

Raising Valiant Men (2)

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Inheritance

The children of the world will someday inherit everything; positions of power, authority, leadership, wealth, and the problems we fail to resolve. If we need extra motivation to spend energy raising our children, let us remember this simple fact. *“For I must leave it to the man who will come after me... he will have control over all the fruit of my labor for which I have labored and acted wisely under the sun”* (Ecclesiastes 2:18-19). Our sons carry on the family name, and whether we realize it or not, our reputations. They can either destroy what we have worked for or continue building it up. If you care anything about your posterity, you will expend extra effort raising your children!

What Men Can Teach

There are certain truths that seem more meaningful and real to a boy when they come from a man he respects. Perhaps this is why the book of Proverbs can be seen as one of the greatest guides for fathers. *“Hear, O sons, the instruction of a father”* (Proverbs 4:1). In it, the writer tells his son a number of lessons that are still applicable today:

- From financial commitments (6:1-5);
- To the right work ethic (6:6-11);
- To the sort of women to avoid (5:1ff);
- And the woman to marry (31:11);
- As well as how to value one’s wife (5:15ff, 12:4);
- Abstain from cruelty to animals (12:10);
- How to not be all talk (14:23);
- The merits of honesty (12:19);
- Sensibility (15:17);
- And learning to control one’s temper (15:18).

Predators

“Dogging the young like hungry wolves are predators who would exploit them for financial gain, including drug pushers, unprincipled movie and television producers, sex abusers, abortion providers, heavy-metal freaks, and now those who inhabit the Internet” (p. 203). All around our boys are unprincipled men who want to entice them (Proverbs 1:10), and those with habits that come quite natural to men, like anger (Proverbs 22:24-25) and greed (22:26-27), who want to teach our boys that sin is actual manliness. How often do we hear the righteous ridiculed for their refusal to give in? A man’s virginity is a mark of shame, his calmness is a sign of weakness, his refusal to fight is cowardice. The most sobering thought is that if we do not win the souls of our boys, they may become the predators themselves! This is why Paul’s advice is so important in 1 Timothy 6:11, *“But flee from these things, you man of God; and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance and gentleness.”*

The Good Family Man

The expression “a good family man” has almost gone into obscurity. In fact, many men see that lifestyle as one that is boring, restrictive, and deadening. When we deconstruct the phrase, though, we find that this kind of man is anything but those things. “Good”: He is a lover of goodness, a companion and supporter of good men, and he is a lover of God’s moral standard (Titus 1:8: *“loving what is good”*; 2 Timothy 2:22; Titus 2:2,7-8). “Family”: There is something in life more important than himself, the focus of his life is his family. He sacrifices his time, energy and resources for this family. He does not sacrifice the family in order to achieve his own agenda. “Man”: He is the provider for the family (1 Timothy 5:8). He is the leader of the clan, the final arbitrator on issues of substance (1 Corinthians 11:3).