

SAVE THE BOYS PART 1 | EPISODE 6

Summary

: Stephen and Marcus are releasing a book called Save the Boys, which is addressing the obstacles fathers face when trying to transition their sons into manhood. - Save the Boys is an initiative to help dads raise their sons to be the best possible men they can be. If you want to help us out, please subscribe and/or donate to Father Magazine. If there is not a clear, strong, direction in a dad's life, it can lead to problems in his relationships with sons. A man about helps fathers learn and grow in their relationships with their sons.: Guys that have struggled with transitioning from zero to twelve to twelve to 14 or 14 will find help and encouragement with this podcast. It's not about being perfect, but being willing and trying to help your sons become manly. - This is the first part of a series on how to save the boys, with the help of Father magazine and Stephen. Stephen and Father will be doing a man about retreat for Dads this year. You can get more information on Father magazine's website. I'm your host, Matt. In this episode, I'm joined by Stephen, Father Magazine's design and content director, for an interview on how to save the boys. And if you're a dad or man who is raising a boy, this is an episode you don't want to miss. The Father Podcast is coming to an end, but don't worry, we're not done with Stephen yet. In future episodes, he'll be talking about how to do a man about retreat, how to engage your son in special ways, and more. So stay tuned!

Transcription

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You **1s** as a man, you have power to impact your family, community and the world. **1s** Men hold the keys to home and society, yet we are in a time where manhood is stigmatized and the role of a good man is unclear. Today, it is more difficult than ever to find guidance,

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wisdom and support to navigate this real. Welcome to the Father podcast, where our mission is to restore the reputation of what biblical manhood can look like and how it can be lived in today's world as fathers, husbands and leaders. If you'd like to help our mission and advance our work, please consider subscribing to this podcast and donate@fathermagazine.com. Enjoy our next episode that starts right **1s** now.

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If I could offer a single prescription for the survival of America, it would be to restore the family. And if you asked me how to do it, my answer, doubtlessly oversimplified would be save the boys. This is from William Raspberry, a Pulse surprise winning columnist. **1s** Stephen, how are you today?

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I'm great, thank you. I'm glad to be here. I'm excited to talk about what we're going to talk about today.

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Amen. So we are going to be bringing you a multi part series. This will be part one of that series. So again, our format is raw, right. So we're just going to dive into this, but yeah, Stephen, let's talk about a subject

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that we're super excited

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about, which is this project that we're trying to finish and I think we're getting close, called Save the Boys. You want to tell the audience a little bit about what we're doing?

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Yeah. And we are getting very close. I'm so glad. I'm so excited. It's getting better. Our editor is really helping us a lot on this to just improve it so much better. But this is, I think, something that the feedback we're getting is that men are saying, boy, this is really helpful. I wish I'd known this when I was I wish my dad had done these things with me, or I wish I'd known this with my kids who, when they were some of the guys have boys already grown. And so they say, well, I wish I had this back when my guy was young. So we're getting positive feedback and it's about how dads can lead their boys into manhood in a very healthy and positive way. That also leaves dad and son very closely connected for the years going forward, which they will need to be close because young men will need advice and dad will certainly want to be giving his advice to his son. So we're talking about how that happens in this book called Save the Boys. Yeah.

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So Save the Boys is a greater mission. Right. We are coming out with a book that is probably going to be a multi part series for Save the Boys or books. But this one in particular is that stage where a father, after he's fathered his son about twelve years or so. What's that next step? How are we going to transition that boy into a God fearing, responsible, faithful man of God? Right? 2s What is the why? I mean, why are we doing this? Stephen? 2s What gave you the fire to say we need something like this in this world? 2s Well, for one thing, I didn't know what to do. 1s Many years ago I came up to around age twelve or 13 with my first son. And I wasn't really sure what to do. So I had to hustle and do some catching up. And I asked a lot of questions and started trying to figure out what to do because I knew, I sensed in my heart that something needed to happen to bring my boy into manhood. More than, than just happy birthday at certain age and pat on the back and go get them. Yeah,

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something deeper and more, just meaningful and powerful needed to happen. But I wasn't sure what it was. So I did some research and started learning. 1s So I was in that position. But what's really gotten me ignited is that I'm hearing from so

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young women, they're saying we can't find good men. And so when I heard that these are college girls, when I heard that I

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thought, I

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have granddaughters that are growing up and they're going to need good men and they're not out there. And so I thought, I'm going to make some. And I had had success with mine and I thought, well, we'll help some other guys do the same. And then since then, though, it's just been an avalanche of decline in many ways. Manhood has just been cascading, crumbling off the edges in our society and it's demeaned. It's not looked up to. And if there are weird versions of manhood that are just the macho, cruel, heartless, kind of muscular, whatever kind of version, **1s** to the guys that are just not men, they don't know what it is. They think it's physical or they think it's financial, or they think it's a lot of other things that it's really not. So I said, we got to help these guys to know what they're aiming for. And a lot of dads are saying, I don't know what. We talked the other day, Marcus. You and I were visiting with Kevin. Kevin Bryan, our friend, and we were visiting with him. He took in a teenage son. It was a situation where he was parents died at the same time. And so he took in this young man and he hadn't raised the boy. He had a daughter that was already almost out of the house. But Kevin's words to us were, I was terrified. **1s** I didn't know what to do to raise a boy, and I think a lot of dads kind of get in that situation. They aren't sure what to do. Especially in certain situations, they aren't sure what to do. So we wanted to help them and address

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that. I don't know what you think about this, Stephen, but we're coming up to in an age that artificial intelligence is now becoming dad for some of these boys, right? What do you think about that? Have you heard some things about how I'm I'm even getting from my own mean, obviously, I have a great relationship with my son, and I'm always there to reinforce that. Hey, son, I know it's easy **2s** to go online and go on YouTube and figure out things on your own, but you have a dad here that loves you. You have a dad here that wants to be involved with you. What do you say to those dads that **1s** are losing their sons right now to other sources of, let's face it, fabricated wisdom? Wisdom that we don't know if it's really wise.

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Yeah. Well, first of all, AI will have some advice. We'll have some ideas. Sure. But AI would never replace dad. Never. Now, there are dads that AI would be maybe a better offering to the kid, because there are some. **1s** There are some guys that are just they really aren't taking care of their kids. They're not loving their sons. They're not helping their sons. They're not encouraging them. In fact, they're discouraging them or they're brutal or they're absent or whatever. So there's a lot of guys that they're hurting their kids. Okay, I'm not talking about those kind of dads when I say there are some that AI will never replace. But AI will give information, perhaps. But wisdom now, wisdom and information are not always the same thing. That's right. Wisdom comes from experience. Wisdom is applied to the individual **3s** through experience. Also, I don't think AI will ever be able to give boys the experiences that dads can give their son. The training, the time, the energy, the presence. **1s** It's dots and dashes. AI is dots and

dashes. And so it cannot replace flesh and blood. And there's something to your dad. In fact, another man really doesn't replace your dad. They can step in and do some good. And a lot of guys that's good, that's what they have.

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Yeah, sometimes that's the only option.

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Right? So I'm not putting that down, but I'm saying that really the best option that's out there is always going to be the best options out there. And so for these fathers to engage with their sons, to be there, to give them advice and counsel, but to give them experiences, to encourage them, to coach them, to teach them, and to walk with them, and AI will never form a relationship with a human being. It may feign one, it may seem like baby, but no, it's not the same thing, because AI will never die for you.

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It will not. I love

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that. And you'll step in front of the bullet of the truck for your kids because you love them. So there's just some elements there that it's not going to cannot replace. And so we want to make sure what our effort here is to see more dads living up to that standard, so that anybody who looks at AI or anything else will say, *Is that's empty compared to what I've got. That's a lost cause. And they will they will readily choose a real live relationship with their own father, with the man who's standing in for him, and they will say, no, this is what I prefer, because this is real.*

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Well stated, Steven. So let's talk a little bit more about some of these Gallup polls. Would you want to go through that a little bit?

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Yeah, I mean, pretty staggering stuff. And there are a lot of other statistical studies that support this or pretty much rhyme with it. Gallup said that, what, 90% or a little over 90% of Americans agree that fathers make a unique contribution to their kids lives. Mmhmm. And that is absolutely right. Father absence, or fatherlessness is another way to indicate, another way to measure the power, the impact of a father, an engaged father. Most of the people in prisons I want to think it's in the 85 or so percent range of men who are in prison, it might be closer to 90% of those in prison came from fatherless homes. It's about the same for women in prison as well. School dropouts, teen pregnancies, suicide rates, runaways drug abuse, depression, all of that. All of that is in the 70 plus percent range of people who suffer from those things came from fatherless homes. Now, there are some homes where dad is in the house, but he's dangerous, or there are some where he's in the house, but he's preoccupied with things, and so he's not really engaged. So if we throw that in the mix. *Is Was really a staggering statistic to*

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consider. Yeah. So let's talk a little bit about more of the why behind Save the Boys. So just started getting ready for this thing called a man, about the manabouts. Is this rite of passage journey that you've created, pioneered actually on an ease, easy, step by step way for dads that don't really have the experience to take a young man that he's been leading up to twelve years old to take him now to that rite of passage journey over to manhood. So this is the precipice of this book, this manabouts journey, right? So let's talk a little bit about why you felt like this is a perfect opportunity for dads to help save the boys. Like, how is this manabout's rite of passage journey part of the bigger picture of saving the boys? The transition times in life are the volatile times in life. Okay? So even moms having babies, there's a pregnancy, and then there's this short period of time, the transition, then the birth, right? So this transition time is kind of crazy. That's when things were wild and everything's in turmoil and it can go good or it can go bad until the child's actually through the pregnancy stage and into the world. And so transition times are always kind of volatile times. And the transition from boy to man is a transition and it needs to be handled well. And we haven't been given we lost some tools or they weren't given to us, or we never had I don't know what happened, but I know I wasn't given those tools and I couldn't find anybody that knew much about them. Now, I lived in East Africa for a decade. While I was there, I noticed that the particular tribal group that we spent time with in Kenya, they had every December special time away for the boys. They'd take a group of three to five is the way they did this. They have boys that are in their teen years, and they would take them, put them in seclusion for about a month. There was a school break in December, so they always did it in December, so they put them in seclusion for about a month. And I don't know all that they did there because it's very secretive and that kind of thing, but we learned some things that they did. But that got me interested because when those young men came out of inclusion and back into the community. **1s** That, marcus they were transformed. They were still young, skinny young guys, 15, 1317, whatever they were, but their eyes, their demeanor, their view of themselves, they were not boys any longer. They were men. And they were part of the community, and the community viewed them as men, received them as men. It was powerful. And I said to myself, I said, there's something there that we have lost that is good when a game. So that started my journey of saying, what have we lost? What can we learn

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and create if we need to? And as I did my research and did my learning, I started seeing in other cultures around the world that there's similar events that we call rites of passage for helping transition boys and girls into adulthood. **2s** I learned that there are some common steps or stages that they all share. And then we put in the content in those stages that we thought were biblical, that were true and weren't filled with things that were false notions or ideas about manhood or about anything else. And so that's how we developed this thing we call a man about that's described in the book, say, the boys, about how dad can, at the right time, take his son, who's a boy, and change his heart. Change his thinking so that he moves into the mindset of an adult and is working towards maturity as an adult instead of just piddling away his life in adolescence **1s** and remaining a boy. Right. Selfish.

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Yeah. And how powerful and how proud of a father could be to be a part of that. Right. How I'm imagining this next part after this first part, we're going to be talking about your experience with kind of a man, about retreat you just did with a number of men. Can you talk a little bit about what's in it for dad when he does this man about and what could be the fruit of all this? **1s** Well, why bother? I mean, you try your best, and then, hey, hopefully he gets it and on your way. Why would I need a man about great question. I am so happy to tell you what I think about that. Oh, man. Dad, you have no idea how full you will be when you have done the right thing. You watch your kid transform and do the right things. There is nothing like it. There is nothing like it. **2s** I don't know how to describe it well, but I will say I'll talk more about this when we do talk about the retreat. I asked my son on this recent retreat we're on. I call some of my sons up on the phone one at a time. And when you see your son come out and he is maturing,

and he is not fighting you, but he is listening to you. And when you see him living the things that you have taught him, the lessons and the principles and the guideline, when you see him applying those in his life at 13, 14, 15, 17 years old, you see him doing those, and he's struggling with wisdom. **1s** He is not swayed by the silliness, and even if he falls into sin and rebellion, he comes back with a broken heart because he knows where to come back to and where to begin again. **2s** He's getting the channels of life worked out in a good way, and it gives you such peace

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to know know that he's going to be okay, that he's going to navigate life well. Right. And it gives you a great amount of peace and confidence, and you just can rest at night. See, I never went to bed at night wondering about were my kids out misbehaving, drunken, getting drunk, or driving crazy or too fast or just doing anything they shouldn't be doing. **1s** It was eradicated.

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Why did you feel that way?

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Because of this experience and the relationship that began to grow out of it. I knew I could trust my sons. I had a history of giving them opportunities, and they were trustworthy. Yeah.

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What was those inklings that you got that said, you know what? I can trust this guy? Tell me a little bit about when you went through the man about your own sons

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on the trip. You invite them to make some commitments, okay? So when they come back, you get to help them live those out and watch them live those out, and as they do, live faithfully to those commitments at age, let's say, 13 and 14 and 15, and they've been consistent at that over the years. Then when they hit 16 or 17 or something, they got a car license, or they're out with their buddies, oh, boy, or something like that, then you don't worry about it because you know them, and it takes time. You can't just go on this little trip and say, well, it's all done. It takes time. Working together, being together. That's why AI will never replace this stuff. Yeah, man. But I knew my sons. I knew their hearts, and I knew them, and I knew that they were strong, and I told them so. And the expectation part of that was that I knew that they would be strong and faithful and honest and good and do the right things. They didn't want to lose my respect either, but that grows over time. So what I'm hearing is you had a pact with your sons. You created that. Yeah. Not lip service type of relationship where he's afraid to say what he really feels, but there's this genuine, like, no. **1s** I don't need I don't need to hide anything from my dad because I know him so well. He knows me so well.

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Is that what you're saying? Absolutely **1s** right. And I don't want to give the notion that I

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or my sons were perfect. We're not, of course. We're just people. We're people. We make our mistakes. You're not. Are you sure? I am absolutely perfectly sure that I'm not perfect. No, I'm not. And my guys weren't either. But the direction was right and strong. That's what it used to for. It's not perfection. It's direction that

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counts. And we got our guys headed in the right direction, and when they failed or I failed, or there was some time when we were kind of headbutting and we didn't see eye to eye, we had a strong enough relationship and a vibrant enough relationship that we knew

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we could come back together and work through it. And we knew how that process would be. It was already set up, how we're going to get back together and get things on track. And so 2s there wasn't much guesswork.

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Yeah, it

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was very prescribed and it worked, and we just practiced it over the years as they grew into men and grown men, like independent families and all that kind of

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stuff. Yeah. So let me chime in here for a minute. I'm going to give the listeners the men listening here and women probably listening in too. But I'm going to speak to the men here 2s when some of these guys

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probably may not have had the most perfect relationship with their sons up to this point, up to, like, 1213, where we're asking them to try to engage their sons by doing a man about. For me, that was the case. That was the case because 1s I wasn't the perfect dad. In this podcast. There's this contrast where I came from not having the best picture of what a godly dad would look

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like, but it. 2s Um, so I was a little nervous, you know, when I was starting down this road of trying to do the man about with my son, planning it, and which is going to be in a month, so I'm a little nervous.

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But

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up to this point, there was highs and lows, highs and lows, and there was some mistakes along the way. What do you say to those guys that with you you went through fatherhood? It seemed like you were pretty

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well

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situated with your sons to have a smooth transition from

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zero to twelve to twelve

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to 14 or whatnot to get them into the manhood stage. What do you say to those guys that feel inadequate? Maybe you're like, oh, gosh, I don't think my son's going to really even want to do this. Yeah,

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well, first of all, that is a gut wrenching moment where you just feel like, I don't know if I can do this. It's scary. ^{3s} What do you do? It's overwhelming. So for them, I want to say ^{1s} there are no perfect fathers, and that's because we didn't have perfect fathers. My dad was an alcoholic. You already said your dad had some issues, too. There was some brokenness and some failures there. So we all come in broken, limping, nobody's coming in with everything all worked out. So welcome to the

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company. That's reassuring. And it's just true when we're honest with each other. Now, some guys get a better shake than others do. I will say there are guys who have really horrific. ^{2s} Negative situations that are greater than some other guys. But still we all come in with some brokenness and we're not perfect. We don't know how to do fathering. We're learning as we go, we always are. Even if you have five sons, every one of them is different. So you're still learning on each one how to raise that one. So it's a constant or continual learning process. We can gain insight from other men, which is what we're trying to do here with this podcast. And even with the whole effort to say the boys and the book, this is all trying to share what we've learned so that guys have something to begin with that works and that is proven to fill in some gaps or supply a plan. And then I would say that I don't think that it's perfect fathers, but there's a difference between the willing and the unwilling, between the involved and the uninvolved, between those trying and those not really trying, between those who focus on raising their kids and those who really aren't focused on their kids. Those are the differences. And so if you're trying and you genuinely want to help you love your son and you want to help them grow into manhood, and if you are involved

with him, and as you learn to do more, you're doing more, you learn to do differently, you're doing differently that communicates what he will need. And then just filling in the gaps with information like what we have and a lot of other resources that are there, you'll gain some tools. But I think the key is dad has to decide that he's going to not play games, he's going to not be working all the time. He's going to understand his priorities and his role, as we talked about earlier, the powerful role of a father ^{1s} and how that cannot be replaced by anyone else. Really, it's just such a powerful thing. So when he decides he's going to be involved and make the raising of his sons into strong men of character, then he's got what he needs and he'll gain the tools. And his son will pick that up. He'll figure out how to do it. He will figure it out and God will help him. If he's turning to God for that help, he will help him as well. He did me.

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I told you my dad was alcoholic and good. I love my dad, he was a nice man, but his dad was a raging alcoholic and beat his family abusive physically in every other way. So he didn't have much to start with either. But still through us to bring about a pretty good result with my kiddos.

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So what I'm hearing is even if you didn't have the greatest start, you can have a masterful finish with this man about if you just jump in. Okay,

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that's well put. Yeah, just jump in. I think. ^{1s} It's a little bit of I would say there's faith involved here, but faith is matter of some action.

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Jump in. Yeah. And how it's written. And I've been starting to read galley we have, and it's step by step. So you're not feeling as a dad like, oh, gosh, this is confusing. This is too difficult. It's very step by know. Maybe you can speak into that a little and and by the just the words of my friend Ben Walkley come to mind. Just going back to what we said just a little earlier about being afraid or being concerned. You don't have what it takes. Very accomplished man in business in other ways and very confident in what he does. And he called me the day he was about to take his son on a trip, and he said, I am scared to death.

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I think if you're afraid, you feel unsure, I'd say good for

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you. Yeah, you're in a good spot.

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You're in a good spot. It's the guys who think they know it all that need to learn some more, and they're going to miss out on some good stuff. So I think it's a good spot. But because it is new, because it's I

mean, rite of passages just conjures up a lot of ideas. We see people it's all the way from a guy walking on hot coals or something like that, some kind of running through the bush naked with a spear or something painted up. We don't know what we're talking about. Rite of passage or it's hazing. We get the ideas of hazing, which is not either of those at all. Real rite of passage is not that's just insanity what those things are. But because it is so new of a concept to us in the west here **1s** we put it together step by step by step and made it very clear with examples, stories and illustrations and just kind of line by line here's it works so that it is the first time through. It's be a little bit mechanical because we're learning it as anything is that you're doing the first time. But after you go through one or see one or two, then it's like, oh. **1s** Now I can take this and really make this great. That's

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exactly. Make it your own.

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Absolutely. We want it to be that way, and it will be.

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Yeah. That's great. Yeah. One of the things I'm going to be doing is I'm going to be creating a little booklet, handmade booklet, because I dabble in design. So I'm creating my own little kind of booklet for my son. Obviously, I'd love to create something of like that little field guide that I think we're going to probably do for other guys that don't design their own booklets, but more fill in the blanks in there.

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And dads are really creative once they kind of get the hang of it. Exactly. I love it. And I took my guys on a fishing camping expedition into the wilderness up in the northern wilderness area along US. And Canadian border. That's where I took mine. But some other guys that have come since, I really love all the different things they have done. They've taken their guys on canoe parts of the tributary of the Colorado River. Some have hiked the At Appalachian Trail. Some have climbed the Teton Mountains. Wow. And others have done trips that are more like Big Bend. They've been in that park there and they've hiked down in there. You have a plan? Yeah, I have a plan. I have a plan. Yeah. So what we're going to be doing yeah, we're going to be going to so I'm starting off, we're going to be renting a car, a car that he really likes. And we're going to go rest in a kind of a dumpy place before we get to the night before. And then we're going to get up really early because I don't want to spoil him. I want it to be low key, like a kind of a Motel Six kind of thing. But we're going to then drive over to a boat dock. And we're going to take a boat that takes us to the Channel Islands in California, which in particular is Scorpion Island is where we're going to be doing a little primitive camping. And so we're going to be there for a little bit. And then after we do that, once we celebrate and do all the things, **1s** you actually are a big part of it because you've written the book to help guide me to complete this. Then we're going to go back on the boat and go to a really nice spot for a couple of nights. And I'm going to take them for a steak dinner, treat them like a man. So it's going to be incredible. Am I nervous? Yeah. And by the way, we're going to do a little snorkeling and all that stuff, but am I a little nervous? Yeah, of course I am. I've never done anything like this before. But am I going to do it? Absolutely. Because I know how important. **2s** This is going to be for him. I want him to look back and go, you know what? My dad really cared about me. My dad cared so much that he actually stepped out and did something that was a little out of his **1s** want to. I know we got to wrap up on this part one series of this bigger series of Save the Boys. But I wanted to thank you, Steven, in particular for, number one, being my partner in father and number two, writing this incredible piece of work that you've worked so hard on. Will try it out

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and it is so useful and it's so relevant in today's world, men and boys need and their boys need to be engaged like this because too many times I see that dad is not dad is not engaged. And this is also just another way to engage your son in a special way. 2s So if you 2s friend out there that is listening if you're a dad, or if you're a man that has adopted a boy which is a dad, or if you are a man that 1s know a young man that needs a dad. 1s This is an incredible opportunity for you because in a few months after this, we're going to have this book out and ready for you. So if you want to go and get on the waiting list, you can go to Fathermagazine.com 1s Savetheboys. We're going to have a form on there where you can actually put in your information 1s and you can get on the waiting list. And once we have this book out, we're going to send you an email and we're going to give you a live link that you can go and purchase it. Also, what we're going to be talking about in the next episode, Steven right, is 2s some churches out there organizations that want to do what is called a man about retreat, which we would actually help you teach multiple men that are dads to help them do a man about retreat for their sons. We have that available as well. So, Stephen, you want to talk about that for our next episode? What are we going to be talking about?

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Well, that is so fun because some guys know I would like to see one. I wish I could go on one of these trips and then I think that would help really understand, first of all, decide if I want to do it. But secondly, it would let me kind of get a feel for this thing because I'm more visual, I'm more active. I learn by doing well. We've taken some men on these retreats and in just 36 hours. 1s Friday evening, all day Saturday, and we finish up by noon on Sunday. We have introduced them and 1s so far, 100% of the men who go on that come back and are telling us, I'm doing this. I am so doing this. And of course, they're all wishing that they had been taken on such a thing when they were kids, too. No, no kidding. Yeah, me too. Yeah. So, yeah, we're going to be talking about that in the next episode, so stay tuned for that. Stephen's going to tell a little bit about the man about retreat that he just put on in Ohio. And so I can't wait to 3s have that available for you, listener, friend, dad, man, whoever's out there listening. And we are just so excited for you to be a part of this journey. We hope you take this step of faith and that we hope you could things that we're making available for you, that you can use them so you can see a huge difference in your son's lives. All right, well, hey, we're going to conclude this episode part one. And Stephen, thank you so much for your time. Thank you for your energy on this project. I'm excited to be doing this alongside of you. And until then, we're signing off. 1s Thank you for tuning in to the Father Podcast. The Father Podcast is brought to you by Father magazine in affiliation with Father Media Group, a 501 nonprofit organization. Our sole mission is to restore and advance the presence of biblical manhood in today's world. We provide wisdom bearing resources to help men

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find the answers they need to live out their Godgiven roles confidently and faithfully. If you feel called to help us advance our mission, we ask you to partner with us by subscribing this podcast and or making a donation@fathermagazine.com so we can continue to create more resources just like this for a future generation of men. Thanks again for listening and we'll see you next time. Bye.