



**M**en like challenges. That's why we obsess over sports rivalries, work tirelessly to climb the ladder of success, and insist we know where we are going without having to consult a map or our phones for directions.

This email challenge is one of the most vital we can undertake as men, as we walk through five probing questions about being a better man, husband, and father. Each challenge may seem simple on the surface but difficult to put into practice. It's easy to say things, but much more of a struggle to actually do them.

Pastor Adrian Rogers preached often on the family because he saw that it was under attack in a significant way. The truth is, we do not have many good examples of what men of God should be like in today's culture. We definitely can't look to TV, internet, music, or modern novels for guidance on what it means to be a man of God. We must do what Pastor Rogers always taught others to do: study and follow God's Word for guidance.

Our guidance passage throughout this five-question journey will be Psalm 128. Everything we need to know about being a man of God, being a husband of honor, and being a dad that leaves a legacy, is in Psalm 128:

"Blessed is everyone who fears the Lord, who walks in His ways. When you eat the labor of your hands, you shall be happy, and it shall be well with you. Your wife shall be like a fruitful vine in the very heart of your house, your children like olive plants all around your table. Behold, thus shall the man be blessed who fears the Lord. 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. Peace be upon Israel!"

If you're ready and willing to take on the challenge, let's begin in prayer today. Here are a couple of ways to pray:

1. Would you pray that God would help you perform an honest self-examination of the areas in which you need to grow?
2. Would you pray that God would give you the boldness to take the steps of obedience required to follow His path?

Pastor Adrian Rogers would encourage all men to take this challenge:

*“ You say pastor, I just feel so inadequate. Well, so do I dear friend. That's the reason I'm glad for the Psalm just above this one (Psalm 127:1). It says, “Except the Lord build a house, they labor in vain that built it.” You see, you can't do it. God will do it and he'll do it in you. ”*

# DAY ONE



## WILL YOU BE A MAN OF GODLY CHARACTER?

We live in a society of misplaced priorities, broken promises, constant distraction, rising work demands, and growing isolation. All these factors present a significant challenge to men today. There are two possible paths to take. You can run downhill into the onslaught of temptation, sliding into, or further into, a lifestyle of sin, danger, and despair. Or you can ask God to help you make the uphill climb toward a lifestyle of greater godly character. Even though it may be more work, this path is far better than the downward slope.

Pastor Adrian Rogers said that the number one key to being a good dad is being a man of godly character. If you have been keeping up with the news, it seems like this type of man is in short supply. But rather than complaining about how bad everyone else is, how about you choose today, to grow each day into a man of greater godly character? Let's go to Scripture as our guide. In Psalm 128, David begins his writing with these words: "Blessed is everyone who fears the Lord, who walks in His ways" (Psalm 128:1).

According to David, godly character is built upon a reverence and respect for the Lord. Godly character is not built from simple discipline or moral obligation. It is built out of an abiding love for Jesus Christ. And with that, you will walk in His ways.

One of the most important elements of godly character is integrity—what you do when no one is looking. What are you watching on your phone, computer, or TV behind closed doors? How are you spending your money that you are earning? How do you talk to your coworkers in private meetings? These are all areas in which integrity becomes a vital piece of a man with godly character.

Now, how will this help you be a better father? Pastor Rogers provides great insight to sum this up:

*“You cannot teach what you do not know. You cannot come from where you've not been. You cannot give what you do not have. You must fear God. You must walk in integrity.”*

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# DAY TWO



## WILL YOU SET AN EXAMPLE OF CONTENTMENT?

*“Do you know the problem with many dads? They’re just simply not content. There’s never enough. They’re always earning a living and forgetting to live life.”*

Pastor Adrian Rogers

Pastor Rogers’ words are truer today than ever before. In social media and digital networking sites such as LinkedIn, there is a rising pressure to perform and to rapidly scale the ladder of success. This reminder from Psalm 128:2 is so timely: “When you eat the labor of your hands, you shall be happy, and it shall be well with you.”

The idea of contentment is not that you become lazy or refuse to work hard. Rather, it is maintaining a healthy work/family balance. When you are working, you are all-in. But when the work is done, you come home to your family to rest, relax, and enjoy the fruits of your labor. Achieving this balance may cause you to forfeit significant financial gain that your colleagues chase after. You must ask yourself what you really want to gain in life. Paul states in 1 Timothy 6:6, “Now godliness with contentment is great gain.”

In other words, if you pair godly character—which we talked about yesterday—with contentment, there is significant gain. And one of the most important things you will do is set an example of contentment for your kids. How exactly will this impact them?

- It will show them that having more things—toys at first—does not equal having a better life.
- It will instill a deep-seated gratitude in their life for what God has given them.
- It will shape what they view as important in life.

Are you setting an example of contentment for your children or are you just earning a living? Today is a great day to start fresh.

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# DAY THREE



## WILL YOU LOVE YOUR WIFE?

Remember back to the time when you were newly married. You may have lived on a tight budget and in close quarters with one another, but life was generally free and fun. Then you had kids. Those children were a gift from God, but the truth is, life changed. So much time and energy go into your children that, over time, there can be a growing distance between you and your wife. The love seems to fade. The communication dissipates. The unity is frayed. This doesn't happen overnight but over years of time.

It doesn't have to be like that. In fact, in Psalm 128, David takes time to emphasize the amazing value of the wife in the home. "Your wife shall be like a fruitful vine, in the very heart of your house" (Psalm 128:3).

There is nothing like hearing Pastor Adrian Rogers beautifully explain Scripture and this is no exception. He says,

*“What does a vine do? Well, a vine just grows up the wall. And if it's fruitful, it breaks out in clusters of grapes. And God describes the wife this way, as a fruitful vine. That means, she is a faithful wife, because she clings to him, just like a vine clings to a wall. He is to be the support. He is to be the strength.”*

Do you still value the woman you married? If so, you will be far more than her roommate or co-parent. You will love her with the strength and support she needs to be the wife and mother God has called her to be. Let's end this time with some practical steps for loving your wife that you can put into practice today.

1. Pray for her consistently and specifically. Tell her you are praying for her. Ask her about some things you can pray for her. Write these in a journal so you can remember them and see God work.
2. Schedule regular date nights. Hire a babysitter. Plan an evening together. It doesn't have to be fancy or lengthy. It will give you time to communicate clearly and have fun alone, together.
3. Strive to out-serve her. Buy her flowers—outside of Valentine's Day. Schedule some time for her to spend alone. Help around the house or with the children in an unexpected way.

When you love your wife, your home will shine brighter for Jesus and your children will have a front row seat to that. That will be powerful.

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# DAY FOUR



## WILL YOU LEAD YOUR CHILDREN?

*“Wise is the dad that understands that it is his duty and privilege to cultivate his wife’s love and her needs and to cultivate his children and their needs.”*

Pastor Adrian Rogers

Your wife is like a fruitful vine, as we discussed yesterday. But David provides us with another agricultural comparison related to your children: “...your children like olive plants, all around your table” (Psalm 128:3).

The comparison of your children to olive plants in this text is illuminating. Olives are a symbol of fruitfulness and righteousness in the Bible. But these plants don’t grow overnight; they must be intentionally cultivated. Likewise, your children need godly leadership in their lives, and it should come from you.

You see, drop-out dads are the norm today. Even if they haven’t physically left, they are spiritually and emotionally disengaged from the lives of their children. Many dads have decided to outsource discipleship to the Christian school or church youth group. But God has sent you to be their leader.

If you have young children, lead a nightly devotional with them before bed. If you have young teenagers, schedule intentional outings with them to talk about important issues they are facing. If you have older teenagers, work to prepare them for life in college. All along, have open lines of communication. Show interest in their hobbies and talents. Attend as many games, recitals, and activities as possible with them.

The cultivating will be hard. You will be challenged. You will experience failure at times. We all do. But remember this: you don’t have to be a Bible scholar or trained pastor to lead your children. God will give you all the resources and training you need for the task at hand. Even reading through this email challenge is proof that you desire to lead your children in the right direction.

Olive plants, if well established, can yield fruit for 20 generations. You have the opportunity to make a generational difference. Don’t check out on your kids. Lead them as God has called and commanded you.

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# DAY FIVE



## WILL YOU LEAVE A LEGACY?

What kind of legacy did your dad or grandfather leave in you? Maybe you come from a line of amazing men who had godly character, were great examples of contentment, loved their wives, and led their children closer to Jesus. Or maybe you come from the opposite. Maybe even the word “father” triggers the worst of memories in your mind. Did you know that your legacy is not determined by any of them, good or bad?

Pastor Adrian Rogers says it this way,

*“You can’t do anything about your ancestors, but you can certainly do something about your descendants.”*

Do you ever consider the legacy that you will leave behind? How will people remember you when you’re gone? This is not as morbid of a question as it might seem on the surface. In fact, David addresses this question in the final verses of Psalm 128.

“Behold, thus shall the man be blessed, who fears the Lord. 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. Peace be upon Israel!” (Psalm 128:4-6)

According to this passage, a legacy of blessing follows when we fear the Lord. This blessing is not just for you but extends to generations to come. Wouldn’t you love to see not only your children but also your grandchildren grow up to worship and serve the Lord? How can you receive this legacy of blessing? Start today to do everything that we have talked about:

- Be a man of Godly character, always walking with integrity.
- Model the quality of contentment for your children.
- Love your wife with intentionality and service.
- Lead your kids closer to Jesus in every season of their lives.

Will you ask the Lord to help you in these areas and, when He does, will you take the steps of obedience to walk this path? If so, you will experience the most exciting adventure in following Christ. He will make you into the man, husband, and father he wants you to be. And your legacy will be all about Him!

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