

MASCULINITY HANDED DOWN

By Joe Rigney

An Outline

Masculinity is the glad assumption of sacrificial responsibility. It's our response to God's calling.

Seven desires for boys as they grow into mature manhood:

1. I want my sons to grow up to be true men of God – first in, last out, laughing loudest.

- a. True masculinity means being the first into battle. If there's a danger to be faced, a true man will face it first. If there's a burden to be borne, a man will bear it first. A man will see to it that pain and hardship fall in his lap before they ever fall upon those under his care.
- b. Godly leadership doesn't give us the right to lord our authority over others; it means, as my friend Toby Sumpter says, that it is our glory to die first.
- c. A man of God comes home not to be served, but to serve (Mark 10:45). After a hard day's work, a godly man enters his home, not with a list of demands, but with an eagerness to give. He comes to relieve the burdens of his wife, not add to them. He comes to play with his kids, not shunt them off to their rooms while he puts his feet up.
- d. I want my sons to aspire to be men who give until it hurts, and whistle the while. I want them to lean into sacrifice with unconquerable laughter in their hearts. "I will most gladly spend and be spent for your souls," Paul says to the Corinthians (2 Cor. 12:15). Godly masculinity ought to be the happiest thing you ever saw.
- e. A twinkle in the eyes, a brightness in the smile, a laughter in the bones – these are the qualities of a man who has planted his feet upon a Rock and will not be shaken when the earth gives way and the waters foam (Ps. 46:1-3).

2. I want my sons to embrace their calling as protectors of the weak.

- a. The primary burden of defense – whether of home, family, church, or country – lies with men. The world is filled with gardens, and, as one pastor says, gardens always attract serpents. Therefore, my prayer is that they put on their armor, keep their swords sharp, and play the man.
- b. What's more, part of their training is learning to fall down and get up again. Boys need to experience skinned knees, bumped heads, and bruised arms so they will learn to laugh it off and keep playing.
- c. Masculinity is about taking responsibility for the physical, emotional, and spiritual safety of those in our care. This means identifying threats and enemies of whatever kind and taking steps to guard and keep those entrusted to me.
- d. Most importantly, it means killing that dragon that lurks in my own heart. The greatest threat to those in my care is my own sin and rebellion. Therefore, protecting others demands a single-minded and glad-hearted pursuit of holiness.

3. I want my sons to gladly submit to lawful authority.

- a. Many men think that leadership is about being "the boss," when in fact it's first and fundamentally about recognizing that God is the Boss (Eph. 6:9; Col. 4:1). Masculinity welcomes accountability, authority, and oversight. The foundation of godly manhood is cheerful obedience to lawful authority.
- b. A man is in no position to expect obedience from others if he is not first eager to render it to those over him in the Lord.
- c. I want to model for my boys glad submission to God in His Word, to the elders of our church, to my boss at work. God is calling them to honor, respect, and obey me; therefore, I want to show them how.
- d. The flip side of submission to lawful authority is resistance to unlawful authority. Part of teaching my sons godly obedience is helping them to grasp the differences between authority that is established by God and that which is usurped by ungodly men.

4. I want my sons to practice self-control for the joy in it.

- a. Paul singles out self-control as one of the fundamental callings for young men (Titus 2:6) and old (2:2). This self-control is the result of the grace of God in the gospel (Titus 2:11-12). It is grace that trains us to renounce ungodliness and live self-controlled lives in this present age.
- b. One of the fundamental aims of the Spirit of God is to restore control of me to me, so that I work out what God is working in (Phil. 2:12-13).
- c. Strength governed by wisdom, strength guided by the Spirit of God, strength aimed at the good of others – this is what God is after.
- d. For my sons, this means controlling their angers and outbursts, not collapsing into whining and fussing when they don't get their way, and learning the time and place to be silly, loud, and crazy. As they grow, self-control will be necessary in getting out of bed for school, completing homework before playing outside, and resisting the pull of sexual temptation.
- e. Chesterton once remarked that the reason that order and structure exist in God's world is to make room for good things to run wild. God erects walls around the city so that life can happen inside. God establishes boundaries so that joy can be unleashed.
- f. A godly man respects and delights in the fences built by God, and then rides bareback across the bounded plain, wind whipping in his hair.

5. I want my sons to celebrate the wonders of femininity.

- a. The whole point of men leading in the dance is to showcase the beauty of men.
- b. Godly men love the glory of women, because the woman's glory is his glory (1 Cor. 11:7). This means that in general we can measure the faithfulness of men by the flourishing of women.
- c. If you want to see whether biblical masculinity is present in a congregation, look to the women and children. Are they thriving? Are they cared for? Are they holy and happy and hopeful?
- d. I want my sons to be awed by the bright strength and life-giving wisdom of women. I want them to hear their mother's praises sung by their father, in season and out of season.
- e. I want there to be no hint of male superiority or dominance, but only gratitude to God for the tremendous blessing of women.

6. I want my sons to put to death any vestige of false masculinity.

- a. Adam was expected to take responsibility for Eve's protection and provision, but when God called him to account for his sin, Adam blamed his wife, effectively demanding that God put her to death for their sin.
- b. Passivity, idolatry, and abuse. These are the hallmarks of Adamic masculinity. It is the opposite of the glad assumption of sacrificial responsibility. Instead of first in, last out, laughing loudest, we find last in, first out, and sulking all the way. I want to train my boys to recognize the old man who lives in their hearts and to take up their cross and put him to death daily.
- c. Responsibility and repentance mark a true man.
- d. Some say that love means never having to say that you're sorry. For a godly husband, love means that you have the privilege of saying you're sorry first.

7. I want my sons to see Jesus Christ as the ground and goal of their masculinity.

- a. Unlike Adam, Christ killed the dragon to get the girl. And he killed the dragon by dying himself. When He saw His bride heading down the broad road to destruction, what did He do? He didn't blame, He bled. He didn't damn, He died. He didn't gripe and grumble and groan. Instead He gladly and graciously gave Himself up for her, that He might purify and beautify His bride.
- b. Christ died for the sins of Adam and all the sons who follow in his steps, that He might make a way for us to return to our Father and recover our royal calling. The gospel of Jesus Christ is the only hope for failed and fallen men, and it is a living and abiding hope.
- c. My prayer for my boys (and for myself and the men who read this chapter) is that we would embrace this gospel and answer Christ's call to be His little brothers, following Him into the breach, laying down our lives for others, and doing so for the joy set before us. First in, last out, laughing loudest.

THE MARKS OF MANHOOD

By: Al Mohler

When does a boy become a man? The answer to this must go far beyond biology and chronological age. As defined in the Bible, manhood is a functional reality, demonstrated in a man's fulfillment of responsibility and leadership. With this in mind, let me suggest thirteen marks of biblical manhood. The achievement of these vital qualities marks the emergence of a man who will demonstrate true biblical masculinity.

1. **Spiritual maturity sufficient to lead a wife and children.** The Bible is clear about a man's responsibility to exercise spiritual maturity and spiritual leadership. Of course, this spiritual maturity takes time to develop, and it is a gift of the Holy Spirit working within the life of the believer. The disciplines of the Christian life, including prayer and serious Bible study, are among the means God uses to mold a boy into a man and to bring spiritual maturity into the life of one who is charged to lead a wife and family. This spiritual leadership is central to the Christian vision of marriage and family life. A man's spiritual leadership is not a matter of dictatorial power, but of firm and credible spiritual leadership and influence. A man must be ready to lead his wife and his children in a way that will honor God, demonstrate godliness, inculcate Christian character, and lead his family to desire Christ and to seek God's glory. Spiritual maturity is a mark of true Christian manhood, and a spiritually immature man is, in at least this crucial sense, spiritually just a boy.
2. **Personal maturity sufficient to be a responsible husband and father.** Christians often speak of raising boys to be men. In the face of today's cultural onslaught, this is an important goal. However, it is just not enough. Biblical manhood is always defined in terms of functions, roles, and responsibilities. True masculinity is not a matter of exhibiting supposedly masculine characteristics devoid of the context of responsibility. In the Bible, a man is called to fulfill his role as husband and father. Unless granted the gift of celibacy for gospel service, the Christian boy is to aim for marriage and fatherhood. This is assuredly a counter-cultural assertion, but the role of husband and father is central to manhood. Boys must be raised to see themselves as future husbands and fathers. They must be taught what to look for in a godly wife and how to fulfill all of the responsibilities that Scripture invests in a husband and father. Marriage is unparalleled in its effect on men, as it channels their energies and directs their responsibilities to the devoted covenant of marriage and the grace-filled civilization of the family. Boys must be taught what it means to be a husband, how to respect and honor marriage, and how to earn the respect and confidence of a wife. Similarly, boys must be taught about the responsibilities of fatherhood. Christians must reverse generations of inattention by speaking directly and clearly to boys about their future responsibilities, including the care, training, education, protection, and discipline of children. They must aspire to be the kind of man a Christian woman would gladly marry and children will trust, respect, and obey.

3. **Economic maturity sufficient to hold an adult job and handle money.** Advertisers and marketers know where to aim their messages—directly at adolescent boys and young men. This particular segment of the population is inordinately attracted to material goods, popular entertainment, sporting events, and other consumer options. The portrait of young manhood made popular in the media and presented as normal through entertainment is characterized by economic carelessness, self-centeredness, and laziness. A real man knows how to hold a job, handle money with responsibility, and take care of the needs of his wife and family. A failure to develop economic maturity means that young men often float from job to job, and take years to “find themselves” in terms of career and vocation. Once again, an extended adolescence marks a huge segment of today’s young male population. A boy must be taught how to work, how to save, to invest, and to spend money with care. He must be taught to respect labor, and to feel the satisfaction that comes from a job well done, and a dollar honestly earned. Too many boys are coddled and entertained, demonstrating a laziness that will be highly detrimental to their future prospects as husband and father. Slothfulness, laziness, and economic carelessness are marks of immaturity. A real man knows how to earn, manage, and respect money. A Christian man understands the danger that comes from the love of money, and fulfills his responsibility as a Christian steward.
4. **Physical maturity sufficient to work and protect a family.** Unless afflicted by injury or illness, a boy should develop the physical maturity that, by stature and strength, marks recognizable manhood. Of course, men come in many sizes and demonstrate different levels of physical strength, but common to all men is a maturity, through which a man demonstrates his masculinity by movement, confidence, and strength. A man must be ready to put his physical strength on the line to protect his wife and children and to fulfill his God-assigned tasks. A boy must be taught to channel his developing strength and emerging size into a self-consciousness of responsibility, recognizing that adult strength is to be combined with adult responsibility and true maturity.
5. **Sexual maturity sufficient to marry and fulfill God’s purposes.** As a boy develops into a man, he becomes aware of the sexual powers God has put within him. In an age saturated with distorted sexuality, bombarded with sexual stimulation, and confused by unbridled sexual passion, boys must be taught to discipline their sexual energies into anticipation of marriage. Even as the society celebrates sex in every form and at every age, the true Christian man practices sexual integrity, avoiding pornography, fornication, all forms of sexual promiscuity, and corruption. He understands the danger of lust, but rejoices in the sexual capacity and reproductive power God has put within him, committing himself to find a wife, and to earn her love, trust, and admiration—and eventually to win her hand in marriage. Boys must be taught to respect this incredible gift, and to protect this gift until, within the context of holy marriage, they are able to fulfill this gift, love their wives, and look to God’s gift of children. Male sexuality separated from the context and integrity of marriage is an explosive and dangerous reality. The boy must understand, even as he travels through the road of puberty and an awakened sexuality, that he is accountable to God for his stewardship of this great gift.

6. **Moral maturity sufficient to lead as an example of righteousness.** Stereotypical behavior on the part of young males is, in the main, marked by recklessness, irresponsibility, and worse. As a boy grows into manhood, he must develop moral maturity as he aspires to righteousness, learning to think like a Christian, act like a Christian, and show others how to do the same. The Christian man is to be an example to others, teaching by both precept and example. Of course, this requires the exercise of responsible moral reasoning. Boys will not learn this on their own, but must be taught. True moral education begins with a clear understanding of moral standards, but must move to the higher level of moral reasoning by which a young man learns how biblical principles are translated into godly living and how the moral challenges of his day must be met with the truths revealed in God's inerrant and infallible word.
7. **Ethical maturity sufficient to make responsible decisions.** To be a man is to make decisions. One of the most fundamental tasks of leadership is decision-making. The indecisiveness of so many contemporary males is evidence of a stunted manhood. Of course, a man does not rush to a decision without thought, consideration, or care, but a man does put himself on the line in making a decision--and making it stick. This requires an extension of moral responsibility into mature ethical decision-making that brings glory to God, is faithful to God's word, and is open to moral scrutiny. Parents often leave their sons unprepared for this role by making decisions for them, and by failing to teach boys how to think and reason in responsible terms, how to weigh evidence and think clearly, and how to prioritize values according to a biblical standard. A real man knows how to make a decision and live with its consequences--even if that means that he must later acknowledge that he has learned by making a bad decision, and then by making the appropriate correction.
8. **Worldview maturity sufficient to understand what is really important.** An inversion of values marks our postmodern age, and the predicament of modern manhood is made all the more perplexing by the fact that many men lack the capacity of consistent worldview thinking. For the Christian, this is doubly tragic, for our Christian discipleship must be demonstrated in the development of a Christian mind. The Christian man must understand how to interpret and evaluate issues across the spectrum of politics, economics, morality, entertainment, education, and a seemingly endless list of other fields. The absence of consistent biblical worldview thinking is a key mark of spiritual immaturity. A boy must be taught how to translate Christian truth into genuine Christian thinking. He must learn how to defend biblical truth before his peers and in the public square, and he must acquire the ability to extend Christian thinking, based on biblical principles, to every arena of life.
9. **Relational maturity sufficient to understand and respect others.** Psychologists now talk of "emotional intelligence," or EQ, as a major factor in personal development. While the world has given much attention to IQ, EQ is just as important. Individuals who lack the ability to relate to others are destined to fail at some of life's most significant challenges and will not fulfill some of their most important responsibilities and roles. By nature, many boys are inwardly directed. While girls learn how

to read emotional signals and connect, many boys lack the capacity to do so, and seemingly fail to understand the absence of these skills. While a man is to demonstrate emotional strength, constancy, and steadfastness, he must be able to relate to his wife, his children, his peers, his colleagues, and a host of others in a way that demonstrates respect, understanding, and appropriate empathy. This will not be learned by playing video games and by entering into the privatized world experienced by many male adolescents. Parents--especially fathers--must draw their sons out of inwardness, and demonstrate what it means to relate to others as a man and as a Christian.

10. **Social maturity sufficient to make a contribution to society.** While the arena of the home is an essential and inescapable focus of a man's responsibility, he is also called out of the home into the workplace and the larger world as a witness, and as one who will make a contribution to the common good. God has created human beings as social creatures, and even though our ultimate citizenship is in heaven, we must also fulfill our citizenship on earth. A boy must learn to fulfill a political responsibility as a citizen, and a moral responsibility as a member of a human community. The Christian man bears a civilizational responsibility, and boys must be taught to see themselves as shapers of the society even as the church is identified by our Lord as both salt and light. Similarly, a Christian man must learn how to relate to unbelievers, both as witness and as fellow citizens of an earthly kingdom.
11. **Verbal maturity sufficient to communicate and articulate as a man.** Here's a striking phenomenon of our times--many adolescent boys and young men seem to communicate only through a series of guttural clicks, grunts, and inchoate language that can hardly be described as verbal. A man must be able to speak, to be understood, and to communicate in a way that will honor God and convey God's truth to others. Parents must work with boys, requiring them to speak, to articulate, and to learn respect for language. This respect must extend to an ability to enunciate words so that articulation is clear and communication succeeds. This skill must be learned at the dinner table, in family conversation, and in one-on-one talk, especially between father and son. Beyond the context of conversation, a boy must learn how to speak before larger groups, overcoming the natural intimidation and fear that comes from looking at a crowd, opening one's mouth, and projecting words. Though not all men will become public speakers, every man should have the ability to take his ground, frame his words, and make his case when truth is under fire and when belief and conviction must be translated into argument.
12. **Character maturity sufficient to demonstrate courage under fire.** The literature of manhood is replete with stories of courage, bravery, and audacity. At least, that's the way it used to be. Now, with manhood both minimalized and marginalized by cultural elites, ideological subversion, and media confusion, we must recapture a commitment to courage that is translated into the real-life challenges faced by the Christian man. At times, this quality of courage is demonstrated when a man risks his own life in defense of others, especially his wife and children, but also *anyone* who is in need of rescue. More often, this courage is demonstrated in taking a stand under hostile fire, refusing to succumb to the temptation of silence and standing as a model and example to others, who will then be encouraged to stand their own ground. In these days, biblical manhood requires great courage. The prevailing

ideologies and worldviews of this age are inherently hostile to Christian truth and are corrosive to Christian faithfulness. It takes great courage for a boy to commit himself to sexual purity and for a man to devote himself unreservedly to his wife. It takes great courage to say no to what this culture insists are the rightful pleasures and delights of the flesh. It takes courage to serve as a godly husband and father, to raise children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. It takes courage to maintain personal integrity in a world that devalues the truth, disparages God's word, and promises self-fulfillment and happiness only through the assertion of undiluted personal autonomy. A man's true confidence is rooted in the wells of courage, and courage is evidence of character. In the end, a man's character is revealed in the crucible of everyday challenges. For most men, life will also bring moments when extraordinary courage will be required, if he is to remain faithful and true. Parents should give close attention to their sons' character, for if character is corrupt, nothing else will really matter.

- 13. Biblical maturity sufficient to lead at some level in the church.** A close look at many churches will reveal that a central problem is the lack of biblical maturity among the men of the congregation and a lack of biblical knowledge that leaves men ill equipped and completely unprepared to exercise spiritual leadership. Boys must be taught to know, to treasure, to honor, and to understand the Bible. They must know their way around the biblical text, and feel at home in the study of God's Word. They must be taught how to read with care, "rightly dividing the word of truth," and they must learn how to apply the eternal truths of God's Word to the challenges of modern manhood. Furthermore, they must stand ready to take their place as leaders in the local church. While God has appointed specific officers for his church--men who are specially gifted and publicly called--every man should fulfill some leadership responsibility within the life of the congregation. For some men, this may mean a less public role of leadership than is the case with others. In any event, a man should be able to teach *someone*, and to lead in *some* ministry, translating his personal discipleship into the fulfillment of a godly call. There is a role of leadership for every man in every church, whether that role is public or private, large or small, official or unofficial. A man should know how to pray before others, to present the Gospel, and to stand in the gap where a leadership need is apparent.

When does a boy become a man? I'm glad I was asked this question, and this series represents my attempt to provide an answer that will be both faithful to Scripture and applicable to the real-life challenges faced by men today. More urgently, it was good for me to think through this question and articulate these hallmarks as I seek to show my own son how to grow into biblical manhood. I am absolutely sure that there is more to be thought and more to be said, but this may help us all to see the challenges before us.

Dads, you are absolutely crucial to the process of man-making. No one else can fulfill your responsibility, and no one else can match your opportunity for influence with your son. By word and by example, we are teaching our sons the meaning of manhood. May God make us faithful as we seek to lead our boys to become true Christian men.

EVERY DAY GODWARD

By Tony Reinke

An Outline

Just like a pastor leading a church, a husband is called to lead his household in many different directions: in pulling his family into greater depths of the gospel, in pushing back the tide of worldliness, in pushing his family up in Godward joy, and in sowing deep seeds of gratitude. Pastoring children is a labor requiring a lot of thoughtful paternal attention. It always has been.

We who are dads are called to the glorious labor of chiseling the words of God deep into the lives of our children, and this labor demands our entire schedule (breakfast and bedtime), all of our situations (activity and inactivity), and all of our locations (our coming and goings). There's never a moment with his family when a father is not on call to love his children by pointing their attention Godward.

Learning as a Dad:

1. Dad leads family devotions...to Jesus.

- a. Dad, leading family devotions is our calling, and leading family devotions to Christ is our final aim. If I have a liturgy at the dinner table, it looks like this: start by reading the Bible and end with Jesus.

2. Dad models a real relationship with the living God.

- a. Deut. 6 addresses a father's heart before it addresses the hearts of his kids. And this is by design. Dad is an object of gospel grace from God before He is a conduit of gospel grace to his children.
- b. Dads are propped up not as models of moral perfection, but as models of holiness born out of contrition and repentance in the highs and lows of parenting.

3. Dad models joy in God.

- a. If my so-called obedience appears to my children as gruff, stern, and stoic, I am lying about God.
- b. God is most glorified in me when I am most satisfied in Him.
- c. If fatherhood echoes pastor-hood, leading my family in joy is central to my success as a dad (2 Cor. 1:24).
- d. More than modeling right moral choices, I must model joy – a mighty, heart-filled, heart-saturated delight in God that spills over into everyday joy.

4. Dad reorients his family to the metanarrative of the gospel (daily).

- a. There's a time for young children to simply learn yes from no and obedience from disobedience. Disobedience brings negative consequences; obedience brings positive consequences. By God's grace, this obedience at the training-wheel level can be replaced later by a robust, gospel-centered obedience when our children are old enough to understand the redemptive story of Christ.
- b. We're called to instruct children in two truths simultaneously:
 - i. First, it's impossible for any sinner to earn God's favor with our best obedience.
 - ii. Second, we cannot say we embrace this glorious Jesus if we consistently disobey his commands (John 14:15; 1 John 2:1-6).
- c. The gospel message is the redemptive supernarrative that covers all of time and history, and the gospel message redefines our very existence. The gospel message is a supernatural story of deliverance that makes Jesus glorious and provides the necessary context for mature obedience.
- d. It is our glorious calling, Dads, to reorient our families to Jesus and to this supernarrative every day.

5. Dad trains his kids in moral vision.

6. Dad models God-centered gratitude.

- a. All the blessings our family receives – house, food, sports, movie nights, dinners at home, dinners out, even life and health itself – come from the almighty God who sustains us and provides us with everything we enjoy.

WHAT MY FATHER SHOULD LOOK LIKE:

- a. From Deut. 6
 - i. Dads who model **submission** to God's authority in every facet of life (6:4)
 - ii. Dads who model **absolute love** for God (6:5)
 - iii. Dads who model how to **treasure** God's Word (6:6)
 - iv. Dads who **teach** God's Word to us (6:7-9)
 1. In our home there is a **verbal** commitment to God's Word (6:7)
 2. In our home there is a **visible** commitment to God's Word (6:8-9)
- b. From Nehemiah 8:13
- c. From Eph. 6
 - i. Do not provoke them to anger
 1. Jesus: Matthew 20 - But Jesus called them to him and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."
 2. Initiation not domination
 3. Are there any sins in me that are provoking my children to anger? (favoritism, indifference, alcoholism, etc.)
 4. O'Brien: Effectively, **the apostle is ruling out 'excessively severe discipline, unreasonably harsh demands, abuse of authority, arbitrariness, unfairness, constant nagging and condemnation, subjecting a child to humiliation, and all forms of gross insensitivity to a child's needs and sensibilities. Children are persons in their own right who are not to be manipulated, exploited, or crushed.**
 5. Why God warns us:
 - a. Piper: **anger is the most common emotion of the sinful heart when it confronts authority.** there is going to be plenty of anger with the best of parenting, so make every effort, without compromising your authority or truth or holiness, to avoid provoking anger. Consciously be there for the child with authority and truth and holiness in ways that try to minimize the response of anger.
 - b. Piper: **The second reason, Paul may focus on not provoking anger in our children is because this emotion devours almost all other good emotions.** It deadens the soul. It numbs the heart to joy and gratitude and hope and tenderness and compassion and kindness. So Paul knows that if a dad can help a child not be overcome by anger, he may unlock his heart to a dozen other precious emotions that make worship possible and make relationships sweet
 6. Think of this: **God has never done anything that should legitimately cause anger in any of his children.** We are never warranted in getting angry at God. Ever. It happens. But even though God has never done anything that legitimately provokes our anger at him, what has he done about the breakdown in our relationship with him? He has taken initiatives to heal it. Initiatives that were infinitely costly to him.
 7. **The main task in all this is that you overcome your own anger and replace it with tenderhearted joy. Joy that spills over onto your children. When the mouth of dad is mainly angry, the tender emotions of a child are consumed. In other words, being the kind of father God calls us to be means being the kind of Christian and the kind of husband God calls us to be.**

- ii. Nurture (Bring up/nourish – also used in 5:29) Your Children Through
 - 1. *Discipline* (means child-training)
 - a. By Word and Example
 - b. Both Formative and Corrective
 - 2. *Filling their minds with the things of the Lord (Instruction)*
 - a. **The main focus/teaching of parenting is that life is to be lived for the glory of God.**
 - b. For this to happen:
 - i. **The things of the Lord have to be in/on your mind**
 - ii. **You have to be with your children**

FATHERS

Eph. 6:4

INTRO:

- How long does it take to form an arrow?
- 936 weeks (52 weeks * 18 years) – 6,570 days
- 936 days (52 Sundays * 18 years) – 2.56 years – WHY WE ARE CALLED TO EQUIP YOU TO LEAD YOUR HOME (BE YOUR CHILD’S PRESCHOOL, CHILDREN, AND YOUTH MINISTER)
- 1,872 days (52 Sundays and Wednesdays * 18 years) – 5.12 years
- What is the chief end of man? To glorify God and enjoy Him forever
 - Isaiah 43:7 – Everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made.
- What is the chief end of parenting? To glorify God
- How? Make disciples

Bonhoeffer “It is from God that parents receive their children, and it is to God that they should lead them.”

Tripp: “Our homes . . . are environments where our children are constantly learning. We are always teaching our children. Our every response, whether it is instruction or silence, teaches. Our behavior and our love teach. But in addition to that natural process, **God calls us to instruct our children about what to believe, how to think from the Scriptures, and how to live.**

We must actively teach our children, and live the reality, that God defines life. He tells and shows us the truth about what is valuable, what is worth living and dying for, what is worth doing and being, and what gives our lives significance. Rather than simply fixing short-term problems, we must have a vision for formative instruction from infancy to adulthood. . . . The Bible is our curriculum for formative instruction. Christ is our example of how to live the Bible.

Our objective when we teach our children is not simply to ensure, by some venerable or socially accepted child rearing method, that our children are not criminals, or that they ‘do well.’ Rather, our desire is that they should love the Lord their God with all their heart, soul and mind.”

I. FATHERS LET THEM KNOW

- a. Our opportunity to shepherd them comes once (can’t hit the reset button)
- b. Ps. 127:3 “Children are a heritage from the LORD, the fruit of the womb a reward.”
- c. Children come from the LORD – He is Sovereign over the womb (ask Abraham and Sarah, ask Samson’s mother, Ask Samuel’s Mother, Ask Jesus’ mother)
 - i. Just because you do not have physical children does not mean that God does expect you to have spiritual children

II. Fathers

- a. Both parents play a role (6:1-2) but Fathers have a special responsibility
 - i. Paul intentionally shifts in his language
 - ii. in the ancient world, in both Graeco-Roman and Jewish writings, fathers were responsible for the education of their children**
 - iii. Ferguson: “In the modern world, bringing up children has often, by default, become the task of mothers. But gratitude for the role played by mothers does not absolve fathers from their responsibility.”
- b. Men – God will hold you primarily responsible for what has been done to make disciples in your home
 - i. What kind of Dads am I praying for at Trace Crossing? Nehemiah 8:13** “On the second day the heads of fathers houses of all the people with the priests and the Levites, came together to Ezra the scribe in order to study the words of the Law.”

- ii. **Our responsibility (to our children and to those we are making disciples):**
 - 1. 1:8; 2:1; 3:1; 4:1-6; 4:10-13; 4:20-23; 5:1; 6:20; 7:1-2; 23:26;
- iii. Piper “May the Lord give us a united focus on what really matters in marriage: husbands and wives loving like Christ and the church, and the children seeing it, and by God’s grace, loving what they see.”
- iv. Piper “Will the child be able to recognize God for who he really is in his authority and love and justice because mom and dad have together shown the child what God is like?”
- c. What do I do if I’m not a father?
 - i. Wife – hear what you need to be praying
 - ii. Single woman – hear what you should expect
 - iii. Single man – hear what God expects of you
 - iv. Wife with non-Christian husband or single mom – Eunice and Lois
- d. How?
 - i. **DEMONSTRATING RESTRAINT**
 - 1. Do not provoke your children to anger
 - 2. Every “do not” from God is for our best
 - 3. Why? Col. 3:21 “Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.”
 - 4. Questions:
 - a. Ferguson: Some fathers try to subordinate their children to their own authority and the necessity of obeying it in such a way that **they obscure rather than express** the gracious authority of God.
 - b. Domination rather than initiation
 - c. Ferguson: What specific sins in me might provoke my children to anger?
 - i. Indifference
 - ii. Favoritism
 - iii. My anger - Remember: God is only wrathful toward sin
 - iv. Law without grace: SEE BELOW
 - 5. From Tim Kimmel’s chapter “The Freedom to Make Mistakes” in his book [*Grace-Based Parenting*](#):
 - 6. Legalistic parents maintain a relationship with God through obedience to a standard. The goal of this when it comes to their children is to keep sin from getting into their home. They do their best to create an environment that controls as many of the avenues as possible that sin could use to work its way into the inner sanctum. . . . It’s as though the power to sin or not to sin was somehow connected to their personal will power and resolve. . . . These families are preoccupied with keeping sin out by putting a fence between them and the world.
 - 7. The difference with grace-based families is that they don’t bother spending much time putting fences up because they know full well that sin is already present and accounted for inside their family. To these types of parents, sin is not an action or an object that penetrates their defenses; it is a preexisting condition that permeates their being. The graceless home requires kids to be good and gets angry and punishes them when they are bad. The grace-based home assumes kids will struggle with sin and helps them learn how to tap into God’s power to help them get stronger.
 - 8. It’s not that grace-based homes don’t take their children’s sin seriously. Nor is it that grace-based homes circumvent consequences. It isn’t even that grace-based homes do nothing to protect their children from attacks and temptations that threaten them from the outside. They do all these things, but not for the same reasons. Grace-based homes aren’t trusting in the moral safety of their home or the spiritual environment

they've created to empower their children to resist sin. . . . They assume that sin is an ongoing dilemma that their children must constantly contend with.

9. [Children in a grace-based family] are accepted as sinners who desire to become more like Christ rather than be seen as nice Christian kids trying to maintain a good moral code. Grace is committed to bringing children up from their sin; legalism puts them on a high standard and works overtime to keep them from falling down.
10. Grace understands that the only real solution for our children's sin is the work of Christ on their behalf. . . . Legalism uses outside forces to help children maintain their moral walk. Their strength is based on the environment they live in. Grace, on the other hand, sees the strength of children by what is inside them—more specifically, Who is inside them.
11. Changes Discipline
 - a. Punitive v. Corrective
 - b. When you discipline your child is it because they have done something that gets on your nerves or is it because they have done something that has offended God?
 - c. Tripp: If correction orbits around the parent who has been offended then the focus will be venting anger, or perhaps, taking vengeance. The function is punitive. If, however, correction orbits around God as the one offended, then the focus is restoration. The function is remedial. It is designed to move a child who has disobeyed God back to the path of obedience. It is corrective.
 - d. Discipline is an expression of love
 - e. Should be rescuing our children from the path of danger (going against God and His Word) rather than just airing frustration

ii. Nourish them (bring them up)

1. Discipline – child training

- a. BY WORD AND EXAMPLE
 - i. Hypocrisy starts in the home more than the church
- b. Formative and corrective
 - i. Teaching that “forms” our children. It enables them to root life in God's revelation in the Bible. It shows our children the glory and excellence of God.
 - ii. “Before the problem” instruction
 - iii. Our faith in God in the face of trials, our love and compassion for others, our forgiving and kind spirit, our confidence in the power of the gospel, our hope in grace – all breathe life into our formative instruction.
 - iv. Our children are being told how to think about authority, justice, honor, amusement, responsibility, service, and gender by a culture that has “lost all sensitivity and given itself to sensuality” (Eph. 4:19).
 - v. If we are not self-consciously providing a culture rooted in truth, our children will be more influenced by the majority culture than they are by us and God's truth.
 - vi. The home is the place where we present a culture that is distinctly Christian.
 - vii. The goal of formative instruction is so that we and our children and our grandchildren may fear the Lord and walk in his ways, enjoying a long life.
- c. Deut. 6

- i. Whether waking, walking, talking or resting, you must be involved in helping your children to understand life, himself/herself, and his/her needs from a biblical perspective
- ii. The Lord is one
- iii. Love Him with everything you have
- iv. Let it be written on your hearts 1st
- v. As you live life – teach
- vi. Write it/visible commitment
- d. Teach them about God:
 - i. Before the mountains were brought forth or ever you formed the earth and the world from everlasting to everlasting you are God – Ps. 90:2
 - ii. Our God is in the Heavens He does all that He pleases – Ps. 115:3
 - iii. Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised and His greatness is unsearchable – Ps. 145:3

2. Instruction – to place in the mind

- a. PROVERBS – all the dad teaching verses and Prov. 1 example

An example of formative instruction – Proverbs 1:8-19

- Who’s involved in the teaching? Father and Mother (Exod. 20:12; 21:15, 17; Lev. 19:3; Deut. 21:18-21; 31:12)
 - What benefit is there to “hearing”? see 1:5
 - Forsake not = to leave someone, something or some situation unattended and uncared for
- Why should I listen?
 - Garland for you head = victory/vindication over enemies
 - Pendant for neck = guidance and protection
- Let the Formative Instruction begin:
 - **My son, IF – to be forewarned is to be forearmed**
 - Resist the gang’s invitation
 - They are looking for excitement (11-12), easy money (13), and the camaraderie of being one of the gang (14)
 - Sinners love company
 - Sinners = the disqualified ones
 - What a great teacher the father is . . .
 - “If they say . . .”
 - “Let us ambush the innocent without reason”
 - Their crime is coldly calculated and a brutal plot against a victim who is given no chance to flee or defend himself
 - The father brilliantly puts words into the sinners’ mouths that both condemn them and expose their enticement – they are made to describe their own victims as ‘innocent’
 - “Alive and whole”
 - the victim is in full health, not old and sickly, and so not expecting death.
 - Father knows best:
 - Don’t join them (15) for justice will prevail (16-17)
 - Hold back your foot from their paths = do not experiment with their addiction
 - We can become hardened to sin – ultimately moving from rejecting it to embracing it
 - The son must reject the company of sinners because it will result in calamity for him, in the shedding of his own blood (16 and 18).

- Their feet rush into moral evil against others and bring harm to themselves, and their hands shed both the blood of others (11) and their own (18).
- They are stupid (18)
 - Not only are they wrong – they are stupid
 - It’s pointless to throw a net toward any flying creature, for God has given it the good sense to avoid it.
 - The wise son with his father’s help is now able to deconstruct the trap of words set by the sinners.
 - Like every flying creature, the wise son will take flight, for they spread their net in his full view. By their own admission they want to ambush an innocent man; they are without excuse, for they flaunt their injustice.
- The Big Finish (19)
 - He had provided “one way” but now he is broadening the application to “ways” – all sorts of lethal behavior prompted by greed.
 - Greedy for unjust gain – ripping someone off (who cuts off a cut)
 - The unjust gain – clings to the criminal and eventually destroys him.
 - Sin begets harm (Matt. 26:52; Gal. 6:7)