

# Boys, Men and Babies

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**Family God's Way** is turning the tide of beliefs and behaviors of boys and men regarding their roles and responsibilities to the babies they father and families they serve.

**The procreative** are getting *younger and younger*. Some high schools are helping out by providing 'on-site' day care centers.

On September 17, 2007, Sean Stewart became a father at the ripe old age of twelve. In an interview with Sean, he showed the poise you might expect from a twelve-year-old boy saying, "I want to be there for the baby and to be part of it all. I want to make sure Emma and the baby are alright. But I want to get my life back to normal. I want to return to school and do my running and play football."<sup>1</sup>

## Who are these boys and men that are making babies?

**Fact 1: Every father has a father.**

Boys and men who are making babies were all babies once and were vulnerable to their own fathers' choices.

**Fact 2: Most boys grow up in single parent households.** <sup>2</sup>

Over half of all American children today spend at least part of their childhood in a single parent household. 'Single parent' almost always translates, 'fatherless'. Fatherlessness is the single most common characteristic of family structures worldwide.<sup>3</sup>

*"Fatherlessness is the most harmful demographic trend of this generation. It is the leading cause of declining child well-being in our society."*- David Blankenhorn

**Fact 3: Boys who lived with both parents at age 14 waited longer to engage in sex for the first time than did those in other family situations.** <sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://answers.google.com/answers/threadview?id=261809>

<sup>2</sup> State of America's Children Yearbook 2000, CDF

<sup>3</sup> .S. Census Bureau, March Current Population Survey and Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics. (2003). *America's children: Key national indicators of well-being, 2003*. Washington, DC: Author

As boys grow into men, they naturally crave companionship, which often results in babies who are vulnerable to the circumstance into which they are born. Remember Fact 1.

This isn't merely population growth; it is exponential procreation that was intended to occur within the context of nuclear households. With the rapid disappearance of Biblical family structures, procreation has actually become *the catalyst of a frightening epidemic*.

About forty years ago the scales tipped. For the first time in human history, the majority of babies grow up with no point of reference regarding Biblical family structures. These babies do what all babies do. They grow up and become the next generation of procreators.

We call this the family cycle. It is *the most powerful cycle on the planet*. Whatever else may be going on, the family cycle remains relentlessly constant. The family cycle is by nature, *exponentially self-compounding*.

No matter what else is happening in the world, the family cycle never stops. With unrelenting constancy people procreate children who grow up in environments where they are shaped and then procreate their own children expounding on whatever they experienced in their families of origin. Remember Fact 1

#### **Fact 4: Parental deprivation results in more difficulties in later life. <sup>5</sup>**

Removing just half the parental influence in a *boy's* childhood years is statistically proven to leave him less likely to achieve healthy and responsible *manhood* than his peers who had the benefit of growing up with both of their parents. Fatherless boys grow up. As men, they may suffer from having been deprived of positive male role modeling from their fathers.

#### **Fact 5: Boys generally receive the message that sex and pregnancy are “no big deal” while girls are generally encouraged to ‘abstain’. <sup>6</sup>**

Boys watch men make babies and abandon them. Fatherlessness is normalized. *Motherlessness* is not. (BTW: Spell check said that isn't a word.) And, is there really any such thing as ‘fatherlessness’.

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<sup>4</sup> Source: National Center for Health Statistics, Fertility, Family Planning, and Reproductive Health of U.S. Women: Data from the 2002 National Survey of Family Growth, Vital and Health Statistics, Series 23, No. 25, 2005; Internet site <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nsfg.htm>

<sup>5</sup>Fathers and Families: Paternal Factors in Child Development. Contributors: Henry B. Biller - author. Publisher: Auburn House. Westport, CT.: 1993. Page Number 8

<sup>6</sup> THE NATIONAL CAMPAIGN TO PREVENT TEEN PREGNANCY  
[www.teenpregnancy.org](http://www.teenpregnancy.org) ■ 202.478.8500 ■ [web@teenpregnancy.org](mailto:web@teenpregnancy.org)

**Fact 6: Almost two thirds of boys and men report having sexual intercourse by the time they graduate from high school. <sup>7</sup>**

Boys grow up under a great deal of pressure to 'perform'. In many cases their identity is closely linked to their ability to engage sexually. Many boys engage in sexual intercourse well before they might be considered to be men. They possess the sexual maturity of a man but the emotional, spiritual and moral maturity a boy.

**Fact 7: The fathers of babies born to teen girls are often significantly older than their female partners.<sup>8</sup>**

As many as a third of the male partners of girls who give birth to a child by age 15 are between 20 and 29 years old. The fathers of children born to eleven and twelve year old girls average twenty years of age. <sup>9</sup>

**Fact 8: In past generations, sex was closely linked to the timing of marriage and then parenthood. For today's generation, sex is increasingly separated from the expectation of marriage. <sup>10</sup>**

Sexuality is no longer sacred and reserved for marital relationships. Boys and men no longer view sexual relationships in the traditional manner. 'Sexual relationships have been reduced to the equivalent of a warm handshake having little if anything to do with any kind of long term commitment such as marriage.' <sup>11</sup>

Marriage 'is something that is entirely separate from teen sex. It is what people do after they are much older, have careers underway and are able to afford a wedding, a house, a couple of cars, and the occasional vacation.' <sup>12</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Center for Disease Control, Surveillance Summaries, Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, P 53 (no ss-2) and <http://www.thenationalcampaign.org/resources/fact-sheets.aspx>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.advocatesforyouth.org/PUBLICATIONS/factsheet/fsyoungerteens.htm#7#7>

<sup>9</sup> Males M. School-age pregnancy: why hasn't prevention worked? *J Sch Health* 1993; 63:429-432.

<sup>10</sup> National Marriage Project 2005, State of our Unions 2005, Piscataway, NJ, Rutgers University

<sup>11</sup> Motivational Educational Entertainment & The National Campaign to prevent teenage pregnancy, 2004, This is My Reality, The Price of Sex, Washington, DC

<sup>12</sup> National Marriage Project 2005, State of our Unions 2005, Piscataway, NJ, Rutgers University

**Fact 9: These boys and men believe parents are the strongest influence on their decisions about sex.** <sup>13</sup>

Surprised? You heard it right. Boys are telling us the messages they are getting at home significantly shape their beliefs and values about love, commitment, marriage, and family.

**Fact 10: Boys and men who listen to sexually explicit lyrics are almost twice as likely to become sexually active when compared to those who do not.**<sup>14</sup>

Does music shape behavior or does behavior shape music? Both are probably true. The relationship is cyclical, not linear.

In an interview, a well-known rap artist (who we will not identify) elaborates on behavior too obscene to write about. Ironically, by his own admission, his lyrics are expressing rage over his absentee and abusive father.

Misery loves company. Beliefs and values reinforced in music that boys and men listen to may represent the only realities about love, commitment, marriage, and family they've ever known.

**Fact 11: About two-thirds of sexually active teens wish they had waited longer to lose their virginity.**<sup>15</sup>

Ironically, some boys and men say they wish they had waited, revealing a deeply embedded code of dignity that Family God's Way strives to resuscitate.

**Fact 12: Ninety percent of boys aged 12-19 believe it is important for teens to be given a strong message from society that they should not have sex until they are at least out of high school.** <sup>16</sup>

Self-evident tenants of human dignity lie dormant, not obliterated. Boys and men possess inherent yearnings for noble beliefs and values about love, commitment, marriage, and family. Even though their behaviors are highly driven by external forces, their moral compasses are in conflict. That's a God thing.

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<sup>13</sup> "Parental Influence and Teen Pregnancy," National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, 2004, [www.teenpregnancy.org](http://www.teenpregnancy.org).

<sup>14</sup> Effect of Degrading Sexual Music Lyrics on Teen Sexual Behavior, *Not necessarily "in one ear and out the other"*— M. Susan Jay, MD Published in Journal Watch Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine January 10, 2007

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.thenationalcampaign.org/resources/things-you-might-not-know.aspx>

<sup>16</sup> [http://www.thenationalcampaign.org/resources/pdf/SS/SS6\\_MaleTeens.pdf](http://www.thenationalcampaign.org/resources/pdf/SS/SS6_MaleTeens.pdf)

The writing is on the wall. Boys and men can't deny the worsening human condition and their connection to it through fatherhood.

**Fact 13: Almost all boys know their capabilities to procreate.**

Although aware of the possibilities, many of the boys and men who procreate outside of Biblical marriage are not seeking the birth of a child through their sexual relationships.

Boys and men do not experience procreation, pregnancy and parenting in the same way girls and women do. They might be more considerate when making babies if they did.

**Fact 14: Fathers express an innate desire to be involved with their children; but cite lack of money, poor relationships with the mothers of their children, incarceration, substance abuse, and their own fatherlessness as barriers.<sup>17</sup>**

Are boys and men victims? As children, perhaps they were. As procreators, not so much. For better or for worse, their babies become the next generation of victims, and fathers, whether they are boys or men, become the perpetrators. While there may be more pleasant ways to communicate the message, most so-called barriers are, in reality, irrelevant excuses.

**Fact 15: Many boys and men approve of unwed childbearing.**

Unwed childbearing is the *new normal*. Many boys and men who are making babies aren't pursuing life long marriage and parenting in the act. Their attitudes suggests boys and men often feel compromised by the babies they make as if these gifts from God are robbing them of their freedom.

**Fact 16: Children born as the result of an unplanned pregnancy are likely to be born to unmarried, cohabiting couples that often split up shortly thereafter. <sup>18</sup>**

It is clear. The new normal isn't working.

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<sup>17</sup> "Expanding the Goals of 'Responsible Fatherhood' Policy," Social Policy Action Network, 2002, [www.span-online.org](http://www.span-online.org).

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.thenationalcampaign.org/resources/pdf/fast-facts-unplanned-among-20somethings.pdf>

**Fact 17: Seventy percent of boys and men say a good marriage is important to them.** <sup>19</sup>

Despite the new normal, men and boys still expect to marry in their future. They also reject divorce as the best solution when a couple can't work out their marital problems.<sup>20</sup>

**Fact 18: In 1970, the median age of first marriage for men was 23.2 years of age. In 2004, the median age climbed to 27.4.**<sup>21</sup>

Why are boys and men waiting? We believe they are waiting because the prospects for success seem low. Most boys and men have experienced a single parent household during their childhood and may simply not believe a lasting Biblical household is possible for them.

Are they waiting while they wait? While they postpone lasting, covenant marriage they continue to engage in relatively uncommitted relationships often resulting in babies. Sometimes again and again, with multiple co-parents.

**Fact 19: What can be done?**

### **Something can!**

Lifecare of Brandon, a pregnancy resource center serving their community for over twenty years, is well acquainted with and deeply concerned about the issue of fatherlessness. So they are doing something about it. They use **Birth of a Family** to capture opportunities they experience and convert them into lasting nuclear families.

One young, unmarried couple in particular comes to mind. They already had twins when I met them. Suffice to say, they were experiencing everything we've discussed so far and more. My wife and I were facilitating **Birth of a Family** at Lifecare of Brandon at that time.

Looking back, the father seemed like just a boy, but was a man, who had two babies.

The challenges to converting his parenthood into fatherhood were numerous and forbidding. Hopes were not high for a lasting family in which this father, mother and children would live, grow and play together in one home. And so it is for many.

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<sup>19</sup> Monitoring the Future: Questionnaire Responses from the Nations High School Seniors 1975-2005, Ann Arbor, MI, Institute for Social Research

<sup>20</sup> Flanagan, C., Huffman, R., Smith, J. (2005) Science Says: Teen attitudes toward Marriage, Cohabitation and Divorce, 2002 Washington, DC, National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy

<sup>21</sup> US Census Bureau, Estimated Median age at First Marriage., 1890 to present

Unlike many of their peers, this couple caught a break. They encountered an organization that wanted to do more than articulate the problem with hopeless reserve. They actively invite their clients to experience **Birth of a Family** in order to help them found and grow their families according to God's plan.

Seemingly, against the odds, this couple accepted the invitation and completed the **Birth of a Family** course coached by an older couple.

Sometime later I had the humbling privilege of visiting with them in their home. I arrived about ten minutes before the father arrived home from work. The twins had grown into energetic toddlers. An occasional car passed by as their mother and I talked on the front porch. Suddenly, the children, recognizing its unique sound on the gravel road, heard their father's car approaching. Clinging to the screen door, they couldn't wait to greet their father. For an hour or more they were inseparable.

This story could have easily ended differently.

Update: I performed this couple's wedding several years after they completed Birth of a Family. I trust this father's boys will someday become men like their father and have babies that they live, grow and play with in one home with their mother.

**Fact 20: Even when the odds are slim, experiences like this make the attempts worthwhile.**