

Biblical Parenting – 12 Bringing Up Boys

Fatherhood & Raising Boys

Introduction

I. What is God's big picture on gender?

This point about equality is critical. In the very first chapter of Genesis we read that “God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.”

At the same time, men and women are not interchangeable. Instead, the biblical idea is that they complement one another.

II. What role does God intend men play, and how do we cultivate this role in boys and live it out as fathers?

John Piper usefully puts it this way: “**at the heart of mature masculinity is a sense of benevolent responsibility to lead, provide for and protect women in ways appropriate to a man's differing relationships.**”

A. Note that he starts by mentioning *mature masculinity*.

We don't want just any masculinity for our boys. There is plenty of immature masculinity in this world. .

1. Sons

Fathers (and mothers), hold out a biblical vision of *mature* masculinity for your son(s).

2. Fathers

As one leader put it, “the best way to raise masculine sons . . . is for fathers to embody masculinity What we intentionally practice daily will eventually be formed in our sons” Are you giving your son a caricature of masculinity, or the thing itself

Dad, are you embodying this type of self-sacrificial, mature masculinity? Are you giving yourself away more and more for your wife?

B. This leads to the next part of our definition: we want to raise our boys to have a **sense** of benevolent responsibility. Note the word “sense.”

1. Sons

Even if our boys cannot completely live out their benevolent responsibility towards women (say they are in an all-boys school, or are single, or become injured), we still want them to sense, at a deep level, their responsibility and look for ways to express it towards women.

2. Fathers

Fathers, would your wife say you are working for good, concerned for and aware of the good of your family, even when time is against you—when you are busy or traveling? For some of you there are extreme demands, such as those in the military who are deployed.

C. So men are to have this “sense” – what is it a sense of? It is a sense of **benevolent responsibility**. The man “will be uniquely called to account for his leadership, provision and protection in relation to women We see this pictured in Genesis 3:9, when God says to Adam, “Where are you?” Eve sinned first, but “Adam must give the first account to God for the moral life of the family.” *Ibid*. So too in our families.

1. Sons

Parents, teach your boys to take responsibility – not only for themselves, but others. Train them to think about their responsibility for their siblings and friends.

2. Fathers

Fathers, do you feel your responsibility? Do you think of yourself as having a “God-given trust”? Share this with your sons (and daughters). Talk about the trust, the calling, you’ve been given.

D. A sense – a sense of benevolent responsibility – a responsibility to do what? **To lead.** :

Leadership involves *service and sacrifice*

Leadership does not presume superiority, but *cultivates and mobilizes the strengths of* others. This usually does not come naturally to boys, who are interested in serving themselves. They have to be trained to be attentive to others, especially those who are weaker, and to foster their growth.

Leadership does not have to initiate every action, but *feels the responsibility to provide a general pattern of initiative*

1. Sons

Give your sons opportunities to lead.

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

2. Fathers

Fathers, how are you leading? As we note in the marriage class, you can either lead well, or you can lead poorly; but you will lead. Let me suggest a leadership assessment. Ask the following questions:

- How are you leading your wife?
- How are you leading your children
- Are you taking time to set priorities and instruct your families?
- Where are you leading them?
 - Family worship.
 - Prayer.
 - Scripture memory.

Fathers, let's not be passive. Passive fathers raise passive sons. If you don't know whether you're too passive, ask your kids: Who seems to lead our home, mommy or daddy

E. A mature man also has a sense of benevolent responsibility **to provide**. What we mean is that, as John Piper puts it, "when there is no bread on the table it is the man who should feel the main pressure to do something to get it there." BMW, 42.

1. Sons

There are many things we can do to encourage our sons to be providers. Let me suggest, for example, that chores are especially important for boys.

Mothers, encourage your children that their fathers are working, and take the opportunity when you spend money to acknowledge your husband's hard work.

2. Fathers

Fathers, some of you need to be encouraged not to work so much. Does your job serve your family, or does your family always serve your job?

F. And a mature man has a sense of benevolent responsibility **to protect**. We see this in Genesis, when the man was put in the garden to work and keep it—keep, as in protect. And Ephesians 5:25 instructs husbands to "love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her."

1. Sons

In my own marriage, one of the primary ways [my wife] wants me to care for her is to give her my protection – to be looking out for her.

2. Fathers

Fathers, model this kind of sensitive, protective care to your boys. Here's an assignment for you. Ask your son(s): Do you think I am harsh with your mom?

As CJ Mahaney says, "I will give up my life to prevent you from sinning." Have you ever given thought to how your wife or daughters might feel vulnerable to temptation?

Fathers, set an example for your sons. What do you watch? Where do you put your eyes Satan into your home through the media? Feel your responsibility to protect.

III. **Summary of Methods: Putting It Into Practice**

Stepping back from this list, we see some themes for application. I want to highlight them.

- Embodiment (or, Example
- Instruction.
- Rehearsal.
- Inspiration