The Daily Text: A Build Guide for Dads

Simple morning deposits for your son



Why This Build Guide

My son is 17. Most mornings he's out the door before I've finished my first cup of coffee, and the long talks I picture having with him rarely happen on schedule. But we were on a walk one day, and he asked me, “how would you define biblical masculinity?” Ideally, we would go through a book together. Better yet, we would pore through Scripture to find the verses. But did I fail to mention that he’s 17?

So this month I tried something smaller: one verse and two or three sentences, texted every weekday before school.

A text won't replace a conversation or a bible study. But it **compounds**. Twenty mornings is twenty small deposits, and it keeps the door open for the bigger talks when they come.

This guide is the build I used, so you can make your own in less than an hour.

The framework: four virtues, four weeks

I told my son, “my advice is par. Certain books are better. But going straight to the Bible is best.” These texts contain all three.

The base is verses from the Bible. The spine comes from pastor Seth Troutt's Authentic Masculinity. He stacks four virtues like a pyramid, each defined by what a man is not. I adapted it into one week per layer. The last piece is my own encouraging words to my son.

Week	Virtue	The idea in one line	Anchor verse
1	Humility	You're not God. Small and significant at the same time.	Psalm 8:3-6
2	Discipline	You're not ruled by impulse. Bigger wants overrule smaller ones.	1 Corinthians 9:24-27
3	Responsibility	You're not a boy. Take care of yourself, then others.	Luke 16:10
4	Strength that honors (chivalry)	You're a man. Strength exists to lift people up.	1 Peter 3:7

The order matters. Discipline without humility turns into either performance or a form of self-hatred. Strength without discipline turns into a problem. **Build from the bottom.**

If your son's season calls for a different set, keep the structure and swap the content. Four themes, one per week, five texts each.

Anatomy of a text

Every text has three parts and fits on one phone screen.

1. **The verse.** Paste it in full from your translation. One to four verses, never a chapter.
2. **One idea.** A single sentence that names what the verse is getting at. Use a phrase he can remember: "swagger and a limp," "want to want to," "strength that honors."
3. **One piece of encouragement or admonition.** A statement about him or about you. No assignment, no question he has to answer. Most of mine end with "I love you."

For example, here's one I sent:

Psalm 8:3-6 — God made the stars and still thinks about you. Both are true: you're small, and God loves you infinitely. Walk with Him today in humility and gratefulness. Another way to think about it: walk in today with a little swagger, because He made you, and a little limp, because you need Him for every step. I love you!

Under 60 words, plus the verse. He can read it in between classes.

Mistakes to avoid:

1. Sending a verse on a sensitive topic (purity, anger, a recent conflict) before you've talked about it face to face. It reads as a subtweet.

2. Writing past 60 words. If it needs a paragraph, it needs a conversation.

3. Turning a bad day into a lesson. If he's had a rough week, send the blessing and skip the point.

Build it in an hour

1. **Pick your four themes** (5 minutes). Use the four virtues above, or choose four that fit your son's season right now.
2. **Pick five verses per theme** (20 minutes). Twenty total. Favor short passages. Use a concordance or a Bible app search on the theme word.
3. **Write one sentence per verse** (20 minutes). What's the one thing you want him to carry out the door? Write it plain, the way you'd say it in the car.
4. **Add the encouragement** (10 minutes). A blessing, a "proud of you," or a line about your own struggle. Plan at least one confession a week.
5. **Read every text as him** (5 minutes). Cut anything that sounds like a lecture or a test.
6. **Load it somewhere you'll see it.** A note on your phone works. Same time every weekday. I'm a nerd, so I had my AI assistant remind me at 0645 every morning, with the verse and the text I pre-wrote, so all I do is copy, paste, and send.

A sample week to borrow

Week 1, humility. Paste each verse above the message from your own translation. In my Wednesday text I named the actual friends who tell me the truth. Name yours.

Day	Verse	Text
Mon	Psalm 8:3-6	God made the stars and still thinks about you. Both are true: you're small, and God loves you infinitely. Walk with Him today in humility and gratefulness. Another way to think about it: walk in today with a little swagger, because He made you, and a little limp, because you need Him for every step. I love you!
Tue	Philippians 2:3-4	Humble people are curious about other people. You're a naturally curious guy, and people feel it, in a good way, when you ask them questions about themselves. I love you!
Wed	Proverbs 14:12	Some of the poorer decisions I've made in my life felt completely right at the time. None of us can fully trust our own read on ourselves. That's why I'm grateful for the guys in my life who God uses to tell me the truth. They keep me humble, and I'm praying you always have a few throughout your life.
Thu	Ephesians 2:10	We were made on purpose, for good work. That should be both humbling and confidence-building for you today. I love you!
Fri	2 Samuel 12:7	This is where Nathan confronted David about Bathsheba. David was quick to judge the man in Nathan's

		allegory, until it turned out to be him. It's easy to look out the window at everyone else and harder to look in the mirror. It's the key to humility, and I'll be working on this one myself until the day I die. I love you!

The rest of the verses I'm using for weeks 2 through 4:

Discipline: 1 Corinthians 9:24-27 · Hebrews 12:1-2 · Proverbs 4:23 · Galatians 5:22-23 · Ephesians 5:8-10

Responsibility: Luke 16:10 · 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12 · 1 Chronicles 4:10 · 1 Timothy 4:12 · 1 Corinthians 10:31

Strength that honors: 1 Peter 3:7 · Genesis 2:15 · 1 Timothy 5:1-2 · Genesis 2:23 · 1 Corinthians 10:33

Ground rules

- Same time, every weekday. Before school is best. Consistency is the message underneath the message.
- Never require a reply. The moment it feels like homework, he stops opening them. Silence is fine. He's reading.
- No questions. Statements land softer than prompts. Save the questions for the car or the dinner table.
- Go first. Once a week, admit something you're still working on. That vulnerability can go a long way, farther than any one verse.
- Don't announce the framework. Let him notice the pattern. If he asks around week 3, that's your opening for a longer talk.
- Weekends off. If a moment comes up naturally, tell a story from your own life about that week's theme.

After four weeks

- Run a second cycle on roles. The Masculine Roles: Son, Brother, Maker (cultivating skill for the common good), Husband, and Father (spiritual and biological). Same anatomy, new themes.
- Flip it. Once a week, let him send you a verse.
- Hand him the book. If he's noticed the pattern, give him the source and talk through it together.

Resources

- Seth Troutt, Authentic Masculinity: Leaving Behind the Counterfeits for God's Design (Moody Publishers, 2026)
- 4 Virtues of Authentic Masculinity reading plan, YouVersion (4 days)

Twenty texts won't make a man. But I'm choosing to believe my son will benefit from a father who shows up every morning, even in imperfect and small ways.

Show up small. Show up daily.