

BOYS AND CLASSICAL CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

by Matt Whitling, Logos School

*Note: This article has been
prepared from an audio recording.*

According to the Department of Education, boys are one year to a year and a half behind girls in reading and writing. Of high-school dropouts eighty percent are boys. In England, Canada, Australia, Germany, France, and Japan—in fact, in thirty-five developed countries—girls outperformed boys in overall educational markers, with the most drastic difference being in reading and writing. Boys are six times more likely than girls to have a learning disability, three times more likely to be registered drug addicts, and four times more likely to be diagnosed as emotionally disturbed. They are at greater risk for schizophrenia, autism, sexual addiction, alcoholism, and all forms of antisocial and criminal behavior. They are twelve times more likely to murder someone and their rate of death and car accidents is greater than girls by 50%. Men commit 90% of major crimes, 95% of burglaries, and they comprise 94% of drunk drivers. And so when you look at the statistics, it can put certain people—moms in particular—into a froth of concern. There are people that are concerned globally for males and the pendulum swings back and forth. It is really fascinating.

There are other people that look at other data and say,

“No, we should be more concerned about our daughters, our girls.” In education especially, it’s interesting to watch the pendulum. One in particular has to do with what we think about boys and girls and the differences between them. Before 1960, we could title the mentality that was there as “gender absolutists.” Before the 60s, pretty much everybody knew that boys and girls were different from birth. As we moved into the 60s, that was still commonly held but the foundation had slowly begun to erode as to why they were different at birth or what it was that they held in common and what was different between the two. The second period that we can look at is 1960 roughly to the 90s, which we could title as gender relativists. There are people who were really into the idea that you could take a young man and raise him as a young woman or vice versa and they thought it was all the culture that you raise them in. It was all the nurture that was taking place that really set the gender direction that your child was going. There were some awful train wrecks that followed that. It was the sort of thing where you take a young girl and have her play with trucks, hand grenades, and plastic M16s and weapons, and then take the boy and give him teacups, forks and knives and spoons, and try to do role reversals. We saw some real messes in young people as

Matt Whitling has taught elementary and secondary classes at Logos School in Moscow, Idaho, for the past 18 years. He is currently the secondary and elementary principal at Logos. He is a parish elder at Christ Church and a trustee of New Saint Andrews College. Matt earned a BA at Fresno State University in liberal studies and taught remedial math in California before moving to Idaho.

a result of that sort of thing.

About 2005 to present, we are back to the gender absolutists. The primary reason for that is recent brain research that has taken place. You can see scientific evidence now where people are telling us “boys and girls really are different. And we have run tests that verify this.” Again we see the swing—there are pendulum swings in education when it comes to curriculum, when it comes to the nature of the children, and what teaching looks like. G.K. Chesterton has this wonderful quote about this sort of a swing. He says, “It often happens that science arrives eventually at a truth which common sense has derived without its aid a long time before.” And so brain research, which is fascinating, has really put us back squarely in this position where people have acknowledged there is a difference.

It is not all how children were raised that determine certain things. Some of the fruit of brain research work shows that girls hear better than boys. Girls are more easily distracted by noise. They are more interested in the human face. Researchers will put a little mobile over the crib—one of the sections is a human face, and one is a block that will have all different patterns. The girls gravitate toward the human face. They want to see the face. For the guys—whether a human face, a square, a rectangle, a triangle—if it is moving his eyes are on it. Girls tend to draw pictures of people, pets, and houses. They are more emotional and more collaborative, and tend to underestimate their abilities. Boys are more interested in moving objects. They prefer different colors than girls. They draw pictures of rockets, car crashes, and warfare. They overestimate their abilities. Regarding the drowning rate, for every one girl that drowns every year, 10 boys drown. That is really stark. The contrast between people dying in a swimming accident has a lot to do with girls who are looking at their surroundings and making a conservative judgment as to what they are going to do and, more often than not, underestimating their abilities. And it serves them well. Then you have

young men who look at a situation and say, “I can do it. Not only can I do it, but I can do it at night. I can do it in a body of water that is unknown. I have never swum across this river before and, in fact, I can’t see the other bank, and I am intoxicated, but I can do it.” It is a really interesting dynamic to look at, but when you look at some of the statistics and studies, it really shouldn’t surprise us that much. When we look at the way that young men are built, we find they are risk takers, they tend to rush off and lead. The fact that they are at the top of those sorts of charts—more men drown than young women—is nothing to brag about. But as you see culture erode, it would make sense that men are at the forefront and are leading the charge down.

Researchers have done little studies with college students. They will take a college age guy and put him in a room with six little pool rings. In the middle of the room is a little post, like a post for horseshoes. They have marked off a one-foot mark away from the post, two feet, five feet, ten feet, fifteen feet, and then twenty in this room. They will tell the guy he will be all alone and that his job is to get these six rings on that post. So that he can do this privately and on his own, the guy in the white lab coat exits. They have a little video camera in the room. The young man will go to five feet or ten feet away from the post and throw the six rings. The researchers will then put a young lady in the room. They will tell her the same thing: six rings on the post. She will go one foot away and get all of them on the post. It is not that difficult of a project. The guy is back there trying to get it from five or ten feet.

For stage two, they bring in two female observers who are peers, college-aged gals. They are watching her and they will say, “Six rings, do as well as you can!” She will go one or two feet away and ring all of them quickly. Then they bring the guy in. He has two young men, college-aged guys, sitting and watching him. If he was a five-footer on his own, he goes back to ten feet. If he was a ten-footer, he will go back to fifteen or twenty



feet because they are watching now. And his rationale is that he doesn't want them to think he is a wuss. And the result is 0 for 6 many times from 20 feet away.

This is called a "risky shift." When a young man is in a situation where there are observers, this risky shift takes place where he wants to take more of a risk. He was already risky enough on his own but he has people watching him: he backs up and doubles the difficulty level. Sometimes he fails miserably. The risk of him not getting one loop on the rod goes up and he takes that risk. He wants to take the risky shift.

Part of thinking about boys and classical Christian education is just getting it, getting the way that God has built them. There are weaknesses and strengths for both. This is nothing about girls just being smarter, obviously. Young ladies are made for a purpose. God is calling them to serve Him in a certain way in the kingdom. With young men, He is calling them to serve in a different way, with different roles. There are many similarities between the two but something that we need to recognize is that they are different. You are going to have young men and young women in your classroom

and it is good to be aware and ready for both. Here are some simple examples. Every year our sixth graders take a bike trip at the end of the year. It is a big celebration; they do a nice long bike ride up north and it's beautiful. When we are talking to the students before the bike trip, I will say, "Girls, let me have your attention. Ladies, throughout the trip make sure that you are including everyone. When it is lunchtime, sit together, talk to everyone, circulate, include. Don't go off into a little group and exclude people." And then I will say, "Boys, are you listening? STAY ON THE PATH!"

There are different temptations that boys and girls are going to face. Boys tend to do things that will endanger their lives. Just foolish. It is do and then think, afterwards. Girls' temptations can be more social. They communicate well. They understand their feelings a lot better than guys do. If you have a 17-year-old lady and she is having a hard time, you can sit down with her and talk it through and many times she can describe to you exactly what is going on. You can sit down with a 17-year-old boy and you can get about as much out of him as you could a 7-year-old boy. Emotionally, he

sometimes has no idea what is happening; verbalizing it is twice as hard. He is just in the midst, he is just living, it is all right here. It doesn't go that far down sometimes. Knowing who you are dealing with and what you are dealing with can help you to be strategic.

The goal is that you should want your son to imitate God as he carries out his masculine role in life. I would like to go through five different aspects of masculinity that you should want to see in your sons at home and that you should expect to see, and at least in a certain sense, nurture in the classroom. These are not things that I made up. If you have read Doug Wilson's book *Future Men*, he alludes to this. (William Mouser, the author of *Five Aspects of Man: A Biblical Theology of Masculinity*, says similar things.) Others have looked biblically at these attributes of masculinity and said, "Let's look for these things and try to foster them in our sons."

The first sort of thing that you want to see in your boys is to be *lords*. By lords we mean we want young men who exercise dominion, who are adventurous and visionary, the sort of young men who can take responsibility and who can deal with authority. Picture young people growing up. You might want your son to have a tree fort or some kind of fort that is on the ground. There are some parents that would rush off and purchase one and then have the company come and set it up in the back yard, and that is the fort for your son. I would encourage you to not think that way. Think about your sons being lords and being adventurous and building for the kingdom of God. Baby steps of building look more like buying them tools and helping them build their own fort. So the creative thinking, the dreaming up what we are going to build, and the process of actually building it is one of those masculine attributes that we want to see from a young age. Use Legos even—young boys building things with Legos. You could look at it and say lordship. He is learning to exercise dominion. He is creating. And then there is something that he has made. Parents that go in and do everything for their

sons miss out on some of those opportunities that they would otherwise have.

Second, we want our young men to be *husbandman*. The idea behind this is that we want them to tend and keep. In order to do that, they need to be patient, careful, and hardworking. In order to tend and keep, they have to have something to tend and keep. They need to be responsible for something. It could be a garden, it could be pets, it could be responsibility for mowing the lawn every week. But they need this. As parents, you need to be able to risk your stuff in order to allow your sons to be lords and husbandmen. What do I mean by your stuff? I mean all of your stuff. You need to be willing to let them break your things. You need to be willing to have them do jobs and have them do it not as well as you would have done it. You know that even when it comes to doing the dishes, it's a risk, right? As parents, if you teach your kids how to do the dishes they are going to break some. You need to be willing to just give it all away because you love your kids. You want to give them this responsibility and with that responsibility there is the potential that they are going to mess it up. There is a temptation for parents—as you give them the responsibility—to hover. I know what it is like to have a job and have someone who is supervising me in such a way that I am thinking about them more than I am thinking about doing my job. Some of us dads are like that. We give a job; we are going to have our son mow the lawn so he is going to be a husbandman. And dad is out on the porch watching for "holidays" the whole time and critiquing. If there is a problem he is out there, "Whoa! Come on over and let me tell you what you are doing wrong." Your boy says "yes, sir" and then he is going to try and not make that mistake again. The biggest thing on his mind is that dad is critiquing all the time, just breathing down his neck. As a father, you need to have some safety things in place and do some little practices with them, but then you need to set him free to do the job and go away. Sometimes as parents, you need to

create some space and then tell them, “Hey, when you are done we will take a look at it. We will see how it went.” It’s like someone editing your writing assignment. There are going to be some things that you miss. Let’s talk about it when you are finished. But let him do his job well. Let him catch some of his own mistakes as he does that, and then go help him and graciously show him some things that could be better next time, or that we need to clean up right now. But don’t hover all the time.

Another thing that I think is important for young men in this realm is they need to know what it is like to work for somebody else, and especially as your boys get older. For teens, if they are always working for mom or dad—especially if they are always working for mom—it is not the healthiest thing for them. Have them get a job where they have someone else who is their boss, someone else who gives them feedback and input as they work for money for that guy. It is great experience for sons to know what it is like to have a good boss, what it’s like to have a bad boss, and to navigate their life. Summers are wonderful! There are some people that will say, why take three months off? It should just be full-time school all the way through. But summers are a whole three months for your sons to work, to get experience doing different jobs, and to have different bosses. I think it is wonderful for young men to step out and get used to going away to work and having a boss.

So lords, husbandmen, and then the third attribute that we want to see is *saviors*. And by this I mean dragon slayers. They need to be strong, sacrificial, courageous, and good. They need to be the sorts of young men who rescue, protect, crush, kill, conquer, and win. In very plain terms, if your son is a wuss, he can’t do it. You should be able to get outside yourself every now and then; you have certain strengths as a parent, certain things that you are probably doing really well with your sons. Every now and then get out of that and try to see from an outside perspective. What are your blind spots? Sometimes in classical Christian circles, we can be really

good at academics—sons, young men that are really bright and really diligent in the classroom—and just wimps. You want to see that and try to hedge and round them out. Ask yourself: “Is this the sort of young man that could put a dent in the culture for the kingdom of God or not? Is he too much of a sissy? Is he a momma’s boy?” And if he is, then you have to think through what to do. How do you give him some attributes that would allow him to be a savior, a dragon slayer?

Your kids need to be good at killing things: weeds, insects, snakes. Our second son is Jed. When he was thirteen, we were on a trip to California to visit my folks. In four days he put down eight or nine rattlesnakes. When we go home to California over spring break, sometimes it is too cool for the rattlesnakes to be out. They are in their little dens, little rock piles. Every now and then you hit the den and they are out. Jed would go from rock pile to rock pile with his .22 rifle and shoot these rattlesnakes and then bring them in and say, “Pop, look at what I have.” It was a big rattlesnake. Then after lunch he’d come back with two sometimes! These are the times for mom . . . right? That’s why the balance is so important. God gave these children a father and mother to help balance each other out. Work together as a team. There are so many times when my dear wife has had to say, “Matthew, I need to go inside, now.” Because she knows that I am not going to discourage it. I see these things and I think, “Jed, look at you go!” And she thinks, “Oh, no!” She has to leave sometimes. But it is that idea of killing the dragon. It could look like little boys in the backyard with BB guns shooting soldiers, trying to shoot the soldiers over. Things that moms might think, “That is just a sin. He is murdering and murder is a sin.” Well, there are different ways to look at it. If your son is pretending to be a drunk driver and he is running people over on the sidewalk, that is a sin. That is the sort of thing that a dad should step in and say, “No, no, no, we do not do that.” Saviors are good. They are rescuing as they kill, they are still good,

and they are still rescuing. A situation like the drunk driver thing, that is a sin. If you have a young man that is pretending there is a sniper who is shooting the family members and the young man has to sneak up behind him and slit his throat, that is when dads should say, “Well done. That is good. You are a savior and you are doing the right thing.” Let’s be honest about it: they are going to have this natural urge to kill and destroy things, to blow things up if they have the right equipment. Your job is to try and funnel it and realize they have been made for a purpose. We are talking about putting a dent in culture. If you always come in and squash it and say, “That is stupid,” or “That is wicked” then you are pushing something down and pushing your son into a different category where he doesn’t have this savior aspect. You want to look and say, “Here is what is really good about that and here is what needs to be cleaned up, right?” You want to separate the wheat from the chaff and we will talk about that in a little bit.

Saviors—very important. Your sons are going to want to know when they get to fight. If they have a sister, talk to them about the fact that their job is to protect their sister. They will want to know “is this the time? Do I get to punch him now?” Almost always it is no; it is not now. The times when your son should be ready to punch somebody is when they are hurting her and the offender won’t stop. Then the brothers go and punch him and they keep punching him until he stops. It is the idea that you don’t start a fight, but once you get into it, you always finish a fight. It is their job to make sure they protect their sister, and in a classical Christian school there aren’t that many great chances. Most of the time people are behaving themselves. But you want them to be poised and ready in case they ever had to.

The fourth attribute is that we want our sons to be *sages*. We want them to be wise. And so they have to be smart, and shrewd, and well educated. They need to be teachable, studious, thoughtful. This is a balance. If they are a kiss-up in the classroom to their teachers, that is

not what you want. You want a son who sees the value in what he is learning, who is working really hard to do well and at the same time with a little bit of distance. It is not as though he is in love with all of his teachers and just waiting for another word of wisdom to come out of their mouths. He appreciates this, but there is a masculine distance where he says, “Yeah, I am learning what I can and basketball practice is in half an hour. I’m almost ready for that.” It is a balance of wanting to see them be wise and to take school seriously.

Part of what follows from this is they should be money smart, so give little baby lessons when they are making money from a summer job or you are paying them to do certain jobs. They need to learn early about tithing. 10% goes to the Lord, 10% is to save, 80% he can use for what he wants. I think it is important for boys to have 80% to blow sometimes, and by that I mean they save up. My oldest sons went through this airsoft stage. The older boys would look at a catalog where they could buy an airsoft rifle for only \$125. We had a two-week rule: before they could blow a wad of cash (\$50 or more) on something significant, (they had to sit on it for two weeks to think about it, to compare prices, and research, and make sure they wanted to spend \$100 on this airsoft rifle. So we gave a two-week buffer period and then we would let them waste it. It is really healthy! Sometimes you can cage your sons into never making a bad choice. Why not let them work really hard for that \$100? Buy that airsoft rifle. Shoot it for an afternoon. Have a friend step on it and have it just be toast. And then they realize: this is a piece of junk. To learn that lesson, \$100 is nothing. If they can learn it when they are 8 or 9 or 10 years old, what a valuable thing for them to understand business-wise! There is going to be all sorts of application later on.

The last attribute is they should be *glory bearers*. And by that we mean they need to understand that they are representatives. They are responsible and they need to be holy. What a great opportunity when you send your kids

to school for them to realize that they have a billboard that they are walking around with on the front of them and on the back of them that says, “This is a Whitling. This is a Christian kid.” Whatever they do, wherever they go, whatever they say, they are advertising: “This is what a child of God acts like. This is what a son of Whitling acts like.” They advertise even more so when they go to their summer job and are working for some boss who doesn’t know the Lord and he just wants them to do the job. They have a sign on them: “This is a Whitling. This is a child of God. This is a student at Logos school.” Boys in particular need to know that those things are printed on the front and the back of their billboard as they walk around. They are representing certain people and that is important for them. They need to be responsible.

Those are some attributes—there are more. Get the *Future Men* book and read that. I would like to take those ideas and say those are attributes we want. But you should also want to see your sons be like the godly men that God loves. If you look at the Scriptures, you think of David. God loved David. He was a man after God’s own heart. David was a warrior poet. We should want that for our sons. In our day and age especially, there aren’t a lot of warrior poets. You can find poets and you can find warriors, but to see those two elements in one person is pretty rare. You may ask, how do I make my son a warrior? There are a bunch of different ways, but I believe that in our day and age, in this culture, the warriors—unless you are doing something pre-military—our warriors are athletes, young men who are working hard. There is physical discipline. There is hard mental work. There is pushing yourself beyond what you think you can do. There is competition and combat. There is an enemy that you are fighting against. You have somebody who is giving orders. You can win or you can lose. Many times there are observers there watching to see how you do. For boys in particular, if parents say they don’t do athletics because of some kind of Christian ideal or some sort of classical goal that

they have, I think it is very difficult for them to create an opportunity for their sons to learn to be warriors.

Sometimes it should be dangerous. As an example, we had a great opportunity when our kids were young. We had a man in our congregation who loved boxing and started a boxing club. So our little guys, when they were teeny, learned how to box. Their gloves were bigger than their heads. They would go out there and learn how to take a punch to the nose. They wore head gear. For the elementary kids, I watched and it was all really healthy and good. There were no concussions going on. It was all slow motion. The gloves are so big and heavy. Every now and then someone would get hit in the nose. What a wonderful experience for a young man to get hit in the nose and have to deal with that and respond to it! That is something that we have lost as a culture, because we are trying to protect everybody so much. When I saw the junior-high school guys, 8th graders, and then high school and beyond, my thought was if they did this a lot they wouldn’t have as many brain cells as I would want them to have at the end of it. So I think there is a balance to it. If you have your kids boxing year round, and they are getting competitive, and they are taking hits to the head regularly, I would have concerns about that. Try to find a contact sport where you can have your kids from a young age learn how to take a hit and give a hit. Could they play football? Could they play lacrosse? Is there an opportunity where they could go not just contact, but impact at times? There is a reason why the paramedics are waiting there, because there is a risk of injury. How are you going to make warrior poets if the warfare is so tame and nobody could ever get hurt? Regarding poetry, these young men who are working hard and in some sort of a combat situation have got to be learning poetry, and then learning to write it on their own, loving it, enjoying it, and seeing it as a masculine activity. That is not easy to do—it is a real balancing act. It takes hard work. But that is what we are shooting for.

Let’s talk about immature masculinity. You are raising

your sons to leave. This can be hardest on mom, right? She wants to hold on tight. The whole point is for this son to go out, and that is why in the Scriptures, children are compared to arrows. If you are shooting an arrow, you have to pull the trigger to shoot your arrow. Taking aim, pulling it back, sharpening the arrow—all of that business is about when you pull, you want him to go. And you want him to hit the target. And you want him to kill whatever it was that you were shooting at. That is why you are aiming for vitals. You could raise your son in such a way that he is always within the bubble and when you finally pull the trigger you are praying that everything goes OK. Or you can raise your son where he has left so many times you can't even keep track of them all. He has been practicing leaving since he was teeny, little teeny leavings.

That is why I love preschool. It is not as though the academic content in preschool is something that parents couldn't teach. It is because Logos is a 2–3 day-a-week packed program, where it is just a little leaving, practicing going out and coming back. Another metaphor is that you want your sons to be like boomerangs; you want to send them out and have them come back—not just leave and hate this place and never come back but to go out, and then come back, and go out, and then come back. It is a practice of leavings that you are getting them ready for. The second thing is your sons, as they grow up, will exhibit behaviors that will shock and astonish their mothers. Our son Jed is our poster child for this. Jed always gets the most stories because he deserves it. He is the one that rides no hands down the steep gravel driveway waving at mom on his way down, and she sees it. She sees what is coming and she has to go inside. Jed is the one who has the frozen loaf of bread and sees the trash can across the kitchen and knows that he can throw it through the air and hit the trash can. He is not going to hit the glass front of the oven that is right next to the trash can. He breaks it. He is the one who shot the basketball through the middle window of the dining

room. Over and over again, you look at the situation and can think (mom thinks many times) “idiot, from top to bottom!” Dad has to come in and say, “OK, son, here is what was really good about that. You were aggressive, you were confident, you took a risk, you thought you could do it, and that is the wheat. Now here is the chaff. You need to learn to see around corners.”

For boys, mom says there is no corner that needs to be seen around. This is a linear equation. If you do A and B, you are going to get to C. I can see it coming before you even start thinking about it. But for boys, talk to them about seeing around corners. Tell them what they need to keep an eye out for. Tell them the qualities that you saw that are really good. Tell them, “Next time make sure that you do this. Make sure when you get to the bottom where the gravel is really soft, at least one hand on that handle bar is what you need, right? So you can navigate it.” It is this wheat and chaff business that I think young men need to be coached through instead of the whole business being squashed.

Since 2005, or roughly thereafter, people started to realize there are differences in boys and girls. Educators tend to be on the forefront of the pendulum, pulling and clawing and rushing off to extremes. Some educators have said we need to have single sex schools. There are differences and so they need to be in different locations at different times. Don't have boys and girls in the same classroom. I think that there are certain times and certain places where that is shrewd, where it is wise. God hasn't given us a definitive answer to the question. You as a parent, or an administrator, or on a school board have to look at it and decide what you are going to do. It's a wisdom call. When I look at classes like junior high P.E. in particular, I want the guys and the girls separate. Some of it is modesty issues. Some of it is warrior mentality issues that we are trying to teach the boys. Some of it is just the sports that you are working on that might be specific to a particular gender. But even with that said I have observed some pretty interesting things.

I am the junior high boys P.E. teacher and have the 7th and 8th grade boys every afternoon. Seventh period I run the mile with them. Our girls P.E. teacher, every now and then, will be sick or can't be there, and I will cover for her and so I will have the guys and the girls together. When we run the mile together, I will have a third or almost a half of my guys PR (i.e., personal record) when they are running with the girls. In other words, they run faster when the girls are there with them. They are giving me more when the girls are present. I think of my own home. I have six boys and one girl and dinnertime conversation. As I was growing up, my dad would interject occasionally and say, "That is not a dinnertime subject." My brother and I realized what he was talking about. There are conversations that have gone around my table that my dad would have wanted to veto, way before I did, because it is a pretty masculine group that I have. But if you put one or two young ladies that are of similar age to my sons at the table, it changes the tone of what is going on there. It is kind of like running the mile, where we step up because we realize that the audience is a little bit different. I think that there are some things like that in a classroom dynamic. If you think that just putting all the junior high boys in a classroom together is going to be a blessing to them, sometimes it might be. I know what it is like to coach all guys together and there are advantages to that in a combat situation. But it can be, tone-wise, not always what you want in a classroom every day, day in and day out. I really appreciate the balance of having both in the classroom. It doesn't mean it is bad to separate them for certain amounts of time. If they are excluded completely, if you say the boys have to be separate from the girls all the way through, I think there are dangers in that. I don't think it is healthy all the time. When we go into a worship service, we don't separate the men and women. They sit together. When you look at a young man and a young woman, they have more in common than they have different between the two of them. They are both made in the image of God.

They both should be studying the same sorts of subjects. The academic standard should be really similar between the two of them. There are some particulars that if you want to tweak something you can, but it's good to keep your eyes open when you do that.

Are schools rigged against boys? There are people that think that maybe they are. My encouragement to you is to say, no, not necessarily. Make sure that is not the case. Part of it is simply understanding. If you have a school that has a woman administrator and all lady teachers and no men on campus at all, then you need to compensate for that. You may not have the balance that you want, *de facto*. You may need to do things specifically to make sure that you are not catering toward things like this. Say you are going to give a citizenship award—we call it the Knights Award, or faculty commendation. Especially if you have all female staff, make sure that you are not giving that to all the good girls and all of the boys that act like them. That is not what you want. You want to see young men with masculine goals. They are going to be taking dumb risks at times. They are going to be disagreeing with teachers in a respectful way at times. But you should be able to see and appreciate masculine attributes. Encourage it and separate the wheat from the chaff. See that you are not trying to have one ideal or one mold that everybody needs to fit into, and it is a feminine one. If you have a mix, if you have a balance between the two, it can be fine.

A quick thought on leadership versus separatism. If you want your sons to be leaders, they have to have peers. If you want your son to be the leader of the football team, he has to be on the football team. You can imagine situations where you think you are preparing him for something, but it is all hypothetical. You haven't put him in a realm where he could actually do what you want him to be able to do. In order for him to be a leader, there have to be people that might follow him, hypothetically. If you want him to be a good leader, he has to be going in a good direction. He has to be a godly

young man. He has to be the sort of guy that other people his age would look at and say, “I would follow him.” That is not an easy thing to concoct all by yourself. It is challenging. If you are homeschooling and you have a son and he has three younger siblings, you may think he is a leader. Well, of course, he is a leader. He is the oldest of his siblings and you have put him in charge all the time. Put him in a group of his peers and then you will see whether anybody would ever want to follow him. That is part of the task of the warrior poet. You have to ask yourself if there are godly friends around him that would rub off some of his rough edges so that he is prepared to lead and someone might possibly follow after him as he goes in that direction. Your project in this whole thing is that you want to send him out to do damage. You are sending him out to do damage and to put a dent in the culture for the glory of God, for the kingdom of God. Those sorts of young men are not easy. They are not convenient. There are times when they are difficult to deal with. Have you watched the *Lone Survivor* movie? Look at Navy Seal type guys. Ask yourself, to be really good at combat, how inconvenient would it be for a mom to have to raise that sort of a guy? Is this a polite and gracious and soft spoken, sit-with-his-hands-folded-in-his-lap sort of guy? The sort of people that are going to go out and do warfare are the sort of people who are a handful at home. You are looking at a coin. One side of the coin is really hard, really challenging. We have a young man with a strong will and he is not afraid of mom. Then you look at the other side of that coin and you think, “What better material for a warrior than that?” He’s hardheaded, aggressive, won’t stop, keeps charging, a little bit careless and risky at times. You need that at times—someone to send in first. That is going to be some of your sons; you want to foster that and make sure that they are ready to go. Send them out.