



## HOW DO WE INITIATE OUR SONS INTO MANHOOD IN THE 2020's?!

### THE PROBLEM:

An increasing number of boys, male teens, and young men are falling behind in many areas where they once flourished. For example: boys have more learning and discipline issues at school, they are less likely to succeed academically, the incarceration rate for minors is 9:1 boys to girls in the US, suicide rates are up, and, teachers and therapists have reported that **boys are increasingly disengaged from both school and life**. And many young people are leaving their Christian faith behind at younger and younger ages.

- <https://www.artofmanliness.com/people/family/podcast-326-raise-boys/>
- <https://www.evangelicalfellowship.ca/Communications/Research/Hemorrhaging-Faith-Why-When-Canadian-Young-Adult>

### SCRIPTURE:

**Psalms 34:11** Come, my children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the Lord.  
[see also Proverbs 4]

**Deuteronomy 6:4** Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. **5** Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. **6** These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. **7 Impress them on your children.** Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. **8** Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. **9** Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

**Ephesians 6:4** Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

**Proverbs 29:18** Where there is no revelation (*divine guidance*), people cast off restraint (*they run wild*); but blessed is he who keeps the law.

See also **the way of Jesus** in the Gospels: Jesus chose 12 young men to follow Him. They apprenticed under King Jesus for 3 years! Then before Jesus ascended back to heaven, He **blessed** his disciples and **commissioned them** to carry on building the Kingdom of God here on earth (see Mt. 28:18-20. John 20:19-23).





## **RIGHT OF PASSAGE:**

"In almost every other culture, there is a codified, intentional, intense pathway to develop adolescents into adults. But in North America, there's almost nothing."<sup>1</sup>

- If we do not initiate our sons into manhood, they will burn down the village - African Proverb

All human societies had Six steps of forming boys into manhood (James Hollis):

1. Removal from the environment of childhood
2. Death of thinking like a child
3. Process of formation (3 things: story of their people, religion of their community, and the roles expected of men to hold honour)
4. Sent out for the ORDEAL - period of testing
5. Ceremony where you are recognized by the community of men
6. Re-integrated into society as a man with the ability to contribute to the common good of society!

## **WHAT IS A MAN?!**

"**A man is** an image bearer and son of God entrusted with power and the responsibility to create, cultivate, care, and defend, for God's glory and the good of others. ... True masculinity has the strength to smash hierarchies, stand up for those on the margins, and lead men into lives where they are stopping abuse from happening."<sup>2</sup>

- **1 Corinthians 16:13** Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, act like men [be courageous], be strong. **14** Let all that you do be done in love.

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<sup>1</sup> Tyson, Jon. "The Intentional Father." Page 26

<sup>2</sup> Tyson, Jon. "The Intentional Father." Pages 37, 27

SEE PODCAST: <https://www.crossroads.net/media/podcasts/the-aggressive-life-with-brian-tome/the-primal-path-to-manhood-with-jon-tyson-father-author-pastor>





Here are six **KEY MASCULINE ROLES (ARCHETYPES)** that a man needs to master to become good at being a man from pastor/author Jon Tyson:

**1. DISCIPLE:** training/apprenticing to become like Jesus

- Who is God? What is the Gospel?
- What is the biblical story? How do I read the Bible? How do I pray?
- Spiritual Practices

**2. LOVER**

- Understand opposite sex. Honour and respect them!
- Purpose and joy of marriage
- Commitment and faithfulness
- Puberty and changes and desires
- Cultural distortions of sexuality
- Biblical accountability - confession and not shame
- How to date

**3. LEADER**

- ***Raising a modern day knight*** by Robert Lewis: "A man accepts responsibility, rejects passivity, leads courageously, and lives for the greater reward."
- John Maxwell's leadership Bible and The 20 Most Important Minutes in a Leader's Day.
- Finding Spiritual gifts and building into those
- Finding their strengths and knowing their weaknesses

**4. WARRIOR**

- Men need a cause!
- Men ache to master something, to be seen as strong, to receive honour and respect
- Mental, spiritual, emotional, and physical strength

**5. BROTHER**

- How to be in community





- Forgiveness
- Relational skills.
- Conflict management.
- Building deep friendships

## 6. WISE MAN

- We live in a culture of fools...
- How do we navigate technology
- Stewardship (money)
- Bring other mentors in. Read biographies.

**Re-Cap:** Biblically there is a mandate to be intentional about raising our sons to become godly men. Every culture (other than ours) has a specific way to initiate their sons into manhood. We need to recover this ancient wisdom made relevant for a modern world. We want for ourselves and our sons to gain mastery in the six key masculine roles: disciple, lover, leader, warrior, brother, wise man.

### So the question is, HOW can we intentionally disciple our boys into godly men?

- Remember, being **intentional** is the key.
- So is **being authentic**. If you fall short in an area, be open about that! Tell your son(s), hey, I have not mastered this by any means, but I want to, come and join me!
- **Be realistic** with your time and resources. Especially if you have multiple boys. It is better to start small and build up than over-promise.
- Take some time to **fast and pray. Come up with a plan**, a budget, get other influential men on board (grandparents, uncles, close friends, trusted men in the church, etc).
- Have **grace** for yourself! We won't get it all right and that's ok! We are all in process and on a journey.
- I have come across methods that ranged from a weekend away, to a focused year, to a six year daily journey ending with a gap year and final trip!

### So here are some ideas to incorporate:

- **The goal when our boys are young (under 12) is to build an emotional bond - to fight for their hearts!** Do they feel known, loved, secure, are they under your authority. Do you know who they are and what makes them tick. Time, play, laughter, and adventure will be key for this stage.





- Then...
- **Pump up that something is going down when your son turns 13:**
- Pastor/Author Mark Batterson (See His book: "Play the Man") did a **13th year** with his boys. It began with a campout (do some sort of trip). Then they signed a covenant. Then there were three significant challenges for the year: **Physical** (1 Cor. 6:19-20. *Train and finish a 100km bike ride fundraiser together*), **Spiritual** (1 Tim. 4:12. *Discover spiritual gifts. read through the NT, do a media fast through lent*), **Intellectual** (Mt. 12:37. *read 12 books and discuss with my dad*). Go on a celebratory trip!
- **Similarly** one family that had great success did 13 things to do in your 13th year:
  - Such as: Go to a professional sporting event, daily devotions, Plan and execute a date for mom (and a sister), complete a service project, run a half marathon, spend a day with your grandparents, learn finances with dad and someone in your community, Go on a boys weekend, memorize the book of James, start a lawn mowing business, go for coffee with significant men in your life
- **FURTHER IDEAS:**
- Initiation ceremony + gifts
- Weekly/monthly man discussion nights: eg: *Band of Brothers* and *BBQ*
- Trip about family background - go over family values
- State **list of values** as you walk out of the house each day: ex. Strength, courage, mastery, honour, vision, passion, discipline, and risk.
- Celebrate defining moments (first shave, baptism, drivers licence, graduation, etc).
- **Teach and Practice the Six roles** (archetypes) of manhood: Disciple. Lover. Leader. Warrior. Brother. Wise.
- Personality tests (identity discovery) + spiritual gifts – **serve together!**
- Gap year and final trip + blessing

**Chuck Swindoll - types of books boys like that help them understand manhood**  
**(movies and podcasts are also fantastic resources):**

- Christian athletes and coaches
- Biographies of heroic Bible characters
- Men of profound bravery on the battle field
- Inventors, musicians, educators, and scientists whose walks with God have been influential
- Stories of well known Christians in professional careers
- Magazine articles about people of faith who withstood insuperable odds
- Missionaries whom God used in unique ways
- Political statement of great integrity and ability



