

A Prayer for a Son to Walk the Way of Jesus

What is it, Lord, to be a man?
What is it to raise one?

In a context where men
Can be almost anything,
We pray for stamina
To raise a son
Who values gentleness
Over strength,
Who values peace
Over power.

Liberate us, Lord,
From the binds
Of toxic masculinity
In our home
And in our hearts.

Rescue us, O God,
From the trappings
Of celebrated violence
In our words
And in our wonderings.

Make us parents
Who welcome emotion
And tenderness.

Remind us that our child
And indeed we ourselves
Are created in Your very image.

Help us fathers
To model self-awareness,
Self-control,
And self-compassion.
For our son is watching
A world where men
Are encouraged to run
The other way.

Help us mothers
To model self-respect,
Self-empowerment,
And self-compassion.
For our son is watching
In a world where women
Are encouraged to shrink away.

We pray for our son as he grows,
Shooting up like a dandelion
After a summer rain,
His legs leaner,
His heart fertile ground.
Help us tend to his soul.
Cultivate in us a sense of awe
For Your creation.

O Creator,
For his developing brain
And body,

PRAYERS FOR NURTURING FAITH AND CHARACTER

We ask for discernment.
Surround him with
Friends and family
Who model lives
That honor themselves
And each other.

As we peek out the window
At the oranges and pinks of a glorious
sunset,
Help us point to You,
And help our son see the holy artist
Within himself.
Let us create with him
So he becomes a cocreator with You.

As we walk along the wooded path
Under the canopy of great oaks
Dropping acorns underfoot,
Help us point to You
And help him see the holy protector
Within himself.
Let us nurture him
So he becomes a nurturer like You.

As we take our seats on the hard plastic
Of the crowded subway,
Packed with grandmothers
And babies and college students,
Help us point to You,
And help him see the holy unity
Within Your family.

As we sit upon the shore,
Skipping a smooth stone on the resting
water,
Help us point to You,
And help him see the holy grace
You have planted within him.

Show us how to raise
Artists and adventurers,
Thinkers and teachers,
Nurturers and navigators.
Let them run with abandon
The race set out for them.
Give them grace; give them grit,
For they're inheriting a world
That says strength means
Bigger, faster, louder;
That says winning is
Conquering, collecting, conquering.
But perhaps we can lead them
To a Kingdom
That flips upside down
Our notions of
Power and of victory,
That points them to
The tenderness of a Shepherd,
The benevolence of a King,
The outstretched arms of a Father.

Help us listen to our son
So he will learn to listen first and speak
slowly.

Help us cry with him
 So he will learn tears are holy indicators,
 Of what it is to be human.

Help us embrace him
 With open arms
 After foolishness
 And wayward wanderings,
 For You model parental mercy.

We pray for our son,
 That he would be empowered
 While divesting his power,
 That he would honor himself
 While honoring his most marginalized
 neighbor,
 That he would have courage
 To turn away
 From the temptation of excess,
 From the delight of more.

God, we are greedy in our prayers,
 And still we ask for more:
 For joy in our son,
 For delight and for celebration,
 For the holy sound of
 Giggles and hearty laughs
 To emanate from his
 Very soul.

Our culture has not modeled well
 What it is to raise a son,
 What it is to be a man.
 But we have hope

Because we have a heavenly Father
 And a compassionate Son
 And a Holy Spirit who will never
 leave us.

It is in the name of the triune God
 That we raise our boy
 And that we pray these things.
 Amen.

Genesis 33; Titus 3:2; Matthew 6:33; James 1:22; Ephesians 6:11-12