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## Mothers and Sons

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# Mothers and Sons

Some researchers have claimed we are in the middle of a “boy crisis.” Men are now only 40 percent of college graduates and boys make up 55 percent of the high school dropouts.



▲ Alina M. Baltazar

Education has become even more important than in the past with less opportunities for well-paid manufacturing and manual labor jobs. Boys also have higher rates of being diagnosed with attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and are more likely to participate in risky behavior such as texting while driving, criminal activity, and alcohol and drug abuse.

Although a majority of children are being raised in two-parent households, children are increasingly being raised in single parent homes with a vast majority of those being female-headed homes. In addition, there is an increasing amount of single by choice households where women choose to adopt or give birth as a single woman. It is more important than ever to examine the mother-and-son relationship, the unique challenges they face, but also the special bond that can be formed. Jesus showed the special connection he had with his mother when he was on the cross. *When Jesus saw His mother and the disciple whom He loved standing nearby, He said to his mother, “Woman, behold, your Son!” Then He said to the disciple, “Behold, your mother!” And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home* (John 19:26-27 ESV).

It’s true that boys and girls have more things in common than different, but sometimes those differences can

cause relationship difficulties between mothers and sons. Moms may not understand why her son is always on the go, obsessed with gaming, takes more risks, is physically aggressive, or doesn’t care for his personal hygiene. Not all boys are this way, but these are common frustrations.

As boys get older, they start pushing their mother away when they begin wanting to identify more as a male. This can be a challenge in female-headed households. Boys growing up without a father in the home have higher rates of running away, school drop-out, incarceration, substance abuse and suicide. It is during adolescence when boys are especially in need of having a father, or a father figure, so he can learn the road map to becoming a man.

Moms may have difficulty adapting to the changing mother-son relationship when her sweet little boy becomes an independent man. The relationship often starts out very sweet with some little boys saying, “I want to marry you when I grow up.” When a mom can understand normal male behavior, she can learn to be more accepting of the gender differences and celebrate his strengths.

Moms play a powerful role in the emotional development of boys. When moms can give unconditional love, praise for his bravery and independence, and teach him how to manage negative emotions, it can go a long way in helping him develop emotional intelligence. A healthy emotional bond between a mother and son can translate into a healthy emotional bond with his future wife. ■

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# Be Daniel Every Day

Every day, we face the king’s banquet table, inviting us to indulge. For example, it used to be that one could get gas at a gas station. That’s it. “Just fill’er up!”

Now we are faced with the decision of Daniel daily. The barrage of junk food, caffeinated drinks in all concentrations, alcohol and tobacco is laid out before us at every turn. Regardless of our economic status, we have choices as never before.

Sadly, the poor, who can’t afford to be sick, have less healthy choices available. Food deserts — places that lack availability to fresh, wholesome fruits and vegetables — dot the landscape. The chronic disease burden of these communities is staggering. But that doesn’t have to be the case amongst us.

We are given counsel to cultivate. “When right methods of cultivation are adopted, there will be far less poverty than now exists. We intend to give the people practical lessons upon the improvement of the land, and thus induce them to cultivate their land, now lying idle. If we accomplish this, we shall have done good missionary work.” (Ellen White, *Letter 42*, 1895)

Our health message should begin with inspiring kitchen gardens for all. Being outside, breathing fresh air in the sunshine, while using muscles the winter months made us forget we had; it doesn’t get better than that. Trust in God grows with every seed that becomes a bearing plant.

The plant-based diet to which we aspire is best achieved from food we cultivate. Simple methods of both preparation and preservation can yield a year-round rainbow of naturally, nutrient-dense foods. Yet, many of us are intimidated by the prospect. Here are a few tips to get started:

## SIMPLE RULES

- **Start small:** Decide just a few staple crops you want homegrown

- **Proper timing:** Prepare the vegetable beds before planting time
- **No wastage:** All plant matter is used for compost or mulch
- **Position matters:** Spacing must be precise for best growth
- **With joy:** God made us to farm; rejoice in the work

## CROP TYPES TO ROTATE

- **Leaves:** kale, cabbage, Brussel sprouts, basil
- **Legumes:** peas, beans, soy
- **Fruits:** tomatoes, peppers, eggplants
- **Roots:** carrots, beets, parsnips

## TRANSPLANT OR DIRECT SEED

In general, transplant seedlings of the leaves and fruits; directly plant the seeds of legumes and roots

## SEED/SEEDLING CARE

- Germinating seeds and seedlings should be kept moist
- Water thoroughly after planting (either)
- Mulch around transplants (not touching)
- Water every day for three days
- Water two times per week thereafter

Now is the time to get started. Similar to Daniel, let’s purpose in our heart that we won’t defile our self with the king’s fare. Rather, delight our self in our King’s classroom — the garden. Let its food be both our medicine and our ministry as we share of its abundant life.

*Still other seeds fell on fertile soil, and they produced a crop that was thirty, sixty, and even a hundred times as much as had been planted!* — Jesus (Matthew 13:8 NLT) ■

*Joy Kauffman, MPH, president and founder of FARM STEW International, www.FARMSTEW.org*



▲ Joy Kauffman