

Raising a Boy to be a Godly Man: 10 Practical Principles Moms Can Teach Their Sons

Children are true blessings from God, even on the days we don't feel like it. It is both an honor and a responsibility to raise a child up in the way he or she should go.

"Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it" (Prov. 22:6, ESV).

What a privilege it is to guide children in their walk with the Lord and lead them into their own mature relationship with our heavenly Father. As a mom of a son and a daughter, I see daily how different God designed boys and girls. At age 12, my son is approaching those teen years, causing me to reflect on the journey to this point and the road ahead. Whether you are raising a son, or mentoring a young man, here are ten tips to help him grow into all God has for him.

1. Teach and Model Godly Character: Leading a boy to study the Word of God first with you, then equipping him to study on his own will give him the ability to get to personally know Jesus. Knowing Jesus is knowing His character. The more one studies the character of God, the easier it is to adopt these traits for oneself. It is also important that you model a consistent quiet time. I know my son is watching the work that I do while working at Christian Care Ministry and notices my response to people in need. Your son will watch to see your character, particularly in trials. Ask God to help you be an example of godly character.

2. Show Love: Teach your son the way you want to be treated now so he will treat his wife that way someday. My son, who is currently 12, asked me if I got my hair done yesterday. When I said yes, I did, he didn't say anything else. I told him that

if he asks a woman if she got her hair done, he should follow that up with a compliment. I reminded him that when his future wife asks this someday, it will be important; his dad confirmed. My son may be only 12 but when the opportunity presents itself, I do make it a point to reinforce how his future wife should be treated.

3. Encourage Exercise as an Outlet: Boys need constructive ways to vent and let out frustration. Most boys are also very physical, so providing outlets to exercise regularly and as needed is important. As a parent, be sensitive to this. If your boy seems to be bothered by something, it may be helpful to bend the rules and let them go throw some hoops or take a run before starting homework. He may be able to concentrate more after letting off some steam.

4. Reinforce His Identity in Christ. Teach the qualities of a man as described by the Word of God. Their identity is already defined, having been set apart and loved by God. Many kids today struggle with identity. My son is anxiously waiting for a growth spurt and sometimes gets down on himself. I remind him that God made him exactly the way He wanted him for what He has called him to do. God doesn't make mistakes. He has a purpose and loves every one of His children. When insecurities hit, we always go back to the Word. God's Word has an amazing way of comforting.

5. Demonstrate Godly Wisdom: Be the kind of woman you want them to marry. Demonstrate principles of a godly woman so they will learn to appreciate those qualities and seek those out in a spouse. Start praying now for their future wives. Pray that she will possess these qualities.

6. Seek Male Role Models: Allow or create time with godly men. If your husband is a man of God, empower him to talk to your son about his own walk with Jesus. However, don't be discouraged if your son does not have a godly father in the home. Here is the good news – God can stand in the gap for

everything we lack. Pray that God will bring godly male role models into your son's life. As a mom, you can do so much for your son, but also allow him to benefit from positive male interaction.

7. Encourage Communication: Teaching a young man to openly express his feelings when he is young will strengthen his future marriage. I have found that trying to talk to my son right after school does not seem to work. He is tired from the day and his answers are short. However, if I talk to him just before bed, he is much more open with me and wants to share details of his day as well as his struggles. Find a consistent time to connect with your son. It may not be convenient for you, but if it is when your son will engage, embrace it. I have found it helpful not to push when he is struggling to share something, but I always let him know I am here. Eventually, he shares what is on his heart. Sometimes I am surprised by the details he will share with me, but I am grateful we have built that kind of trust. You can do the same by regularly being there with a non-judgmental ear.

8. Nurture a Leader: Give them opportunities to lead and some control over their own lives and responsibilities at home. Allow them to come up with their own solutions and take responsibility. Teach them that we all err but can learn from our mistakes. I often remind my kids to use their resources. If they don't have a tool or bit of information, they should ask themselves, "Well, what do I have?" Teaching your son to be a leader will give him the confidence to lead his family.

9. Demonstrate Respect: Men desire to be respected; respect your boy too. Allowing him to lead, giving him space to cool off and allowing him to share his heart without judgment are great ways to show respect. You may also affirm him when he makes good choices and ask his opinion when appropriate. Opportunities to show respect will increase as he gets older. By encouraging him to make responsible suggestions and choices, and applauding him when he does, you will help him to

make productive choices as he ages.

10. Be Tolerant in Trials: Teach him to be an overcomer. We will all face trials. As a man, your son will lead his family through trials. Teach him to pray first, then focus on the things you can fix, leaving the rest up to God. Allow him the opportunity to learn that closed doors can be God's redirecting and that overcoming trials makes us stronger and increases our ability to help others who face similar trials.

The most important thing you can do for your son is to pray for him. Pray for his future wife. Pray for his purpose – that it will be revealed to him as he matures and that he will follow it. Pray for his health and protection, for his godly influence and for his future kids. He is God's son, but you have been given the amazing blessing of raising him. Pray continually that God equips you to be the mother that your son (state his name) needs. Know that God will equip you and walk alongside you every step of the way. {eoa}

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