

A “*Show Yourself A Man*” Plan

“Show Yourself A Man”

by Carolyn Mahaney

While CJ and Chad went away for their annual father-son trip two weeks ago, I was able to take a personal retreat--something I attempt to do every six months or so at the prodding of my husband. During these retreats I always set aside time to create a plan for each of our children. I think about their strengths and weaknesses, their unique temptations, and consider ways I can more effectively encourage and challenge them to grow. Since Chad is my only child still at home, he got my full attention on this retreat. (Although he wasn't so sure if he wanted that or not!)

To help me think and strategize, I read an article by Randy Stinson (Executive Director of CBMW) entitled “Show Yourself a Man.” Chad is thirteen now, so the topic of biblical masculinity is becoming more and more important in our household. Of course, CJ is the primary one who leads and disciples Chad in all things related to growing manhood. However, as his helper, I want to make sure I am doing all I can to serve my husband in this significant task.

After reading Randy's article I was inspired with ideas of how I can daily encourage Chad to cultivate masculine characteristics. I came up with 7. I will list them for you in tomorrow's post. But in the meantime, if you are the mother of a son, may I encourage you to read Randy's article for yourself? I think you will be inspired too.

Chad's “Show Yourself A Man” Plan

by Carolyn Mahaney

When David's time to die drew near, he commanded Solomon his son, saying, “I am about to go the way of all the earth. Be strong, and show yourself a man, and keep the charge of the Lord your God, walking in his ways and keeping his statutes, his commandments, his rules, and his testimonies, as it is written in the Law of Moses, that you may prosper in all that you do and wherever you turn, that the Lord may establish his

word that he spoke concerning me, saying, 'If your sons pay close attention to their way, to walk before me in faithfulness with all their heart and with all their soul, you shall not lack a man on the throne of Israel.' 1 Kings 2:1-4

“Show yourself a man.” As mother of a teenage son, I sure do love that statement!

In fact, I'm using that little phrase as the title of my plan to support my husband in his discipleship of Chad during his teen years. As mentioned in yesterday's post, I have compiled a list of 7 ways to help Chad cultivate masculine characteristics. This is not an exhaustive list by any means. And some may think it unnecessary. True. You certainly don't need a list such as this to be an effective mother. I find, however, that setting down specific goals simply provides clarity, helps me to be more intentional, and gives me a criterion whereby I can evaluate progress for both Chad and myself. So here is my “Show Yourself a Man Plan” for Chad:

Daily encourage Chad to:

1. Learn, learn, learn from his dad
2. Develop a strong work ethic
3. Be a good steward of his money
4. Keep his domain in order
5. Kill a bear or a lion
6. Show honor to women
7. Lead wherever appropriate

If you read Randy Stinson's article highlighted in Monday's post, then you will see that I have borrowed several of his ideas and came up with a few of my own. They may not all make sense, especially number five. Chad immediately asked, “What? You're expecting me to go out and kill a bear or a lion?” I'll explain them in more detail over the next few days.

Son, Learn from Your Father

by Carolyn Mahaney

Encouraging Chad to learn from his father is number one on my “Show Yourself a Man” plan. And for good reason. What better way is there for Chad to cultivate masculine characteristics than to be taught and trained by the most important man in his life: his father? And who better to highlight his father's innumerable godly and manly qualities and to challenge Chad to emulate his father, than me?

That being the case, here are three strategies I've developed to provoke Chad to learn from CJ:

1. Point out to Chad the many strong and admirable qualities of his father.

I have started a running list of these qualities in order to be more constant and deliberate in drawing Chad's attention to them. (This little exercise is helping me to see how many of my husband's strengths I simply take for granted. Why am I surprised when Chad does the same?!)

2. Prompt Chad to ask lots of questions of his father.

I've also started a running list of questions to have Chad ask his father at dinnertime. (e.g. "What's one challenge you faced today, and how did God help you?" or "What is one manly quality you learned from your dad?")

3. Remind Chad to aggressively pursue the counsel and correction of his father.

I've given Chad the following assignment: "Read chapter 10 ("Inviting and Pursuing Correction") in your dad's book (*Humility, True Greatness*), and come up with a plan to more aggressively pursue the counsel and correction of your father. You and I will discuss and tweak your plan and then I will hold you accountable for carrying it out."

Proverbs 13:1 says: "A wise son hears his father's instruction," so I want to do all I can to encourage Chad to be wise!

Son, Work Hard

by Carolyn Mahaney

When I remind my son that he is thirteen now and that part and parcel with growing into manhood means more work and less play, he doesn't jump for joy. So before I presented Chad with a plan to increase his workload, I had him reread the letter he received from Joshua Harris for his thirteenth birthday. Here's an excerpt that Josh kindly gave me permission to post:

My encouragement to you on this important birthday is to work hard. That doesn't sound very inspiring does it? But I mean it. The teenage years are years packed with potential—potential to grow in

wisdom, to develop practical skills and abilities, to deepen your relationship with God, to study and learn. These years are the launching pad of your life. And they're also the years that are most easily wasted. The world will tell you that these are the years to coast, to have a good time, to take it easy, to live off the faith of your parents. Don't buy that lie. Press ahead. Push yourself. Train yourself for godliness. Even now prepare yourself to be a godly man, a godly husband and godly father. As my younger brothers, Alex and Brett like to say, use these years to "Do Hard Things."

Now what teenage boy wouldn't be inspired after reading that?! Well, Chad still wasn't ecstatic about his growing responsibilities, however he was a lot more motivated than before.

So for all you moms out there who need to inform your son (or daughter) about extra chores, let Joshua Harris help you out!

Son, Be a Good Steward of Your Finances

by Carolyn Mahaney

Chad is starting to figure out what his married sisters learned a long time ago about their parents and finances: Dad is generous and Mom is _____.

I asked my 3 daughters to complete that phrase and their answers were: strategic, economical and responsible. Phew! At least it wasn't stingy, miserly and tightfisted.

Point being, my husband and I approach finances very differently. Our children know it, and even work it to their advantage at times. My girls tell me now that whenever they wanted to borrow money growing up they would always go ask their father. That's because, when they would go to pay it back, their dad would always say: "No need to pay it back, my love. I only wish I could have given you more." I on the other hand, would not only keep track of what they owed, I would issue reminders of when it needed to be paid back. I was attempting to teach them to be responsible with their finances.

Though we laugh about the discrepancy between our approach to finances, we hope it will actually benefit our children. (Thankfully, our girls tell us it has!). For we want our children to learn to be both responsible and

generous with their finances, since that is the standard Scripture seems to put forth as God-honoring.

So that's why, today, when I give Chad his weekly allowance, I will remind him that 10% is for tithe, 10% is for special giving, 50% is for savings, and the remaining 30% can be spent with our oversight. And that's why I have no doubt that if Chad wants to borrow money anytime soon, he will be asking his dad.

The righteous is generous and gives. Ps. 37:21

Whoever gathers [wealth] little by little will increase it. Pr. 13:11b

Honor the Lord with your wealth and with the firstfruits of all your produce; then your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will be bursting with wine. Pr. 3:9-10

Son, Keep Your Domain in Order

by Carolyn Mahaney

I enjoy cleaning and putting things in order. (I know, there's something wrong with me!) Chad, on the other hand, strongly dislikes these tasks. (Did I mention that my son is 13?) Now given our differing preferences, I would much rather be the one to clean up after Chad and maintain the order of his bedroom and bathroom. Chad would prefer that too. But all I have to do is think about Chad's future wife and future employers--what his messy habits would mean for them (and what they would think of me!)-and I make him clean his room.

Actually, it's not only Chad's future relationships that motivate me to insist that Chad "keep his domain in order." As Randy Stinson put it in his "Show Yourself a Man" article, "a life that is characterized by disorder is evidence of passivity." Chad's domain "should bear the mark of [his] masculinity as [he] subdues it and keeps it in order."

Because I want Chad to honor his future wife and serve his future employers; because I want Chad to resist passivity and cultivate masculinity:

- * I have Chad clean his room and bathroom at the start of each day.
- * I make Chad hang up his towel on the rack, return clean clothing back to drawers or hangers and put dirty clothing into the hamper. (I

recently discovered that everything--dirty *and* clean--was being put into the hamper, thus the need for specificity.)

* I require Chad to stop whatever he is doing to put something back in its proper place, if he got it out, but neglected to put it back.

* I enforce the “no trash rule”--if something is consumed out of a disposable wrapper or container, the wrapper or container must be put into the trashcan!

Lest my rules seem petty to a certain young man, I Corinthians 14:33 backs me up: *For God is not a God of disorder.* (NIV) Above all, I want Chad to honor God by reflecting His character. Thus, I will persevere in challenging my son to keep his domain in order.

Son, Kill a Bear or a Lion

by Carolyn Mahaney

Obviously we're not requiring Chad to literally go out and kill a bear or a lion. Although, one of our readers, who is a Firearm Education and Hunter Safety Instructor for the state of MD, did email us in jest last week to invite CJ and Chad to be in her next class. She said then they could enter the lottery for a bear permit this fall.

Now, that's a scary thought! Thankfully, the plan for any father-son hunting expeditions in our family is to stick with squirrel as the game of choice.

So, what bears or lions are we encouraging Chad to kill? In his article, “Show Yourself a Man,” Randy Stinson explains this phrase to mean: “Do something that is a challenge.” What a useful mandate for helping teenage sons cultivate masculinity! CJ and I have begun to use it with Chad. When we discern there is an obstacle Chad wants to dodge, but should tackle, we encourage him: “Son, it's a bear you need to kill!” This “bear” or “lion” could be an area where he is not gifted or his personality is not inclined, and because of selfishness, fear, or pride, he prefers to avoid. We want to show Chad the underlying sin that hinders him, and then challenge him to attack it. See, we not only desire to help Chad grow stronger where he is already strong, but to also grow strong where he is weak.

And though there will never be any actual bear heads or lion skins mounted on the walls of our home, it is our prayer that the showcase of Chad's teenage years will display many challenges that he conquered to the glory of God.

“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.” Joshua 1:9

Son, Show Honor to Women

by Carolyn Mahaney

Chivalry may be disregarded in our culture, but it receives ongoing attention in our home. That’s because one way to show oneself a man is to be courteous and considerate toward women.

With a mom and three sisters, Chad gets oodles of opportunities to practice chivalrous behavior. And I must say he displays consistent courtesy toward his mom. However, he still prefers the role of “annoying little brother” over the role of a “chivalrous knight” when it comes to his three sisters. CJ and I are working on that!

Here is how we are attempting to teach Chad to show honor to a woman:

- * Open her doors
- * Stand when she enters the room
- * Pull out her chair
- * Give up your seat for her
- * Carry heavy objects for her
- * Retrieve dropped items for her

Most likely, Chad will be the leader and protector of his own family one day. Now is the time for him to learn how to show honor to his wife and model chivalry to his children.

"Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered." 1 Peter 3:7

Son, Lead Where Appropriate

by Carolyn Mahaney

Below are three adjectives and their definitions from an on-line dictionary:

- * Passive – tending not to participate actively and usually letting others make decisions
- * Uncommunicative – not willing to say much or tending not to say much
- * Indifferent – showing no care or concern for, or interest in, somebody or something.

Why did I choose to look up the meaning of these 3 adjectives?

Hmmmmmm.

If you can unscramble the following phrase you will figure out why: heT amle otulopnpai.

Did you get it? Okay. Okay. I do not want you wasting forty-five minutes trying to decipher this code – you have much more important things you should be doing – so I will just tell you. Here it is: The male population.

Now before anyone thinks we are men-bashers here at girltalk, let me explain. I am referring to a stereotypical description of the male population. A comparable list of adjectives could just as easily be drawn up for the female population. Can anyone say: manipulative, nagging, busybodies?

Women are not better than men. Neither do all men fit the stereotypical mold. I know many men whose lives, by God's grace, defy these adjectives. They lead. They serve. They care. My husband is one of these men!

CJ and I desire to raise a son who also defies this stereotypical description of men. We want him to be an example of godly masculinity by the grace of God. That's why we are challenging him to lead where appropriate.

Here are a few directives we give our son:

- * Be the first to pray in group settings.
- * Be the first to take an interest in others.
- * Be the first to lead in conversation.
- * Be the first to stop a conversation that is not edifying.
- * Be the first to offer to serve others.

With this list, we come to the end of Chad's "Show Yourself a Man" Plan. However, there is one more essential responsibility I have as his mom. You can read about it in the next post.

Mom, Remember the Gospel

by Carolyn Mahaney

This "show yourself a man" series would not be complete without the reminder that training our sons must be rooted in the gospel. Here are a few sweet truths we must always remember and never forget:

Let's not forget that because of the gospel we encourage our sons "to show himself a man."

Let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ.

Philippians 1:27

Let's not forget that by the power of the gospel moms can faithfully teach and sons can humbly learn how to cultivate masculinity.

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works. Titus 2:11-

14

Let's not forget that through the gospel we can receive forgiveness whenever mom and son sin in the process of training and growth in godly masculinity (and sin, we will!).

[God] has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. Colossians :13-14

If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? But with you there is forgiveness, that you may be feared. Psalm

130:3-4

So Moms (and everyone else reading this), because we have a tendency to forget the gospel, let us begin each day preaching the gospel to our souls. This will produce happy moms who are filled with hope for their sons. And this will make all the difference as we train our sons to be godly men.*

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