

## **Mothering Little Men From Mars: What Men Want Moms to Know**

Mothers, in my opinion, are much too protective. Most boys want to live on the edge, to experience danger, and their single biggest obstacle to that desire is mothers. I have written about what it is like to go on a father son camp out. Boys running around with hatchets, sticks, playing in the fire, etc... and dads sitting back and drinking coffee and paying little attention to the boys. Now we don't want to make dads of the moms so there must be some middle ground that each can strive for. Mothers would want to prevent pain for their child, but pain is necessary for learning. Mothers must risk letting their sons feel pain.

As soon as mothers can, while every ounce of them rebels against it, they must treat their sons as men. Resist all attempts at keeping them as their babies. Mothers seem to never want their sons, especially their youngest son, to mature. Many mothers do all they can to enable their sons to be as dependent on them as possible. Don't!

Getting dirty is one thing that distinguishes boys from girls and from Mom. "On our farm, dirt meant fun, dirt meant work, dirt meant build, dirt meant animals, dirt, dirt, dirt, it was the most common element in our existence."

We could get dirty, we could play FOOTBALL and get to hit and be hit... that is the coolest thing about being a guy, we could go to war and do it legal like. We could jump on calves at branding time, we could gather a herd of toads and not be considered strange, we could play with trucks and tractors in the dirt. We could learn to build, weld, drive a tractor all at an early age. We could have friendly boxing matches with our best friend. We could tame wild animals, build forts in the feed, dig kivas in the dirt, paint ourselves with colored sand stone and pretend to be Indians. We could eat gross stuff and string spaghetti through our nose and out our mouths.

I realize that girls can do these things also, but most would not want to and those who did would suffer ridicule from most for doing so. Right or wrong, a boy doesn't have to suffer that ridicule.

It took me a long time to learn that I could do all those things, be a real male, and still let my tender feminine side show. I could really be both once I had proven I was a male. Once I had established that I was indeed male, then I could be a man. I wish I had learned that about 15-20 years before I did.

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Allow them to trample through the woods, camp out, jump homemade ramps with their bike, wrestle w/ friends, smell musty/sweaty, experiment with hammer/nails, jump out of a tree onto the trampoline, crawl through the mud while playing army, etc....

Let them know that you will always be there for them when they are ready to talk or need a shoulder to lean on (usually after 11pm :-)) give them their wings and find joy in their attempts at spreading their wings and flying.

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A boy has to prove himself a male before he can prove himself a man. First to his father and then to his peers, all the while proving it to himself.

I didn't take any sports my 8th grade year. I had knees that hurt all the time and I was somewhat a pansy, something my older brother desperately tried to prevent, but still happened growing up with a twin sister and an over protective mother. (My mother, bless her, had every reason to be over protective. Her first son was run over by a pickup at two, thrown out of a fast moving car when suicide doors were in use, had his left arm smashed and nearly ripped off in a car wreck, and poisoned to where he should have been dead when he was sixteen. It is no wonder that his 8 year younger brother would have incurred her intense protection.) I chickened out and didn't take any sports. I paid a big price for that in junior high. So come my freshman year I was determined that no matter the cost I was going to play football. I was a week late because my family was on vacation and everyone was in shape and hitting hard when I arrived. It was literally "hell" for me, but I knew that I had to make my stand or it was over for me as a male in that environment. You might ask how could you know that then. I don't know, I guess it was that intuitive side of me. I had one last chance to survive as a male and I had to take it or be satisfied with who I was. About noon each day I would become sick because I dreaded practice. I couldn't sleep at night for worrying about practice. They were so hard and full of pain. I

couldn't quit, not just because I had something to prove to myself, but because I could never be one of the guys with my class again. Right or wrong, three classmates out of 16 chose not to play and they kind of just faded away. I knew that would be my fate if I didn't last, and last I did and became all state my junior and senior years. I proved to my peers (and myself) that I had what it took.

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I think you need to tell these Moms that at some point, boys will begin to separate from their Moms emotionally. Moms need to be prepared for that and too understand what is going on and, this is the hard part, don't take it personally. Moms should encourage it, within appropriate limits.

Can I add that when boys, for whatever reason, are not "naturally" separating from their Moms, the Moms need to be a little bit proactive. Maybe asking their sons to do "manly" things around the house (fix something) even when Mom could do it better herself. Or try and convey to him that she notices his masculine features (especially in his friend's earshot!). One mother's affirmation of his masculinity can defeat 100 of his friends calling him a fag.

One more. Moms, NEVER call your boy a "sissy" or say "you're acting like a girl." You may be greatly reinforcing what he's hearing at school.

Don't let him dress like a woman at Halloween. I guess that's two more.

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1. Respect your son's privacy. Knock before coming into the bedroom, bathroom, etc. It's amazing how many parents don't do that.
2. Allow your son to make mistakes and poor decisions without too much intervention. Obviously, you don't want them to be harmed, but learning to make decisions as a young man and then learning the consequences is a good lesson.
3. Don't get all mushy, gooey with your son around his friends. That is extremely embarrassing.
4. Don't suppress his emotions by saying, "You shouldn't feel that way, you shouldn't get mad, etc." Teach your sons to express their emotions in healthy ways and that it is OK to have emotions.
5. Big boys do cry and it is OK to express that emotion.

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DON'T expect too much of your son academically—encourage it of course, but don't take it for granted. It is possible to get stressed out even as a teenager by overly high expectations from your mother.

Encourage romantic involvements and never make fun of them. My mother did not encourage me in a relationship with a Christian girl during my formative years and look where I ended up! [*struggling with unwanted homosexuality*] She thought the girl was not good enough for her son.

Encourage sports, even at the expense of some academic subjects. Being well rounded is very important for a healthy development and good self-esteem in a child. Also encourage your child to make his own decisions and mistakes (as Jeff mentioned)—it will help them a great deal in later life.

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NEVER (if a divorcee) say things like "you're just as bad as your father," or other negative comments about the boy's father. That did a lot of damage to me as a young teen—it creates a feeling of shame being associated with masculinity.

Encouraging masculine pursuits/ friendships is very important too.

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Quote:

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So suffering ridicule is one of the major wounds that so many SSA-afflicted guys have sustained. They get ridiculed for not being "male" enough, right? For gravitating to the more gentle/sensitive/creative, inaccurately-labeled "feminine" activities and giftings?

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Ridicule is a very powerful weapon of the enemy.

For me it was at the hands of my brothers on several occasions. Probably more than I remember but the ones that stand out still stand out and were hindrances to my development. Both were body and bodily control issues that little boys do not need to be shamed of in public in front of the neighborhood kids, especially by their own brothers

I had the measles during the summer and so I was in bed in only my undies. My brothers tricked me into running outside in my underwear, by acting like the house was on fire, and the neighborhood girls were outside waiting. There was much laughter and finger pointing all at my expense. Total embarrassment. I know afterwards that I went outside in swim trunks when necessary, but I never felt comfortable just being outside without my shirt on in front of the neighborhood kids. Body shame is what I would have to call it.

Being a bed wetter was bad enough as it led me to have socialization problems with other boys because I felt I was defective and had something to hide. What was worse and caused more shame and body issues was when I was being tortured/teased in front of other kids about my bedwetting, by my middle brother. Also because I felt like I was the only one of the boys I knew who had this problem, I perceived they were all better than I was, normal, where as I was not. I would not accept sleepover invitations, even though at times I was pretty much forced to by my parents, due to my bedwetting and it was a normal thing to do sleepovers.

The one time when I was recording my voice to the Beatles I was about 6 or so and my middle brother found it and played it back for my older brother in front of me. It was bad I know, off key and all, but what I did not need was the ridicule from my own brother over my lack of ability to sing. So I never did that again, nor did I pursue anything of a sensitive artistic nature like you mentioned above, why would I?

I have a good voice and have been told on more than one occasion by clients on the phone, when I was a telephone operator, that I had a great voice and should be on the radio. I like to sing and can sing on key. Just in the last couple of years have I come to realize I have a desire to sing, for other people and God to enjoy, and would like one day to do so at Church for the congregation. These ridiculing moments carry great weight that may take years to or may never be overcome.

Well that is my two cents worth on ridicule. Yeah I felt less because of it and it had much to do with my becoming homosexual. The attention I received over my body when I was molested and then subsequently was introduced to full fledged sex with another boy, who I am now sure had also been molested, was fulfilling a deep felt need to be accepted for me, in my own skin, like I had never been accepted before. Even though it was wrong attention and acceptance, it was what it was, and after the first time it happened I wanted it again, craved it even.

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I can REALLY relate to the "body shame". I didn't have older brothers but rather classmates that were ridicule experts. Because I never started puberty until I was 17, everyone was "older" and unsupervised locker rooms were hell for me. Even as a senior in HS, freshmen had an easy time with me. When I was first seduced by a man, it was because he continually complimented my body and was gentle. He was the only one that seemed to recognize that I was a worthy male; that I had equipment someone might desire. Unfortunately, that took everything in the wrong direction. But continual positive reinforcement from gays and their preference for "smooth" bodies and continual negative reinforcement from "straights" has it's affects to this day. One of the worst offenders of negative reinforcement were my parents (though they didn't realize it). Because I was physically immature, they treated me like my 4 year younger brother. I was never really treated like an 'older, wiser, more mature' brother. We were more like twins because we were the same size and physical maturity level (until he passed me up when I was 19). The situation robbed him of an older brother, too. BTW, he ended up with SSA, too.

Age is such a BIG factor in a boy's life. How many times to you hear, "I'm 12 AND 3/4"? We late-bloomers (which are rare these days) want to be treated like our numerical age (or older) and not by how tall we are or how much body hair we sport. You may snicker, but it IS a big deal. I think my life would have been quite different if at 15 my parents had asked the doctor to give me a jump start. If I hadn't lived with so much body shame/hate I wouldn't have so wrecklessly given my body away to someone else.

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Let us boys explore nature!!!!

Don't baby us from cuts and bruises!!

Nurture and care for us but PLEASE don't treat us like Barbie dolls. (Oops, personal experience)

Give us some PURE encouragement without any hidden motives.

If possible don't give us the bird and bees talk. Let dad or another man of integrity (preacher, uncle or anything but mom) give us the talk.

Let us fail and promote failing as a normal thing. If I make a C in school praise me for that. We are not your "perfect little angels" and honestly we can't live up to that expectation either.

Let us fail more on our own than in your own expectations.

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Your Children:

And I hope you will have them. Watching your child come into the world is one of the most emotional and spiritual experiences I have ever had. Conceiving them was pretty good too. Once you have them, however, I caution you to not react to them as maybe your parents did to you. No matter what the situation, stop, take a breath and look in their eyes.

Remember you will appear huge to them and they are totally dependent on you for everything. They will learn of God's love for them, forgiveness, and discipline based on how you model those things while they are in your care. The Bible has great advice for dads and moms. Be firm where you need to be for their safety and well being. Give grace where you can and above all, love like this is the last time you will ever see them. Hug freely, listen carefully, and speak softly. A child does not have the language skills to tell you what they need. For this you will have to be attentive to body language and facial expressions. They may not say "I am sad and need a hug." If you are attentive you will be there for them. Like a woman a child needs security and they too find that in knowing their dad's and mom's love them no matter what.

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If dad is not engaging his son, encourage him to do so. If dad will not, or is not present please quietly arrange for a trustworthy man to do so. Preferably one with a son the same age, so he can just be included in on what is already taking place. Perhaps two dads and two sons together if one dad tends not to engage. Your son needs man time. Someone to make things with, someone to teach him how to fish, to go camping with etc.

Encourage your son, whether it is something that he does well, or is something that he needs to work on.

If your son is bullied, teach him (or find someone to teach him) how to defend himself, and make sure he knows it's OK to do so, even if he does get in trouble at school because of it.

You are the parent, act like it. It's OK to say no on occasion, but make sure you make it stick.

Make sure he realizes what inappropriate touch is and what to do about it. It is better for dad or another man (of integrity) to do this, but it needs to get done and at an age earlier than you would expect.

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Quote:

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I totally second this. I would add that in addition to "stranger danger," advise on the danger of friends and family too and that it is always ok to say NO and tell no matter who it is. And the earlier the better; kids as young as 3 and 4 are being targeted these days.

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Right, friend. I think one reason youngsters don't "tell" when they are being molested is that they don't have a vocabulary to talk about it. How can they talk about something they have no words for? Make sure they have a way they could talk about it if they need to. Talking about what has happened (abuse) to others is a good way of putting the words and concepts into their heads. They would have something to draw on if the need arises. And yes, maybe moms shouldn't be the ones to talk about the birds and bees to her son but SOMEONE has to make sure it is done (and preferably before he is 17).

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First, about the Barbie doll stuff. A) Don't let the neighborhood girls talk your son into dressing in a dress and then walk him around the neighborhood. My wife let this happen to my two/three year old son. Hacked me off. B) Barbie dolls are not for boys. Again, my wife and her friends thought it was great fun to have a birthday party and let the girls give him Barbie dolls. Perhaps I am wrong, but give him a G.I. Joe or something that he can pretend he is blowing things up with. Even we sensitive types like that.

If there is trouble at school, do everything behind the scenes. Don't let the other guys see you going to the principal and complaining that little Johnny is being picked on. Like it was said earlier, give him the tools to defend himself and let him stick up for himself. The one time my oldest got in trouble for something other than truancy was when he defended himself against a bully. I don't care what the vice principal said (although he didn't get suspended) he was right and I refused to punish him when he got home. Told him I was proud of him.

Spend lots of time telling your son how proud you are of him. When he tries to do something good, like build a birdhouse that even the birds wouldn't walk into, tell him you are proud of him for trying and he will get the hang of it eventually.

Let him make mistakes. Never let him think that grades are the most important thing in life. Important, yes, but if he is doing his best, don't harp on him.

Expect the best from your son. But if you're not going to help him achieve his best, then place the blame on yourself, not him.

Make sure there is a trustworthy man in your son's life. Someone who will work with him and give him the time to grow. Someone who will let him make mistakes and not take the saw out of his hands just to get the job done. If he doesn't make mistakes, he will never learn.

Once you start something, never give up. Fight through to the end. The only failure is the failure to try.

Never make a comment about his body, unless it is positive. Joseph mentioned the puberty thing. Can't tell you how it upset me at 17 when my mom mentioned, in front of my 21 year old brother that the doctor said I was behind developmentally. Never, never do that to a boy.

Pray. Pray. Pray.

Finally, make sure you let your son know that his worth is not in what he does or what other people see. His worth is in who he is, a uniquely loved child of God and nobody can ever take that away from him because nobody is bigger than his heavenly daddy.

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3 things to tell you son:

I love you!

I am proud of you.

I want you to know I think you are really good at \_\_\_\_\_.

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Just make a bigger deal about the good that he does, than about what he does wrong.

Example: The son gets an A in an exam and the mother says, "That's good, sweetie." But if he gets a D, the mother rants, "What's wrong with you?! Are you serious? You're grounded! I expect better from you! You think this is a joke? This is your future!" And on and on and on.

I'm not saying to not get concerned and make sure he does better. I just don't know why we don't make a bigger deal of the positive than the negative. I think this would encourage boys as they grow.

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I wish my mum realized I didn't spend any time with dad. If she pushed us two together more, things might have been different.

Maybe present me with more activities that affirms my masculinity instead of just letting me play dress up with my sister, or Barbies with her friends. (Granted there is not always something wrong with that (age considered) but my sister and her friends, in a way became my friends)

Be more involved in my life outside of the home. Mum never liked to attend school functions, never watched while we played tennis and never attended parent-teacher nights.

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Within the feminine nature is the innate ability to love and nurture. In generally terms, this ability manifests itself through connection. That is, in the case of a mother-son relationship, the loving mother will strive to give her son a profound feeling of "connectedness." Connectedness to her, connectedness to family, church, friends, etc. Obviously, this is the necessary, wonderful function of the mother. However, this does not take into consideration one of the fundamental shapers and needs of the masculine soul. I'm going to call this the desire to "Stand Alone."

During infancy and early childhood, the male child's life will be characterized by extreme connectedness to his mother (which is absolutely essential). However, at a certain point in early childhood, the male child will/should exert his independence from mother and begin building his masculine identity. Preferably, this process would begin under the covering of the child's father. During this stage, the male child will detach from his mother in small but very real ways. He will test boundaries and rules. In a very real way, at this stage he is learning how he affects the world, what right and wrong is, and what his worth as a masculine soul is. Understanding how to navigate this stage will drastically effect how grounded he is in some of the most fundamental elements of masculinity.

It is important to have emphasis on what is wrong, however, this instruction must be tempered with an equal or (ideally) a greater volume of instruction on what is right. **Each situation in which the male child can be affirmed that he has discerned what the right course of action is and followed through with it will affirm who he is/will be as a man.** This concept manifests itself in a variety of ways (it might be helpful to view this in less "morally charged" terms as "Right and Wrong" and include the broader, neutral terms of "Good and Bad").

Some examples may include: The child creating something, the child discerning truth or falsity in a statement/concept, the child participating in an activity, etc. Note: It is imperative to affirm what IS, nothing else. That is, though the child may be able to accomplish something better, but if what the child has accomplished can be termed "good," then it should be affirmed! The healthy male child has the innate desire to better himself, and this will manifest itself more and more as the good the child does is affirmed. Conversely, emphasizing a desire for the child to better himself will UNDERMINE his sense of well-being and work AGAINST this innate desire to better himself.

Behind this is a very simple statement that the male child must hear over and over, anchored by parental word and deed: **You are a good man and I respect you.** All the love and nurture in the world will not anchor a male securely in masculinity if he is not assured that his worth as a man is understood and respected.

In our current society, we don't like male children. We like female children. Little girls are developing their femininity, building little connections, nurturing relationships, loving both inanimate objects and other little children liberally. Little boys are running around, wrestling, competing, yelling, all trying to be louder, faster, and stronger than the others. Behind each action is that question: "Am I good enough, do you respect me?"

Through a combination of behavior modification and medication, we're trying to get our little boys to act like little girls, and then acting shocked when our young men have no idea how to be a man.

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Realize that if you really want him to be your son, let him be his father's boy, not yours.

Push him toward his father. You can't give him what His father possesses.

It's OK for him to get hurt on occasion. It is what will help him to know consequences and boundaries. Don't rescue him.

To fight is not bad so long as it is for moral good and truth and things that are right.

Peace at any cost is not peace at all but the loss of self.

Never say anything negative about men because you'll cause him to detach from masculinity in an attempt to please you.

Delight in who he is and not what he does.

Remember he is your child, not your friend. You have a responsibility to raise him and train him, not provide him with a buddy.

When in doubt, ask dad. 😊

The only way he will learn to love and respect dad is if he sees it exemplified in you.

You will be the kind of person he marries... live carefully.

Don't teach him to be good, teach him to be Godly. Good boys lose their soul and their determination to speak truth into chaos. Godly men know how to do just that.

Remember discipline is training, not punishment. Consistency is the key.

Celebrate his masculinity and his sister's femininity - they are not the same.

Above all - always respect his father and insist that he respect you both.

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Mothers ought to realize that it's awesome to be a boy/man. God designed us the way we are to be used for His kingdom and it's GOOD!

The modern world seems to have degenerated to a state that says being male is a bad and/or inferior state of being.

God made us men for a reason and purpose and it's every bit as good, godly & valuable as womanhood.

Remember that boys are sensitive and they'll see attacks on their manhood, as a direct attack on who they are as a man. Eg. he should NEVER ever be called a girl. It's not insulting women; it's saying he's the opposite of a man.

Boys are naturally physical and often more aggressive. Guidance, not removal of this trait, is needed.

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My advice is, don't smother them! I was raised by my grandmother, mainly, and don't get me wrong...I love her like crazy, but she was SO over protective! She didn't want me going swimming in a lake cause there aren't lifeguards and there are sink holes and stuff. She always wanted to keep me safe, and while I realize that's a mother's instinct, we have to be allowed to make mistakes and get hurt....that's how we learn!

My grandmother taught my mom how to smother me too. She always fought my battles for me. I didn't learn to be independent. I didn't learn that I have it in myself to stand up for myself and go out on my own and be a man. I was forced into a female role....being taken care of and provided for. Boys are going to want to be more independent from their mothers than girls....that's just the way it is. Girls have that connection, boys want to break things....LOL!

Encourage their independence. Support them in what they do. Guide them, don't lead them. Be willing to let them make mistakes and learn from them, and be there to encourage them during this, not reprimand and guilt them.

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Don't baby him. Let him cross the street. Give him freedom and independence. Let him experiment. Don't emphasize safety so much that he is afraid to try anything.

Don't let him have his own computer and TV in his room.

Let him bring his friends over and be nice to them even if you don't like them (or their parents).

If he doesn't seem to have any friends, encourage him to make some.

Make sure there are words and signs of love and affection. Say "I love you" and give him hugs but don't embarrass him with too much of that in front of his friends.

When people ask about him and he is there let him answer for himself. Don't talk about him in front of him.

Let him play, imagine, dream, explore, experiment. Limit his time with TV and video games. Encourage his talents and interests even if they are in areas you may not like.

Messes and accidents happen. Don't make him feel like a bad person because of them.

When he wants to talk to you or ask you questions don't tell him, "Later." Don't act like he is a bother. Give him your time and attention. If you don't, he'll stop coming to you.

Learn the signs of abuse and when you see them check it out.

Teach him how to draw his bath water or set the shower and then give him bathroom privacy.

Don't nag.

Don't harp on neatness. A messy room is okay. As long as it doesn't smell and there are no vermin or rodents just shut the door.

Don't try to fix all his problems. Help him to learn how to do that himself. Let him know that failures are part of learning.

Let him choose his own clothes, even if they don't match. He will learn.

When he is interested in girls, help him understand the female side (to the extent that is possible for males. LOL!). And be nice to his girlfriends even if you don't like her (or her parents).

When frustrated or angered by things he does or says, don't make him feel like he is a bad person.

Apply discipline and consequences when it happens. Don't wait until his father gets home. Make sure he knows why he is getting the consequence and give him a chance to tell his side. Make the consequence fair. Don't ground him for a week for coming home five minutes late.

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The one thing I have not heard from anyone yet but is so important...these moms need to make sure that the dads are involved in their sons lives. Encourage them to do guy stuff together, make time for them to spend together without mom.

OK, another one ... if there are two sons...do not play favorites based on performance.

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I started out in the hole; my brother was the perfect son. He never played sports of any kind, he was just very smart in school. In my Mom and Dad's eyes he was the perfect son. So when I came along, I was raised mainly by Mom. My first part of my childhood I grew up going shopping, staying in the women's section with all the slips and frilly stuff around me. I always had to go shopping with my Mom and my sister, where my older brother didn't have to because he was old enough to stay home by himself. When I got in school, and was old enough I joined football to try and get my

Dad's attention. He came to a few games, but he always had to work. It made me feel like I was not good enough and my dad did not love me.

So I quit playing football when I was 13. I started playing baseball. At the age of 15 my batting average was .427 and I played first base, back up pitcher. And every time I pitched, I pitched a no hitter. Dad came to most of the games because by this time, my older brother was in college and was not around. Also, my Dad was the assistant coach the last two years I played baseball. Which meant that Dad and I started bonding a little bit.

In high school I went back to playing football. My Mom and sister came to the games, but my Dad became more involved in work and less involved in my life and he did not come to my games. I got more involved in football as a freshman in high school. I was 6'1 and weighed 191#, and the football coaches loved me. So they became my father figures.

But all they were interested in was mainly to win. So that meant me wanting to please them; if there was somebody from the other team that was hurting our chance of winning. I was the one chosen to take them out. Every time I hurt somebody I was praised for it. When I was the talk of the town my dad, started bragging and came to a couple of games.

But my Mom was always there. She didn't understand the game, but she always came.

I guess Mom being around all the time, fine tuned my sensitive side, but I didn't know how to show it and still have the manly side not collapse.

My advice to tell the moms, would be that if their sons are showing an interest in playing in any sports, that they should encourage the fathers to take the time to affirm and support their sons, 'cause it is a very important part in becoming who they will later be.

**Some of the hardest things about being a man is proving to the world that you are a man and proving to your wife that you have feelings!!**

Source: Living Hope Ministries online forums (discussion groups) for men struggling with unwanted homosexuality, and parents from the Family & Friends forum. [www.livehope.org](http://www.livehope.org)