olive wood.
  - 1 Kings 6:31-33.
  - The access to the Holy Place of the Temple was through these doors.
- Psalm 52:8 – *But I am like a green olive tree in the house of God: I trust in the mercy of God for ever and ever.*

15  **Introducers to Christ — key tasks**

- Teach by example how to work Christ into every conversation.



- Teach children how to:
  - Share spoken and written testimonies of how they came to know Christ.
  - How to lead someone to Christ using:
    - Tracts
    - Single verse Gospel presentation (Romans 6:23)
    - <http://www.mayishare.com>
      - Video training
      - Printable tracts / FORM method

### 16 3. Illuminators of God's Word

- Olive oil was used for the lamps in the Tabernacle and Temple.
- Olive oil is produced by the crushing of the olive.
  - Exodus 27:20 — *And thou shalt command the children of Israel, that they bring thee pure olive beaten for the light, to cause the lamp to burn always* (cf. Leviticus 24:2).

### 17 Illuminators explained

- Our "light" is produced when:
  - We follow the Commands of Christ when confronted with difficulties (the "beaten" olive produces oil).
  - When we share rhemas.
- The light generated by children provides the credentials for the father's ministry.

### 18 Illuminators — key tasks

- At the dinner table, have each family member (including Dad) share something they learned that day that illustrates or illuminates a passage of Scripture:
  - A biblical insight gained from careful study of God's Word.
  - A *rhema* God gave them during Scripture meditation.
  - How a trial benefited them and enabled them to be a light for Christ.

### 19 4. Imparters of blessing

- God designed olives to bless the widows, fatherless, and strangers in the land.
  - According to the Law, the olive tree was only to receive one "beating" or "shaking" to release the fruit.
  - All fruit left on the tree after that was to benefit the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow.
    - *"When thou beatest thine olive tree, thou shalt not go over the boughs again: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow"* (Deuteronomy 24:20; see also Isaiah 17:6, 24:13).

### 20 Imparters of blessing—key tasks

- Bless your children and let them know they are a blessing to you!
  - Haggai 2:19, Nehemiah 9:25 – Fruitful olive trees were a daily reminder of God's blessing.
- Actively engage children in family ministry.
- Helps produce long-term faithfulness in our children.
- Look for special opportunities with widows, fatherless children, and foreign language groups.

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- 21  **5. Imparters of beauty**
  - Those who by repentance maintain a right relationship with God will display the “beauty” of bright countenance.
    - Hosea 14:6 – *His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive tree, and his smell as Lebanon.*
  - Dads, teach children by example what a repentant heart looks like.
    - “... *in my flesh dwelleth no good thing.*”
    - Go to the cross and die quickly, so there’s no need of having your knees broken.
- 22  **Propagation of Olive Trees**
- 23  **1. Train roots of character**
  - Propagation by seedlings:
    - Produces a deep root
    - Forms tall trees
    - Has delayed fruitfulness
  - The first fruit is at 12-15 years; longer than for stem cuttings or hardwood cuttings.
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- 24  **Train roots of character (2)**
  - Propagation by truncheon:
    - Uses a portion of a horizontal surface root from an existing olive tree
    - Produces a tree with quicker fruitfulness because the root system is more quickly established
    - Character is more caught than taught. Parents have to be the real deal!
- 25  **Train roots of character (3)**
- 26  **Train roots of character (4)**
- 27  **Spurgeon on your olive plants**
  - *The Psalmist never intended to suggest the idea of olive plants round a table, but of young people springing up around their parents, even as olive plants surround the fine, well-rooted tree. The figure is very striking, and would be sure to present itself to the mind of every observer in the olive country. How beautiful to see the gnarled olive, still bearing abundant fruit, surrounded with a little band of sturdy successors, any one of which would be able to take its place should the central olive be blown down, or removed in any other way.*
- 28  **2. Train children to serve rather than rule**
  - Judges 9:8-9 — An Olive Tree Personified
    - *The trees went forth on a time to anoint a king over them; and they said unto the olive tree, Reign thou over us. But the olive tree said unto them, Should I leave my fatness, wherewith by me they honor God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees?*
    - The olive tree in this passage “chose” to produce its “fatness” (fruitfulness) rather than rule over the other trees.

29  **Train children to serve rather than rule (2)**

- It saw its mission as blessing men that they might honor God and in turn bless still other men.
- We are to be like that olive tree. We should operate by the Psalm 75:6 secret.

30  **The Psalm 75:6 Secret**

- *For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another.*
  - Why is the NORTH not mentioned?
  - The sacrifice was killed on the north side of the altar (Leviticus 1:11).
  - Promotion comes from sacrifice!

31  **Teaching children to serve**

- KEY: Teach children to enlarge their “coasts” and expand their opportunities by living and serving sacrificially to make others successful

32  **Provision for Olive Trees**

33  **1. Support with strong ties when young**

- Often, olive trees are staked until they are five years old to allow root system to be firmly established. Proper staking requires at least three stakes (a “threefold cord”).
- In formative years, concentrate on developing relationships rather than teaching academics.

34  **“Staking” Relationships**

- Stake 1: God’s Word
  - Emphasize the special privilege of possessing a Bible.
    - Have a special ceremony to present them a *Hebrew-Greek Key Word Study Bible* when they develop some reading proficiency.
    - Engrave their name on it.
  - Establish accountability for daily insights.
  - Reward Scripture memorization.

35  **“Staking” Relationships (2)**

- Stake 2: Dad – Children learn how to relate to God from their fathers.
  - Dad should spend one-on-one time with children – even if just running errands.
  - Create a safe atmosphere where they can talk to Dad about anything without fear of an angry reaction.
  - Find a godly man in the absence of a father. (Men, volunteer to be that guy.)
- Stake 3: Mom – Children learn how to relate to others from their mothers.

36  **“Staking” Relationships (3)**

- Stake 4: Siblings
  - *Making Brothers and Sisters Best Friends* by Sarah, Stephen, and Grace Mally
  - Love projects:
    - Showing deference
    - Giving treasures
    - Words of encouragement

- Shared ministry projects

37  **A weekly staking calendar**

- Monday – Giving day (love gives)
  - Give something to a sibling that you would give to a friend.
- Tuesday – Serving day
  - Galatians 5:13 – ... *by love serve one another.*
- Wednesday – Edification day (1 Corinthians 8:1).
  - Give tangible edification to encourage another.

38  **A weekly staking calendar (2)**

- Thursday – Preference day
  - Romans 12:10 – *Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another.*
  - Give up a privilege that you want for someone else. Honor someone else.
- FRIDAY – Thankfulness day
  - Share how you are thankful for another family member. Make sure that each family member is appreciated.

39  **2. Incremental release**

- Give incremental opportunities for ministry:
  - “Arrows in the hands of a mighty man” are shot and then retrieved.
  - Start with “safe” situations and then let them take greater risks for Christ.
  - Helps them develop their own dynamic relationship with God instead of just having their parents’ faith.

40  **3. Release potential by engrafting scripture**

- The Tree:
  - Grafting is best done in heat; it increases the fruitfulness of the tree.
  - To avoid root system competition, the husbandmen will graft cultivated branches into wild olive tree.

41  **Grafting releases potential**

- View special times of “irritations to be transformed” (ITBT) as guidance for selecting Scriptures to engraft as a family.
  - Family engrafting of Scriptures is a way for the whole family to participate in the “fatness” (riches) of God’s love, mercy, and presence.

42  **4. Establish strong deep roots**

- Children need parents who are credible messengers (living out the truths they teach to their children).
- Focus on proper care of the tree (love) instead of outward results (conformity to standards).

43  **Establish strong roots (2)**

- Watering:
  - Should be done deeply, but not too often or roots will be shallow and subject to root rot.

– Neither should you just “spray” the tree with water – this sets it up for fungal infection.

44  **Establish strong roots (3)**

- Children must be taught to sink their roots into God’s Word and find their own rhemas.
  - Don’t just “water” or “spoon-feed” them the Word.

45  **Establish strong roots (4)**

- Point them to Bible passages, but let them find the answers.
  - Suggest Bible verses for meditation that address problems they are having. Let God speak to them and let them learn to listen.
  - Give praise for asking questions of Scripture and for finding answers to life problems.

46  **Production of Fruit and Oil**

47  **1. Fruit forms on new growth**

- Each year, the olive fruit forms on new, tender branches.
  - Long-established branches bear no fruit and must either support the fruit-bearing branches or be pruned.
- Key: Children will not be fruitful unless spiritual growth continues.
  - While academics are important, spiritual growth must remain the focal point of home education.

48  **2. Encourage new growth**

- Share new insights at the dinner table.
  - Praise the character qualities that cause them to find these new insights.
  - Give daily blessing for spiritual insight and service.
- Conduct family rhema searches.
- Teach children to disciple others.
  - Give older children an opportunity to disciple younger siblings.
  - Give increasing responsibility for ministry.

49  **3. Increase fruitfulness through incremental release**

- Some olives are picked early – while still green. When these are picked, it allows the remaining olives to become more plump and of greater value.
- Immature olives produce less oil.
- Most valuable oil comes from the fully mature olive.
- Key: Incremental release for ministry aids in producing a mature faith.

50  **4. Increase oil content**

- Irrigate
  - The “waters” in Psalm 1 are actually irrigation ditches created by meditating on God’s Law day and night.
  - Encourage memorization and meditation on the Commands of Christ.

51  **Increase oil content (2)**

- Fertilizer
  - Rhemas – Family rhemas and personal rhemas

- Blessing – Identity statement; personal touch
- Prayer – STOP & DROP! (Pray with children the moment concerns or needs arise)
- Encouragement – Make the effort even when you are away from home! (Don't just talk to them when there's trouble!)
- Letters of blessing and life purpose from Dad

52  **5. Avoid reducing oil content**

A reduction in oil content can be caused by:

- Over-watering to produce false results:
  - Unscrupulous olive tree husbandmen will water until picking time. This produces olives full of water but low on oil.
  - Reputable growers cease watering six (6) weeks before harvest. This produces olives that may weigh less but which have higher oil content.
- Refrigeration reduces oil content.

53  **Avoid reducing oil content (2)**

- KEY: Children need to be getting their own rhemas and doing their own Bible study before they are incrementally released for ministry.
  - They should not possess only a "spoon-fed" spirituality.
  - Journey to the Heart can help.
- Refrigeration reduces oil content.
  - Do not remove all hardships for your children.
  - The heat of hardship will prepare them for fruitfulness to the Lord.

54  **Avoid reducing oil content (3)**

- Lack of fruitfulness in child may signal disobedience in the parents
  - Deuteronomy 28:15,18,32,40-41 (cf. Amos 4:9) -- *But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee: . . . Cursed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy land, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep. . . . Thy sons and thy daughters shall be given unto another people . . . . Thou shalt have olive trees throughout all thy coasts, but thou shalt not anoint thyself with the oil; for thine olive shall cast his fruit. 41 Thou shalt beget sons and daughters, but thou shalt not enjoy them; for they shall go into captivity.*

55  **Pruning of Olive Trees**

56  **Prune for fruitfulness**

57  **Prune for fruitfulness (continued)**

58  **The rest of the story...**

1. How to preserve the spiritual harvest in your children -- protecting your olive plants from their three greatest enemies
2. God's plan for preserving the harvest
3. The keys for dad to have an understanding heart