

*Praying
for
Boys*

**ASKING GOD
FOR THE THINGS THEY NEED MOST**

Brooke McGlothlin



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To my grandmothers,

Catherine Trout Lloyd (Cack)

and

Wanda Jewell McDonald (Duel)

Cack, you left three good men behind, including my father, who were the evidence of your sacrifice, deep love, and hard work. Their lives, and the lives of your grandchildren, tell your story. “Thank you” just doesn’t cut it.

Duel, thank you for teaching your children and grandchildren the power of prayer. Apparently, it stuck with me. Until heaven . . .

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Foreword

In *Praying for Boys*, Brooke McGlothlin takes a stand for boys and their well-being, and it's a stand based firmly in the Word of God. It's bold and countercultural, and therefore likely to be controversial. I know Brooke, and I know she doesn't want to create such controversy, but the beauty of this book is in its bravery. These are days that require boldness of purpose and speech, and she does just that.

She affirms boys for who they are and how God created them. Her belief is that the raising of boys as honorable standard-bearers for their faith, family, and community is something to be honored, not condemned. Rare stuff indeed. I commend her for it and admire her courage.

My wife and I prayed over our three sons using this book, and continue to do so. It's made a difference in how we view them and their world. If they grow up knowing that their mother and father are praying Scripture over them, perhaps they will be so conditioned by the training of God's Word that they will allow it to take root in their core, becomingly fiercely dependent on Christ for all things.

Foreword

Study the verses Brooke references and consider what she writes. I firmly believe it will be a difference-maker as you raise your young men. Nothing is more powerful than the Bible, and rarely has it been so powerfully presented in the raising of boys as within these pages.

Cliff Graham
Author of the *Lion of War* novels and movies

Boys Are a Battle Zone

I watch their little faces as we prepare for bedtime prayers. I'm overwhelmed with love for them—overwhelmed with parenting them, these little boys who have stolen my heart and rocked my world.

As I write this, my sons are seven and five, and I already find myself wondering where the time has gone. I'm running as fast as I can to keep up with every step they take, tucking each moment away in my memory for safekeeping.

I asked God to give me boys. Even before I was married I knew I wanted to raise men who would be different—respecters of women, lovers of God. Men who would work with their hands, take commitments seriously, and protect the least of these. Men who were warriors, protectors, worshipers, peacemakers, and friends.

Fast-forward twelve years or so, and the present-day circus that is my life often finds me asking . . .

WHAT WAS I THINKING?

I don't have any clue how to be a mom of boys! They're rough and tumble; I don't have an athletic bone in my body. They're

loud and obnoxious; I enjoy peace and quiet. They love dirt and mud and bugs; I'd rather curl up with a good book in my cool, clean family room.

Obviously, God has a sense of humor.

If you are the mother of at least one boy, you're nodding your head in agreement with me right now. I used to think there was something wrong with my boys, that they were the only ones in the world who acted the way they do. Then the Lord hooked me up with an awesome community of boy-moms, and I learned that this simply isn't true! There *is* something different about boys!

- They're loud.
- They like to leap from tall buildings with no safety net (*aka* jump off the top bunk).
- They like to build forts and hide candy.
- They break toilets and “go” in (and all over) anything BUT the toilet.
- They're adventurous.
- They're natural-born protectors.
- They like to shoot things (even when there's nothing actually resembling a gun).
- They shower you with spit when showcasing their sound-effects skills.
- They love their mommies and need their daddies.
- They're made of snakes and snails and puppy-dog tails. (Okay, not really. But when I told my oldest that girls were made of sugar and spice and everything nice, he asked if he could lick me!)

Raising boys brings one adventure after another, but I'm afraid we're losing the beauty and importance of training up godly men. Churches are filled with men who have no idea what

it truly means to be a man. They find their self-worth in their jobs, or their cars, or worse—anywhere except in the Lord.

Our boys need faithful Christian parents now more than ever, and we're failing them. But it doesn't have to be that way. We can choose to rejoin the war for the hearts of our sons . . . today.

But how?

The Battle

In his lifetime, Eli the priest was given three men to train, teach, and raise, but he only got it right with one of them. Samuel came under Eli's care through the prayers of his desperate mother, Hannah. After years of being barren, she "vowed a vow and said, 'O LORD of hosts, if you will indeed look on the affliction of your servant and remember me and not forget your servant, but will give to your servant a son, then I will give him to the LORD all the days of his life'" (1 Samuel 1:11). So Samuel, the fruit of that desperate prayer, spent his childhood with Eli in the temple.

Even as a child Samuel knew and listened to the voice of God. We know him as the man God used to choose the first and second kings of Israel. We can assume Eli trained Samuel in the ways of the Lord. Certainly he helped him to recognize the voice of the Lord (1 Samuel 3). But the Bible says something completely different regarding Eli's biological sons, Hophni and Phinehas. According to 1 Samuel 2:12, Eli's sons were worthless men, unrestrained in their behavior, and Eli did nothing to stop them.

Eli failed to raise his sons to know and fear the Lord, and the cost was heavy.

- While Samuel was ministering to the Lord, Eli's two sons were hindering the people's worship (1 Samuel 2:11–36).
- The Lord cursed Eli's lineage saying, "There will not be an old man in your house" (1 Samuel 2:31).

- Hophni and Phinehas both died on the same day in battle against the Philistines (1 Samuel 4:17).
- The ark of God was captured by the Philistines (1 Samuel 4:17).
- Eli died when he heard the news of his sons' deaths and the capture of the ark (1 Samuel 4:18).
- Eli's daughter-in-law, the wife of Phinehas, went into apparent premature labor and died giving birth (1 Samuel 4:19–22).

Apparently, God takes the way we raise our sons quite seriously. I don't know about you, but I feel like we're losing our sons. Take a look around. What do you see? Everywhere you look men are leaving the church, leaving their wives, throwing out the Word of God as their main authority. The call of God to raise men to know Him and fear Him still stands. But are we doing that?

I don't think so.

I submit to you that as a culture, we've been more like Eli than we care to admit. Our sons don't know the Father God, because their fathers (and mothers) don't know and trust the Father God. They don't see a big difference between what the world says it means to be a man and what they see in church. Many popular male Christian writers of our time say men in the church don't even know what it means to be godly men. They're bored and tired, and most feel that to align themselves with the teachings of the church means to die to what's in their hearts.

All it takes to lose the truth of the Word of God is one set of parents who fail to teach it. The result can be generations of men who don't know and fear the Lord. Imagine the impact for a moment. It's a lot to take in.

So what do we do about it? How do we make a change? My answer might surprise you.

There are so many books out there today on the topic of parenting that I can't count them. Nor do I have time to read them all. But even if I did, reading these books and putting the solid tools in them to work still doesn't come with guarantees. Refusing to compromise the Word of God as we raise our sons helps tremendously, but it can't change hearts of stone to hearts of flesh.

Knowing this, it becomes quite clear that the best way a mom can enter the war for the heart of her son is on her knees.

Prayer

About four years ago I began praying Scripture over my children. Since then, it has become quite a passion of mine. I love to take the Word and wash it over my boys in prayer, substituting their names in when I can, and asking the Lord to bring it to fruition in their lives.

One day, as I was praying for my boys, the Lord dropped the seed into my heart for this book. So many resources exist out there for girls. There are even some great books that I would wholeheartedly recommend on the subject of prayer for our children. What was missing, I realized, was a book leading mothers in how to pray specifically for their sons in the areas they need it most. Something to equip, encourage, and bless mothers of boys on the journey to raising godly men.

So many of you moms have been kneeling down or lying flat on your face before God, asking Him to help you. You're lost, overwhelmed, exhausted, stressed, heartbroken, and seconds away from waving the white flag in defeat. I know where you are. I've been there. I'm still there. I have no idea how to make this dream of mine come true. I have no idea how to raise men who will be different: respecters of women, lovers of God. I have no idea how to teach little men to work with their hands,

take commitments seriously, and protect the least of these. And I certainly have no idea how to raise warriors, protectors, worshippers, peacemakers, and friends by myself.

But I do know how to get down on my knees and cry out to God on their behalf. I do know God's Word is "living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12).

I'm convinced prayer is the missing piece of this puzzle. Parents who pray for their children recognize their own inability to change their children's hearts, and put their faith and hope in the God who can. Our best work on our boys' behalf—the *most* important thing we can do for them each and every day—is to wage war on our knees. So I pray the Word over my boys daily, asking the One who has the power to change hearts of stone into hearts of flesh to find my boys and make them His.

If you're looking for a book to teach you how to raise godly men, *Praying for Boys* isn't it. Neither is it a book that promises five easy ways to produce a boy to be proud of. In fact, it isn't really a book about *you* at all. It's a book about the God who loves your son more than you do and wants to work in his heart and life *in spite* of you as you pray and desperately seek Him.

So as we gather our battle gear and get ready to join the fight for our sons, let's take a few minutes to survey the land and get to know what we're up against first. We'll start by gaining a deeper understanding of prayer—why we should do it and how it works.

Ready to fight?