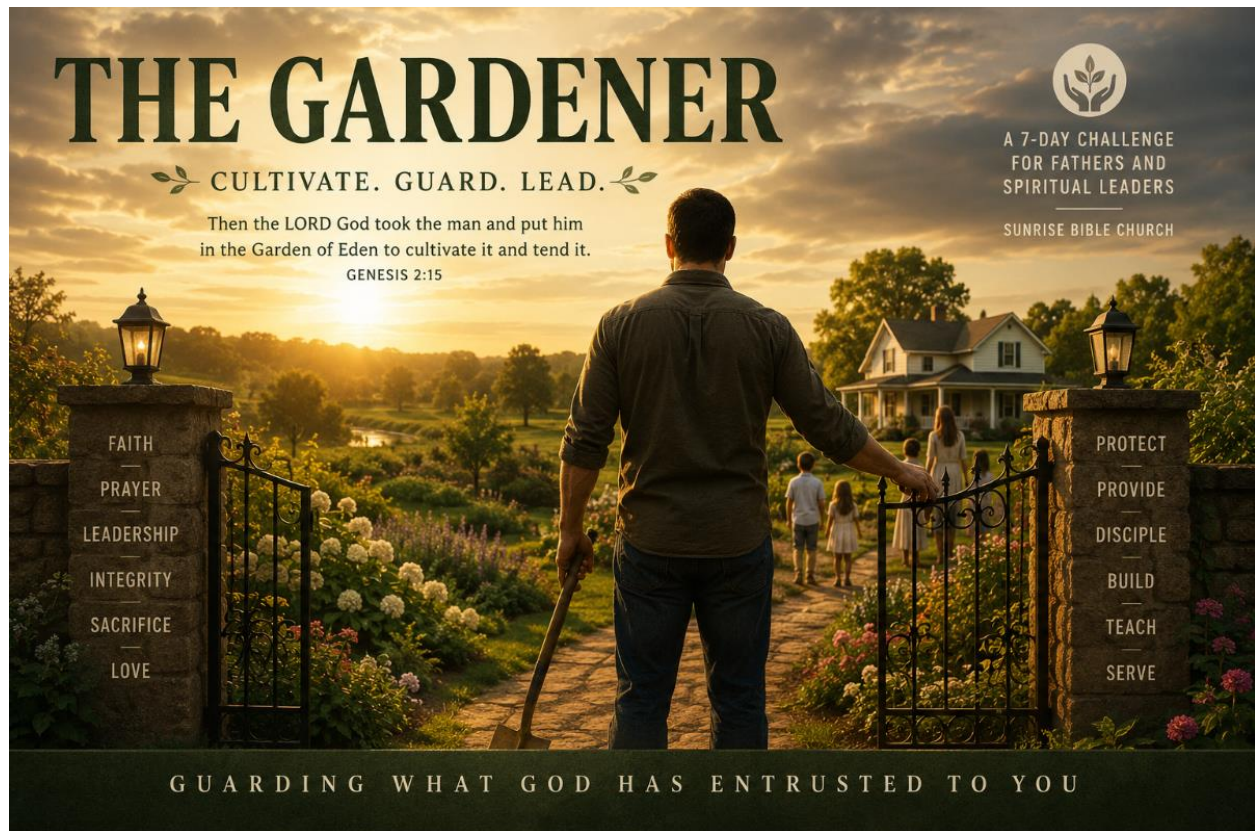




A 7-Day Challenge for Fathers and Spiritual Leaders

Sunrise Bible Church

**Theme Verse:
Genesis 2:15**

INTRODUCTION

God created Adam before He created a family.

Before God entrusted Adam with a wife, He entrusted him with responsibility.

Before God gave Adam children, He gave Adam stewardship.

The call of biblical manhood has never changed.

God calls men to cultivate and guard.

This workbook is designed to help fathers and spiritual leaders establish biblical habits that strengthen homes, disciple families, and honor Christ.

DAILY FORMAT

Scripture Reading

Daily Lesson

Personal Application

Family Discussion

Prayer Focus

Memory Verse

Journal Section

WEEK 1: CLEANSE THE HOUSE

DAY 1..... EXAMINE THE GARDEN

Scripture for today

Psalm 139:23–24(You and God)

Psalm 51:1–4(Your Wife God and You)

Joshua 24:15(Your Family God and You)

Daily Lesson:

Every good gardener begins with inspection. Before weeds are removed, they must first be identified.

David understood this truth. Rather than defending himself, excusing himself, or blaming others, he invited God to examine his heart.

Most men are quick to evaluate others. We evaluate politicians, employers, coaches, pastors, and even our wives and children. But biblical leadership begins when a man allows God to evaluate him.

A father cannot effectively lead his family if he refuses to examine his own walk with Christ. The condition of your garden will eventually affect everyone who lives in it. A neglected garden produces neglected fruit.

The first step toward becoming the spiritual leader God designed you to be is honest self-examination. Ask God to reveal hidden sins, wrong priorities, bitterness, pride, selfishness, lust, anger, laziness, or spiritual apathy.

Do not fear conviction.

Conviction is one of God's greatest gifts because it leads His children toward repentance and restoration.

Personal Application:

Today, spend five minutes alone with God.

Ask Him to reveal areas of your life that need attention.

Write them down. Be honest. Do not justify them. Do not blame others. Simply acknowledge them before the Lord.

Family Discussion:

1. Why is it difficult for people to admit when they are wrong?
2. Why does God want us to confess our sins?
3. How does repentance strengthen a family?

Prayer Focus:

"Lord, search my heart. Reveal anything in my life that displeases You. Help me to walk in humility and repentance. Give me the courage to address areas of sin and neglect so I may honor You as a husband, father, and spiritual leader. Amen."

Memory Verse:

Search me, God, and know my heart; Put me to the test and know my anxious thoughts; And see if there is any hurtful way in me and lead me in the everlasting way. (**Psalm 139:23–24**)

Journal:

What areas of my life need the most attention right now?

DAY 2 – REMOVE THE WEEDS

Scripture Reading

Hebrews 12:1–2..... (You and God)

James 4:7–10..... (Your Wife God and You)

Ephesians 4:29–32..... (Your Family God and You)

Daily Lesson:

A garden can be beautiful one season and overrun the next. Weeds never need encouragement. They grow naturally. Fruit requires cultivation. The same is true spiritually. Sin grows naturally within fallen humanity. Holiness requires intentional effort.

Hebrews tells believers to lay aside every encumbrance and the sin that so easily entangles us. Notice that Scripture mentions both. Some things are outright sinful. Other things may not be sinful in themselves, yet they continually distract us from pursuing Christ.

Many men have allowed weeds to grow unchecked. Entertainment has become a weed. Sports have become a weed. Work has become a weed. Hobbies have become a weed. Social media has become a weed.

None of those things are necessarily evil, but when they consume our time, attention, and affection, they begin choking spiritual growth.

A wise gardener removes weeds before they become deeply rooted. Likewise, wise men confront sin early. Do not wait until your marriage suffers. Do not wait until your children drift. Do not wait until your spiritual life grows cold.

Pull the weeds now.

Personal Application:

Identify one specific sin or distraction that is hindering your walk with Christ. Create a plan to remove it. If accountability is needed, seek help from a mature believer.

Family Discussion:

1. What are some "weeds" that can distract a family from God?
2. Why is it easier to ignore small problems than address them?
3. How can our family encourage one another spiritually?

Prayer Focus:

"Father, help me recognize the weeds growing in my life. Give me wisdom to identify distractions and courage to remove them. Help me fix my eyes on Christ and pursue holiness with determination. Amen."

Memory Verse:

Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. (**Hebrews 12:1–2**)

Journal:

What distractions consume too much of my attention?

What sinful habits need to be addressed immediately?

What practical steps can I take this week to pursue greater holiness?

DAY 3 – GUARD THE GATES

Scripture Reading:

Proverbs 4:23..... (You and God)

Philippians 4:8..... (Your Wife God and You)

Psalms 101: 1-3..... (Your Family God and You)

Daily Lesson:

Every city in the ancient world understood the importance of its gates. The gates determined what entered and what remained outside. A city without guarded gates was vulnerable to attack. An unguarded city was an invitation to the enemy. The same principle applies to every Christian home.

Solomon writes:

"Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life."

The heart is the command center of a man's life. What enters the heart eventually influences his thoughts. His thoughts shape his actions. His actions become habits. His habits become his character. And his character influences everyone around him.

Men, every home has gates. Televisions are gates. Phones are gates. Computers are gates. Friendships are gates. Books are gates. Music is a gate. Social media is a gate.

The question is not whether your home has gates. The question is whether anyone is guarding them. Too many men have become passive gatekeepers. They allow the world to disciple their children. They allow entertainment to shape their family's values. They allow cultural voices to speak louder than Scripture. Then they wonder why their homes struggle spiritually.

Men, weeds do not need permission to grow. The enemy does not ask permission to enter. If the gates remain unguarded, the enemy will gladly walk through them. A godly man does not lead his family with fear. He leads with discernment. He carefully evaluates what enters his home because he understands that every influence is planting seeds. Some seeds produce righteousness. Some seeds produce compromise. The gardener must know the difference.

Joshua guarded the spiritual direction of his household. David desired that no worthless thing would be set before his eyes. Paul instructed believers to dwell upon things that are true, honorable, right, pure, lovely, and worthy of praise.

Biblical leadership requires vigilance.

A father cannot protect what he refuses to inspect.

A husband cannot guard what he ignores.

A spiritual leader cannot oversee gates he never visits.

God has entrusted you with a garden. Part of your responsibility is guarding the gates.

Personal Application:

Take inventory of the influences entering your life and your home.

Ask yourself: What am I watching? What am I listening to?

What am I reading? Who is influencing my family? What is shaping my children's worldview? Identify one influence that needs to be removed, restricted, or replaced.

Family Discussion:

1. Why do influences matter?
2. What kinds of things honor God in our home?
3. What kinds of things pull us away from Christ?
4. How can we encourage one another to guard our hearts?

Prayer Focus:

"Father, help me become a faithful guardian of the gates You have entrusted to me. Give me wisdom to recognize harmful influences and courage to remove them. Help me protect my heart, my marriage, my children, and my home from anything that would dishonor You. Fill our home with things that point us toward Christ. Amen."

Memory Verse:

Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life. (**Proverbs 4:23**)

Journal:

What influences currently have the greatest impact on my life?

What influences have the greatest impact on my family?

Are there any gates I have neglected to guard?

What practical changes can I make this week?

DAY 4 – RESTORE THE ALTAR

Scripture Reading:

Genesis 12:7-8..... (You and God)

Romans 12:1-2..... (Your Wife God and You)

Matthew 6:33..... (Your Family God and You)

Daily Lesson:

Throughout the Old Testament, one of the first things God's people often did after encountering Him was build an altar.

Abraham built altars. Isaac built altars. Jacob built altars. These altars served as visible reminders of God's presence, God's promises, and man's dependence upon Him. An altar was a place of worship. A place of surrender. A place of remembrance. A place where priorities were set in their proper order.

Today, most homes do not have physical altars. But every home has something that functions as one. Every family gathers around something. Some families gather around sports. Some gather around entertainment. Some gather around careers. Some gather around hobbies. Some gather around social media. The question is not whether your family has an altar. The question is what sits upon it?

Men, God has called us to establish Christ as the center of our homes. One of the greatest responsibilities of a spiritual leader is making sure that worship is not confined to Sunday morning. The Christian home should be a place where God's Word is discussed. Where prayer is practiced. Where Christ is honored. Where repentance is normal. Where gratitude is expressed. Where children learn that God is not merely part of life, He is the center of it.

Many fathers desire a godly home but have never intentionally established spiritual rhythms within it. The good news is that family worship does not need to be complicated. You do not need a seminary degree. You do not need to preach a sermon. You simply need to begin. Read a passage of Scripture. Ask a few questions. Pray together.

Be Consistent.

Small acts of faithfulness repeated over time often produce significant spiritual fruit. Remember, before a garden flourishes publicly, it must be cultivated privately. The home is often the first place God develops spiritual leadership. If a man does not lead at home, he will struggle to lead anywhere else. Today is about restoring the altar. It is about intentionally placing Christ back at the center of your household.

Personal Application:

Set aside a specific time for family worship. Choose a day and time that is realistic and sustainable. Start small. Even ten minutes of Scripture and prayer can begin transforming the spiritual atmosphere of a home.

Write your plan below:

Day: _____

Time: _____

Location: _____

Family Discussion:

1. What are some things that compete for our attention as a family?
2. Why is it important to seek God first?
3. What would family worship look like in our home?
4. How can each family member participate?

Prayer Focus:

"Father, help me establish You as the center of my home. Forgive me for the times I have allowed other priorities to take Your place. Give me courage to lead spiritually, wisdom to teach Your Word, and consistency to build habits that honor You. May our home become a place where Christ is loved, worshiped, and obeyed. Amen."

Memory Verse:

But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be provided to you. (**Matthew 6:33**)

Journal

What currently receives the most attention in our home?

What changes would help place Christ at the center of our family life?

What fears or obstacles keep me from leading family worship?

How can I begin this week?

DAY 5 – LEAD THROUGH REPENTANCE

Scripture Reading:

1 John 1:5..... (You and God)

Ephesians 4:35-27..... (Your Wife God and You)

Colossians 3:12-15..... (Your Family God and You)

Daily Lesson:

Many men believe leadership means never admitting failure. The world teaches men to hide weakness. To protect their image. To defend themselves. To shift blame. To justify mistakes. But biblical manhood looks very different. One of the greatest acts of leadership a man can demonstrate is genuine repentance.

Repentance is not weakness.

Repentance is strength under submission to God. The first Adam failed in the garden and immediately began shifting blame. Adam blamed Eve. Eve blamed the serpent. No one took responsibility. And mankind has been making excuses ever since. But godly men take ownership. They confess sin. They acknowledge failure. They seek forgiveness. And they make things right whenever possible.

Men, one of the most powerful lessons your children will ever learn is not that their father is perfect. They already know he isn't. The lesson they desperately need to see is what a godly man does when he sins. Do they see humility? Do they hear

confessions? Do they witness repentance? Do they see a man who quickly returns to Christ? Many fathers believe admitting failure will diminish their authority. The opposite is often true.

Nothing builds trust like honesty. Nothing strengthens leadership like humility. Nothing demonstrates the Gospel more clearly than a man who is willing to say:

"I was wrong."

"Please forgive me."

"I need God's grace too."

The cross reminds us that every Christian lives by grace. Not one of us stands because of our perfection. We stand because of Christ's perfection. A man who refuses to repent will eventually damage his family. A man who models repentance teaches his family where forgiveness is found. The goal of leadership is not projecting strength. The goal is leading people to Christ. And sometimes the clearest path to Christ begins with a humble confession.

Personal Application:

Ask yourself:

Have I wronged my wife recently? Have I spoken harshly? Have I neglected my responsibilities? Have I failed to keep a promise? Have I allowed anger, pride, selfishness, or impatience to influence my actions?

If God brings something to mind, address it today. Do not delay. Do not excuse it. Do not minimize it. Repent quickly.

Family Discussion:

1. Why is it difficult to admit when we are wrong?
2. What does genuine repentance look like?
3. Why is forgiveness important in a family?
4. How does repentance point us to Jesus?

Prayer Focus:

"Father, thank You for Your mercy and grace. Forgive me for the times I have failed as a husband, father, and spiritual leader. Help me to walk in humility and repentance. Give me the courage to confess my sin quickly and the wisdom to seek reconciliation when I have wronged others. May my family see in me a man who depends completely upon Christ. Amen."

Memory Verse:

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (**1 John 1:9**)

Journal:

Are there any unresolved conflicts in my family?

Have I asked for forgiveness when I should have?

What area of pride do I need to surrender to God?

How can I, better model repentance for my family?

DAY 6 – LOVE YOUR WIFE

Scripture Reading:

Ephesians 5: 25-33..... (You and God)

Ephesians 5: 25-33..... (Your Wife God and You)

Colossians 3:19..... (Your Family God and You)

Daily Lesson:

One of the greatest responsibilities God entrusts to a man is the care of his wife. Before God gave Adam children, He gave him Eve. Before Adam became a father, he became a husband. This was not an accident. God established marriage as the foundation of the home. A healthy marriage becomes fertile soil for a healthy family. A neglected marriage often produces instability throughout the entire household. Many men believe leadership means authority. The Bible teaches that leadership begins with sacrifice. When Paul instructs husbands, he does not first command them to rule. He commands them to love. And not just any kind of love. He points us to Christ.

"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her."

Christ's love is sacrificial. Christ's love is patient. Christ's love serves. Christ's love protects. Christ's love pursues the good of another.

Church, Jesus did not sit back and demand that the church serve Him. He laid down His life for her. Men, your wife needs more than a provider. She needs a shepherd. She needs a protector. She needs encouragement. She needs spiritual leadership. She needs a husband who continually points her toward Christ.

One of the greatest lies our culture tells men is that success at work can compensate for failure at home. It cannot. You can build a successful business and neglect your marriage. You can earn promotions and lose intimacy. You can impress strangers while ignoring the person God has entrusted to your care.

A wise gardener pays attention to the most valuable part of the garden. Your wife is not an obstacle to your ministry. She is one of your primary ministries. A godly husband does not just stay married. He intentionally cultivates the relationship God has given him.

Personal Application:

Ask yourself honestly:

When was the last time I prayed with my wife?

When was the last time I encouraged her?

When was the last time I thanked her?

When was the last time I asked how I could better serve her?

Choose one specific way to demonstrate Christlike love today.

Family Discussion:

1. What does sacrificial love look like?
2. How does Jesus demonstrate love for His people?
3. Why is kindness important in marriage?
4. How does a strong marriage benefit the entire family?

Prayer Focus:

"Father, thank You for the gift of marriage. Help me love my wife the way Christ loves the church. Forgive me for selfishness, neglect, impatience, or pride. Teach me to serve sacrificially, lead humbly, and cherish the woman You have entrusted to me. Strengthen our marriage for Your glory. Amen."

Memory Verse:

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her (**Ephesians 5:25**)

Journal:

What are three qualities I appreciate most about my wife?

How have I served my wife well recently?

Where do I need to grow as a husband?

What is one practical way I can love my wife better this week?

DAY 7 – DEDICATE THE GARDEN

Scripture Reading:

Genesis 3:15..... (You and God)

Psalms 127:1..... (Your Wife, God, and You)

Joshua 24:14-15..... (Your Family God and You)

Daily Lesson:

For six days we have been examining the garden. We have searched our hearts. We have identified weeds. We have guarded the gates. We have restored the altar. We practiced repentance and we have invested in our marriages.

Now it is time to dedicate the garden.

Throughout Scripture, God's people often marked significant moments by publicly declaring their commitment to the Lord. Joshua did this near the end of his life. Surrounded by the nation of Israel, he drew a line in the sand. He challenged the people to choose whom they would serve. Then he made one of the most powerful declarations in all of Scripture:

"As for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."

Notice something important. Joshua was not speaking merely as an individual. He was speaking as the spiritual leader of his household. He understood that God had entrusted him with influence, responsibility and stewardship. Joshua could not force

every family member to love God. But he could establish the direction of the home.

Men, that is still our responsibility today. You cannot save your wife. You cannot save your children. You cannot produce spiritual life in another person's heart. Only God can do that. But you can establish the direction of your home. You can make it clear that Christ will be honored there. You can make it clear that God's Word will be respected there. You can make it clear that prayers will be practiced there. You can make it clear that your family belongs to the Lord.

Many men have spent years reacting to circumstances. Joshua teaches us to lead with intentionality. A gardener who never decides what he wants to grow should not be surprised when weeds take over. Likewise, a family without spiritual direction often drifts wherever culture pushes it. Today is about establishing direction, not perfection but direction.

Your family does not need a perfect father. They need a father who knows where he is leading them. And they need to know who their father is following.

Personal Application:

Write a short mission statement for your family.Keep it simple like Joshua did...

"As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

Write your family mission statement below:

Family Discussion:

Gather your family together and discuss:

1. What kind of family do we want to have?
2. What does serving the Lord look like in daily life?
3. How can we encourage one another spiritually?
4. What changes would help our family honor Christ more faithfully?

Prayer Focus:

"Father, thank You for every person You have entrusted to my care. Help me lead my home with humility, courage, and faithfulness. Establish Your Word as the foundation of our family. Protect us from spiritual drift. Help us honor You in our thoughts, words, decisions, and relationships. May our home become a place where Christ is loved, worshiped, and proclaimed. Amen."

Memory Verse:

But if it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves today whom you will serve: whether the gods which your fathers served, which were beyond the *Euphrates* River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." (**Joshua 24:15**)

Journal

What spiritual legacy do I want to leave behind?

What kind of husband, father, grandfather, or spiritual leader do I hope to become?

What specific changes has God shown me during this first week?

What areas still need attention?

Family Dedication Ceremony

On this night, gather your family together. Read Joshua 24:15 aloud. Share the family mission statement that you wrote. Then sk each family member if they would like to share a prayer request.

Pray over your wife.

Pray over your children.

Pray over your home.

Then close with this commitment:

"Lord, this home belongs to You.
These relationships belong to You.
These resources belong to You. This
garden belongs to You. Help us
cultivate it faithfully. Help us guard it
diligently. Help us glorify You in all
things. As for me and my house, we
will serve the Lord."

GARDENER'S COVENANT

As a husband, father, grandfather, or spiritual leader, I commit before God and these witnesses to:

Cultivate my walk with Christ.
Guard my family from spiritual danger.
Lead with humility.
Love sacrificially.
Teach God's Word faithfully.
Serve my church joyfully.
Finish my race faithfully.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Pastor: _____

CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION

THE GARDENER 7 Day Challenge for Fathers and Spiritual Leaders

Presented to:

For faithfully completing the Sunrise Bible Church Biblical Leadership Challenge and committing to cultivate and guard the garden God has entrusted to his care.

Presented by:

Pastor JD Hood

Sunrise Bible Church