

POWER PARENTING

A Dad's Field Guide to **Leading Your Home**

with Intention, Consistency, and Faith

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Revive Church

GROW Series — Parenting

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A Note to Every Dad Reading This

There has never been more information on parenting than right now. Books. Podcasts. Influencers. Experts of every kind. And yet we have never seen more anxious kids, more confusion in the home, or more fathers feeling like they are simply surviving rather than leading.

So here is the question worth asking: If we have more parenting advice than ever — why are so many homes struggling?

The answer is simple: Information is not transformation.

At some point, we have to stop asking what culture says about fatherhood and start asking what God says about it. And when we go to Scripture, the picture becomes clear: God did not call you to be your child's best friend. He called you to be their father.

This e-book is built from a sermon in the Revive Church GROW series on parenting, along with a 7-Day Dad Leadership Reset and a Father-Son Conversation Guide. It is not a theory book. It is a tool.

Read it. Mark it up. Do the work. Your kids are being shaped right now — by either your leadership or your absence. This guide exists to help you choose leadership.

How This Book Is Organized

- PART ONE: Raising Children God's Way — the biblical foundation for your parenting
- PART TWO: The 7-Day Dad Leadership Reset — a week of intentional, practical action
- PART THREE: The Father-Son Conversation Guide — a step-by-step guide for one of the most important talks you will ever have

You don't need more time, more money, or more information. You need to lead.

Before We Get Into Any of This — Let Me Tell You About Reign

What a Helmet Spinning Sideways Taught Me About Fatherhood

Reign is now 22 years old — and when he was 8, he decided he wanted to play football. We were living in Houston at the time, and in Houston they let kids play as early as 8 years old. Full pads, full helmet, the whole deal.

So we're on the way to our very first football practice. Now, those of you who know Reign — and Jet as well — know that they're a lot like their mama. Sweet, kind, gentle. Not exactly the fired-up, aggressive type. And that's a beautiful thing — but football is a different world. If you don't play aggressive and fast, you're going to get hurt. So I knew I had to say something on the way to practice.

I told him, "Hey man, let's listen to some music and get fired up. You pick the song." Big mistake.

He puts on his favorite song, and it starts with a tuba going — *boom boom boom boom* — and then the lyrics come in: "*If you like to talk to tomatoes...*" Veggie Tales. The boy put on Veggie Tales on the way to football practice.

So I said, "Reign, we cannot go to football practice listening to Bob and Larry, bro." Then he goes to his second favorite — *We're going on a trip in our favorite rocket ship* — Little Einsteins. I'm dying.

So I took over the aux cord, threw on "Here Comes the Boom," and we started trying to get his head right. I'm coaching him up: "Reign, when you line up across from somebody, you've got to snarl. You've got to growl. Let me hear your growl — from deep down, like a man."

He took a deep breath, and from deep within him, out came the cutest little....to call it a "growl" would be to insult anything that's ever growled....this was, at best, the sound of a kitten with a sore throat.

And look, it wasn't because he wasn't strong or capable — he was 8 years old and he was scared. Not just scared of getting hit, either. He was scared of hitting somebody too hard. He didn't want to hurt anyone. Which is sweet — but you cannot play football like that.

So he danced through practice like a ballerina trying to be quiet, and avoided all other players.

So after practice I told him, "Don't take your pads off. We're going to the front yard. I'm going to show you how to take a hit."

In my head, this was going to be a great dad moment.

I looked at him and said, "Do you think any of those boys out there are stronger than daddy?" He said no. "Do you think anybody out there is going to hit you as hard as I can hit you?" He said no. I said, "All right — I'm fixing to hit you harder than anybody will hit you all season long. And I'm going to teach you that it doesn't hurt. You've got pads on. It doesn't hurt."

He said okay. So he's standing there, and I say, "Here it comes — get ready."

He goes, "I'm ready."

I could tell he was not ready.

"Break down boy, get in your stance — here we go. Set, hut!"

I fired off and hit him so hard that he flew back three feet and landed flat on his back. His helmet spun around sideways, and snot flew out of the facemask. And when he looked up at me from the ground — he was crying.

Now in that moment, you've got two choices. You can do what you're not supposed to do — "Oh no, baby, I'm so sorry, are you okay?!" — and the second you do that, it's over. He feeds right into it and cries even harder. Or you can pretend like you meant to hit him that hard, and find out what he's made of.

I chose option two. Even though on the inside I was thinking, *Holy crap, I just killed my kid...and his mother is going to kill ME!*

He got up. I'm watching him dry his tears, and I said, "See? You can take a hit. Did that hurt?"

He thought about it for a second and said, "No... it really didn't."

It startled him. It scared him. But it didn't hurt. And the second he said that, his tears turned into a smile. I said, "See — you CAN take a hit." And he said, "Yeah. I can."

So I popped him again. He popped me back. I popped him. And just like that, he went from terrified — from *Daddy just waylaid me in the front yard* — to believing in himself. Believing he could do it.

He went on to have a pretty good season. Football was never really his thing long-term, but that's not the point. The point is that there are transformative moments in your kids' lives — and the question is whether you're going to be present enough to recognize them and rise to meet them.

We don't always get it right. We mess up. But here's the grace in it: if you miss the moment, God will give you another chance. He always does.

PART ONE

Raising Children God's Way

in a Culture That Won't

Chapter 1: God Is Our Model for Parenting

Before we talk about techniques, strategies, or parenting hacks — we need to look at the most important model we have. Before we ask how to parent, we need to ask how God parents us.

This is not a small question. It is the question. Because if you misunderstand how God relates to His children, you will misunderstand your own calling as a father.

The Love That Disciplines

Our culture has fed us a version of love that is soft, conflict-avoiding, and entirely feelings-based. Culture says love means never making your child uncomfortable. Never saying no. Never enforcing a consequence. Just affirming whatever they feel.

But look at how God actually loves His children:

"For the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes each one he accepts as his child." — Hebrews 12:6

"My child, don't reject the Lord's discipline, and don't be upset when he corrects you. For the Lord corrects those he loves, just as a father corrects a child in whom he delights." — Proverbs 3:11–12

Read that again slowly. The Lord corrects those He loves — as a father corrects a child in whom he delights. God's discipline is not a contradiction of His love. It is an expression of it.

Hebrews 12 goes even further. It says that if God never disciplines you, it is a sign that you are not truly His child. Discipline is not occasional behavior from a loving Father — it is a defining characteristic of His parenting.

What This Means for You

God's love is not soft. It is strong, intentional, and corrective. He does not say, "Hey, if you feel like obeying today, that would be great." He trains. He corrects. He disciplines — and then He draws near with grace.

The truth every dad must own:

Discipline is not a *lack* of love.

Discipline is *proof* of love.

People sometimes think that if you correct your children firmly, you are being harsh or unloving. Scripture says the opposite. The father who never disciplines his child is not being kind — he is being neglectful. He is withholding the very training his child needs to become who God created them to be.

This is the foundation of everything else in this book. When you discipline your children, you are not acting against love — you are acting in love. You are imaging God.

Chapter 2: Children Need Direction, Not Negotiation

Somewhere along the way, parenting shifted from leadership to negotiation. Instead of directing their children, many parents began appealing to them. Instead of requiring obedience, they started bargaining for it.

"Hey buddy — do you want to clean your room?" When the answer is no, the response becomes a countdown: "Okay... one... two... two and a half..." What does a child learn from this pattern? They learn that their parent does not mean what they say. They learn that instructions are suggestions. They learn that the real line is somewhere around "two and three quarters."

What the Bible Says About Obedience

"Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right." — Ephesians 6:1

Notice the verse does not say, "Children, obey your parents after a reasonable countdown, for this is right." It does not say, "Children, obey your parents when you feel like it." It says obey — full stop.

Delayed obedience is disobedience. When a child waits until the third request before responding, they have not obeyed. They have managed their parent. And a child who learns to manage their parent will spend the rest of their life managing authority rather than submitting to it.

Your Words Have to Mean Something

"Let your 'Yes' be yes, and your 'No,' no." — Matthew 5:37

Jesus said this in the context of integrity and commitment — but the principle applies directly to parenting. Every time you say something and do not enforce it, you are training your child not to listen to you. You are teaching them that your words are negotiable.

The principle: Every time you say something and don't enforce it, you are training your child not to listen to you.

If you tell your child to stop, and they do not stop, and you say nothing — you just taught them that "stop" is optional. If you tell your child to come here, and they do not come, and you walk away — you just taught them that your instructions carry no real authority.

This is not about being harsh or demanding. It is about being consistent. Children are not confused by clear, firm parents. They are confused by parents who say one thing and do another.

The Goal Is Not Compliance — It Is Character

Understand this: the goal of requiring obedience is not to produce a rule-follower. The goal is to build a human being who understands what it means to honor authority, respect boundaries, and follow through. Those qualities will serve your child in every area of life — in marriage, in work, in their walk with God.

When you require your child to obey promptly and consistently, you are not crushing their spirit. You are building their character. You are preparing them for a world that does not negotiate.

Chapter 3: Love Without Truth Creates Chaos

Our culture has a motto when it comes to parenting: "Just love them." Do not be too hard. Do not damage their self-esteem. Protect them from disappointment. Praise everything they do. Remove every obstacle. Shield them from every consequence.

The problem is, this kind of parenting does not produce confident, resilient children. It produces fragile ones. Children who have never been told no grow up unable to handle the word. Children who have never experienced a consequence grow up unprepared for a world that is full of them.

The Rod and the Relationship

"Whoever spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is diligent to discipline him." — Proverbs 13:24

This is one of the strongest statements in Proverbs on parenting. The person who withholds correction is described not as gentle or loving, but as someone who hates their child. That is a hard word — but the logic is sound. If you know your child needs training and you refuse to provide it because it is uncomfortable, you are choosing your own comfort over their growth.

This does not mean parenting is about punishment. It means parenting is about training. The "rod" in Proverbs is a shepherd's tool — used to guide, redirect, and correct sheep who wander. The shepherd who loves the sheep uses the rod. The shepherd who does not care lets them wander wherever they please.

Grace AND Truth Together

"The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory — full of grace and truth." — John 1:14

Jesus did not come with grace **or** truth. He came with grace **and** truth — both, together, at full strength. And this is exactly the model for godly parenting.

Truth without grace = harshness. Grace without truth = weakness. Together? That is powerful parenting.

Some of you grew up in homes where there was all discipline and no warmth. All rules and no relationship. You know what that produces — and you do not want to repeat it. That is right. A correction without a hug is not biblical discipline.

But the answer is not to swing to the opposite extreme and remove all correction in the name of kindness. The answer is what Jesus modeled: hold grace and truth together. Be firm and be warm. Be clear and be loving. Correct quickly and reconnect completely.

Chapter 4: You Are Building a Future, Not Managing a Moment

This is where most parents lose perspective. When a child is throwing a fit at dinner or arguing about homework at 9 PM, it is easy to feel like the only goal is to survive the moment. Get through today. Make it to bedtime.

But every single moment of parenting is also a building block. Every correction or affirmation, every standard you hold or release, every pattern you establish — you are not just managing behavior today. You are shaping who your child becomes.

Train, Not Suggest

"Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it." — Proverbs 22:6

The word is train — not suggest. Not hint at. Not make available. Train. Training implies repetition, consistency, correction, and expectation. Athletes train. Musicians train. Soldiers train. And children, according to Scripture, must be trained as well.

Training means that the standard does not change based on your energy level or the time of day. It means that what you expected on Monday is still expected on Friday. It means that when your child tests the boundary — which they will — the boundary holds.

Expect Greatness

There is a principle that shows up in every area of human development: people tend to rise or fall to the level of what is expected of them. If you set the bar low — if you reward mediocrity, celebrate average effort, or accept half-hearted work — your child will learn that half-hearted is enough.

Your kids will do exactly what you expect from them. Set the tone early, and set it high.

If you expect greatness — if you communicate that this family works hard, tells the truth, honors God, and gives full effort — your children will internalize that standard. Not perfectly. Not without resistance. But the expectation shapes the trajectory.

If YOU Don't Teach Them, Someone Else Will

Here is the urgent reality underneath all of this: your children are being shaped right now. The question is not whether they are being formed — the question is by whom. If you are not intentionally instilling values, identity, and direction, the culture around them will fill that vacuum.

And the world is not neutral. It has a competing vision for who your child should be, what they should value, and how they should live. The stakes of passive parenting are not just frustrating behavior in the short term — they are a generation shaped by everything except the truth.

You have been trusted with these children. That is not an accident. It is a calling. Lead accordingly.

Chapter 5: Consistency Creates Security

Ask a child what they really want from their parents — not what they demand in the moment, but what they genuinely need — and the answer is rarely what most parents expect. They do not want a pushover. They do not want a parent who explodes and then retreats. They want a consistent parent.

Consistency is one of the most underrated gifts a father can give his children. Not perfection — consistency.

The Danger of Double-Minded Parenting

"A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways." — James 1:8

When a parent is sometimes strict and sometimes indifferent, sometimes explosive and sometimes passive, sometimes engaged and sometimes absent — children learn that the rules are not really rules. They are weather patterns. And children raised in unpredictable homes do not feel free — they feel anxious.

They spend their energy reading the room rather than growing. They become skilled at gauging what they can get away with today based on what mood Dad is in — rather than learning to live within clear and trustworthy expectations.

The Fence Around the Playground

There is a classic study in child development involving a school playground. Children were given access to a large open area — but no fence. Observed from above, they clustered near the building, uncertain and hesitant, rarely venturing far.

When a fence was added around the perimeter, something remarkable happened. The children spread out and used the entire space with confidence. The boundary did not restrict them — it freed them.

Clear, firm, and non-negotiable boundaries don't create rebellion. They create security.

Children thrive when they know where the line is — and that the line does not move. This is not about fear. It is about trust. When your child knows that your yes means yes and your no means no, they can relax. They are not always testing and probing. They already know the answer.

That kind of security is one of the most important things you can build into your child's life. And it starts with your consistency.

Chapter 6: Five Anchors for Every Dad

Everything covered in this section comes down to practice. Here are five anchor points — simple, repeatable commitments that can change the culture of your home starting today.

Anchor 1: Say It Once — and Mean It

Stop counting. Stop repeating. Stop issuing warnings that carry no consequence. When you say something, mean it the first time. This takes more discipline from you initially — because you will have to follow through immediately rather than giving yourself room to back off. But the long-term payoff is a child who listens the first time because they know there will not be a second.

Anchor 2: Follow Through Every Time

Consistency builds trust. If you say there will be a consequence and there is not, you have lost ground. If you say yes and then change your mind under pressure, you have taught your child that persistence beats your word. Follow through — even when it is inconvenient, even when it means the evening gets harder before it gets easier. The investment is worth it.

Anchor 3: Correct Quickly, Not Emotionally

Discipline is training, not venting. When you need to correct your child, do it calmly and immediately — not twenty minutes later when your frustration has built to a boiling point. A correction delivered in anger sends a mixed message. The child begins to focus on your emotional state rather than on what they did wrong. Stay calm. Address it. Make the consequence clear. Then reconnect.

Anchor 4: Reward Effort, Not Entitlement

Every generation faces the temptation to over-affirm their children. Participation trophies. Gold stars for average work. Praise for just showing up. When everything is celebrated, nothing is truly earned. Celebrate growth. Celebrate effort. Celebrate the moment your child pushes through difficulty and does hard things. That is worth praising. Existence alone is not a performance.

Anchor 5: Model What You Expect

Children do not do what you say. They do what you do. If you expect respect but speak disrespectfully. If you expect discipline but spend your evenings scrolling your phone. If you expect faith but they never see you pray — the gap between your words and your life will form your children far more powerfully than any instruction you give. The most important question a father can ask is not "What am I telling my kids?" It is "What am I showing them?"

This is not about being a perfect parent. Every one of us has missed it. Every one of us has moments we wish we could redo. But hear this clearly: it is not too late to change the culture of your home. God trusted you with those children — not because you are perfect, but because you are called.

Culture says: make your kids happy. God says: make them holy. You don't raise strong children by making life easy — you raise them by making them ready.

PART TWO

The 7-Day Dad Leadership Reset

Lead Your House — Starting Now

This is not a 7-day program that ends on day seven. This is a week of intentional action designed to reset your leadership and reestablish the culture of your home. Some of it will feel uncomfortable. That is not a sign that it is wrong — it is a sign that you have been passive for a while and the muscle needs work.

This is not about being perfect. This is about being intentional.

Ground Rules for the Week

Before you begin Day 1, lock these five commitments in:

- No passivity — you engage, every day
- No empty words — if you say it, you mean it
- No emotional reactions — correction is calm and controlled
- Follow through on everything you say
- Be present — put the phone down when you are with your family

For 7 days — you lead on purpose.

DAY 1 FOCUS: RESPONSIBILITY — *Own It*

Leadership begins with ownership. You cannot lead a home that you are not willing to take responsibility for — and that means being honest about where you have been absent, passive, or inconsistent.

Most men have areas of their fatherhood they would rather not look at too closely. Today, you are going to look directly at them. Not to condemn yourself — but to name what needs to change.

Your Action Today

Take 10 to 15 minutes alone — in your car before you walk inside, in your office before the day begins, or early in the morning before everyone wakes up. Ask yourself honestly:

- Where have I been passive in my home?
- Where have I been inconsistent with my words?
- Where have I checked out emotionally or physically?

Then say it out loud if you have to: "I am the leader of this home. That changes today."

"For if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church?" — 1 Timothy 3:5

There is a direct connection in Scripture between a man's leadership at home and his capacity to lead anywhere else. Your home is not separate from your calling — it is where your calling begins.

At Home Today

Tell your wife and/or children simply: "Hey — I'm going to be more intentional this week. I love you guys, and I want to lead better." No long speech. No over-promising. Just clarity and honesty. That alone is a step in the right direction.

DAY 2 FOCUS: PRESENCE — *Set the Tone*

Leadership is not just about issuing directives — it is about being present. One of the most powerful things you can do for your children is give them the full version of you. Not the distracted version. Not the phone-in-hand version. The eyes-on-them, genuinely-listening version.

Before you can correct your children, you need to be connected to them. Reconnect before you redirect. That is the order.

Your Action Today

Set aside 30 to 60 minutes of fully uninterrupted time with your kids — phone face down, television off, no half-attention. Sit with them. Get on the floor with younger children. Go outside. Ask simple questions and actually listen to the answers:

- "What was the best part of your day?"
- "What has been hard lately?"
- "What have you been thinking about?"

Look them in the eyes. Let the silence be okay. Do not rush to fix or redirect — just be with them.

"Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord." — Ephesians 6:4

The opposite of exasperating your children is not being soft. It is being engaged. It is knowing what is happening in their world before you try to speak into it.

The Goal Today

Your goal is not correction. Your goal is connection. Spend today building the relational bridge you will walk across in the harder moments. A child who feels known by their father is a child who is far more open to that father's leadership.

DAY 3 FOCUS: CLARITY — *Establish Authority*

Every home has things that have drifted out of order. Disrespect that has gone unchallenged. Habits that have become default because no one addressed them. Behavior that was let go once, and then twice, and then quietly accepted.

Today is the day you identify one of those things and address it clearly.

Your Action Today

Pick one area that has been out of order in your home. It might be:

- Disrespectful speech or attitudes toward parents
- Persistent messiness or refusal to follow household expectations
- Disobedience around screen time or bedtime routines
- Interrupting when adults are speaking

Gather the relevant family members and say clearly: "Hey — from now on, this is how it is going to be in our home. Here is what I expect, and here is the consequence if it does not happen."

No countdowns. No negotiating. No backing off. Just clarity, and then follow-through.

"Whatever you say in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus." — Colossians 3:17

Notice this principle does not allow for empty words. Whatever you say — say it with the full weight of your leadership behind it. This applies to the dinner table and the living room just as much as it applies to ministry and work.

What to Expect

Your children may test the new boundary today. That is normal. That is actually the point. Hold the line calmly and completely. The test is not a sign that you are doing this wrong — it is a sign that the boundary is real, and they are checking to see if it will hold. Let it hold.

DAY 4 FOCUS: SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP — *Lead Spiritually*

This may be the most uncomfortable day of the seven. For many dads, spiritual leadership feels like it belongs to the pastor, to the Sunday school teacher, or to someone who has it more together than they do. So they defer. They leave it to someone else. And in doing so, they abdicate one of the most important responsibilities God has given them.

The spiritual temperature of your home is largely set by you. Not by your church attendance, and not by what your wife does — by what you model and initiate. Today, you go first.

Your Action Today

You do not need to have a seminary degree. You do not need to sound polished. You just need to do one simple spiritual act today — out loud, in front of your family:

- Pray out loud over your family before the day begins
- Pray before a meal, out loud, with genuine words — not just habit
- Read three to five verses from Proverbs or the Psalms and ask your kids what they think
- Share something God has been teaching you lately

"As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." — **Joshua 24:15**

Joshua did not say "my house will try to follow the Lord if it is convenient" or "we might lean that direction." He made a declaration of identity: this is who we are and this is how we live. Your home needs a similar declaration — not a one-time speech, but a consistent pattern of spiritual leadership that makes it clear who this family belongs to.

The Power of Going First

When a father prays out loud, something shifts. When a father opens a Bible, children notice. When a father admits he does not have it all figured out but points his family toward God anyway — that is the most powerful spiritual formation tool in existence. You do not need to lead perfectly. You just need to lead.

DAY 5 FOCUS: CORRECTION WITH CONTROL — *Discipline Right*

Today's focus is not about waiting for something to go wrong. It is about being prepared when it does — because it will. And the difference between a discipline moment that forms your child and one that damages them often comes down to one thing: your emotional state.

A father who corrects in anger teaches his child to be afraid. A father who corrects in control teaches his child to be accountable. The goal is correction — not punishment, not venting, not making an example. Correction.

The Framework: Correction + Connection

When something goes wrong today, work through this sequence:

- Stay calm — take a breath, lower your voice, do not react
- Address it immediately — do not let it fester or come back later as a bigger explosion
- Explain why it matters — help your child understand the principle, not just the rule
- Follow through with a clear consequence
- Reconnect — hug them, tell them you love them, separate the behavior from their worth

"No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it." — Hebrews 12:11

The equation: Correction + Connection = Healthy Discipline

A child who is corrected and then disconnected learns that love is conditional. A child who is corrected and then embraced learns that love is steady — even when behavior is not. That is the message you want to send. You discipline because you love. You reconnect because the relationship is more important than the moment.

DAY 6 FOCUS: EXAMPLE — *Model It*

This is the day that requires the most honesty — because it asks you to look not at your children's behavior, but at your own. The most powerful thing you will ever do as a father is not what you tell your children to do. It is what you show them you are.

Children are watching constantly. They absorb patterns. They learn by observation far more than by instruction. And they will spend the rest of their lives repeating — or reacting against — what they saw at home.

Your Action Today

Ask yourself honestly: What do I expect from my kids that I am not consistently doing myself?

- Do you expect respect but speak to your wife with impatience or dismissal?
- Do you expect discipline from your children but spend your evenings in passive entertainment?
- Do you expect honesty but find it easy to bend the truth when it is convenient?
- Do you expect faith but rarely pray, rarely open the Bible, rarely talk about God?

"Set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity."

— 1 Timothy 4:12

Paul gave this instruction to a young leader — but it is the calling of every father. You are setting an example whether you intend to or not. The question is what kind.

Fix One Thing Today

Pick one area of gap between what you expect and what you model — and close the gap today. Not permanently, not perfectly, but start. Your children do not need a perfect father. They need a father who is genuinely trying to live what he asks of them.

DAY 7 FOCUS: IDENTITY OF YOUR HOME — *Build the Culture*

You have spent six days owning it, showing up, establishing clarity, leading spiritually, disciplining rightly, and modeling what you expect. Today, you do something that will outlast all of it: you name the culture of your home.

Culture is not what you hope for. It is what you consistently create. And families that thrive do not just drift into a good culture — they define it. They repeat it. They return to it when things go sideways.

Your Action Today

Gather your family — even for just ten to fifteen minutes. Keep it simple and direct. Say something like: "This is the kind of family we are going to be." And then name it:

- "We respect each other in this home."
- "We tell the truth, even when it is hard."
- "We work hard and we finish what we start."
- "We put God first in this house."
- "We are for each other — no matter what."

"As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." — **Joshua 24:15**

Keep it simple. Make it clear. And then repeat it — at dinner, in the car, during the hard moments, in the quiet ones. Culture is not built in a single conversation. It is built in the accumulation of consistent, repeated statements and actions over time.

The End-of-Week Check-In

Before you close out this week, ask yourself honestly:

- Am I more present than I was seven days ago?
- Are my words carrying more weight?
- Am I more consistent?

- Is the tone of my home shifting?

If yes — keep going. This is not a seven-day fix. This is a reset that launches a new season. If you feel like you missed the mark on some days — repeat the week. There is no shame in that. There is only leadership.

The Final Charge: Your kids are being shaped right now — by either your leadership or your absence. You don't need more time. You don't need more money. You don't need more information. You just need to lead your house. Let this be the week everything changed.

PART THREE

The Father-Son Conversation Guide

"Becoming the Man God Called You to Be"

There is a conversation your son needs to have with you — and he does not know how to ask for it. He may not even know he needs it. But somewhere underneath the surface, every young man is waiting for his father to look him in the eyes and say: "You matter. I see you. And I am going to help you become who you were made to be."

This guide is a framework for that conversation. It is not a script to be read word for word — it is a roadmap to help you cover what matters. Read through it before you sit down with your son. Make notes. Make it yours.

Setting the Moment

Do not try to have this conversation on the fly. Create an environment that feels intentional, not accidental. Some ideas:

- Go to breakfast or grab burgers — food lowers defenses
- Sit by a fire pit — something about fire makes men talk
- Take a drive — side-by-side conversation reduces pressure
- Throw a ball while you talk — movement helps him stay open

Keep it relaxed, but make the purpose clear: "Hey, I wanted some time with you because this matters to me." That sentence alone will mean more to your son than you know.

Section 1: Identity — Who You Are

The Key Truth

You don't figure out who you are. You receive who you are.

One of the most dangerous lies a young man can believe is that identity is something he builds from scratch by performing, proving, or pleasing others. Many young men spend their entire teenage years — and much of their adult lives — trying to figure out who they are by looking at what others think of them.

Your son needs to hear from you that his identity is not constructed through performance. It is received as a gift. He is a son of God. That is not something he earns. It is something he receives by faith — and it becomes the unshakeable foundation for everything else.

Say Something Like This

"You're not defined by what your friends say, what social media says, or even your mistakes. You are a son of God. That is your foundation. Before anything else — before your grades, your athletic ability, your social life — that is who you are."

"To all who believed him, to those who received him, he gave the right to become children of God." — John 1:12

Questions to Ask Him

- "What do you think people your age base their identity on?"
- "Have you ever felt pressure to be someone you're not?"
- "What do you think God sees when He looks at you?"

Let him answer. Do not rush to correct or redirect. You are listening for what is actually going on inside him — not just gathering information to respond to.

Section 2: Character — How You Live

The Key Truth

Character is who you are when nobody's watching.

Every young man will eventually face a moment when no one is watching — when the right choice is inconvenient, when the easy path involves cutting a corner, when the crowd is going in a direction that violates his values. What he does in those moments is not determined by what he says he believes. It is determined by who he has become.

Character is not a checklist. It is a pattern, built over hundreds of small decisions. Talk through three areas with your son:

- Integrity — telling the truth, doing what is right when no one will ever know
- Discipline — doing the hard thing, not just the easy or comfortable thing
- Respect — especially toward women and toward authority

"Whoever is faithful in little will be faithful in much." — Luke 16:10

The man your son becomes in big moments will be determined almost entirely by who he is in small ones. His faithfulness in little things right now is the training ground for everything that comes later.

Be Honest About Your Own Journey

This is where connection actually happens. Do not just teach your son about character — let him see yours, including where you have missed it.

"I've messed this up before. I've taken the easy way out when I should have stood firm. I've let fear make the decision instead of conviction. Here is what I learned from that..."

A father who is transparent about his failures earns far more trust than one who presents a polished, flawless version of himself. Your honesty gives your son permission to be human — and to keep growing.

Questions to Ask Him

- "What do you think makes a man trustworthy?"
- "Where do you see guys your age getting this wrong?"
- "Is there an area of your life where you know what is right but keep choosing something different?"

Section 3: Purity and Relationships — How You Treat Others

The Key Truth

Real men protect purity. They don't pressure it.

This is the conversation most dads avoid — which means their sons end up getting their understanding of relationships and sexuality from their peers, from media, and from a culture that has absolutely no interest in raising them into godly men.

Do not leave this section out. It may be the most important one.

Say it directly: "Any boy can chase feelings. A man leads with conviction. How you treat young women now will shape the kind of husband you will one day become. You are not just practicing dating — you are practicing marriage."

"Set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity." — 1 Timothy 4:12

Frame It Positively

Purity is not primarily about what your son avoids. It is about what he protects — his own integrity, the dignity of the young women around him, and the man he is becoming. A man who understands this does not feel restricted by the call to purity. He feels honored by it.

"Don't practice being a selfish boyfriend. Practice being a godly man. The habits you build now are the ones you will bring into your marriage."

Questions to Ask Him

- "What do guys at school say about girls and relationships?"
- "Do you ever feel pressure in this area? What does that look like?"
- "What do you think it means to treat a girl with respect?"

Listen carefully to his answers. You may learn that he is facing more pressure than you realized. And your willingness to have this conversation without shame or panic will make it possible for him to come back to you when things get harder.

Section 4: Purpose — Why You Are Here

The Key Truth

You were not created to coast. You were created to carry responsibility.

Every young man longs to know that his life matters. That there is something worth showing up for. That he was not put on this earth to simply consume entertainment, accumulate followers, and drift into middle age. He was made for something.

Part of your job as a father is to name what you see in him — specifically. Not just general encouragement, but actual language about the actual gifts and potential you observe in your actual son.

"For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord — plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." — Jeremiah 29:11

Speak Life Into Him — Specifically

Do not skip this part. This is identity-shaping language.

"I see this in you..." Name a strength you have observed — leadership, loyalty, creativity, compassion, work ethic, boldness. Be specific. Your son has heard vague affirmation before. What he rarely hears is a father who has been watching closely enough to name something real.

"God could use you to..." Cast a vision for how his specific gifts could serve others, build something, change something. Help him see himself not as a consumer of life but as someone with a role to play in something larger than himself.

Questions to Ask Him

- "What do you feel like you are actually good at?"
- "What gets you excited or fired up?"
- "If you could do anything — if failure was not a possibility — what would you go after?"

Section 5: Reality — It Won't Be Easy

The Key Truth

Following God will set you apart — and that will be uncomfortable.

One of the worst things you can do for your son is send him into the world with the belief that choosing the right path will be easy, popular, or free of cost. It will not. And when the cost comes and he was not prepared for it, he may conclude that he heard God wrong, that his faith is weak, or that holiness is not worth the price.

Prepare him honestly: "Not everyone will understand the choices you make. You may feel different from your peers. There will be pressure to compromise, to blend in, to take the easy road. That pressure is real — and it is going to come."

"Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong." — 1 Corinthians 16:13

He Is Not Alone

The most important thing you can do after naming the reality is naming the company he keeps: "You are not doing this alone. I have your back. And more importantly, God does. Every man who ever stood firm for something worth standing for had to make that choice in the face of opposition. You come from a long line of men who chose to stand. You can do this."

Questions to Ask Him

- "Where do you feel the most pressure right now?"
- "Have you ever felt like it was too hard to do the right thing? What happened?"
- "What would it mean for you to stand firm this year?"

Section 6: The Commitment Moment

Do not just have a good conversation and walk away. Land the plane. A great talk without a commitment moment is like a sermon without an invitation — you have built something, but you have not closed the distance.

What to Say

"I want us to be able to have conversations like this anytime. My door is always open. There is nothing you can bring to me that is going to make me love you less or push you away. I am in your corner — always."

What to Ask Him

- "Is there anything you have been wanting to ask me but have not?"
- "How can I be a better dad for you?"

That second question is gold. Be ready to hear the answer without becoming defensive. He may tell you something that is hard to receive. Receive it. Thank him for trusting you with it. That moment of humility on your part will do more for your relationship than almost anything else in this entire guide.

Closing Prayer

Pray over your son out loud. This matters more than you think. A father's blessing, spoken over a son in prayer, lands in places that nothing else reaches. Here is a prayer to get you started — make it your own:

God, thank You for my son. Thank You for who You created him to be. I pray that You would give him strength, wisdom, and courage to stand firm in a world that pulls in every other direction. Protect his heart. Guide his steps. Help him become the man You have called him to be. I am proud of him — and I trust You with his life. In Jesus' name, amen.

Final Takeaways for Dads

- Don't wait for the perfect moment — create one
- Speak identity over your son more than you speak correction
- Be honest about your own journey and your own failures
- Ask questions and actually listen to the answers
- This isn't a one-time talk — it is a lifestyle of intentional fatherhood

A son doesn't drift into manhood. He is led into it. That is your job. And you are up for it.

One Last Thing

Hey — before you close this and get back to your day, I just want to say something to you directly.

I'm proud of you for reading this. Seriously. The fact that you picked this up and made it this far tells me something about you — it tells me you care. And caring is where all of this starts.

You are not going to be a perfect dad. I am not a perfect dad. Nobody in these pages is holding up a trophy and telling you to match it. What we are saying — what God is saying — is that your kids need you to be *present*. Intentional. Consistent. They need you to show up, stay in the room, and lead.

So here is my final word to you, man to man:

Get planted in a church. Not just showing up on Sunday and slipping out before the last song — actually planted. Serving. Investing. Let your kids watch you give your time to something bigger than yourself. Let them see that faith is not just something you talk about, it is something you live inside of a community.

Find a small group. Get around other dads who are trying to figure this thing out just like you are. You were never meant to do this alone, and the strongest men I know are the ones who were willing to be known. Iron sharpens iron — and your family will feel the difference when you are being sharpened.

Give back. Volunteer. Coach a team. Mentor a kid who does not have what your kids have. Teach your children that your family exists not just for itself, but for others. That is one of the most powerful lessons a father can pass down.

And in everything — at home, in public, in the way you speak to your wife, in the way you handle disappointment, in the way you treat a waiter or a stranger or someone who cannot do anything for you — be a gentleman. Show your kids what it looks like to carry yourself with dignity and grace.

Because here is the thing I want to leave you with:

Your son is watching you become the man he is going to be. And your daughter? She is watching you become the man she is going to marry.

So be that man. Not someday. Not when you have it all figured out. Now — imperfect, in process, and fully committed.

Your family does not need you to be flawless. They just need you to be faithful.

Go lead your house.