

Raising Boys to Honor Girls in a Culture of Abuse

Raising boys in our sexually charged culture can be a challenge, with the price of failure dramatized by recent reports of NFL stars, Hollywood elites and political figures using their positions to sexually abuse the daughters of the world.

I use the term “daughters” because, as fathers, we should set the stage for our daughters by the way we love them, model fidelity and raise our sons.

Identity is first transferred to young boys through the model of their fathers. A present, loving father who models sexual fidelity is still the best defense against raising sexually irresponsible young men. That means that we must be the kind of men that we would want our daughters to marry one day and the kind of husbands we want our sons to copy.

Here are four tools I try to utilize every day to show my sons how to honor and respect the women in their lives:

1. Humility. I believe that men have been made by God to love and honor women, but we must be brutally honest and admit that we can't do it without God's grace in our lives. I wake up each day realizing that I have been given the honor of caring for my wife and daughters and directing them toward a life of joy and love. When we ask for God's guidance in this, it takes the focus off our personal strength. Humility is the key to fidelity.
2. Accountability. You need close friends to openly share your struggles. Some of the saddest stories I know of men who have fallen into sexual temptation were isolated men who battled their demons alone without talking to friends. Accountability is essential to living an

honorable life that your sons can model.

3. Model love by dating your wife. The biggest influence on love in your son's life happens to be the way you honor and support your wife and daughters. I had a lot of learning to do in this area in my own life. My heart changed the day God showed me how my daughters were closely watching and learning from how I loved my wife. I realized that my daughters would probably pick a man just like me, so I needed to be the kind of man that I would want them to choose to marry one day. I'm not sure how much influence I had on them, but both of my daughters chose great men. I am so grateful to the Lord for grabbing my heart and teaching me to be an honorable man in the way I view and treat the women around me. My sons have watched this change happen in my heart, and have in turn chosen to love and date their wives in the same way.
4. Create a safe place to talk to your boys about their fidelity. I have learned that the best way to do this is not by preaching to them, but by telling them that you have also struggled. Sharing your struggles with your sons models openness and creates opportunities for them to feel safe to share. So many times I hear stories of disconnected sons because their fathers beat them up for their weaknesses instead of offering a warm embrace and creating an open space for mistakes. We all make mistakes. When we have our son's hearts, we are able to be present when they are ready to ask us for our advice. This also reminds them of their need for God's strength, guiding them toward a source of strength that goes beyond our own.

I have encountered countless men who have learned these skills years after their children have left home and end up reconnecting to their kids and modeling a life of honor. It is never too late to be the kind of dad who makes a difference in

your children's lives.

*Former NFL player **Ed Tandy McGlasson** is the founder of Blessing of the Father Ministries and the creator of The Blessing of the Father for Families video series and workbook.*