



## Young Men Preparing For Life

By Israel Wayne

*“Let no man despise your youth, but set an example for the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, and purity.” (1 Tim. 4:12) “How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to Your word.” (Ps. 119:9)*

We live in a culture that has effeminized young men. Young men are rarely encouraged to be leaders in their homes, churches and society. As parents seek to raise their sons in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, it may be helpful to make a checklist to see how these future leaders are measuring up to the Biblical standard.

**He must be blameless and have a good testimony.** To be “above reproach” means the young man must have a Teflon<sup>a</sup> reputation. Though people may seek to make accusations about his moral character, he must live in such a way that nothing sticks. We are to live such lives among the pagans that even though they would seek to malign us, they would see our good deeds and glorify God. (1 Pet. 2:12) We must have *“Sound speech which cannot be condemned, so that he who would accuse you may be ashamed, because he can find nothing bad to say about you.”* (Titus 2:8)

**He must be a “One-Woman Man.”** Even prior to marriage, he should be demonstrating his willingness to save his heart for the one woman that he will marry. If, as a teenager, he has a desire to give his affections to as many females as possible, you can be sure these habits won’t break easily later in life! He should be resolute in his desire to be emotionally and physically pure until the day he marries his life partner. Fornication, uncleanness, filthy talk, ungodly imaginations, have no place in the Christian life. (Eph. 5:3-5, Prov. 6:18) The best way for a son to develop a pure heart is to observe the whole-hearted devotion of his father to his mother. *“My son, give me your heart, and let your eyes observe my ways.”* (Prov. 23:26)

**He must be self-controlled.** *“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, walks about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.”* (1 Pet. 5:8) Temperance is a fruit of the Spirit, or an evidence of God living in his life. He must learn to control his body (Gal. 5:16, 24), his eyes (Ec. 2:14, Job 31:1, Matt. 6:22-23), his mouth (James 3, Prov. 10:11-32, Prov. 29:20) and his mind (Is. 26:3). A lack of self-control will result in sweeping poverty and broken relationships for as long as he lives. One of the best remedies for a lack of self-control is Biblical fasting. It gives the spirit a marked edge over the flesh.

**He must be respectable and well behaved.** Every young lady wants to marry a gentleman. She desires a husband who has good manners, and handles himself in a

principled and honorable way. Young men should not be rude or unseemly in any way. They should respect others, treating older men as fathers, younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, and younger women as sisters. (1 Tim. 5:1-2) The best test to know if a young man has victory in this area is to watch him with his siblings. Everyone can learn to treat guests well, but most men let down their guard with their family. He will not likely treat his wife better than he treats his sisters.

**He must be hospitable.** How does a young man act when company comes over? Does he slink off to his room and ignore them? Does he refuse to talk with them while he mumbles to himself and looks at his shoes? Does he enjoy serving and helping people? A sign of a good leader is someone who will look you in the eye, speak clearly, and converse intelligently. As opportunities arise he must meet each occasion with a desire to wash the feet of the saints. The root of hospitality is loving your neighbor and esteeming him better than yourself. In the context of your family there will be many chances to demonstrate this character trait.

**He must be able to teach.** He must be able to express truth through written and verbal communication. This is essential for any leader. *“Holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine to exhort and convince the skeptics.”* (Titus 1:9) A young man may be able to teach younger siblings, or smaller children. The primary ingredient, though, in being a good teacher, is being a good learner. If he doesn't receive instruction in the right spirit, he won't give it well either. For now he must be willing to learn, later he will teach.

**He must be patient.** A young man who is hasty will come to ruin. *“The thoughts of the diligent lead to abundance, but everyone who is hasty will lack.”* (Prov. 21:5) Patience is needed in waiting for a wife, in running a business (realizing you need to build slowly), in relating to people (especially a wife and children), and many other disciplines of life. 1 Tim. 6:11 reminds us that we must “pursue” or “follow after” patience. It doesn't just happen. We must press into it. This will be one of the first and longest lasting struggles a young man will encounter. Only by prayer and diligence will he obtain this fruit.

**He must be sincere and honest.** Does he tell the truth, even to his own hurt? (Psalm 15) Does he walk before you with an open face, concealing nothing? What a testimony to be like Nathaniel, “in whom is no guile.” (John 1:47) Popular speaker Ken Davis often encourages young men to live with “Nothing to hide, nothing to prove, nothing to fear and nothing to lose.” This is not an encouragement to live recklessly, but righteously, realizing that when we live abandoned to God we have everything to gain and nothing to lose. You will have sweet sleep at night knowing your conscience is clear before God and men. (Prov. 3:24) On the negative side, Psalm 55:23 says a deceitful man will not live out half their days. Hit this one hard if you want your son to live past 40!

**He must be tested (held accountable).** People love to shirk accountability. We don't like others meddling in our lives. Very rarely do you meet a young man who is properly submitted to Godly authority. Discipleship requires being mentored and instructed by

those older in the faith. Every Timothy needs a Paul. The maturity desired in the young man's life doesn't occur over night. It takes many years of instruction. A young man who is still immature in the faith should not be released into a position of leadership. *"But continue thou in the things thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them. And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."* (2 Tim. 3:14-15)

**He must be just and upright.** A proper sense of Godly justice is essential. He must make decisions based on Biblical absolutes, not merely on personal preference or human emotion. He must abhor what is evil and cling to what is good. (Rom. 12:9) Anyone who is in the position of a shepherd, whether to his family or to other believers, must be a servant leader. He must not take advantage of people or "lord it over others." (Luke 22:25-27) Dishonest weights and measures are an abomination to the Lord. (Prov. 20:10) He must desire truth in his inmost parts. (Ps. 51:6)

**He must be disciplined.** Being self-governed is vital for Godly men. They must have a clear vision, and direction for the path they choose. They need to know how to take responsibility for their actions. When a young man shifts the blame, tries to get out of his duties, or shirks work and commitment, he is too immature to be trusted. *"The glory of young men is their strength."* (Prov. 20:29) *"It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth."* (Lam. 3:27) Young men must be willing to labor and to follow through with their commitments. If they can't muster the ability to discipline themselves, parents must do it for them until the instruction becomes internalized. *"Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying."* (Prov. 19:18)

**He must be clothed with humility.** *"God resists the proud, but He gives grace to the humble."* (1 Pet. 5:5) The young man must be willing to admit that he still has much to learn. *"The man who thinks he knows something does not yet know as he ought to know."* (1 Cor. 8:2) He must realize that the pattern is for him to hold his tongue in the presence of age and experience. *"I am young, and you are very old, therefore I was afraid, and did not speak my opinion. I said, 'Days should speak and multitude of years should teach wisdom.'"* He must know that any wisdom residing in him is from the Spirit of the Almighty. (Job 32:6-8)

**He must be holy.** This is the highest calling of all. Holiness is not something you do, it is something you are. From this state of "being" holy, come holy actions. Holiness is the condition of the heart from which everything else flows. It isn't optional. *"Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord."* (Heb. 12:14) Being holy is possible only as we abide in God. Only His Spirit can make us holy. *"But as He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation. Because it is written 'Be ye holy, for I am holy.'"* (1 Pet. 1:15-16)

**He must not be over-indulgent.** Whether in food, recreation, material things, or any other area of life, he must show proper restraint. *"For the drunkard and the glutton shall*

*come to poverty, and drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags.” (Prov. 23:21) In Deut. 21:20, when a teenage son was found guilty of being a glutton and a drunkard, he was taken out and stoned by the men of that city. Surely we must take seriously the Biblical admonition to be restrained. It may seem a small thing that a son can’t hold to his diet or to the patterns of eating established by his family, but if he can’t control himself in one area, he is in danger in all areas. A son who sneaks chocolate between meals may become a husband who stops at the bar or pornography store on the way home. The root problem must be solved.*

**He must not be violent or easily angry.** Titus 3:2 commands men not to be violent, but to be “gentle, showing meekness to all men.” Our culture has a skewed view of masculinity. Where is the balance between being “macho” and being effeminate? It comes in bridled and restrained strength. Instead of glorying in his strength (Jer. 9:23) he is to use his might to worship God (Mark 12:30), not to harm others. (Ps. 11:5) *“A mighty man is not delivered by much strength.: Behold the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear Him, upon them that hope in His mercy.” (Ps. 33:16, 18)*

**He must not be quarrelsome.** Some people love to argue! They enjoy disagreement, and love debating with others. There is a time and place for discussing ideas, but to constantly batter others with a verbal barrage is totally inappropriate for the Godly man. In 1 Tim. 6:20 & Tim. 2:16, we are told to avoid “vain and profane babblings” which lead to more ungodliness. Ask any wife and she will tell you that nit-picking and quarreling were not virtues she looked for in her husband.

**He must not be a lover of money or material possessions.** 1 Tim. 6:6-11 *“But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness.”*

**He must not be selfish.** Servant-leadership is hard to come by these days. Everyone wants to be “top dog,” but no one wants to scrub toilets. Jesus said, *“The kings of the gentiles exercise lordship over them and they exercise authority upon them that are called benefactors. But it should not be so among you. Instead, let him who is the greatest among you be as the younger, and he that is chief as the one who serves.” (Luke 22:25-26)* Christ, as our example, taught perfect selflessness. Only as we empty ourselves are we filled with His Spirit. We must esteem others as better than ourselves. (Phil. 2:3) God, give us men! Obviously, we could expand this study to include every character trait known to the human race, but the few listed above are foundational. In order to have a functional society, we must, by necessity, have men who aren’t afraid to lead. They must be willing to reclaim their proper God-given roles, and stop delegating it to the women of our nation. Women should only be called to fill the place of women, they shouldn’t be expected to take up the slack for men as well.

As J.C. Ryle said in his book, *Thoughts for Young Men*: “What young men will be, in all probability depends upon what they are now, and yet they seem so easily to forget this. Youth is the seed time of full age, the molding season in the little space of human life, the turning-point in the history of man’s mind.”<sup>1</sup>

The time is now to begin training for the future. You can’t wait until you are married to begin. No matter what age, a young man must begin to walk out the traits that will direct him for years to come. Following our Lord’s example, we must grow in wisdom and stature, in favor with God and man. (Luke 2:52)

**Israel Wayne** is Homeschool graduate and homeschooling father, and the Marketing Director for Wisdom's Gate. He is the author of *Homeschooling From A Biblical Worldview*, and *What God Has Joined Together*, and is a frequent speaker at conventions, conferences, and seminars across the country.

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