

Family Legacy Institute

Tools For Families Building Godly Legacies

It Takes A Man To Raise A Boy

By Dr. John P. Splinter

The first time my dad took me hunting I was 10 years old. We were in Manitoba, Canada. It was cold – I slept in a sleeping bag. And I had a *real* gun, a Cooey 20- gauge single shot. We were hunting geese. Dad and the other guys had Browning or Winchester 12-gauges. If you're a hunter, you get the picture – no, I did not bag my quota. All I acquired on that day was a love for the smell of gun powder, and a sore shoulder. But I was with dad and I had a gun. No big game hunter on the Serengeti ever felt more like a man than I did on that day.

Dads are powerful in their sons' eyes. Assuming you had a dad, when you were a little guy, do you remember him picking you up like you were as light as a bag of potato chips? Did you ever pee at the same time and happen to glance over at him ~ Dad's plumbing was a lot bigger, right? *He* was bigger. He was more powerful. He was smarter (well, until you got to be 13.) He certainly had a lot more money than you. And until you got to be 15 or 16 you knew he could whup you with one arm tied behind his back.

Boys Generally Don't Like To Talk With Their Mothers About Sex

Did you ever talk with your dad about girls? Perhaps your mother tried to join the conversation, but if so, you knew the uncomfortable feel of her wandering into territory that was out of bounds for women. It was OK for her to tell you to treat a woman like a lady. No problem there. But if she ever said words like "breasts" or "masturbation" or "orgasm," you knew it was time to change the conversation to baseball or fishing. On the other hand, if dad used those words you were all ears.

So what was the difference? The difference is that it takes a man to communicate sexually on the same level as a boy. Sure, there are lots of single moms, and they do the very best they can with their sons. But for the most part, a young man doesn't get off on his mother talking with him about intimate sexual things. If mom were to say, "When I was a young girl, I used to look at boys' butts and wonder what they looked like with no clothes on," her son would probably roll his eyes and say, "Jeeeeeezzz, mom, too much information!"

But if dad said, "When I was your age I used to look at girls' boobs and wonder what they looked like with no bra," his son would likely say, "Really, you too?" There's a kinship in sexuality shared only by men. Only males know what it feels like to accidentally brush against a girl's chest and suddenly start having an erection. Or to sit in class and see a girl in a skirt cross her legs, see the color of her underwear and feel like you just conquered Mount Everest. Then the stupid bell rings and the boy with the erection has to stand up and walk out of class somehow

without being embarrassed. Those sort of situations make absolutely no sense to a woman ~ but they're the grist of adolescent sexual awareness. Men understand this. Boys learn it naturally. But it takes a man to help a boy *interpret* male sexuality.

Boys Need Men To Help Them Understand The Value And Purpose Of Women

I have a dog named Max. Part of his self-understanding is that he's supposed to hump all other dogs in the county ~ male or female ~ it's a dog-dominance activity. We've had to help Max learn that his joy-riding isn't much appreciated while in human company. We've had to help Max appreciate other dogs as friends, not just hump-partners. That's a bit like the task of a man with a boy. Men need to *teach* boys the value and purpose of women. As adolescence and testosterone kick in, boys tend to look at girls like Max looks at other dogs ~ potential hump-partners. It takes a man to help a boy gain mature perspective. Unfortunately, in this area of learning most dads totally drop the ball.

Dads help their sons understand the value of women when they say things like, "Son, I want you to treat your mother, and all women, with respect." Dads help their boys gain control over male sexuality by actually talking about the idea that the boy's sexuality may be the toughest battle the boy will ever face in his life, and that God created women to be our friends, not just hump-partners.

Dads help their boys with the subject of masturbation, by talking about masturbation. It's not a "secret word" any more – boys and girls are mutually masturbating each other – and research is finding that more than half the time these days they're doing it with their mouths. Some call it, "Giving a Monica," thanks to one of our former presidents. But if dad doesn't initiate this....