

September R&R

*From Boy to Man*

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Last month we looked at what qualities a young lady must possess in order to be a godly woman. She develops these as she ages and matures spiritually, physically, and mentally, and she gradually becomes qualified to be a suitable wife and keeper of a home. A boy likewise must develop qualities which make him eligible for that transition to manhood and leader of a family.

Perhaps the best secular depiction of what makes a boy a man is seen in Rudyard Kipling's poem "If." This poem is better than the shallow standard society has for boys where they become men suddenly at puberty, or age 18, or when they get a job and are able to support themselves, or when they get married.

Just as we did with our young ladies, let's look to the Bible which we as parents can use as a standard and guide to help us determine when a boy becomes a man who is able to lead a home himself. Consider the weight of these passages:

Psalm 127:3-5, "Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb is a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, so are the children of one's youth. Happy is the man who has his quiver full of them."

If we were to look at this passage, along with multiple others without our cultural goggles, we would easily see that children are considered by God a blessing and should be welcomed into a family. Yet our world has a complete opposite view of children. They are seen as burdens and consumers with little to no benefit for the family. How can this be when God says that children are to make **men** happy?

Joshua 24:15 reads, "...Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve...as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." Our young men must learn to be leaders like Joshua, men who can rise up in the midst of evil and be a stronghold for truth. They must see a need for

evangelizing their own families. Our boys must learn at a very young age that they are going to have to make a choice between serving God and serving the world. Parents must teach them a worldview that is Biblically oriented so they can see early the fallacies of greatness promised by the world.

In Ephesians 6:4 we read, “And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.” In order for a boy to be qualified as a man, he has to become as the prophets of old, that is, he is able to accurately handle the truthfulness of the Gospel as he leads his family. Not that he is able to have a quick answer for every question as Jesus did at age 12, but that he is known by his family as one who searches the Scriptures and able to tell about the hope that is in him because he is a child of God (1 Peter 3:15).

When Nehemiah was leading God’s people to rebuilding the wall, he told them in 4:14, “Do not be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, great and awesome, and fight for your brethren, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your houses.” Just as in Old Testament times, there are those in our present world who would wish to do our families harm in one way or another. While there may be a time to “turn the other cheek,” there is also a time to stand and fight for what is holy, true, pure, and correct. In 2011, that time is now. Hopefully, our sons can see the example set by their own fathers as they fight daily for the hearts and lives of our wives and children.

Lastly, I want to look at 1 Timothy 5:8, “But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.” This passage, along with those like 2 Thessalonians 3:10, teach that our boys should grow up expecting to not only be the spiritual “provider” of the family, but also the physical provider of the family. Our boys should learn to not expect their parents, their wives, or the government to care for what God has called them to care for.

So when does a boy become a man who is able to take a wife and begin a family? It is when he has learned to love the blessing of children and is able to adequately provide for, protect, and spiritually lead not just himself, but a wife and children also.