



March 27, 2008

BOYS TO MEN

A word of encouragement for those trying to raise boys to be Godly men in a Godless culture.

Much discussion exists in evangelical circles regarding a boyhood, adolescence, and manhood. When is a boy no longer a boy but rather a man? Does the phase we call “adolescence” even exist? Much disagreement exists, but one thing is sure regardless of one’s views on these issues, there is not much time to prepare a boy for manhood. There are just a few crucial years of boyhood to lay the groundwork for a lifetime of manhood.

If your son chooses to become a follower of Christ, the Lord Jesus will, when He is ready, reveal to him His will for your son’s life with regard to his service in the Kingdom. Your son will embark on a journey of living out that call in a world that hates the Lord Jesus and opposes the Kingdom of God. In addition, the Lord may call your son to get married one day which would in turn be a call to live as a Godly husband in a world that mocks and undermines marriage. Still further, the Lord may one day call him to fatherhood which would mean facing the challenge of being a biblical father in a world of broken father-son and father-daughter relationships.

How does one prepare a boy to become a man of God? Is there a clear biblical strategy to implement?

Listen to the simple instruction the Lord gave Joshua when he succeeded Moses as the leader of the nation of Israel. Joshua 1:7: *Only be strong and very courageous; be careful to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, so that you may have success wherever you go.*

I want to briefly point out the four parts to God’s strategy for Joshua to be a man of God. I believe that if a parent will use this strategy, they will raise their boy to be a man of God in this world.

1. God spoke directly to Joshua, thus we can easily conclude that Joshua personally knew God. A parent must start early in their efforts to lay the groundwork for their son to choose to follow Jesus Christ. Two elements, working together, will make this decision in your son’s life likely. First, regular teaching of the Word of God—both at church and in the home. If you do not do so already, you need to have regular Bible teaching times in your home throughout the week. If you want some direction, just let me know and I’d be glad to help. Second, parents who live what the Bible teaches. The child can’t just know what the Bible says; they must also see it at work in the

lives of their parents. A parent living out the Word of God teaches a child that a relationship with the Lord is a matter of great importance. Salvation is one of the four components in the strategy.

2. *“Only be strong”*: Godly men are men of strength. This is not a matter of physical strength, but rather one of inner strength. A man of God is grounded in the Bible and His relationship with Jesus Christ. His convictions run deep, his moral compass is well calibrated, his values line up with God’s, and compromise of the Word of God is unacceptable. This kind of inner strength comes from studying and memorizing the Word of God and being mentored in real life situations, but a more seasoned follower of Christ, to do what is right in God’s eyes--to be righteous. Strength is one of the four components in the strategy.
3. *“Only be . . . very courageous”*. Godly men are men of courage. Courage is not the absence of fear, but a willingness to stand for what is right in the face of your fear. It is a willingness to be righteous in the face of tremendous opposition. Courageous men are a rare sighting in the Kingdom of God here on earth. Many are marked by cowardice. Men who are more afraid of what people think of them than what Jesus Christ thinks of them. Men who walk by sight and not by faith. Men who crater in the face of mounting opposition. Parent, teach your son from a young age that you expect him to be a person of courage. Put him in situations, while he is still under your care and as he is ready, that will give him experience at being courageous. Give him opportunities to stand alone in the face of spiritual opposition. Talk about those opportunities after they happen. Talk about what to do the next time it happens. Model courage to your son. He needs to see you stand for the Lord in the face of opposition. He needs to learn from you that courage is not brash, arrogant, or obnoxious. Courage is righteous. He needs to see you mocked for your walk with the Lord. Courage is one of the four components in the strategy.
4. *“Be careful to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left”*. Godly men obey the Word of God. They are men who, by the grace of God at work in their lives, obey the Bible and when they don’t, they make sure they right their wrongs. When one lives in this way, they will live a clean life. This kind of clean living ensures there is nothing that will separate you from the Lord Jesus. It ensures one does not quench and grieve the Holy Spirit and thus remains alert to His guidance, counsel, conviction, and comfort. This kind of clean living ensures there is no breach in one’s integrity that someone can use as leverage to manipulate you. Parent, teach your son to obey you thoroughly. By learning to obey you, he will know what it means to obey the Lord. There need to be effective repercussions for disobedience. He needs to learn disobedience is sin against God. Obedience to the Word of God is one of the four components in the strategy.

Men of God are followers of Christ and are marked by strength, courage, and obedience.

Parent, I want to encourage you to follow this strategy in raising your son. Grab hold of this plan, pray for wisdom from God, execute the plan by faith, and wait for the harvest.

GREATEST GIFT TO JESUS OFFERING

\$55,000. Wow. Northeast Houston family, I can’t tell you how satisfied I am with the offering we collected this past Sunday. This one time gift, to enable us to go beyond our budget to spread the Gospel even more, is going to do exactly that. Lives will be saved, Bibles will be printed, believers will be disciplined, and churches will be started because of this offering. Terrific. Thank you for loving Jesus Christ this much.

Let me take the opportunity to remind you this was actually our 2007 Greatest Gift to Jesus Offering. Remember, we usually collect this offering in December each year, but because of the full court press on

our building plans this past December, 2007, we pushed the Greatest Gift to Jesus Offering to Easter. That means we will get to do this again this coming December and I can't wait.

CHURCH PICNIC

I'm looking forward to our picnic this coming Sunday following the third service. Food, drinks, and plate ware will be provided at no charge. Bring your lawn chairs or a picnic blanket. We are picnicking on our field on the south side of the building.

Come and meet new people, see current friends, and renew old relationships. It is going to be a great time. Oh, and pray for good weather.

PERSONNEL

Please continue to pray for the Lord to bring our new Director of Childhood Ministries to us. I have spoken with lots of candidates, many of whom are great people, but I have not found the one. My hiring mantra remains the same: I'd rather have no one than the wrong one. It isn't easy finding a staff member who fits our approach to ministry. But, the person is out there and when the Lord is ready, He will cross my path with theirs. I would just like it to be soon.

NEW TITHE BOXES

Yesterday, a large, black box was mounted on the wall at each end of the lobby. A sign at each box indicates they are tithe and offering drop off locations. You are welcome at any time to drop your tithes and offerings in these boxes which will be emptied daily. Please always remember to put your financial gift into one of the pink envelopes before dropping it into a tithe box. This helps our business office tremendously.

These boxes were mounted in response to the increasing number of people that come out of the services on Sundays and Wednesdays who were unprepared when the green bags came around during the service. Instead of finding an usher to collect the money from an individual in the lobby, staff members can now just direct people to the boxes.

These boxes are not taking the place of the giving element during our services. They are just another avenue for people to give financially. Now, a person can give on-line, during a service, or via the tithe boxes in the lobby.

GATES

On Tuesday of this week, we had gates installed at both entrances to our parking lot. We have needed these gates for some time now. We regularly get asked by local law enforcement to put up gates because people loiter in our parking lot late at night, sometimes into the wee hours of the morning. In other words, our parking lot has the potential to be used as a staging area for some undesirable community

activity. Also, more and more our parking lot is being used by 18-wheelers as an unloading zone. Our grassy islands seem to be in their way as they routinely ride right through the islands and leave deep tracks in their wake. The gates will be open during business hours during the week, Wednesday nights, all day on Sundays, and during any scheduled events outside of those times. It is an unfortunate but necessary step in our efforts to protect the property the Lord has entrusted to our care.