

LESSONS FOR YOUNG MEN.

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Our world desperately needs men. Real men. Manly men. Godly men. Holy men. Courageous men. Men who fear no one because they fear their God more. Our culture despises true, biblical manhood. What our young people today who grow up in American society will *not* learn on their own, from their friends, from Hollywood, or simply by observing the way of culture is how to be a real, godly, courageous, man of God.

So in this brief essay, I will give 5 simple lessons for young, maturing men.

1. Fear God.

Young man, if you are to be a real man, you must fear God. To fear God means to have a true understanding of who God is and what God has done in Christ. It is to know the redemption story and to be affected by what God has done for you by sheer grace. To fear God is to know God and to follow God in obedience. This means that you, young man, must be humble. Manhood and pride are *never* harmonious. They are antithetical. A true man must be humble. He must not so much think merely 'lowly' of himself nor must he think simply 'less' of himself. To be humble is, really and fundamentally, to view yourself the way that *God* views you. That, young man, will humble you. This means that you are a dependent creature. You are created and you are therefore dependent – on God. You can do nothing for yourself. You need God for everything – for life, for strength, for breath, for help, for comfort, for salvation. Indeed, young man, if you are to be a man of God, you must fear God which will drive you to the people of God who also fear God. That means you, young man, must be a church-man. No man of God forfeits his involvement in the church. No godly person ignores the church or shoves it to the side. A godly young man will invest his time, his energy, his prayers, and his service to the local church because he fears his God, he loves his God and he loves God's people. So, fear God. Know God! Obey God! Bow humbly before God. Be a church-man!

2. Work hard & work till the task is done.

Young man, a lesson that you must learn, and learn early in life, is to be a hard-worker. To be a hard worker demands that you be a man who keeps your word. You must let your 'yes' be yes and your 'no' be no. Be a man who keeps your word – at all costs. Don't lie, don't deceive, don't make plans and then break them all when something more exciting comes around. Be a man of integrity. Work hard & do what you say you'll do. And do it heartfully and joyfully. To be a man of God also means that you are a worker who works till the task is complete. Don't quit early. When things get tough, don't give up. Quitters give up and failures give up. True men continue, they persevere, they work hard, they complete the job. Young men, this will require you to put down the video games and get a job. Work hard. Turn off the movies and do something eternally productive. Stop the complaining about what others have done to you, about how hard life is, and how you feel as though you're not getting what you deserve. Put off whining and put on worship. Kill the complaining and replace it with joy-filled gratitude to a sovereign King who has made you, created you, and redeemed you by His grace! So, young man, be a man and put your hand to the plow. Work! Yes, work hard! Yes, work tirelessly! And learn to sweat, learn to labor, learn to exert energy and learn to get tired – and keep working even when you're tired. Don't worship work but worship God while you work hard. So, young, growing men, a lesson you must learn is to work hard and work till the work is done.

3. Lead & take responsibility.

Young man, growing man, let me exhort you to lead well and take responsibility. Leaders do not abdicate responsibility, they welcome it, cling to it, and full the responsibilities to the utmost of their abilities. Lead actively. Don't be a passive observer. Men of God lead in the home. It's not

optional. God calls you to it. He has commissioned you to be a leader in the home – one day, if and when you are married – as a husband to lead your wife and as a father to lead your children. Leading is not opposed to humility. To lead well is to model integrity and Christlikeness for others. To lead well is to serve others. To lead well means that you take responsibility, you fulfill your responsibilities, and you work heartily in every element of those responsibilities as an act of worship *not* to men but as to God! Young man, you live in a world where corrupt leadership abounds at every turn. At all levels of authority, domineering, selfish, self-serving, greedy, man-centered leadership dominates the landscape. Do not look to the world for a model for leadership – in the home, at your job, or in the church. Look to the Book. The eternal, trustworthy, faithful, unfailing Word of God. See Christ and how He led and took responsibilities and how he did not back down, shy way, or give up when things became tough. He led well & finished well. You must do the same.

4. Be on time.

Young man, another element that will help guide you through life is very simple. Be on time. When you have a meeting, arrive in plenty of time. If you arrive the minute something begins, you're late. If you arrive five minutes early, consider that to be arriving on time. This requires integrity. To constantly arrive late to meetings, to church, to the job, to discipling appointments evidences a lack of integrity and it shows that you view your life and its duties with little seriousness. Young men, fight this! It's not about you! Life does not revolve around you! Keep your word when you have duties and commitments. Leave your home early and awake in plenty of time in the morning to meet with God and commune with Him in prayer and then arrive early to your dutiful appointments. This requires you to plan well. There may be rush-hour. There may be other factors that come into the picture. So you, young man, must plan well. Yes, this means you must make a schedule, you must abide by that schedule. You must discipline yourself. Make the most of your time. Don't waste a moment. If you continually show up on time, alert and awake, ready and eager and joyful, you will distinguish yourself quickly as a man – as a leader – vastly different from the other people surrounding you in culture. Young man, live with integrity!

5. Read your Bible, pray it, memorize it & obey it.

Young man, as you grow and age, and become a man of God and a man of dependability, one more mark must be mentioned. It is as if the best is for last. It is as if all the others flow from this one. This is the root out of which the other characteristics of life blossom. Young man, invest yourself in one thing, one thing truly, and one thing tirelessly. Know your Bible. Many men in the world have hobbies that dominate their lives. Other men work so hard that they worship their vocation and think always and only about their appointments, their clients, and their income. Still others don't do anything well because they have fifty things going on at once and it's impossible to do any of these with any credibility, dependability, and whole-heartedness. Young man, be an expert at your Bible. Know it well. Study it. Memorize it. Pray it. Obey it. Govern your life after what it says. Determine that you will obey God *whatever* the cost – even if it means persecution, martyrdom, and death. It will matter little when you lie on your deathbed how much money you made (since you can't take it with you) nor will it matter little how many hours you spent fishing or playing sports or how many friends you had (since none of that will matter in eternity). What will matter, however, is how well you know your God. How much has His glory affected you, transformed you, awed you, dazzled you, and captivated you. Do you know your God? O young men, focus your heart, your mind, your energies on one primary thing – and it is the preeminent thing – the diligent study of and the intentional praying through the Word of God. Don't settle for anything less. Do not trifle, young men. Be serious. Be focused! You may be alone. Many friends may abandon you. They don't take life seriously. That's fine. You will, however, young man, stand before God and give an account of your life. Don't throw it away. And don't lose your soul forever! Have concern for your soul! Even while a young man, consider eternity! It's coming! You can't stop it. You can't resist it! You can't ignore it! You can't escape it! So give yourself, devote yourself, tirelessly wade yourself in the deep end of God's Word. Read it, study it, pray it, memorize it, and young man, at all costs, obey it!