



Bringing Up Boys

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Sensible advice and caring encouragement on raising boys from the nation's most trusted parenting authority, Dr. James Dobson.

With so much confusion about the role of men in our society, it's no wonder so many parents and teachers are asking questions about how to bring up boys. Why are so many boys in crisis? What qualities should we be trying to instill in young males? Our culture has vilified masculinity and, as a result, an entire generation of boys is growing up without a clear idea of what it means to be a man. In the runaway bestseller *Bringing Up Boys*, Dr. Dobson draws from his experience as a child psychologist and family counselor, as well as extensive research, to offer advice and encouragement based on a firm foundation of biblical principles. (This new edition is part of Dr. James Dobson's Building A Family Legacy initiative.)

Bringing Up Boys Details

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From Reader Review Bringing Up Boys for online ebook

Kelly says

We got this as a gift -- it isn't a book I would have sought out. It's kind of funny -- I brought up this book at Thanksgiving dinner at the in-laws and my ultra-Conservative right wing SIL scoffed at it! Anyhow, Dobson's views on parenting are way too colored by his political views. If I listen to him my sons are going to grow up to be homosexual because my husband is out of town too much and I take on the lion's share of the parenting. Yeah, I'll make a note about that. (Hey -- by that view, are lesbians formed because their moms left the bulk of the parenting to the dads? Was the mom out pursuing her career as a Mary Kay saleswomen, leading to gay daughters? Hm. That'd make a good novel. A mom blames her daughter's alternative lifestyle on the tragic pursuit of a pink cadillac.)

The ONE thing that saves this book from the trash heap is the observation that the traditional classroom structure was designed by women teachers for the benefit of girls' learning styles. (Ha -- as a friend said, that's the ONLY thing designed for the benefit of girls!) As the mother of boys, I try to keep in mind that what worked for me in school may not work for them.

Dave Johnson says

before I talk about my thoughts of this books, let me suggest that this book is not for the average parent, though if the average parent would read with an open mind, it would help. no, this book is primarily for Christian parents--and there's nothing wrong with that. I mention this truism because most of the criticism of this book is on the spiritual content (stemming from non-Christians, seemingly), and not on the ACTUAL apparent content of the book, e.g., bringing up boys. if you are someone who disagrees with the assertions that Christianity and the bible make about morality, homosexuality, the traditional family unit, male/female differences and strengths, and making religion the center of raising a child, then this book is not for you--even though it's right.

having a 1.5 year old boy as of this review, I found myself really needing guidance about how to raise him up to be a godly man and a good person. I had good parents, but probably not great ones, and I often feel under-prepared and overwhelmed when I think about what I have or don't have to give to my son. I am familiar with Dobson, and knew that this book would at the very least get me in the ballpark.

Dobson is a good writer and strikes a good balance of information as a psychologist, Christian, and father. sometimes it seems that Dobson only had an example because he felt like it fit within his book outline, and there are times when his stories or examples had nothing to do with the subject at hand, and he even admitted it a few times. that made the reading a little odd. the other thing that I have to say is that he seems to really be a "traditionalist" when it comes to the family and the roles in the family, and i'm not opposed to this, per se, but since my family isn't traditional (I stay at home with my kids while my wife works), I really wanted to hear his argument for this. but the best thing you get is that "the bible says it", or something similar to that. which is not how he cites everything else in the book. I found most of the book well researched, but there are a few times--like his traditional statements--which seemed really unsupported by reason, citation, and scripture, even though he SAID it was. most of his content is very good, and the general thing I took away from it was really just how important my role as a father is in shaping my son's life, and that I need to always be mindful of that and seek God for wisdom in what I do and say. but really, that's about the only thing I

took from this book. I can't ding it for major flaws, but I will say that reading this book wasn't all that illuminating for me. most of it was common sense and only reinforced my beliefs as a Christian dad. I do recommend it, and i'm going to read more from Dobson, and will read the Bringing Up Girls sequel too.

Jessica says

Never before have I been disgusted by the fact that I spent money on a book. If I could give it zero stars, I would.

I ordered the book online after just seeing the title on a suggested reading list, and since I'm all for reading up about parenting lately and it had 4 stars, and well, I have a boy, I went ahead and ordered it without knowing anything about it or the author.

In reading the first chapter, I recognized the author and realized that his ideas were likely to be more conservative than my own. But hey, I'm a mom and I'm a Christian, so I kept an open mind.

The first few chapters made me raise a few eyebrows, but almost in a good way. It made me think about my own values and question my ideas about the family and my role as a mother. I figured that even if I didn't wholeheartedly agree with everything Dobson was saying, examining my own ideas is always a good thing. But once I was about 30% into the book, I was getting annoyed. There was nothing helpful or even specific being said about the day to day raising of boys, just generalities about the structure of the family. And I found it poorly written at that, and poorly organized. And he continually did one of my biggest pet peeves - mentioning something, then saying he'll talk about it more fully in another chapter. He also quoted himself from his other books, which I found annoying.

But then I got to the chapter on preventing homosexuality, and it just made me sick. I had to stop reading. I guess I will never know if there was ANYTHING helpful in the book because the I can't give weight or credit to any of his ideas because his views as espoused in that chapter are just a deal breaker for me. He is certainly entitled to his opinions, but I just can't take advice from someone believes what he does.

Crazycatlady says

My pediatrician recommended this one. I read it. Then I found a new doctor for my children.

Sandra says

As a mother of two boys myself, any book that advises me to ensure that they grow up to be more masculine (as if that is desirable) goes straight to the DNR pile. I want my children to become loving and kind men, not misogynistic assholes who wouldn't recognize an emotion if it hit them over the head with a four by four.

Raising boys in a loving environment and letting them play with non-gender specific toys doesn't make them gay, Dr. Dobson.

Sara Almeida says

I gave up on this book. Several people had recommended this book to me. When I bought Bringing Up Boys, I was hoping to gain insight into raising my little one. Based on the recommendations I received, I thought the book would give advice on how to raise boys in different situations. I was greatly disappointed. Instead of advice, the book was filled with Dr. Dobson's personal opinions about parenting - most with which I disagreed. I am a Christian, but I found Dr. Dobson's views to be very narrow-minded and one-sided. One of the most discouraging aspects of the book was Dr. Dobson's view on motherhood. I was hoping he would give suggestions for how mothers can develop close relationships with their sons. I was VERY disappointed to discover that the two chapters dedicated to motherhood in Bringing Up Boys were devoted to explaining why women should stay at home with their children! Don't get me wrong - I firmly believe motherhood is one of the most important roles a woman can have. As a teacher, I have also seen how broken family relationships and absent parents can negatively impact children. But as a working mom, I resent the implication that I am somehow failing to fulfill my God-given responsibility by NOT staying home with my son. I had many other issues with Dr. Dobson's viewpoints, so I have decided not to finish the book.

Kimberly says

I was given this book as a gift as well. I saw this other comment written by Jane Leacock "I am raising three boys. I received this as a gift and was appalled at the anti-feminist, homophobic, religious morality rhetoric contained within this book. It is a dangerous misrepresentation of imperial psychological data to formulate correlations that are not only incorrect but also insulting. The level of chauvinism and bigotry are astounding. The author includes amusing anecdotes and a few remedial suggestions for raising boys. However, this only hides the fact that he wants you to raise homophobic, misogynistic children that will be more confused about themselves and the world that they live in. If you are wanting advice on raising boys in modern society you are better served reading Raising Cain, by Dan Kindlon....less...more "

She hits it dead on. I never finished the book and I couldn't even recycle it. It is the only book I have ever thrown away.

Coincidentally, I am not even friends any longer with the person who gave it to me.

Jane Leacock says

I am raising three boys. I received this as a gift and was appalled at the anti-feminist, homophobic, religious morality rhetoric contained within this book. It is a dangerous misrepresentation of imperial psychological data to formulate correlations that are not only incorrect but also insulting. The level of chauvinism and bigotry are astounding. The author includes amusing anecdotes and a few remedial suggestions for raising boys. However, this only hides the fact that he wants you to raise homophobic, misogynistic children that will be more confused about themselves and the world that they live in.

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Randi S says

I'm reading "Bringing Up Boys" by Dr. James Dobson (founder of Focus on the Family). I LOVE it! It has just affirmed what I know to be true: that my husband is a MAN, a REAL man (who I love to death), and that raising a boy is so important (not that raising a girl is unimportant, but if you read the book, you'll understand that it's just really different).

This is not my point to this post. It is actually about why we feel disconnected to others. I'm sure if we dig deep down, we all know that it is - in part - due to technology. We keep up with people on Facebook, email, MySpace, text messaging, etc, etc.

He says it a lot better than I can. "Are you one of these harried women running in endless circles? Have you found yourself too busy to read a good book or take a long walk with your spouse or hold your three-year-old child on your lap while telling him or her a story? Have you taken time to study God's Word - to commune with Him and listen to His gentle voice? Have you eliminated almost every meaningful activity in order to deal with the tyranny of a never-ending "to do" list? Have you ever asked yourself why in the world you have chosen to live like this?....When was the last time you had friends drop by unexpectedly for a visit?...There was a time when families made a regular habit of packing into the car and driving over to a friend's home for an afternoon of good conversation and a piece of banana-cream pie. It was one of life's special little pleasures...I'll never forget the times as a boy when I would hear a knock on the door...and a familiar voice would echo through the house, "Is anybody home?"...Sadly, that kind of spontaneous camaraderie is difficult to achieve in today's fast-paced world. The pressures and busyness of life have all but destroyed the sense of community that was once common among families and friends. We seldom - if ever - drop in on friends unannounced. And even if we did, they would probably have to cancel a string of appointments in order to be with us. Thus, we go about our days, careening through life, glancing at our watches, and wondering why we don't have very many close friendships."

Wow. I remember friends of my parents calling out, "anyone home?" or my parents doing that at my grandparents' homes. I have never done that - well, not since college when I lived in the dorms. We schedule and make appointments with friends. Part of this is that friends live a distance from us. Many of us, I think, probably don't know our neighbors well. Our friends live far enough away that we need to drive to their house, and we know how busy they are so we ask when a good time to call is rather than just calling.

When was the last time you dropped in on a friend? I hope it wasn't long ago and that you'll do it again soon.

Jen Shank says

Dr. Dobson does not hide his political agenda in anything he is apart of, this book included. Some of his views may be a bit right wing, even for me. However, no one can deny the cold hard facts he lays before his readers in Bringing Up Boys.

Dobson scientifically analyzes biological data, he compares Christian perspective with secular world views/perspectives and he manages to do it all in a loving grandfatherly sort of way. His critics felt attacked by his book--I felt challenged. Yeah, so maybe he quoted mostly from Christian authors/personalities to

support his views; but what do you expect? He is the leading Christian Psychologist in the US! And besides, he did manage to pull very convincing truths from a non-Christian columnist (pp202), so there!

When all is said and done, I learned an awful lot about boys/men from Dobson. Like how why it is men/boys feel the need to risk their life and limb for no apparent reason other than to "have a good time". And I will most definitely reference this book when sweet baby O hits his teens...even if that may be light years away.

Beth says

This is a very dangerous book for mothers and fathers of boys. There is punitive parenting tactics and worse there are scare tactics and unproven theories used to promote detaching of young children from their mother's. PLEASE, if you do read this book, read it as an opportunity to educate yourself against the Christian movement towards punitive discipline, control and breaking of a child's spirit. I have lost all respect for Dr. Dobson after reading this book. Parts of it are so disgusting to my thoughts of gentle, graced based discipline and attachment parenting it made me physically sick.

Kat Kennedy says

This book was loaned to me by a friend who had purchased it, but not read it. I only finished this book so that I could do a comparative review to Raising Boys: Why Boys Are Different-And How to Help Them Become Happy and Well-Balanced Men but after reading it, I realized that this book is far more comparable to I Am America than any serious or informative text on raising boys.

Despite the fact that Raising Boys is vague on details, out of date and amateurish in the more intimate areas of brain functioning and child development, it is still far more helpful, informative and useful than this book will ever be.

You can be forgiven for assuming, as I did, that Bringing Up Boys is a book concerned with providing information for parents in understanding their boys, a variety of tips and advice on their problem behaviors and an overall plan on how to smooth the journey.

Unfortunately, Dobson's only answer to all of the above is the same to any question asked in Sunday School (and here's a tip, it's ALWAYS a variation of the following three): Jesus, prayer, the Bible.

Okay, you expect a book by an evangelist to run in such a theme. However, I also expected a book by a person with a doctorate in psychiatry to provide informed, balanced, professional advice based on research, statistics, studies and personal experience.

No. Dobson unapologetically hates feminists, liberals and homosexuals and he makes absolutely no attempt at providing balanced information. This book is nothing more than fear-mongering propaganda. Though he uses many studies to try and validate his opinion, he outright omits balanced data or studies that don't confirm his opinion. Some of the studies he uses are out-dated or invalidated by other studies. His statistics are used to validate his opinions in one area, then disregarded in another.

For example, at one point he claims that there's no evidence for a genetic inheritance of homosexuality

because twin studies show that if one twin is homosexual, then the other is statistically "only" %50 likely to be homosexual as well. Yet, later in the book he claims that our genetics are a major influence on our life and uses another twin study to validate this by stating that if one twin gets divorced then then identical twin has a %45 chance of divorcing as well!

Now I'm not arguing about the nature vs nurture because the bulk of recent scientific studies show that we are largely products of our genetics - in that part, he's right but there's little else in this book that I can say that for.

Mostly, because this book's advice for raising boys can be summed up as:

1. JESUS!
2. Love them lots
3. Spend time with them
4. MAKE SURE THEY DON'T CATCH TEH GAY!
5. Homeschooling, yeah!

[image error]

This book was offensive to logic, reason and most of all, humanity. Dobson hates:

1. Homosexuals
2. Women's liberation
3. Liberals
4. Namby-pamby people who let their children play with gender-neutral toys and don't provide young boys with toy guns, don't smack and practice that hippy, attachment parenting philosophy.
5. The media

He is terrified of them all and this book, rather than being about Bringing Up Boys as the title suggests, is really about vilifying all of the above and scare-mongering his readers into hating and fearing them as much as he does.

Every chapter went something like this:

You need to spend time with your kids. I really FEEL for single mothers/homosexuals/poor people/women who don't fit my small and pathetic definition of what I think a woman should be. Unlike me, who is a disgustingly rich, upper middle class, white man, I understand that you don't have the benefits of choices about spending time with your children. Some of you have to work in order to survive. Gee, must be tough.

But it's still important so if you can't spend more time with them... eh, I really feel for you. Please enjoy my heart-touching tale of how I once met a single mother/homosexual/poor person/woman that didn't fit my small and pathetic definition of what I think a woman should be and changed their life in a positive way. I'm so awesome.

As a woman and a feminist, I want to be mostly offended at his narrow and pathetic views on what and who I

should be. However, I'm far more offended on behalf of the homosexual community who he ALMOST outright incriminates of conspiring to rape your boys. Didn't you know? All homosexual men want is to have buttsecks with little boys. All lesbians want is to groom little girls into future lesbians and - perhaps worse, feminists. I especially love how he uses the example of the LGBT community in the UK pushing for the age of consent for homosexual boys to be lowered to 16 in order to try and prove his allegations about homosexuals. Yet he conveniently neglects to mention that this was in order to equalize the age of consent because the AOC for heterosexuals was already 16! At one point he even claims that the breakdown of marriage in the US is due to the rising acceptance of same-sex relationships.

Riiiiiiiiiggghht!

Like I said, logic isn't his strong point!

Similarly, women's liberation is also at fault for all the ills of society and most of all, for troubled young lads. It's too exhausting to address his many inaccuracies and prejudices toward women and since this review is long enough already, I'll just leave you to assume the worst - you'll most likely be right. I wish, instead, that he'd look at his own research. He claims again and again that fathers are essential to the raising of strong, good young men. I absolutely agree. So maybe men are to blame for the current male crisis?

Just an idea?

Did it ever occur to Dobson though? Nope!

Tanya Smart says

Oh, where do I begin?

If you're looking for a book to pinpoint all the dangers teenage boys face, all the ways you're probably screwing up as a parent, and how to keep him from becoming one of the gays, well this book is for you, my friend!

Basically, Dr. Dobson blames today's current society (that is going to hell in a hand-basket) on feminists, homosexuals, liberals, and the non-saved folk. He speaks with, what I suppose he thinks is, an air of Christianity that, in reality, comes off as an air of superiority. His viewpoints are not very Christian-like, despite numerous testimonies and scripture throughout the book. I feel the need to point out that I am a Catholic, and I love God. I just expect more from someone who is supposed to be well-educated, Christian or not.

Feminists and homosexuals are his biggest targets to the downfall of masculinity. He rants about the feminist movement, only giving a brief sentence of acknowledgement that at the time it started women had no "equal pay, for equal work" and endured sexual harassment more often than men in the workplace. However, he later goes on to blame feminists for men not being able to be firm in business anymore because they have to fear a woman making false claims about harassment and losing their jobs.

Now, I'm not saying that's never happened, but do we live on the same planet Dr. Dobson? He blames high divorce rates on the feminist movement as well, but never cites how difficult it was for women at that time to get out of highly abusive relationships. I'd expect at least that from a doctor of psychology.

His viewpoints on homosexuality are very one sided. He only links articles and studies that support his viewpoint, ignoring all other evidence.

He gives advice throughout the book on how to avoid turning your child into a wild, hateful, homosexual adolescent, and then let's you know that you can do everything right and still have that outcome.

He cites, and seems to agree with, a viewpoint that mothers are basically unneeded by a boy by the time they reach age of somewhere between 3-5 (fathers are more important from that point forward), and then goes on later to say that having a stay-at-home mother (if you can afford it) is essential in the home to keep your children, but especially boys, on track and out of trouble. This is just one example of how he seems to lean in more than one direction on a subject.

Finally, I do have to give credit to Chapter 15. I agree with most of what he says in that area, a good portion of it dedicated to telling parents that it isn't so much what you give your child, but more so how you spend time with your child. I've always believed that time and love supersedes things.

Unfortunately, one chapter is not enough to save the word-vomit that was this book. If you want to read it, do so only for the laughter that his "statistics" and anecdotes provides.

If I had a physical copy of this book, I think I'd burn it.

Spider the Doof Warrior says

This book assumes that all boys are the same and that they are all stereotypical. It also assumes that if your son plays with dolls, likes pink, wears his mother's shoes when he's like 3 he will grow up and be GAY.

Yes, folks, let your son do girly, girl things and he'll be out in some gay club wearing chaps with his butt hanging out looking to score.

NO THAT'S NOT EVEN GOING TO HAPPEN! Do NOT take child rearing advice from a man who thinks it's OK to go after dogs with belts and to torment small children over the slightest little thing into submission.

I haven't finished the book Real Boys, but so far it's good and acts like boys are complex people and not just stereotypes. But real people with emotions, feelings and needs.

Jessica says

I wanted to be turned off by this book by a very conservative author, but Dobson raised so many important points about raising a strong, confident, secure, creative little dude that I reluctantly learned a lot. However, stereotypes abound.
