

# Boys Will Be Men

## Imparting Vision to Sons

### Introduction

We must instill in our children a vision for the biblical family if we desire to see the Kingdom of God advanced. Specifically, we must raise men who have a biblical vision for their lives and families. As it is the husband's duty to be the visionary leader for his family, we turn our attention specifically to training our boys to be men – and, eventually fathers and grandfathers.

With the specific goal of imparting vision, particularly a multigenerational family vision, to our sons, the Vaughn Family developed the following goals. Our thoughts are offered not as an end goal or an absolute rule, but as a starting place for a conversation – a conversation that I pray will continue within each of our families for generations to come.

### Spheres of Life

Recently I sent an e-mail to my wife while I was away on a business trip that started with the following excited paragraph:

“I’m working on a training program for the boys of the next generation... It will include theology, but also stuff like farming and self sustaining living, along with naval navigation, GPS usage, self defense, and a lot of fun stuff that they will need in their life time. We have to be able to plant a biblical vision along with a proper assessment of where we are in this generation.”

I rambled and ranted for a page or two with what eventually became, and is still becoming, these principles.

Our conversation, so far, has centered around six spheres of life that are with us from the time we are born, until the time we enter eternity. The essential categories are family role, character, theology, education, finances, and reformer.

Family Role	Son, brother, husband, father, grandfather
Character	Integrity, obedience to God's Word and our conscience
Theology	Foundation for all of life, what we believe about God
Education	Basic education early, specific education for life purpose later
Finances	Building wealth for freedom and advancing the Kingdom
Reformer	In calling, in culture, in family, in church, in life

Our sons need training, education, and discipleship in *each* of these areas. If we give them a top notch education and teach them every aspect of what the professional educators say is the current latest greatest curriculum so they outscore every child in both public and private school, but do not teach

them about the subtle voice of their own conscience, we will have failed in our biblical duty to train our sons.

The same could be said for any of these spheres of life. If we teach them to be honest and hard working, but don't introduce them to the One who defines these terms, we have failed. Or if we give them great vision, but fail to instruct them in finances so they can reach those goals, their life will be spent in frustration and failure.

These spheres of life apply differently to the specific seasons of life. We find our sons changing and developing with time as they grow and mature.

### **Family Role**

The family role is who they are at this season of life. In fact, it is the family role, more than chronological age, which determines the appropriate application of the spheres as illustrated below.

### **Character**

In dealing with character, we want to train our son's on the importance of a good name. We teach them the principle behind the truth of Proverbs 22:1.

*A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favor rather than silver and gold.*

A name is not what you are called, but who you are. We ask them, "When people say your name, what image do they instantly see in their mind of who you are?" We do not care what people think or say about us, but we care that because we are called by Christ's name, we want to honor Him with our life.

Secondly, we speak of their conscience and understanding. If our son's consciences are ignored, the very fabric of their lives is destroyed.

### **Theology**

Next there is Theology - teaching and training who God is, our relationship with Him, and His relationship with the world in which we live. The importance of sound theology cannot be overstated.

### **Education**

This is the sphere most folks think of when the word *homeschool* is mentioned. Academics are a part, but we also include application. It's not enough to know information without knowing who you are and what your mission in life is. When we speak of education, we are also looking at the uniqueness of the sons we are training. We structure their academic studies based on who God made them to be and the part they will play in this world God placed them in. We impart a vision and help set life goals based on the calling of God in their life.

### **Finances**

We want our sons to be free to operate in their family roles in the family and as reformers without want or necessity. Riches is not an end goal, but rather a tool to implement part of the vision they have for who they are and what they will accomplish in this life.

## Reformer

The reformer is the final sphere we discuss with our sons. So often this is the sphere that is held up as the highest and most noble calling of men. We have national leaders who have sacrificed their entire life to change the nation or the world but have lost their families in the process. There are two points worth mentioning in regards to this title we call Reformer.

First, reformation should be a natural outgrowth of family life. If we are faithful in training our sons, they should step in our shoes one day and continue the work that we have begun and carry our vision even greater distances than we were able.

Second, this is not just a term used for theological pursuits. This is much more about why God created and placed these unique sons upon this Earth than it is about becoming a John Knox or a Charles Spurgeon. Our goal is to help them determine what talents God gave them and teach them to discern how they may use those talents to bring glory to God. They may have the skills to be an artist, a civic leader, a cabinet maker, or an inventor, or all of these things. We teach them that regardless of the momentary area or function by which they serve Christ, they are indeed serving Christ in all they do. In this manner, the work of the Kingdom should continue for generations to come.

## Seasons of Life

The application of these spheres will vary depending on our son's stages in life. This distinction is not based on age, as much as it is based on their family role they are currently in or preparing to fulfill. The following are suggested goals for each phase of a son's life. While I have listed ages for reference, realize that every son is different. As such, these should be noted as seasons rather than hard and fast time periods.

### The Early Years (ages one to six)

The early years are the beginning and foundational phase for all of life. If we can get our son's hearts and teach them obedience early in life, the next phase will be all the more productive.

- **Family Role:** Turning their hearts towards, their siblings, their parents, and ultimately God
- **Character:** Absolute obedience in the young years, honor and respect towards parents
- **Theology:** Basic scripture memory and hymns
- **Education:** Basic math and reading
- **Reformer:** Stories of Christian reformers – Great Christian men of history

### Becoming Self-disciplined (ages seven to twelve)

A natural transition takes place as a son begins to move from playful childish behavior to a self-disciplined life.

- **Family Role:** Mentor to younger siblings, mentored by father, teach education of younger siblings in the early years
- **Character:** Discipline, set schedule, make priorities
- **Theology:** In depth scripture memory, basic points of doctrines, know and understand basics of Westminster catechisms

- **Education:** Lots of reading, adventure, historical novels, lower level sciences, experiments, GPS navigation, camping, hunting, fishing, trapping
- **Financial:** Building business plans, work with hands / building, and working alongside father
- **Reformer:** Begin to consider life calling; assess talents, skills, and the cultural

### Becoming Self-sufficient (ages thirteen to twenty-five)

Marriage and the hand-off from a father to his son becomes the focus at this time as the son moves into his position of authority and leadership. The focus here is self sufficiency as he begins to earn his own living ready himself to survive independently.

- **Family Role:** Contribute to family economy, Prepare for spouse and family, continue teaching younger siblings
- **Character:** Master any fears, build personal integrity, and life code of honor based on the Bible
- **Theology:** Understand and apply sound doctrine to life decisions, able to identify in history unsound doctrine and its consequences
- **Education:** Antiquities, deep study in history, begin to understand the effects of a world view, historical trips
- **Financial:** Starting businesses and investing
- **Reformer:** Begin to move into life calling and shape the culture

### Family Builders (age eighteen to thirty)

This is the relationship- and wealth- building phase where men are establishing the foundations that will allow them to be reformers. This phase is building a strong family and continuing the multigenerational vision re-visiting the early years as a teacher with their children.

- **Family Role:** Husband, father
- **Character:** Making decisions consistent with life code regardless of cost, character refined by relationships
- **Theology:** Teaching doctrine to wife and children, possibly siblings
- **Education:** Life time learning, ongoing study in areas of life calling and eternal interest
- **Financial:** Building family wealth with an eye towards financial freedom and future generation's needs
- **Reformer:** Actively engaged in the community, standing for Christ and continuing to maintain a strong family name – a heritage for the next generation

### Realizing Life Goals (ages thirty to eighty)

This is the implementation phase. Finances and relationships should be strong and allow for the implementation of life goals and vision.

- **Family Role:** Husband, father, grandfather, great grandfather
- **Character:** Strong, unwavering, humble, kindness, generous, model for future generations
- **Theology:** Teaching doctrine to wife and children, grandchildren, church leadership
- **Education:** Life time learning, ongoing study, teaching, mentoring others
- **Financial:** advising children and grandchildren, investing in family businesses of younger generation

- **Reformer:** Implementation of life vision, addressing the culture, writing, leading, family biographer

## Obedience

We don't present this as a training process to create perfect children. Our heart is simply to be obedient to God's commands for us to train our children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. To know Him and to be faithful to develop the talent and skills which He has blessed each of our children with.

Our prayer as we put all these spheres and phases together is that we would break out of the world's mold – a socialistic approach to education as an individual discipline - and would begin to look biblically, holistically at life once again. In fact, our hope is that we would begin to look at the family as a unified whole and not just a group of individuals with separate interests and goals. We don't need the latest NEA study, or the historic research of Dewey, or Horace Mann, all we need is the Bible and the spirit of God who turns the hearts of the father's to the children. Fathers so oriented will impart Biblical vision to their sons.

There is so much more that can be said about this topic and so many nuances for each family to consider as they approach training their sons. This is a conversation which our family thought was worth having. It is my hope that, however humble, a good conversation once begun will continue around your dinner table, and at your family alter for years to come.

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