

# Turning Boys into Men:

*How to Create a  
Rite of Passage for Your Son.*

By

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*“This is loaded with meaning, makes a one-of-a-kind bond, and anybody can do it!”*

*– Stephen*

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# Preface

I did not have a good father role model as a boy. In fact, Dad was an alcoholic, workaholic, and a gambler. By all statistical accounts, I should have followed in his tracks, but I did not. I missed all of that, and so have all four of my sons. I've learned a lot from watching and listening to other men and it has made the difference in how I lived and how I raised my children. These lessons resulted in my four sons having their own strong faith in God, avoiding sexual impurity, never been intoxicated, having a confident but humble view of themselves, and passing these same noble attributes and values on to their children. Now, my sons and I are working together to help other fathers and sons experience the same joy and bond we do.

Without doubt, the father-son activity most impacting our relationship has been a rite of passage event we're calling "the manabout." Borrowing from the Australian Aboriginal term "walkabout," I crafted a Christ-centered experience to usher my sons into manhood. They loved it, and they aren't alone! Fathers we've coached in leading their sons on their own manabout have been moved to tears at the deeply meaningful impact the experience had on their sons and on themselves. My sons and I passionately want others to share in this memorable and life altering experience.

We're so eager for other men to get this in their hands, that we prepared this e-book to share some of our thinking behind why fathers need to engage their sons, and provides an introduction to what a manabout is. We're writing **The Manabout Manual** to provide a more complete and detailed description of the manabout event, and beautiful video footage of fathers and sons engaging in their manabout is also on the drawing board. However, in the meantime, we hope this e-book will inspire and equip you and your son or youngster you mentor to live up to the high calling of biblical manhood!

--- Stephen Meeks and Sons

# Chapter 1. “No Apologies: Men Matter – Especially Fathers.”

Though today it is not a popular notion, it is true nonetheless: there is no need to apologize for being male --- none. No more than an oak need say, “Sorry,” for being a tree, or a flower repent for being a rose do men need to make excuses for being created male. In fact, it is time we leapt into our Divinely appointed design by living it to the full and passing its hot flame to our sons.

The creep of feminism into Western culture over the past several decades has stealthily eroded our view of the virtue and value of manhood. The critical role of the male in society and in the home has been laughed down, belittled, and scolded. Sitcoms and Hollywood consistently portray men as bumbling morons or inconvenient nuisances instead of esteemed patriarchs. The result is Millennial and Gen Z males suffering identity loss and gender confusion, and reluctant to enter adulthood. We are witnessing boyhood extending a decade longer than anytime in history. Males, in their mid to late twenties are behaving as adolescents far beyond their teen years. Michael Kimmel, a sociologist at the State University in New York, in his book Guyland sees these super-late bloomers as a unique phenomenon to our times and contends they create a new category juxtaposed between adolescence and adulthood that he terms “guyland.”

These guys are living at home, not serious about their college educations, squandering their parents’ wealth, unmotivated, living to

party, playing video games, looking for “hook-ups” rather than wives, delaying careers, wasting weekends hanging with the guys, and perfectly content with all the above. They are an overfed, selfish, childish, directionless, hedonistic mob of males without purpose, without plans, and without ambition. The decline in the views and behaviors of men is alarming and bodes of horrific problems ahead. But, all is not lost. Across our nation, a quiet, but growing, Divinely inspired and powerful stirring seems to be set in motion – a rise of fathers.

“Deal with absent fathers, and the rest follows.”

Statistics vary, but studies point to at least twenty-seven million fatherless children in the United States, and that number is not stagnant. Today, 33% of children live without their father; in 1960 the number was only 11%. Nearly every study points to father absence as the primary culprit behind poverty, crime, drugs, unwed pregnancy, school dropout, runaways, and suicide. Vincent DiCaro, vice president of the National Fatherhood Initiative said,

*“Deal with absent fathers, and the rest follows. People “look at a child in need, in poverty or failing in school, and ask, ‘What can we do to help?’ But what we ask is, ‘Why does that child need help in the first place?’ And the answer is often it’s because [the child lacks] a responsible and involved father.”<sup>i</sup>*

In the wake of overwhelming evidence, failed fathers are at the root of all societal problems. It follows then that they conversely are in a

90.3 % of Americans agree that fathers make a unique contribution to their children’s lives.

position to resolve those same issues. I believe this is why God is again stirring men.

Intuitively, the majority of Americans realize that dad makes a huge difference. In fact, a Gallop Poll found that nearly **all** (90.3%) Americans agree that fathers make a unique contribution to their children's lives."<sup>ii</sup> As specific examples, Dr. Eirini Flouri and Ann Buchanan found in their research that:

- Children with involved fathers have less emotional and behavioral difficulties in adolescence.
- Teenagers who feel close to their fathers in adolescence go on to have more satisfactory adult marital relationship.
- Girls who have a strong relationship with their fathers during adolescence showed a lack of psychological distress in adult life.<sup>iii</sup>

And the good news is not just for the girls; boys benefit too. The Huffington Post ran an article presented by Johnson and Johnson listing nine important ways Dads impact the lives of their Children. The article specifies:

- Their sons are less likely to be in trouble.
- The rates of delinquency from school are lower among boys whose fathers actively participate in their care.<sup>iv</sup>

Dads matter. Fathers make a difference. As a nation, we're in big trouble without a change in the trend of fatherlessness, but a shift is coming and it could be seismic! It will start with individuals eager to be men according to their original design; who share in the deepest part of their being are moved at the notion, at the mention, at the call to a version of manhood that is noble, that is strong in character, that rises above the frivolous chatter of political correctness and deeply inhales the rich oxygen of the highest ideals of man's design and purpose. These will be those who long for what cannot be shaken, are stirred by virtue, and nourished by selflessness, courage, truth, and faithfulness. This emerging tribe will cast its shadow over a coming generation and yield its greatest fruit in those who come after them. They are not demanding men, but a humble ones. Patient, steady, tenacious men able to sow and wait for a harvest. They are not rulers, but a servants; leaders, even as they follow Another. They are not too proud to accept authority, yet

they are unyielding on truth. The groundswell that is coming will not be seen as much as it will be felt. It will not occur in the White House until it occurs in our own house. This rising nation men embracing biblical manhood will matter, and they will make a difference because those to whom they pass it will redeem their times.

The manabout is an unforgettable, meaning-packed rite of passage into manhood led by fathers or mentors for Western Civilization.

What I'm describing won't happen spontaneously. It must be intentional. Fathers must take action and invest themselves in building their sons into men of character and faith. The problem is that many fathers -- you may be one of them -- don't know exactly how, where, or when to begin. Many think that being around their son is the same as being engaged with him. Dads standing along the sidelines at little league, or basketball games talking among themselves are doing better than some, but attention, not attendance is more essential to a creating the link between a dad and his son. Sitting around the campfire and chatting with our buddies while the boys go off by themselves is not ample. There must be communication.

Fatherhood requires both talking and listening, because, while talking fills a boy's mind, listening opens his heart. Listening endears him to his father. Listening shows interest, and knowing that your dad is interested in you communicates that he thinks you are special. Everyone wants to be thought of as special, and no one wants to lose that status. When a boy knows his father thinks highly of him, he will work to maintain it. This is an essential aspect of communication that a father needs between himself and his son. Telling him he is loved helps tremendously in opening the communication channel, but it must be accompanied (demonstrated) by how the father speaks to his son and especially how he listens to him. These lines are most easily constructed when boys are small and reinforced through adolescence. It is at adolescence that a window opens for fathers and mentors to launch boys onto a path of biblical manhood. Unlike many world cultures,

Western Civilization has failed in large degree to take advantage of this powerful opportunity. We are stepping up to help fathers and mentors prepare their boys to make the leap from boy to man using a rite of passage event we call a manabout.



## **Chapter 2. “Men Are Made: The Manabout--Western Civilization’s Walkabout.”**

The “walkabout” is the Australian Aborigine’s rite of passage in which indigenous males undergo a journey, typically between ages ten to sixteen, living in the wilderness for a period as long as six months. It is their spiritual and traditional transition into adulthood. These walkabouts are a boy’s first steps into independence, identity, and maturity. Enlightenment, healing and a spiritual awakening are essential elements of these solemn rituals. Ironically, Western Civilization, in spite of its many advances, struggles to craft a dynamic equivalent. Society gauges the transition of boy to adult using an incoherent patchwork of markers such as getting a driver’s license, graduating from high school, loss of virginity, or getting married. Yet, none of these (not even the sum total of them) provides the benefit to our boys that the ancient walkabout delivers its sons.

Boys are male, but being a man is much more than being male. Reaching a certain age, or boasting of a particular possession doesn’t make a man either. Manhood resides within and roots itself in the unseen soul. Being a man is always a matter of what is inside. For generations, cultures have determined manhood and preserved societal health through challenging journeys like the Aborigines’ venture into the outback, which provided a much-needed opportunity for young men to prepare themselves mentally, emotionally, spiritually, and, physically for adulthood and community membership. These sojourns into the

untamed to the face danger and fear from within and without are essential to a male's identity formation. The difference between boys and men is one of heart and thought. The mystery of what it means to be a man is first decoded and then transferred during the days and weeks of these rites of passage. Adult males flounder in life without them.

The French ethnographer Arnold van Gennep coined the phrase "rite of passage" to describe the metamorphic movement between childhood and adulthood. Gennep defined it as a celebration of the passage, which occurs when an individual leaves one group to enter another. It involves a significant change of status in society. He suggests two universals that every culture's rites of passage share, mainly: "the sexual separation between men and women, and the magio-religious separation between the profane and the sacred."<sup>v</sup> Other experts on rite of passage identify three common stages or steps in these passages: separation, transition, and inclusion. My sons and I see a vitally important and necessary fourth stage we call 'ethos'. We refer to our Christ-centered western rite of passage as a "manabout."

Every boy living today needs the help of his father or a male mentor to prepare him for manhood.

Throughout America's history, the defining images or expressions of what makes 'a real man' have waffled between the rough and rugged mountain man and the suave, sophisticated cigarette-smoking man-about-town; it has bounced between the hard-working blue-collar guy relaxing to Budweiser and football, and the successful corporate mogul sipping expensive wine atop his empire. This revamping and redefining of manhood continues right up to the present such that the definition of what constitutes a man is now unclear, in flux, and polarizing in today's western world. In fact, we've added chaos to the confusion by debating matters as elementary and foundational as what is male and what is female. This toxic mix is a very real and present danger to those forming their identity. Our society straddles a quaking fault-line as western culture pulls away from its ancient roots and truths about manhood, and the tectonic shifting of the societal plates is traumatizing every structure on the social landscape. As a result, the West is witnessing a

rise in male loss of esteem, a pornography explosion, widespread gender confusion, and a staggering degree of prolonged adolescence. Only a clear vision, deeply rooted in the ancient bedrock of what it means to be a man, will stand in the days ahead. Every boy living today needs the help of his father or a male mentor to prepare him for the societal San Andreas ready to reshape western civilization on a scale of magnitude not experienced before.

Despite the West's many advances, great learning, and vast experiences, we, as a culture, have not developed a satisfactory equivalent to the simple aboriginal walkabout. Our markers of manhood are all over the map. Some say a male is a man when he turns sixteen, or eighteen, or twenty-one. Others propose that manhood is achieved when a male can legally drink alcohol, or when he graduates from college. Locker room banter claims the key factor is rooted in sexual experience. Each is as ludicrous as the next! If we reflect for a moment, we should all have the discernment to know that the ability to drive or the right to vote are totally disconnected from any indicators of manhood. The many ideas being offered as the measure of manhood collectively fail because they are little more than arbitrary guesses and they take a surface view of manhood. Actually, it is easy to argue that many of them provide evidence of a failure to achieve manhood. For example, quaffing alcohol to the point of intoxication communicates more about a boy's lack of control than it does his maturity, and sexual encounters are candidly more a sign of a child-like need for attention than evidence of any noble character trait. Mannishness is not equivalent to manliness. Manliness is a matter of heart; Mannishness is everything else, and western civilization has opted almost entirely for mannishness.

Western society needs a marker founded on time-proven truths, immune to fads and trends, rooted in the bedrock of the original design, and drawing from the deepest, strongest, and purest elements of what a male was intended to become to the planet, in community, and within his spirit. It is time that a brave many men sever the umbilical cord of societal dictates, renounce the childish fads of western culture, reject the crowd's silly chaotic clamoring. It's time to recapture that ancient Spirit residing within every male and empower it to be experienced and lived fully by our sons. A male who pursues his Divine design will never

need to apologize for his maleness or his manhood. It's time we stop making excuses for failing manhood and begin building men again.

## **Chapter 3. “Building Men: Stage One – Extending an Invitation to Manhood.”**

Nobility (strength of character) in a man is an irresistible magnet to the metal in a boy. The living witness of a good man sparks the fires of manhood in a youngster. Boys naturally aspire to become like the men they admire. Gatorade used this powerful tonic when launching their famous “Be like Mike” campaign. The notion that a kid could be as athletic, cool, and famous as Michael Jordan if he drank Gatorade was so attractive that it made Mike and Gatorade millions upon millions of dollars. Boys wanted to be like him because being like Mike was a slam-dunk for success. Fathers and mentors can use this same power to inspire boys to become men of character.

**Nobility in a man is an irresistible magnet to the metal in a boy.**

How do men get boys on board the manhood train? It is actually very simple – we invite them. The invitation to BE a man must be compelling. What makes it compelling is your personal buy-in. I lived a life of character and my sons saw it. Therefore, when I applied the Gatorade tactic and invited them to “Be like Dad,” they bought-in. Now, this isn’t saying that a father must be flawless -- there are no perfect parents -- but it is saying that my heart was sold on being the kind of man that God intended. My sons saw my zeal and commitment for this type of manhood and it sparked a fire in them; my invitation fanned it. In

addition, I was excited FOR them to become men. In fact, I was maybe even more excited than they were (and probably more nervous) about launching their journey into manhood and enthusiasm is contagious. Let your son or boy you mentor know that you are eager to help him on this journey because you are so excited about your own manhood that you want him to experience it too.

How to boys get onboard the manhood train?  
Simple – they are invited.

I chose to take my sons on their manabout and initiate them into manhood when they reached about thirteen years old. I began talking about it a couple of years before. “Son. One day you’ll be a man. I will help you on that journey. I want to lead you into manhood because I want you to do well in life and be a great man. You just need to let me show you what I know and help you along that path.” Then, on their thirteenth birthday, I took some time to give a little more detail and build the excitement, “This year I will take you on a special trip. It’ll be just you and me. We’ll take a few days to be together to talk and work on helping you make the first steps into being a man. From that time on you’ll be more like me than your little brothers and sister. I’ll need you to help me bring them along one day too.” It was enough to whet his appetite, stir his imagination, and excite him to want more. Honestly, if you make this invitation right, he will have a hard time sleeping that night due to the excitement.

This calling to manhood is a critical part of the rite of passage. Inviting a boy into manhood tells him that he is special. Designing a meaningful rite of passage for him creates an environment rich with potential and is a way of selecting him to be on your team. Your offer separates him from the crowd and welcomes him to partner with a unique circle. This invitation means membership in community, and membership means responsibilities, and responsibility means value. And everyone wants to have value.....to matter.

## **Chapter 4. “Building Men: Stage Two – Finding Your Way to the World of Men.”**

I enjoy how John Eldredge discusses the journey of manhood in his book, “Wild at Heart.” About this part of the initiation of a boy into manhood he wrote,

*“The history of man’s relationship with God is the story of how God calls him out, takes him on a journey, and gives him his true name.”<sup>vi</sup>*

Stage two of a manabout is called “orientation” and is the time when a father or mentor takes his son on a journey to discover his true name....his Divinely decreed identity. Eldredge is exactly right.

Exactly like following a map, reference points are required for proper navigation. The New World of Manhood is not something boys can safely jump into. Like running into an unfamiliar wilderness without a compass or map, boys get lost in the world of manhood without guidance. Inexperienced explorers tend to stumble, become fearful, move in circles, or never emerge without the aid of navigational tools. Boys left to their own devices, fail to navigate the path from adolescence to adulthood or they emerge with wounds and scares. Most also fail to develop many of the inner aspects of manly character, and this cycle tends to perpetuate itself in subsequent generations.

As an example, boys attempting to find love, or prove their manliness typically wander into the dense undergrowth of physical relations with girls only to discover later in life that they are inept at long-term, meaningful relationships. Whether it is pornography or immoral sexual contact, as soon as the passion fades, these guys come to realize just what impotent failures they are at the winning and keeping of a woman's heart. Living and expressing true love is much more demanding than succumbing to mere physical passion. Mature, manly love is an entirely self-less expression of value toward a woman. Without guidance, boys do not emerge from the jungle of their hedonistic wanderings. A man who has himself discovered the high ground of agape love must lead them.

Stage two is called "orientation," but is a bit misleading because "dis-orientation" actually plays as much a role as orientation. The military breaks-down new recruits in order to rebuild them. During a manabout, you'll place your initiate in unfamiliar surroundings for a similar purpose. In the case of my sons and me, we traveled to the wilderness of the Boundary Waters of Northern Minnesota. Being far from home, with no electricity, dependent on ourselves for food preparation, and in an untamed environment created the dis-orientation necessary for rebuilding to take place.

Any number of scenarios can be designed to create disorientation. One church I am familiar with, after a crash course in orienteering, sends a group of their young initiates (usually in teens) into a national forest with a map, a compass, and two young men who were initiates the year before. The experienced men offer no guidance other than to be present in case of emergency. It is the responsibility of the initiates to navigate from the drop off spot to a marked destination on the map. The unfamiliar surroundings is an opportunity for them to work through disorientation, get their bearings, and make corrections as needed. They emerge with an transformed image of themselves and acquire a confidence in their abilities not possible in a familiar context. The unfamiliar presents possibilities not likely to be considered otherwise and gives mentors a cleared slate for input and reshaping.

Since orientation begins with disorientation, selecting an environment that is safe, but unfamiliar on many levels is important. The more



unfamiliar the situation the wider the door of listening is forced for new input and greater reliance on a guide. In other words, the less your initiate can rely on himself, the more he will be in need of his mentor's advice, input, and direction. In the orientation stage, we want boys to be listening to us, trusting us and looking to us for instruction. In stage two the lines of communication are strengthened and broadened. He will need to be watching you, listening to you, imitating you in years to come and this temporary disorientation begins to develop that process.

My third son, Benjamin, is admittedly our most natural outdoorsman. From about the time he could walk he was stalking lizards, catching turtles, and collecting bugs. If we fish, Benjamin will catch the first and often the biggest. He even catches trout with his bare hands! So, Benjamin is quite at home in the outdoors, yet he was kept off balance as I led him into the wilderness of the Boundary Waters along the US and Canadian border. The map, the destination, the pre-planned camping sites were all in my possession. It was forced, but he had to lean on me, look to me, and listen to me. A boy must be placed in a situation where he **needs** to look to his mentor for counsel and direction. I'll borrow from Benjamin's notes as a real example of what goes on in a boy's heart when he is forced to rely on a guide:

*"Fear. Fear envelopes my whole being. Our canoe, that had seemed so steady and safe, now rocks with the battering of dark green waves. The last remnant of sunshine speedily disappears as skies are overwhelmed by a shadowy, rolling blanket of black. Dad points out that our next landing site is in view, but from the way the clouds look, we may not be able to see more than 30 feet ahead as soon as the driving torrent decides to fall. The wind is picking up and so are the waves; my whole body is shaking from the frigid Canadian water. It leaps ever higher as if reaching for me. My white-knuckled hands tightly grip the paddle as my muscles strain and heave against the waves, yet progress remains slow. Behind me, Dad's voice rings out against the wind, "Son, we've got to get to the landing site! Keep paddling! Don't let up! Give it all you've got, son!" I sense concern in Dad's voice, but my fear is replaced by resolve. I take his words to mind and paddle with everything in me. Soon my arms are burning with exhaustion, but I can't stop – I*

*can't give up – I can't surrender. Then, the tip of the canoe abruptly grinds to a halt on the rock-strewn beach.”*

As the boys' heart opens to your instruction, we suggest you seek five milestone agreements from him. These five agreements lay a foundation for biblical manliness. They are sure footings for a young man to build his faith, life, family, and career upon that will not disappoint or fail him because they spring from the central teachings of Jesus to love God and love neighbor as one's self.

The agreements we suggest you seek during the manabout are:

- **As a man, I will live in the fear of God:** An agreement and trust in the Designer's agape love and a willingness to learn and practice His ways and purposes.
- **As a man, I will honor my parents:** An agreement to value the experience and learnings of parents and mentors.
- **As a Man, I will practice unselfish devotion to family:** An agreement to put away serve, protect, and provide for family before self.
- **As a man, I will show kindness to my neighbor:** An agreement to do what is best for neighbor and friend.
- **As a man, I will love my enemies:** An agreement to do what is best for those who do their worst to me.

Around the campfire, out on the beach, in a tent, or under the stars dads talk to their sons about these matters and then call them to embrace them as their own. Tokens of commitment provide powerful reminders of these commitments and are commonly presented at these moments. The token is a very important tangible reminder of a verbal commitment. I've heard of men who exchanged a specially crafted medallion, a ring, or knife when their boys committed to sexual purity. For example, the ring, being circular, symbolized an unending commitment. The medallion had the head of a lion on it and symbolized a commitment to 'stand by the lion of Judah' which had been made by the groups that went through the event in years past. One father, after his sons agreed to live in the fear of God, presented his sons with a beautiful knife to symbolize the severing of themselves from the ways and values of the world. The symbol you choose should be something

worth keeping as a family heirloom. We recommend mentors put some thought into the symbols they'll use and load them with meaning. Choose something that might be considered heirloom quality knowing, even hoping, that one day your son will pass it on to his son who makes the same commitment. The manabout is more than the making of one man, it is making a thousand generations of them.

## **Chapter 5. “Building Men: Stage Three– Re-Entry: The Return of the King.”**

When the initiate returns, the community embraces him. A festive ‘Welcome Home’ is a profound component of the initiation process. This young man returns with a budding new image of himself and the community validates it by gathering to honor and recognize his manhood. He returns a man in mind, if not yet in body. I interviewed a thirteen-year-old returning from his manabout and asked, “How do you see your self differently than before the trip?” His voice high, freckles running across the bridge of his nose, still a boy in build, he looked up at me and without a blink of hesitation confidently affirmed, “I’m a man now.” Indeed, in his heart, he now was a man.

I asked, “How do you see yourself differently?”  
“I’m a man now,” he replied.

As we celebrate the births of our children with cake and songs, and the beginnings of new families at with food and dance, so every initiate’s community should prepare an elaborate celebration upon his return. I attended a college football game pre-game show a few weeks ago. It was amazing to watch from the perspective of all the symbolism and the involvement of the crowd to show their support of the team. The band

played, a flag squad encircled the field enthusiastically racing across the waving the team's colors to the cadence of the music. The mascot raced onto the field ahead of the team and everyone erupted in a roar of delight! The whole place shook with the enthusiasm and pride of seeing 'our boys' on the field. Wow! "This is it!" I thought. "This is how we should celebrate our boys returning, committed and devoted to biblical manhood!"

Now, while I doubt many of you will crowd a 100,000 cheering family and friends into your backyard when the boy arrives from his trip, I do believe some elaborate fanfare can and should be arranged. My wife is actually better at this than I am, so I delegated the food and the invitations to her. She left the content of the speeches and role of MC to me. For our boys, we asked four or five men whom the boys respected and had a relationship with to prepare a short speech for the event. They could read them or simply present them, but were asked to keep it to about 7-10 minutes and to talk to the boy about what they saw IN him that was admirable and what they saw FOR him as a man committed to the ways of God.

We had as many as 40 or 50 people attend and gather around our boys to bless, encourage, and offer prayers for them. Their mother spoke and welcomed "a new man" to our family. As adults and curious youngsters listened, our new man was asked to address the group and share his heart about his commitment to manhood. When his speech concluded, we asked that he stand at the center of the room. We then circled around him -- Patriarchs and his mother nearest to him, their hands on his shoulders or head; all others circled around this inner group. I prayed and blessed my son before God and community.

*"Father, here is your son. You see his new heart. You've heard his commitments. He is your man. Bless him. Equip him. Guide him. Protect him. Lead him. Empower him to live according to your will and your ways. Receive his agreements to fear you, honor parents, selflessly care for his family, show kindness to his neighbor, and love his enemies. Make your face to shine upon him according to the Name of Jesus."*

The entire community agreed with a collective, "Amen!" With that, a loud cheer went up with applause and there was an invitation to enjoy

the food, music, and fellowship. We rejoiced and celebrated into the evening. The safe return of this young man who would one day serve family, community, and church as a servant-hearted king was reason to rejoice, and the birth of a noble man should be celebrated vigorously!

## Chapter 6. “Building Men: Stage Four – Ethos: the Life of a Man.”

*“The noun ethos refers to the particular rules and values that organize people, although the ethos can vary from group to group. For example, in some cultures, individual rights might be highly valued, while in others the good of the community as a whole might be considered more important. The Greek root word ethos is related to “ethics” and refers to moral character. In rhetoric, an appeal to ethos means that a speaker attempts to persuade the audience that he is authoritative and credible.”<sup>vii</sup>*

We believe ethos is essential for a man about to be completely life altering because it brings the rite full-circle. Stages one, two, and three launch manhood, but ethos applies it. The initial stages occur in a few hours or a few days; ethos is life long. Ethos is the practical living out of the values and commitments made during the first three stages. Ethos is the fulfilling of the five key agreements verbalized and symbolized throughout the rite of passage. A man is only a man in theory until he lives like one in everyday reality, or as the definition above implies, until he “persuades the audience that he is credible.”

Prescribing the details of this stage is impossible in that it is dynamic in nature – happening on the fly, as it were. The lines of communication and trust opened between the father and son or mentor and initiate during the man about event become feeding tubes and lifelines during this final stage where an emphasis must be placed on deepening of the initiate’s first agreement to fear God. Fathers now help their sons

develop and incorporate routines and habits designed to daily aid the boy in learning how to be in the presence of God. My sons found the discussions and progressive practice of simple daily routines and basic spiritual disciplines in the workbook D60:Transformation Through Discipleship is very practical and also provided accountability. In just sixty days, spiritual routines and habits were formed that grounded them and created a lifestyle that included God in every day.

I encourage fathers to provide their sons with teaching and a practical model of how to daily present themselves before God,

I encourage fathers to provide their sons with teaching and a practical model of how to daily present themselves before God, and a method of accountability measure their progress. Don't delay! A dad should sit with his son the first morning back from their trip and begin leading him in this lifestyle. Any father who is not consistent in practicing his own daily spiritual disciplines should join his son in developing these habits for himself. Humility is a part of manhood, and a father's admission of his weaknesses is a blessing to his sons....so long as he is working to overcome them and not content with them. What a great launch to his manhood for you to join him in these morning adventures into the presence of your Father in Heaven!



## **Chapter 7. “Conclusion: Let Us Build Men.”**

Boys will be boys unless they are taught what it is to be a man. Our nation is flailing like a fish on the beach because it doesn't know its element is the ocean. Males were created with purpose, but outside of that purpose we flounder and fail. But, we believe a wave is rising. Something is stirring. Men are realizing they aren't where they should be and are searching for a place to thrive. Until we figure this out, our society will continue to suffer, but as fathers return, reconnect, and reach out to their sons and lead them by example and with supportive guidance to fulfill their Divine calling, our entire civilization will transform, and a great and beautiful transformation it will be. Now, without apology, let us be men!

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**We are interested in promoting and assisting other men or groups of like mind, vision, and purpose. If this is you, or you know someone we should know, please email us at [info@manabouts.com](mailto:info@manabouts.com)**

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- i "Fathers Disappear from Households Across America" by Luke Rosiak; The Washington Times, December 25, 2012.
- ii Gallup Poll, 1996. National Center for Fathering. "Father Figures."
- iii Dr. Eirini Flouri and Ann Buchanan, "Involved Fathers Key for Children," Economic and Social Research Council, march 2002.
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- v "Rites of Passage" (1908), Chapter 1 (translated by Monika B. Vizedom and Garrielle L. Caffee).
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- vii [Vocabulary.com/dictionary/ethos](http://Vocabulary.com/dictionary/ethos).