

## June's (2007) Book Review:

*Preparing Sons to Provide for a Single-Income Family* by Steve Maxwell.  
Communication Concepts, Inc.

Review By Troy L Parrish

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### *Additional Resources.*

Written from a very conservative point of view, *Preparing Sons* surprises you because of the way that the book approaches the topic of preparing our sons to provide for a single family income. Mr. Maxwell starts by discussing several men that he knows and how they are faring in terms of providing for their families. He then refers to these individuals throughout the book as examples of the points he is trying to make. From this starting point he begins to address the issue of preparing our sons by addressing the issues that we would most expect to be discussed in a title of this nature, he discusses our sons' earning potential. He discusses this from the point of view that we

would expect as well, training, education, vocation etc. He quickly turns to the thrust of the book in the next chapter, titled "What is his **real** earning potential?"

Mr. Maxwell really begins to discuss the way he believes that we need to think about preparing our sons, and this is primarily in the development of their character and their attitude towards work. He argues that the real way to prepare our sons to provide for a single family income situation is the preparation of his character and attitudes towards work, money and recreation. He places strong emphasis on the spiritual development of our sons so that by the time they are young men they are Godly and God centered with the attitudes that accompany this spiritual focus. On a number of occasions he clearly states that we need to be sure of our son's relationship with God through our son's personal relationship with a Jesus Christ as his personal savior. He sees this relationship as foundational to all other aspects of the development of our sons.

With that foundation laid, he talks about the three pillars of developing our sons, those being prayer, example and training. He points out that we need to be ever prayerful about the growth of our sons and the direction we are giving to him. We need to be mindful of the example that we present to our sons in terms of the attitudes, actions and choices we make as parents and we need to be training our sons both in terms of the vocational skills and their character. He refers to these pillars as being like a three legged stool that has inherent stability, that keeping these three principles in mind provides the type of stability that is needed when preparing our sons.

At this point he talks about the "appetites" that we allow to develop in our sons. These are really nothing more than the interests that we either foster in our children or allow our children to pursue. Mr. Maxwell challenges the reader to consider a significant shift away from the typical types of activities that we permit our children to be engaged in for recreation. He is very clear in terms of no video or computer games, no television in the home, only educational or spiritual videos, no recreational involvement in organized sports and no involvement in spectator sports. He adequately argues for his reasons to keep our sons away from these activities, but his argument can really be boiled down to its essence: the appetites or likes and habits our sons develop now will influence how they spend their resources latter. He does object to some of these activities on moral grounds (The nature of TV) but really his main point is that these types of activities only consume time and money or foster pride, things that will hinder a man's ability to be a sole provider for his family.

He then sets out a number of direct guidelines for four different age ranges of our children. Ages 3 to 6, ages 7 to 13, ages 13 to graduation and after graduation.

He talks specifically about the development of a positive attitude towards work as well as the foundational work of equipping our sons for a vocation. Starting young with our boys, he encourages a lot of character development and as our boys mature the addition of real life work skills as well as the saving of money to make the purchase of a home debt free as well as having genuine marketable skills when they make that purchase.

He closes the book by encouraging and challenging parents to be prepared to make the significant investment on time and energy that it will take to accomplish the task of preparing our sons.

The title itself, "to Provide for a Single-Family Income" is a direct give away that the book is written from a very conservative point of view. The notion of a single income family is modestly radical in today's culture. If there was any doubt about the conservative nature of the book, that doubt is removed when Mr. Maxwell discusses the issue of appetites, or recreational activities. Most reader will find the suggestions in the book somewhat extreme in terms of recreational activities and believe them to be somewhat unrealistic.

While these suggestions and the approach that he advocates is extreme when compared to popular culture, they are not beyond accomplishment. Mr. Maxwell provides examples of these goals being accomplished in the characters he sketches for us in the beginning of the book as well as the accomplishments he has seen in his own sons. For those of us reading the book and having sons already, changing course may be a large task. It is doubtful that most readers will enact all of the suggestions made by Mr. Maxwell but the spirit of what he is trying to accomplish, that is redeeming the time we have with our sons and making the most of equipping them and not allowing them to develop habits that will only consume their time and money is definitely worth our efforts. The implementation of many of them would represent significant shifts for most families, with what I believe would be positive results.

While the book takes on this subject from a surprising angle, I believe that it is an angle that needs to be looked at seriously. A counselor colleague of mine often complains about the lack of character that she is seeing in the men that are in her office. She is convinced that serious attention needs to be paid to the character development of our sons. I am also supportive of the conviction that the preparing of our sons to provide for a family is to be accomplished most in terms of character first, skills and ability second.

Number of stars: 4