

My son's rite of passage was a defining moment for him. The night was a tangible and unforgettable time when the men closest to him would help him take the leap to manhood.

We traveled one hour outside Katy to a Christian campground with a lake. Zach and I built a fire beside the lake and enjoyed about an hour together until sundown. As darkness fell, a vanload of my friends who had invested into Zach parked behind a barn. I then sent Zach up the hill to meet the first one. Each man step out of the barn with the same question for him, "Zach are you ready to become a man?" I had asked each man to speak to him about a quality that I had observed in them personally as men. These qualities were Loyalty, a Servant's heart, Integrity, Sexual Purity, Perseverance, Discipline, and Loving people with grace. Then they took a slow walk around the lake discussing that character trait and then joined me at the fire while Zach continued around the lake with each man.

When finished with the marathon of trips around the lake we all sat around the campfire. I then asked each man to affirm Zach in his walk with Christ. I wrapped up this portion by speaking blessing over my son and all that he meant to me. He and I had already discussed in our weekly breakfast time at Chick Fil A what that a biblical man looked like. He would reject passivity, lead courageously, and accept responsibility. Things we had learned from the book, "Raising a Modern Day Knight." I used the moment at hand to tell him that I could not have dreamed of a better son to have. I reminded him that as the only son in the Kennedy home that he would carry on the family name but more importantly he would one day be a husband and father to pass along the name of the Jesus to the next generation. I then gave him a sword to remind him the rest of his life of what a man is built upon. It was actually a 'sword of the Spirit.' A Bible just like the one I preach out of every Sunday morning with a letter written in the front from his dad.

We concluded the night with a 'manly' meal fit for carnivores at the local barbecue restaurant. We laughed a lot that night. We cried some too. It was one of the best nights of our lives.