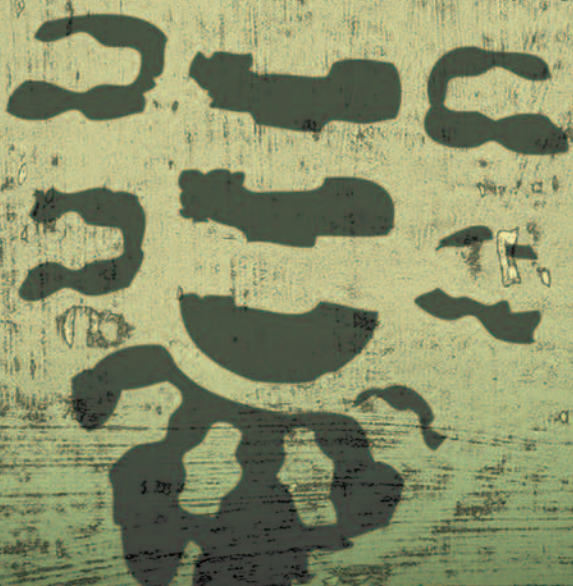




STEPPING UP

A CALL TO COURAGEOUS MANHOOD

— DENNIS RAINEY —



DISCUSSION
QUESTIONS

STEPPING UP: A CALL TO COURAGEOUS MANHOOD DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

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THINK ABOUT IT, TALK ABOUT IT



After reading portions of *Stepping Up*, you may find yourself wanting to think about the message a little more, or even wanting to talk it over with some friends. Here are some questions and talking points to assist you in applying the lessons and challenges of *Stepping Up* to your life and family.

WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO BE A MAN?

CHAPTERS 1 - 4

1. What is your favorite story about courage, either true or fictional?
2. Do you agree with Eddie Rickenbacker's statement: "There can be no courage unless you're scared" (p. 5)?
 - What events and circumstances in today's world might make men afraid?
3. Like Michael (in chapter 1), men must sometimes show courage by "owning" their personal mistakes and failures. Why is it especially difficult to be courageous when we've brought hardship to ourselves and our loved ones?
4. Why is it important to own up to our mistakes and failures?
5. Few things challenge and shape a man's courage more than leading his family during times of suffering and grief. Read the "Lessons from the Valley" section (pp. 16–17). What would you add to that list based on your own experience?
6. What is the most courageous thing you've ever done?
7. What makes passivity so cowardly?
8. Three "storms" that rob men of courage were identified in chapter 4. Which of these storms do you relate to? What other storms would you add to the list?
9. What effect does a man's relationship with God have on his ability to live courageously?

BOYHOOD, AN AGE OF EXPLORATION AND DISCOVERY

CHAPTERS 5 - 8

- 10.** Describe some of the activities that you have enjoyed doing with your dad or with the man who raised you.
- 11.** What do you think it means to “engage purposefully in a boy’s life” (p. 40)?
- 12.** Chapter 6 lists four building blocks for raising children: character, relationships, identity, and mission. Describe some of the ways that a man can help a boy learn and grow in each of these areas of his life.
- 13.** How would you describe your dad, or the man who raised you, in one word?
- 14.** What one word do you think your children would choose to describe you?
- 15.** What changes would you need to make in your life in order to become more “intentional” about your role as a dad? As a husband?

ADOLESCENCE, AN AGE OF PUSHING AND PULLING

CHAPTERS 9-12

- 16.** What are some of the trends and temptations of our culture that threaten our adolescent sons?
- 17.** In your role as a dad, have you encountered either of the pressures described on page 67, the push back or the pull out?
- What do you wish you had done differently? What did you do that helped you and your son stay connected during his teenage years?
 - (If you are not the father of a son, answer the previous questions from a son's perspective.) What do you wish your dad had done differently? What did he do that helped the two of you stay connected during your teenage years?
- 18.** “With each new generation, we have lowered our expectations for teenagers” (p. 72). What adjustments could we make that would reverse this trend and help young men grow toward responsible and respectable manhood?
- 19.** Chapter 11 lists six non-negotiables for training teenage young men (see pp. 78–81). Choose two or three from the list and explain what you are doing to develop your son's life (or to help other young men) in each area.
- 20.** What are your hopes for your son? Describe the kind of man you want him to be. (Be as specific as possible, taking into account his abilities, interests, and personality.)
- Take a few minutes right now to pray that God will work in your son's life and will give you wisdom and courage to help shape his life.

MANHOOD, AN AGE OF STEPPING UP AGAIN AND AGAIN

CHAPTERS 13-17

- 21.** What obstacles, setbacks, challenges, and disappointments have you encountered that have helped build your courage and endurance?
- 22.** Is there a man whose courage and endurance inspires you? Tell the others about him by describing what you've learned from him through the way he has faced challenges.
- 23.** “The fear of failure creates a gravitational pull toward passivity” (p. 100). In what areas of your life have you battled the fear of failing?
- 24.** What one step of action could you take today that would move you away from passivity and toward courage?
- 25.** For husbands: Consider asking your wife “The Ten Questions” (pp. 100–101).
- 26.** Refer to the list of specific actions that Dennis Rainey took as the protector of his family (pp. 108–110). Which of these actions have you taken, or which do you need to take? What other actions would you add to your own list?
- 27.** Romans 12:21 reads, “Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.” Discuss some of the evils that you see in our culture and what you could do to overcome evil with good.
- 28.** In the story that begins on page 115 (Reconnecting with an Old Flame), describe the role that his accountability partner had in preventing Dan from making a huge mistake.
 - Do you have someone like that in your life who calls you up and will call you out when necessary?
 - If not, begin praying—and looking—for someone who can fill that role in your life. Remember: “Accountability is a proactive step toward never underestimating the power of temptation” (p. 118).

MANHOOD, AN AGE OF STEPPING UP AGAIN AND AGAIN

CHAPTERS 13-17
(CONTINUED)

- 29.** Dennis described his spiritual condition in his early college days: “I had treated Jesus Christ like a spare tire, pulling Him out of the trunk in an emergency and then putting Him back in after the crisis was over” (pp. 119–120). In one or two sentences, describe the current condition of your spiritual life.
- 30.** If you have questions about what it means to have a relationship with Jesus Christ, please read “Knowing God Personally” beginning on page 189.

MENTOR, AN AGE OF INVESTMENT AND IMPACT

CHAPTERS 18-20

- 31.** What men have had the most influence in your life? Describe the nature of their influence on you.
- 32.** Is the thought of mentoring new to you? How have these chapters helped, challenged, or clarified your thinking about becoming a mentor?
- 33.** “When it comes to being a mentor, many men suffer from self-doubt” (p. 139). Do you have feelings of self-doubt?
- What feeds your self-doubt?
 - What steps do you think you need to take in order to overcome those feelings?
- 34.** Dennis outlines three characteristics of a mentor: available, purposeful, and authentic.
- As you consider mentoring, what obstacles do you face?
 - What most inspires you about becoming a mentor?

PATRIARCH, AN AGE OF INFLUENCE AND RELEVANCE

CHAPTERS 21-25

- 35.** Beck Weathers, heading toward camp and surveying some of the tremendous losses and setbacks before him, said to himself: “You cannot sweat that small stuff. . . . You have to focus on that which must be done, and do that thing” (p. 159).
- What obstacles must you currently look beyond in order to focus on what must be done in your life?
- 36.** On page 170, Dennis explores the reasons behind why many older men lose their courage.
- Discuss any of these that you see encroaching on your life.
 - What would you add to this list?
 - Discuss what you can do to overcome these courage thieves.
- 37.** Who are the patriarchs in your life? Name them and describe one quality from each man that you want God to build into your life.
- You may want to consider making a call or sending a note or e-mail, thanking these men for the quality of life they have led and for the impact they’ve had on you.
- 38.** Chapter 25 contains the story of a man who decided, “It’s time.”
- This may take some courage, but discuss an issue in your life where it’s clear that, for you, “it’s time.”
 - What do you think you should do to enlist the help and accountability you need in this area of your life?
 - Is God prompting you to challenge a friend to step up? What do you need to do?