



Manhood Formation Plan

Your Next Step

Men, your son has officially entered a new phase in his journey to manhood. He has learned that to become a man, he must move beyond boyhood and enter into the rigors of character formation and acceptance of new responsibilities. We can see the Bible affirm this hard shift.

When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things. 1 Corinthians 13:11

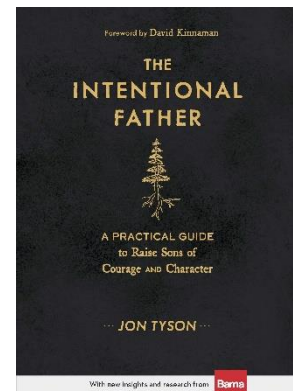
As he moves toward manhood, it is important that you also make a shift in your approach to training your son. Your son needs you come alongside and walk him through the journey, one step at a time. He needs to understand the complexities of how you received, processed, and understood your own journey. He must understand that life as a man is filled with great opportunities, an abundance of distractions, and a God given expectation of leadership. He must grow to realize he is not the center of the world, that success is more about living for others than for himself, and that he has a legacy to leave. You have a responsibility to help him understand his roles as a man, and to provide him opportunities to learn through direct experience, while guiding him through the bumps in the road. In other words, your work is not done. In many ways, it is just beginning.

Much of the following information that follows is meant to be a guide for your next step and was inspired by a wonderful book by Jon Tyson called “The Intentional Father” which I highly recommend you read as you plan your next move with your son. You can, in many ways, read this book, and walk through the plan simultaneously. It also contains links to important resources you should consider, to prepare and equip yourself in this next stage.

On the following pages are a series of exercises. You will likely want to grab some paper and a pen to start jotting down some ideas. While this won’t be a quick process, it is a necessary one to properly plan out your time with your son.

Remember, you only get one shot as a father with your son. You want to capitalize on these years and prepare your son for a lifetime of faithfulness as a disciple, a leader, a lover, a brother, a warrior, and a wiseman.

You can do this. This is your legacy.



Starting with Dad First

The first thing any man can do is to prepare himself to pass on manhood. This means taking time to understand how you got to where you are as a man. It has been said that we can only look forward as far as we can look back. It is important as a father that we only pass on the values that help our son live virtuously. The reality is, our manhood journey, no matter how defined or muddled it played out, was full of positive and negative experiences. We are products of those influences, and it is important for us to evaluate and deal with them at the outset, so we can disciple and lead our son from the right posture.

The following are a series of exercises you will want to take some time to think through. Again, refer to the book “The Intentional Father” by Jon Tyson to put these exercises in a more complete context.

Let me also reference two other resources for the following reasons.

First, dealing with the wounds of a father are difficult to identify or work through alone. True North Ministries has made it their focus to help men rise above past experiences and poor father figures, become rightly identified with Christ, and become prepared to lead their family.

Second, all families exist, but not many have a defined values and direction. For this reason, it becomes hard for a father to communicate what the family stands for, strives for, and is committed to. Family ID Ministry serves to fill in this gap. They provide families with the framework to codify family values, and create vision based on the unique makeup of the members. Please consider engaging with both of these ministries as you walk through this process.



Dad Prep Exercises

Evaluate your relationship with your father

Look back over the course of your childhood. How did your father teach you about manhood?

What did he get right, wrong? Wounds from a father can come from a myriad of directions. Your dad might have been absent, tyrannical, confused about the definition of man (athleticism, money, sex etc.), or passive. While not comprehensive, each of these behaviors leads to wounding. Were there wounds and how have you dealt with them?

For more information about identifying and healing wounds, you might consider Robert Lewis's "The Quest for Authentic Manhood" or his "33 The Series."

Honor your father

Resolve the wounds that hold you back from authentic manhood.

Honor your father, by understanding the difficulty associated with being a man, forgiving him of the wounds he gave you, and resolving to be reconciled to him, as much as is possible.

Consider writing a letter to your father regarding your journey as a man, how God has helped establish you, either through the formative years of his loving and God-fearing guidance, or separately, through experiences that may have not been while living under his roof.

For some, it may be hard to write or say honoring things about your father. However, as much as this could serve as a testimony to your father, it is also a pathway to making sure you don't repeat the mistakes of the past.

Determine your formative peaks and valleys

What highs and lows have formed you over the years? How have those shaped who you are?

This is a major part of your testimony. How has God taught you about Himself, the world, His plan, your purpose, or the gifts He has bestowed on you through these peaks and valleys?

Who had profound impacts on your life? Where were you when you gave your life to Christ? What are some key things you learned that make you, you? Conversely, what low points taught you grand lessons? How did you deal with them? How could you use these experiences to protect your son from unnecessary pain, but to also show him how highs and lows can be used by God to form great men for the kingdom?

Define your family values

What does your family stand for? What makes your family tick? Does your family have a vision statement? If not, what a great exercise for your family to undertake. You don't have to make it complicated but do make it fun.

Again, I will encourage you to check on Family ID as a resource on this?

Define your personal values

What are you passionate about? What is worth living, fighting, and dying for?

Many of the things you may write here may be derived from your mountains and valleys exercise.

Define masculine values

What is a man? What should he care about? Where should he focus his attention?

Roman philosophers and the Stoics virtues: Wisdom, Self-Control, Courage, and Justice

Sand to Stone's core values: Truth, Purpose, Faith, and Legacy

Get into the word, prayer, meditation, memorization and application.

You need to be a pacesetter. Get and stay a step ahead. The [Navigators](#) have wonderful simple and very practical tools to help you develop and maintain personal spiritual discipline

Planning Your Time

If you fail to plan, plan to fail. The reality is, we have great intentions. We may even get off to a great start. However, life gets busy, and motivations tend to fluctuate, so deciding on a curriculum of sorts before starting is important. I believe it is important to identify all the non-negotiables first and make sure they take high priority. These would be things like, understanding the gospel and being able to share how God has worked in their life. Another would be understanding himself, his identity, and his role in life, to the degree it has been revealed to him by the time he leaves home.

There are many topics you may need to coordinate with specific times in his life. For instance, it might not be worth discussing dating until he shows an interest in dating or acknowledges girls as not being infected with cooties.

Start with the end in mind. Imagine your son is packing his bags for college in another state. If you could give him another bag to take with him, and it would represent all that the two of you have discussed, and all the advice and teaching you have poured into him over these formative years, what would you hope would be in that bag? This will help you determine the things you want to spend your time addressing with him and will help keep you on track.

Before your son leaves your home,

What characteristics do you want your son to demonstrate?

What spiritual disciplines do you want your son to value?

What do you want him to understand about himself, his vulnerabilities, his strengths?

What do you want him to know about you, your family, your ancestors?

Who do you want him to spend time with, why, and in what context?

What kinds of tangible items do you want him to receive from you during this process?

How can you help him understand the philosophy and roles of manhood?

How can you prepare him for the deceptions that try will try and drag him away?

How and where can you help your son become domestically confident through competence?

Be Practical

Where, when, how long, and how often are you and your son going to meet?

Who do you know who would be willing to do this with you?

How can you make your wife apart of the process of pointing him to you for manhood formation?

How do you want to kick off the manhood process ceremonially?

How do you want to end the manhood training process ceremonially?

Implementation

Unfortunately, good intentions never changed a thing. All too many of us understand the importance of important tasks, but we all too often let life get in the way. In [“The Tyranny of the Urgent”](#) by Charles Hummel, the main issue is about identifying what is most important, creating margin, and making sure the fires of life that are bound to come up, get in the way of that sacred thing. Pouring your life into your son is one of those important, sacred tasks you don’t want to let get mixed up in the dozens of daily demands of life. You only have a limited time with your son. Redeem the time.

Here are some suggestions based on the previous exercises. Again, because much of this information is adopted from Jon Tyson’s book, “The Intentional Father,” I would encourage you to read it as you plan and implement this with your son.

Be a pacesetter. Stay a step ahead. Read the word, pray, and let God’s word humble and change you.

Get your son a nice journal to mark experiences and pearls of wisdom. He will be able to look back over this in the years to come as a testimony of his formation.

Give your son your testimony using the gospel, your mountains and valleys work, and through tangible experiences from your past. Consider creating experiences around your testimony by introducing him to places, people, and experiences that had profound impacts on your life as a man.

Organize your topics in such a way that you can create a path to work through them, but don’t be so rigid with it that you aren’t able to shift based on what your son is experiencing at the time. Below is a condensed list of topics I would suggest.

Spiritual disciplines (reading, praying, meditating, memorizing, applying God’s word)

Family values

Personal values

Masculine virtues – Wisdom, Self-Control, Courage, Justice/Truth, Purpose, Faith, Legacy

Domestic confidence (through competence)

Worldly temptations and responses

Roles of men – disciple, leader, lover, warrior, brother, wiseman

Make sure to sprinkle in various forms of media in order to help your son better understand the topic at hand. Find a movie to watch that shows a negative or positive representation of whatever it is you are learning. Read a book and discuss it's significance with your topic. Engage in an activity that illustrates what the Bible is trying to teach.

Throughout this process, help your son learn that he is not the center of the universe. Teach him to see others, not as a means to an end, but as loved and cherished creatures of God, that we should love as well.

Resources and Hacks

Below is a smattering of resources, ideas, and thoughts based on my personal experiences, and from the book "The Intentional Father."

Study the Bible

One of the things you should do is regularly read the Bible with your son. Supplement with books, movies etc., but never neglect a consistent and healthy dose of biblical wisdom. Here are a few book suggestions based on their themes. You obviously could identify a theme for each book of the Bible, and likely, each chapter. But if you're looking for some starting points for character training, here are a few suggestions.

Wisdom – Proverbs

How to Live – James

Overcome Fear – Philippians

Interacting with others – Colossians

Who you are and who is Jesus – Ephesians

Leadership and Courage – Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther

Depravity; Living in the flesh – Isaiah

Mental Toughness and Solutions - Psalms

Books

I have put together a list of just over 100 books for boys. There are many that may not be relevant for a teenager, but the list can be used as a jumping off point as you move forward.

Sand to Stone Book List [HERE](#)

Movies

There are so many good movies to watch! Everyone is going to have their own "best movies" list. The emphasis here is getting you to think about movies that help you highlight what it means to be a man in complex world. You want to be able to show how different characters deal with various moral issues and then have conversations about them in a biblical context. Below are several links to reference.

[Chuck Colson's 50 Films Every Christian Should See | Jim Daly \(focusonthefamily.com\)](#)

[13 Meaningful Movies with Important Life Lessons To Learn - Personal Excellence](#)

[100+ of the Best Character-Building Movie Nights for Teens \(learnincolor.com\)](#)

[25 Films with Hidden Christian Themes | Impacting Culture Blog](#)

Competence Leads to Confidence (Father-Son Progression)

One of the things that Jon Tyson mentioned in his book was his process of helping his son develop confidence in different areas of his life. He gave the example of learning to initiate, carry, and finish a conversation. To help him learn how to do this, he employed the simple progression below. The reality is you could utilize this same concept with almost any task.

I do, you watch, we talk

I do, you help, we talk

You do, I help, we talk

You do, I watch, we talk

Philosophy of Manhood (Adopted from Richard Rohr)

Below, is Richard Rohr's five concepts for life. Because they can come off so bluntly, which I believe was the point, to soften the reality for an adolescent, Jon Tyson rewrote them. In doing so, it allows a father to help a son apply 1 Corinthians 13:11 as they transition away from boyhood to manhood.

Life is hard – Life is a shift from ease to difficulty

You are not important – Boys care about themselves. Men care about others.

Life is not about you – You're a part of the story, but you're not the whole story.

You are not in control – Manhood is a shift from control to surrender.

You are going to die – Being a man is a shift from the temporary, to the eternal.

Personality Tests

As your son gets closer to graduation, it may be helpful for you to take him through any number of personality tests to help him become more keenly aware of himself and how he interacts with the world around him. When we know ourselves better, and we couple with this with the right motives, we can learn to become a more positive influence on the world around us.

Consider the following: Enneagram, Myers-Briggs, Spiritual Gifts Survey, Strength Finders, Birkman Method