

10 Things to Teach Your Son About True Manhood

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By Joe Ehrmann

In the book *Season of Life*, Joe Ehrmann says there are three false ideas of masculinity: athletic ability, sexual conquest, and wealth accumulation. Instead, true masculinity is defined by two principles. One is relationships...to love and be loved by your family. The other is to live for a purpose bigger than yourself. Great advice.

So, how are you doing on being a true man? And, are you teaching your son about being a real man? Here are the 10 things you must teach your son about true manhood:

1. Being a gentleman is still worth the effort:

- Hold the door.
- Stand up when a woman leaves or joins the table.
- Walk on the “splash” side of the sidewalk.
- Attempt (gently) to pick up the tab.
- Go get the car when it’s raining.
- Offer your hand...

2. At the same time, be respectful: All the above “gentlemanly” actions must be offered subtly, and - if necessary - set aside graciously when refused.

3. Take responsibility: In a word (well, two), “step up.” True manhood takes responsibility for its actions, choices, values and beliefs. While taking responsibility, manhood is also willing to admit – with grace - when it is wrong.

4. Don’t be afraid to be vulnerable: Real strength allows other people in. Manhood is honest about feelings and not afraid to be known. True manhood never builds a wall where there should be a window, or a fortress where there should be a sanctuary.

5. Actually “being” a man is more important than “talking” like one: Real men don’t just stand up and speak up - they “put up” too. Loud talk and tough posturing don’t cut it. True manhood involves finding a need and doing something about it. Real men don’t complain about social problems – they go out and do something about them. Real men don’t point fingers – they work for solutions. Real men get calluses on their hands – not from flapping their lips.

6. Listen respectfully, disagree politely and never exclude women from conversation: True manhood is inclusive. It may be strong, but it’s unfailingly polite. Men who equate bluster or machismo with strength are typically covering something up. Men who think women have nothing to contribute to the conversation need to wake up and smell the 21st Century.

7. Love is stronger than muscles: True manhood understands that brute force is less compelling than self-giving love. The best solutions to difficulties involve applied love.

8. The first shall be last: True manhood puts others first. Jesus is quoted more than once as saying something like this: If you want to be a leader, then the place to be is on your knees, with a towel in your hand, washing someone’s feet.

9. Manhood is – sometimes - more about what you could do but didn’t than what you could have avoided but did anyway: There’s a lot of restraint – a great deal of “Quiet Strength” in true manhood. Real men tend to always have something in reserve.

10. True manhood is more about giving than about getting: Our culture often touts a “men see what they want, then they go out and get it” view of manhood. But true manhood is more along the lines of “see what the world needs, then go out and do it.” Strength leveraged for the benefit of others.

Huddle up with your son tonight and ask: What do you think makes a true man?