

10 Things I Would Do If I Were Raising a Son Today

I know a little bit about this subject, having two incredible sons of my own. But we always look at life differently from the other side of it.

My boys are grown. I'm still parenting, but in a completely different way. Mine now is one of influence. Thankfully, both boys still come to me for that influence. There is no greater joy than seeing boys become God-honoring young men. I'm thankful to have a front-row seat with my sons.

But even with the incredible young men I know as sons, there are things I would do differently if I had that part of life to do over again. I know boys become men. And every man I know, whether or not he admits it, struggles at some level with confidence. He struggles to know he is enough, that he can do what God calls him to do. Every man is desperate for someone to believe in him.

And sadly, we are living in the age where the absentee father is the norm. It once was the exception. (That's the subject of another post, but it's plaguing our society. Check any statistics.)

I was mindful of these truths when my boys were young, but I'm older now. The seasons of my life have taught me so much more. So I would be even more intentional today if I were raising sons.

Here are 10 things I'd do if raising a son today:

1. I would tell him daily that I love him and I'm proud of who he is and the individual God created him to be.
2. I would show him I believe in him, by learning to enjoy and

value the activities important to him.

3. I would discipline myself to be available when he needs me—not only when it's convenient or doesn't interfere with my work or my hobbies—and assure him that I will never leave him or reject him.

4. I would strive to live a life that's respectable and God-honoring, so he could model after me, and likewise be respected, knowing this will be his greatest need.

5. I would show him how to love a woman by valuing and treating my wife as a treasured gift from God.

6. I would help him build confidence by giving him ample opportunities to explore, to dream, to be adventurous, allowing him to fail under my watch, so I could encourage him to start again, explaining to him that the only way he will be a failure is if he doesn't get back up from a fall.

7. I would lead him on paths of discovery, trying lots of new things, helping him find his place in the world, with the awesome reality that the only limits on him will be the ones he sets for himself.

8. I would let him know the boundaries of the house, knowing he would test them, so he could learn that even in freedom, there are consequences for misbehavior and sin.

9. I would teach and model for him that the real value of a man is not in the sum total of his possessions but in the sum total of knowing God intimately and knowing that those who know Him best are honoring Him most.

10. I would at times let him see me afraid, even let him see me cry, to show him that men can be courageous and still be vulnerable. But then I would let him see me following even closer after God as my source of strength.

Are you raising a son? Tell us about him.

There are no perfect parents. I have observed, however, that there are parents more intentional than others. There are parents who parent with the sober reality that we have precious little time to mold children who will be adults longer than they are children.

There are parents who know it takes time, energy, consistency and intentionality to parent well, mostly knowing it takes the grace of God to be a great parent. As I finish this post, I'm praying for parents who will read this ... and for those who won't.

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