

HE WASN'T BORN LOST.
HE WAS BORN WITHOUT GUIDANCE.

SONS WITHOUT FATHERS

THE CRISIS
FACING
YOUNG
MUSLIM
MEN

ABU MALIK

SONS WITHOUT FATHERS

THE CRISIS FACING YOUNG MUSLIM MEN

ABU MALIK

Sons Without Fathers:

The Crisis Facing Young Muslim Men

CONTENTS

- Chapter 1: The Emotional Vacuum Facing Muslim Boys
- Chapter 2: Anger, Isolation, and Identity
- Chapter 3: Online Masculinity Gurus and Radicalization
- Chapter 4: Pornography and Escapism
- Chapter 5: Why Many Young Men Avoid Marriage
- Chapter 6: Fathers Who Were Never Taught Fatherhood
- Chapter 7: Masculinity in the Sunnah
- Chapter 8: Brotherhood, Discipline, and Purpose
- Chapter 9: Helping Young Men Return to the Mosque
- Chapter 10: Raising Strong Men Without Harshness

Chapter 1: The Emotional Vacuum Facing Muslim Boys

Many Muslim boys are growing up surrounded by noise but starving for guidance.

They have phones, games, videos, group chats, school friends, online personalities, and endless entertainment. They can watch men speak about success, money, women, fitness, dominance, politics, religion, and masculinity within seconds. Yet many of them do not have a man close enough to notice when they are angry, lonely, ashamed, confused, addicted, drifting from salah, or quietly losing confidence in themselves.

This is the emotional vacuum facing many Muslim boys.

It is not always the absence of a biological father. Some boys live with their fathers but still feel unknown by them. The father may provide, discipline, drive, pay bills, and appear respectable, while his son remains emotionally distant from him. The boy may know his father's rules, moods, expectations, and warnings, but not his heart. He may fear disappointing him more than he feels guided by him.

A boy can have a father in the house and still grow up fatherless in the places where it matters most.

This does not mean fathers are villains. Many Muslim fathers are tired men who were never shown how to connect. They may be working long hours, carrying debts, supporting relatives, surviving migration stress, or repeating the emotional silence they inherited from their own fathers. Some men love their sons deeply but do not know how to speak to them except through correction. They think provision is love, discipline is guidance, and silence is strength.

Their sacrifices may be real, but sacrifice alone does not raise a son's heart.

Allah says:

"O you who have believed, protect yourselves and your families from a Fire whose fuel is people and stones." Qur'an 66:6

Protecting a family from the Fire is not only about giving rules. It includes nurturing faith, character, emotional strength, discipline, and love for Allah. A son needs to be warned against haram, but he also needs to be shown why obedience to Allah is beautiful. He needs boundaries, yet he also needs belonging. He needs correction, but correction without connection often becomes resentment.

Many boys today are corrected more than they are understood.

They are told to pray, study, behave, lower their gaze, stop wasting time, avoid bad friends, respect parents, and become responsible men. These commands are important. A Muslim boy cannot be raised without discipline. The problem is that many boys hear instructions without mentorship. They are told what not to do, but not shown who to become. They are warned about sin, while no one helps them understand the pain, shame, boredom, desire, anger, and loneliness that often drive them toward it.

A boy who feels unseen will search for someone to see him.

If the father does not speak, the internet will. If the mosque does not mentor, influencers will. If older Muslim men do not guide him with mercy and strength, he may attach himself to voices that offer certainty without wisdom, confidence without character, and masculinity without taqwa.

Allah says:

“And whoever turns away from My remembrance, indeed, he will have a depressed life.” Qur'an 20:124

A life away from Allah becomes constricted, even if it is full of stimulation. Many boys are living with this constriction before they have the language to explain it. They scroll for hours but feel empty. They joke constantly but feel insecure. They act careless but fear failure. They mock religion but feel guilty. They chase pleasure but remain restless. Their outward behavior may look like laziness or rebellion, while inwardly they may be drowning in confusion.

This does not excuse sin. It explains why shallow advice often fails.

Telling a boy, “Just fear Allah,” is true, but if he does not understand Allah, if he has not tasted the sweetness of prayer, if he has no mentor, if shame is eating him alive, if he is addicted to screens, if his friends laugh at religion, if his father only criticizes him, and if the masjid feels like a place for older men, then the advice may not reach the wound. He needs fear of Allah, but he also needs someone to help him walk toward that fear with hope.

The Prophet Peace and Blessings upon him did not raise people through shame alone. He called them to Allah with wisdom, patience, mercy, firmness, and personal attention. Young companions were not treated as disposable because they were young. Their questions were answered. Their mistakes were corrected. Their potential was seen.

Ibn Abbas, may Allah be pleased with him, said:

“I was behind the Prophet Peace and Blessings upon him one day when he said, ‘Young man, I will teach you some words: Be mindful of Allah, and He will protect you. Be mindful of Allah, and you will find Him before you.’”

Jami at-Tirmidhi, Hadith 2516.

This hadith shows the Prophet Peace and Blessings upon him mentoring a young person directly. He did not only command Ibn Abbas. He invested in him. He spoke to him personally. He gave him words that would shape his understanding of Allah, reliance, destiny, and courage. That is what many boys are missing: not only lectures, but living guidance from someone who cares enough to teach them before the world misleads them.

A Muslim boy needs someone to say, “I see you. I know this world is confusing. I know your desires are strong. I know you are angry sometimes. I know you are not sure where you fit. Let me help you become a man who belongs to Allah.”

The emotional vacuum becomes dangerous because boys often hide pain behind anger. A girl may be more likely to cry, talk, or seek emotional connection, although this is not always the case. Many boys are trained early to bury softer emotions. Sadness becomes sarcasm. Fear becomes aggression. Shame becomes arrogance. Loneliness becomes addiction. Insecurity becomes disrespect. A boy may not say, “I feel lost.” He may say, “I do not care.”

Adults often respond to the surface and miss the root.

This Prophetic teaching teaches boys a different vision of strength. Strength is not the ability to dominate, intimidate, insult, or react. True strength is self-control. A boy who learns this early can begin to understand that anger is not leadership, cruelty is not masculinity, and emotional numbness is not power. He does not need to be weak to be gentle. He does not need to be harsh to be respected.

Many boys are not taught how to handle anger before anger becomes part of their identity. They are punished for outbursts but not trained in self-control. They are told to stop being disrespectful, but not shown what to do with humiliation, jealousy, rejection, or failure. When anger becomes the only emotion they know how to express, it can damage their relationship with parents, siblings, teachers, future wives, and eventually their own children.

A father, mentor, imam, or older brother can help by naming what sits beneath the anger. The boy may be embarrassed, feel stupid or ignored, hate himself for an addiction, believe he will never become successful, or grieve a father who is physically present but emotionally absent. Correcting behavior remains necessary, but healing the inner wound is also part of guidance.

Allah says:

“Indeed, Allah will not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves.” Qur'an 13:11

A boy's inner world matters. If his heart is full of resentment, confusion, shame, and emptiness, then outward discipline alone will not be enough. Islam reforms the inside and outside together. The salah of a young man should affect his heart. His fasting should train desire. His Quran should give meaning. His friendships should strengthen him. His father or mentor should help him connect these acts of worship to the real battles he faces.

The emotional vacuum is also spiritual. Many boys know Islam as pressure before they know it as guidance. They hear haram, shame, punishment, reputation, obedience, and expectations. They may not hear enough about Allah's mercy, the honor of being Muslim, the beauty of salah, the courage of the prophets, the brotherhood of the believers, the dignity of self-control, and the meaning of living for the Hereafter.

When Islam is presented only as restriction, boys may look elsewhere for identity.

Allah says:

“Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while being a believer, We will surely cause him to live a good life.” Qur'an 16:97

This ayah should be taught to boys with warmth. Righteousness is not a prison. It is the path to a good life. A boy should understand that Allah's commands are not there to crush him, but to protect his heart, body, honor, future marriage, family, and akhirah (Afterlife). Lowering the gaze is not deprivation. It is protection. Prayer is not interruption. It is connection. Brotherhood is not just friendship. It is strength upon obedience. Discipline is not punishment. It is freedom from slavery to desire.

A young Muslim man needs to see Islam as a path of meaning, not merely a list of things that make him feel guilty.

The Prophet Peace and Blessings upon him said:

“Seven will be shaded by Allah in His shade on the Day when there will be no shade except His shade,” and among them he mentioned “a young man who grew up in the worship of Allah.” Sahih Muslim, Hadith 1031.

This hadith gives young men a noble identity. A boy growing up in worship is not strange in the sight of Allah. He is honored. In a world that celebrates rebellion, lust, mockery, and self-indulgence, a young man who fights for salah, purity, discipline, and sincerity is walking toward shade on the Day of Judgment. Boys need this vision. They need to know that their struggle is seen by Allah.

Growing up in worship does not mean never struggling. It means returning. It means fighting the nafs. It means choosing Allah again after slipping. It means building a life where worship is not only inherited from parents, but chosen by the heart. Many boys need adults who can help them return without making them feel permanently stained.

An emotional vacuum often grows when boys have no safe place to confess confusion. They may have questions about Allah, doubts about Islam, sexual temptation, pornography, anger toward parents, attraction, gender confusion around modern culture, anxiety about success, fear of marriage, or shame over private sins. If every question is met with panic, anger, or humiliation, they will stop asking Muslims and start asking the internet.

This meaning teaches that questions should be directed to people of knowledge. Yet for a boy to ask, he must believe that asking will not destroy him socially. Parents and teachers need to create enough trust that difficult questions can be brought forward before they become private crises. A boy should not be mocked for not knowing. He should not be treated as a hypocrite because he is struggling. Guidance requires truth, but also a door that remains open.

This Prophetic teaching is essential for mentoring boys. Making things easy does not mean making haram halal. Giving glad tidings does not mean removing accountability. It means helping people move toward Allah instead of crushing them before they begin. A boy trapped in sin needs a way back. A boy confused about manhood needs guidance. A boy who feels ashamed needs hope. If adults only drive him away, they should not be surprised when someone else welcomes him.

Many boys also lack meaningful male companionship. They may have friends, but friendship is often built around joking, gaming, sports, memes, school, or shared boredom. They may rarely speak about Allah, goals, discipline, fear, family pain, or becoming better men. The result is social life without brotherhood. They are surrounded but not strengthened.

Friendship shapes boys deeply. A boy who sits with those who mock prayer, chase girls, consume pornography, lie to parents, and laugh at religion will be affected. A boy who has brothers who pray, train, study, speak truth, lower their gaze, and remind him of Allah will also be affected. Parents cannot choose every friend forever, but they can help create environments where good friendships become possible.

Masjids need to think seriously about this. Many mosques are not designed with teenage boys in mind. They may have prayer spaces and occasional lectures, but not enough mentorship,

brotherhood, physical activity, responsibility, service, and honest conversation. A boy may feel that the masjid is where he is corrected, not where he is known. If he does not feel he belongs, the street, gym, screen, or online community may become his substitute mosque.

Young Muslim men need to feel part of this believing alliance. They need roles. Let them serve. Let them help set up events, clean the masjid, mentor younger boys, visit elders, support charity work, learn adhan, organize sports, study beneficial knowledge, and take responsibility. Boys grow when trusted with meaningful responsibility, not when treated only as potential problems.

Responsibility gives a boy dignity. If he is never trusted, he may seek dignity through rebellion. If he is only criticized, he may search for praise from dangerous people. If he is given a role in serving Allah, his energy may begin to turn toward purpose.

The emotional vacuum is made worse by screens. Digital life gives boys immediate escape from boredom, sadness, loneliness, and discomfort. Games reward them. Videos distract them. Algorithms study them. Pornography corrupts them. Online debates make them feel informed without making them wise. Masculinity influencers make them feel powerful while often feeding resentment. A boy can spend years being shaped by voices his parents have never heard.

This is not a small issue.

Hearing, sight, and heart are accountable. What a boy watches matters. What he listens to matters. What he repeatedly consumes becomes part of his inner world. Parents who only focus on grades while ignoring digital formation are missing one of the largest influences on their sons. A boy may be physically at home while his mind is being raised elsewhere.

This does not mean parents should only ban and punish. Boundaries are necessary, but guidance must go deeper. Boys need to understand why the screen is powerful, how addiction works, why pornography destroys the heart, how algorithms manipulate anger, and how online personalities profit from insecurity. They need alternatives: sports, brotherhood, learning, work, service, nature, skills, and real conversation.

Empty time is dangerous when the phone is always available.

The Prophet Peace and Blessings upon him said:

“There are two blessings which many people lose: health and free time.”
Sahih al-Bukhari, Hadith 6412.

Free time can either build a young man or ruin him. A boy without purpose will fill time with whatever is easiest. If he has no goals, no discipline, no mentorship, and no love for worship, the easiest path will usually win. A healthy Muslim environment teaches boys to use time before time uses them.

This does not mean every moment must be intense. Boys need rest, play, humor, and recreation. Islam is not asking them to become joyless. The problem is when recreation becomes escape, escape becomes addiction, and addiction becomes identity. A boy should be able to enjoy halal fun without losing himself.

Parents should also be careful not to reduce their sons to achievement. Some boys feel they are only valued when they score well, behave well, look respectable, or make the family proud. If they fail, they feel worthless. This can create anxiety, dishonesty, and emotional distance. A son needs to know that his parents love him, but love does not mean approving of every action. It means his worth is not erased by mistakes.

Allah says:

“Say, ‘O My servants who have transgressed against themselves, do not despair of the mercy of Allah. Indeed, Allah forgives all sins. Indeed, it is He who is the Forgiving, the Merciful.’” Qur'an 39:53

This ayah should be part of how boys are raised. A son who sins should fear Allah, but he should not despair. If he falls into pornography, lying, anger, missing prayers, disrespect, or bad company, the door of tawbah remains open. Despair is one of the traps that keeps boys in sin. They think, “I already failed, so what is the point?” Islam says return.

A father or mentor should know how to speak the language of return. Hold the boy accountable, but do not bury him under shame. Help him make a plan. Teach him ghusl if needed. Teach him how to repent. Help him block access to sin. Replace bad friends with better company. Invite him to the masjid. Give him responsibility. Remind him that Allah’s mercy is greater than his failure.

The Prophet Peace and Blessings upon him said:

“Allah is more pleased with the repentance of His servant than one of you who finds his camel after losing it in a desert.” Sahih Muslim, Hadith 2747.

This hadith gives hope. A boy who returns to Allah is not treated by Allah as permanently dirty. Allah loves repentance. Young men need to know this because shame can become a prison. Many boys are not refusing Allah because they hate Islam. They are hiding because they feel too stained to come back.

The emotional vacuum also appears in how boys relate to fathers. Some fathers only speak when there is a problem. The son hears his name when grades drop, chores are missed, salah is delayed, or attitude appears. He rarely hears his father ask what he thinks, what he fears, what he

wants to become, what he is struggling with, or whether he needs help. Over time, the boy learns to hide the real parts of himself.

A father does not need perfect words. He needs presence.

Sit with him, drive with him, pray with him, and eat with him without turning every moment into correction. Ask questions before lecturing, share what you learned from your own youth, admit mistakes where appropriate, and let him witness Islam in your conduct: worship, apology, service to his mother, controlled anger, and manhood rooted in responsibility rather than emotional distance.

A father is a shepherd. A shepherd watches carefully. He does not only appear when the sheep wander. He knows the flock. Fathers need to know their sons beyond discipline. What are his friends like? What does he watch? What makes him angry? What makes him ashamed? Does he pray because he loves Allah or because he fears punishment at home? Does he know how to handle desire? Does he feel capable? Does he have older men he respects?

Mothers also carry a serious role, especially when fathers are absent, passive, harsh, or emotionally closed. Many Muslim mothers are trying to raise sons while also protecting them from the very patterns that hurt them. A mother may be the one who notices her son's emotional state, reminds him of prayer, manages school, softens the father's harshness, and worries about his future. Her role is great, but she should not be left alone.

Boys need mothers, and boys need good men.

A mother can nurture, guide, and love her son deeply, but a boy also needs righteous male examples. If the father cannot provide this fully, the community must help through uncles, grandfathers, imams, teachers, coaches, and older brothers in Islam. The absence of mentorship should not be treated as a private family failure only. It is a community crisis.

The Prophet Peace and Blessings upon him said:

"The believer to another believer is like a building, each part strengthening the other." Sahih Muslim, Hadith 2585.

Young men need to be strengthened by the building of the community. A boy without a father figure should not be left to search alone. A convert's son, a refugee boy, a child of divorce, a boy whose father works constantly, or a teenager whose father is emotionally absent should find men in the Ummah who can guide him.

This guidance must be consistent. One lecture will not replace fatherhood. One camp will not undo years of loneliness. A boy needs repeated contact with trustworthy men who model prayer, discipline, speech, work, mercy, physical health, emotional control, and love for Allah.

The emotional vacuum facing Muslim boys cannot be solved by shaming them. Shame may control behavior for a moment, but it rarely builds lasting faith. Boys need accountability, but accountability must be joined with hope. They need discipline, but discipline must be joined with connection. They need warnings about Hellfire, but also a vision of Paradise, purpose, honor, and Allah's pleasure.

Young men should be invited to race toward something greater than pleasure, status, or online approval. They should be told that Allah created them for worship, courage, service, discipline, brotherhood, protection of the weak, honoring parents, building families, speaking truth, earning halal, and standing firm in a confused age. A boy with purpose can fight battles that a boy with emptiness will surrender to.

Purpose is not built through lectures alone. It is shaped through habits such as waking for Fajr, training the body, learning the Quran, serving the masjid, working honestly, keeping promises, lowering the gaze, choosing good friends, respecting parents, making tawbah quickly, reading beneficial books, sitting with righteous men, helping the poor, learning a skill, protecting time, speaking truth, and controlling anger. Over time, these habits slowly turn a boy into a man.

Care must be taken not to turn this into another list that crushes him. The point is not perfection on the first day. The point is direction. A young man needs a path. He needs someone to walk with him. He needs to know that becoming strong takes time.

The Prophet Peace and Blessings upon him said:

"The most beloved deeds to Allah are those that are most consistent, even if they are few." Sahih Muslim, Hadith 783.

Consistency is more important than dramatic bursts. A boy who prays one salah consistently after neglect, then builds from there, is moving. A teenager who reduces screen time step by step is moving. A young man who starts attending the masjid once a week, then more, is moving. Growth should be encouraged, not mocked because it is incomplete.

The community must learn to recognize early signs of disconnection. A boy who stops coming to the masjid may be drifting. A teenager who is always angry may be hurting. A young man who jokes constantly about haram may be hiding guilt. A son who locks himself away for hours may not simply be lazy. A boy who says religion is boring may never have been shown its beauty. A young man who avoids older men may have only known criticism from them.

These signs should invite concern before condemnation.

Wisdom means knowing how to reach the person in front of you. One boy may need firmness, another may need warmth before correction, while others may require help breaking addiction, a

mentor who believes in them, clearer knowledge, or the fatherly attention they have been missing. The same approach will not work for every boy.

A harsh boy may need mercy. A passive boy may need challenge. A confused boy may need clarity. A lonely boy may need brotherhood. A sinful boy may need tawbah and structure. A wounded boy may need someone patient enough to keep showing up.

This is how the emotional vacuum begins to close.

The goal is not to produce boys who merely look respectable. Respectability can hide emptiness. The goal is to raise young Muslim men whose hearts are connected to Allah, whose emotions are disciplined but not dead, whose desires are governed by taqwa, whose strength is joined to mercy, whose friendships support righteousness, and whose sense of manhood is shaped by the Prophet Peace and Blessings upon him rather than the internet.

The Prophet Peace and Blessings upon him is the model for young men. He was strong without cruelty, gentle without weakness, courageous without arrogance, emotionally alive without being controlled by emotion, disciplined without being harsh, and merciful without abandoning truth. Muslim boys need to see this model clearly.

If they do not, they will build masculinity from fragments: a little from angry influencers, a little from absent fathers, a little from friends, a little from pornography, a little from movies, a little from pain, and a little from shame. That is not enough to form a righteous man.

The emotional vacuum facing Muslim boys is serious, but it is not hopeless. Fathers can reconnect, mothers can be supported, mosques can provide mentorship, and men can step forward with consistency. By Allah's permission, boys can return, addictions can be fought, anger can be disciplined, prayer can become beloved, brotherhood can be rebuilt, and purpose can be restored.

The work must begin with seeing boys clearly.

They are not only problems to control. They are future men of the Ummah. They may become husbands, fathers, imams, workers, leaders, protectors, teachers, and servants of Allah. Some are already carrying wounds they do not know how to name. Some are waiting for one sincere adult to believe they can become more than their worst habits.

A generation of boys should not be left to be raised by screens and shame.

They need fathers who are present, mentors who are consistent, mosques that welcome them, mothers who are supported, friends who strengthen them, and an Islamic vision of manhood that gives them both mercy and discipline.

The emotional vacuum will not be filled by noise. It will be filled by guidance, love, worship, responsibility, brotherhood, and men who remember that raising a boy is not only about stopping him from doing wrong. It is about helping him become someone who wants what is right.

Chapter 2: Anger, Isolation, and Identity

Anger is often the language Muslim boys use when they do not know how to explain pain.

A boy may not say, “I feel invisible.” He may become rude. He may not say, “I feel ashamed.” He may become sarcastic. He may not say, “I do not know who I am.” He may become defensive, withdrawn, loud, cold, or careless. Adults see the attitude and respond to the behavior, while the deeper wound remains untouched.

This does not mean anger should be excused. A Muslim boy is still responsible for his words, his hands, his tone, his choices, and the way he treats his parents, siblings, teachers, and friends. Islam does not allow a young man to harm others simply because he is hurting. Yet if the only response to his anger is punishment without understanding, the anger may go underground and grow stronger.

Many Muslim boys are carrying anger they cannot name.

Some are angry because they feel controlled but not guided. Some feel judged more than loved. Others are frustrated by family pressure, school failure, racism, bullying, poverty, body insecurity, pornography shame, social rejection, or the feeling that they will never become the kind of man people expect them to be. There are boys who live in homes where fathers are harsh, absent, emotionally closed, or constantly tired, while mothers are overwhelmed and unable to carry everything alone. A young man may not understand all of this, so he simply feels tense, restless, and ready to explode.

Allah says:

“Indeed, man was created anxious: when evil touches him, impatient, and when good touches him, withholding.” Qur'an 70:19-21

The Quran speaks honestly about human weakness. People can become anxious, impatient, and selfish when their inner state is not disciplined by faith. Boys are not exempt from this. A young man who does not learn how to deal with fear, disappointment, desire, shame, and loneliness may become controlled by them. Anger then becomes the easiest mask.

The Prophet Peace and Blessings upon him gave simple but powerful advice when a man asked him for counsel. He said:

“Do not become angry.” The man repeated his request several times, and he said, “Do not become angry.” Sahih al-Bukhari, Hadith 6116.

This hadith does not mean a believer will never feel anger. Anger is a human emotion. The command is about not surrendering to it, not letting it rule speech, decisions, relationships, and identity. For young men, this is a foundation of maturity. A boy who cannot control anger can damage friendships, disrespect parents, scare siblings, ruin opportunities, and later wound a wife and children.

Anger becomes especially dangerous when it gives a boy a false sense of power. If he feels weak inside, anger makes him feel strong for a moment. If he feels ignored, anger makes people react. If he feels ashamed, anger pushes attention away from his shame and onto someone else. The problem is that this kind of power is temporary and destructive. It may win a moment, but it weakens character.

The Prophet Peace and Blessings upon him said:

“The strong man is not the one who overcomes people by his strength, but the strong man is the one who controls himself while angry.”
Sahih Muslim, Hadith 2609.

This hadith gives young Muslim men a completely different definition of strength. Strength is not the ability to dominate a room, frighten people, insult someone sharply, or react without restraint. Strength is self-control when the nafs is burning. It is swallowing a word that would hurt someone. It is walking away before anger becomes sin. It is refusing to become a slave to one's own mood.

This teaching is badly needed because modern culture often rewards angry young men. Online spaces turn outrage into entertainment. Masculinity influencers turn resentment into identity. Political debates turn frustration into belonging. Group chats turn mockery into status. A boy who already feels isolated may discover that anger gives him a community, even if that community slowly poisons his heart.

Isolation makes anger worse.

A boy who has healthy friendships, caring mentors, a present father, a safe mother, and a masjid where he belongs has places to take his pain before it hardens. A boy alone with a phone, shame, and unspoken questions is much easier to capture. He may spend hours in his room, not because he loves isolation, but because isolation has become the place where no one expects anything from him. There, no one sees his failure. No one asks why he is behind. No one compares him to others. No one tells him he is not good enough.

The screen then becomes his companion.

It gives him games where he can win, videos where he can escape, influencers who give him certainty, pornography that numbs him, arguments that excite him, and identities that feel stronger than his real life. He may become physically present in the home but emotionally somewhere else. His parents see a son in the room, while his mind and heart are being shaped by strangers.

A boy's hearing, sight, and heart are being formed every day. The videos he watches, the voices he listens to, the jokes he laughs at, and the people he allows into his mind through a screen all leave a mark. A young man cannot fill his eyes and ears with rage, lust, mockery, and despair, then expect his heart to remain clean without effort.

Parents sometimes underestimate this because the boy is quiet. Quiet does not always mean safe. A teenager can be silent at the dinner table and deeply active online. He can avoid trouble outside while being spiritually harmed inside. He can appear lazy, when he is actually addicted. He can appear arrogant, when he is deeply ashamed.

This is why fathers, mothers, teachers, and mentors need to approach isolation with curiosity before condemnation. They should learn how the boy spends his time, what he watches, who he listens to, what kind of man he wants to become, and what anger may be hiding beneath the surface. The goal is not only to catch him doing wrong, but to know him well enough to guide him.

This Prophetic teaching should shape the way adults deal with isolated and angry boys. Making things easy does not mean allowing sin or removing accountability. It means opening a path back to Allah that the boy can actually walk. A young man who feels trapped in anger needs more than scolding. He needs hope, structure, companionship, and someone who believes he can change.

Many Muslim boys are also struggling with identity. They are Muslim, but they may not know what that means beyond family background, restrictions, and occasional religious events. They may be from immigrant families but not fully connected to their parents' culture. They may live in non Muslim societies and feel pulled between competing versions of manhood. At home, they may be told to be obedient sons. At school, they may be pressured to fit in. Online, they may be told that real men chase money, women, dominance, fame, and emotional detachment.

Inside all of this, a boy asks silently, "Who am I supposed to be?"

Masjids and families also need to give young men a vision of manhood stronger than the algorithm. That means presenting the Sunnah clearly: courage with restraint, confidence with humility, modesty without awkwardness, firmness without cruelty, service without humiliation, and responsibility without arrogance.

The Messenger of Allah, Peace and Blessings upon him, remains the measure. Every message about masculinity should be weighed against his example: whether it increases mercy, discipline, humility, protection of the weak, dignity toward women, truthfulness, and fear of Allah, or whether it only inflames ego under religious language.

“And who is better in religion than one who submits himself to Allah while being a doer of good and follows the religion of Ibrahim, inclining toward truth?”
Qur'an 4:125

A Muslim boy needs to know that his deepest identity is submission to Allah. He is not first a consumer, athlete, student, gamer, ethnic identity, social media profile, future husband, or economic unit. He is a servant of Allah. That identity gives him dignity before people praise him and direction when people confuse him.

This does not erase his personality, culture, interests, ambitions, or struggles. It gives them a center. A boy who knows he belongs to Allah can enjoy sport without worshipping popularity, study without making grades his god, work without making money his entire worth, and pursue strength without becoming cruel.

The crisis comes when boys are given Islam as inherited pressure rather than chosen purpose. They may know they are Muslim because their parents are Muslim. They may attend the mosque because the family expects it. They may fast because everyone around them fasts. Yet their own hearts may not have been helped to choose Allah consciously. When social pressure weakens, their Islam weakens with it.

Allah says:

“Say, ‘Indeed, my prayer, my sacrifice, my living and my dying are for Allah, Lord of the worlds.’” Qur'an 6:162

This ayah gives a complete identity. My prayer, my sacrifice, my living, and my dying are for Allah. A young Muslim man needs this kind of purpose. His life is not random, his body is not for sin, his energy is not for wasting, his anger is not for ego, his mind is not for confusion, his strength is not for oppression, and his future is not for showing off to people. He was created to worship Allah and to live as someone accountable to Him.

When a boy lacks this meaning, anger and isolation can become identity substitutes. He becomes the angry one, the funny one, the rebellious one, the quiet one, the gamer, the gym guy, the tough guy, the religious doubter, the one who does not care. Sometimes these labels become cages. He begins performing the version of himself that people expect, even if he is tired of it inside.

A young man needs permission to grow beyond the worst version people have known.

This meaning is essential for boys trapped in shame. Some young men have sinned privately for years. They may be addicted to pornography, lying to parents, missing prayers, speaking filth, wasting time, or living double lives. Shame can make them feel that religious identity is no longer available to them. They think good Muslim boys are somewhere else, and they are too far gone.

Allah closes the door of despair.

A young man who sinned can repent, missed prayers can be restored, wasted years can become the beginning of a new path, anger can be replaced with self-control, life online can be rebuilt into real discipline, and even someone who once mocked religion can become sincere. The path back may require effort, tears, discipline, and help, but it exists.

This Prophetic teaching gives hope without removing responsibility. Allah loves repentance. A young man should not delay tawbah because he feels embarrassed. He should not say, “I will become religious later,” as if later is guaranteed. He should return now, even if the return is imperfect. Pray the next salah. Delete what must be deleted. Leave the chat that corrupts you. Speak to someone trustworthy. Make wudu. Ask Allah for a new heart.

Anger also needs spiritual treatment. The Prophet Peace and Blessings upon him taught practical steps. Sulayman ibn Surad, may Allah be pleased with him, said that two men insulted each other in the presence of the Prophet Peace and Blessings upon him while one became very angry. The Prophet Peace and Blessings upon him said:

“I know a word which, if he said it, what he feels would go away: I seek refuge with Allah from Shaytan.” Sahih Muslim, Hadith 2610.

Anger is not only psychological. Shaytan can enter it. A boy who becomes angry should be taught to seek refuge with Allah, change posture, make wudu where appropriate, leave the situation if needed, and control his tongue. These are not childish techniques. They are prophetic tools for protecting the soul.

The Prophet Peace and Blessings upon him said:

“If one of you becomes angry while standing, let him sit down. If the anger leaves him, well and good; otherwise let him lie down.” Sunan Abu Dawud, Hadith 4782.

This shows that the body and soul are connected. Anger can be interrupted. A young man does not have to obey the first surge of rage. He can move. He can pause. He can lower the intensity

before sin happens. Training boys in these prophetic tools is better than only punishing them after they fail.

Isolation also needs practical treatment, because a boy cannot simply be told, “Stop isolating yourself,” if he has no meaningful place to go. He needs a better environment, with good friends, sport, work, study circles, mentorship, masjid service, physical training, and skill-building, while structure in his day helps protect him from the temptation that grows in emptiness.

Free time is dangerous when it is unguarded, especially for a young man with hours of empty time, no goals, no supervision, no brotherhood, and a phone in his hand. Boys still need rest, halal recreation, humor, and enjoyment, but recreation should never become the center of life.

A boy’s body also matters, because many angry and isolated boys are not sleeping properly, eating well, moving enough, or spending enough time away from screens and indoors. Physical neglect can feed emotional instability, while Islam teaches that strength, cleanliness, routine, and discipline are all part of a healthier life before Allah.

Strength includes faith first, but physical, emotional, and practical strength are also valuable when used for Allah. A young man should be encouraged to build strength through halal means: exercise, work, study, skill, worship, discipline, and service. Strength without faith becomes arrogance, while faith without discipline may remain fragile. The two should support each other.

Identity is also shaped by belonging, and a boy who feels that no one needs him may become careless until responsibility gives him dignity. Let him help younger children, assist at the masjid, volunteer, learn adhan, carry things, organize events, visit the sick, feed the poor, and see that his presence matters, because boys often grow when responsibility is trusted to them.

Young men should be invited into cooperation upon good, not only told what to avoid. Give them something noble to do, because serving the masjid can help a boy love the masjid, helping the poor can teach him to see beyond himself, mentoring younger children can mature him, and being trusted by righteous adults can help him begin to trust himself.

The masjid has a special role in this. Many young men feel that the mosque is for older men, little children, or people already religious. They may feel judged when they come irregularly. They may not know where to sit, who to speak to, or how to belong. If they made mistakes publicly, they may feel embarrassed to return. The community must make the masjid a place of accountability and welcome, not humiliation.

The mosque belongs to Allah. It should not feel like the private space of one age group, one ethnicity, one class, or one style of religious expression. Young men need to find worship there, but also brotherhood, mentorship, learning, service, and a sense of purpose. If the masjid only appears in their lives when someone is lecturing them, they may not experience it as a spiritual home.

Imams and community leaders should speak to boys directly. Not only about being bad, distracted, addicted, and disrespectful, although those problems may exist. They also need to hear that they are needed. They need to hear that the Ummah requires men of prayer, courage, knowledge, work, chastity, mercy, and discipline. They need a vision of manhood big enough to compete with what the internet offers.

This is the identity Muslim boys need. A young man in worship is not a failure, boring, weak, or less masculine, but honored by Allah. Allah sees him when his friends chase haram and he holds back, when he fights addiction, when he comes to Fajr tired, when he lowers his gaze while others laugh, and when he leaves a bad gathering.

Knowing that Allah sees him can begin to change how a boy lives, because his struggle is no longer hidden or meaningless.

Parents also need to rethink how they respond to anger, because some parents escalate every conflict until the boy raises his voice, the father raises his higher, the mother shames him, and the argument becomes a fight for control rather than a path to guidance. Authority matters, and parents should not allow disrespect, but firm correction must not become emotional warfare.

Allah says:

“And speak to people good words.” Qur'an 2:83

Good speech should enter parenting, because a parent can be firm without insulting, correct without destroying dignity, and say, “That behavior is unacceptable,” without saying, “You are useless.” A boy who is constantly humiliated may either break inwardly or become hard outwardly, and neither outcome is healthy.

Fathers especially need to be careful with contempt. A son can recover from discipline more easily than contempt. Discipline says, “You did wrong and must correct it.” Contempt says, “You are low.” When a boy feels his father sees him as stupid, weak, lazy, or disappointing, he may stop trying to earn respect in the home and seek it elsewhere.

Mercy is not the opposite of discipline, but what keeps discipline from becoming cruelty. A merciful father still corrects, a merciful mother still sets limits, and a merciful mentor still warns against sin, but the difference is that mercy wants the boy to return to Allah, not simply to feel crushed.

Some boys also need help dealing with identity wounds connected to racism, class, migration, and cultural confusion. A boy from an immigrant family may feel he is not fully accepted in wider society and not fully understood at home. He may feel embarrassed by his family’s accent, culture, poverty, or strictness, then feel guilty for that embarrassment. Another boy may feel constantly viewed through suspicion because he is Muslim. Over time, identity becomes heavy.

Islam must become the anchor beneath these pressures, giving the boy dignity when culture, racism, class, and confusion make identity feel heavy.

A Muslim boy belongs to an Ummah greater than school popularity, racial labels, suburb status, online tribes, and cultural insecurity. He is part of the Ummah of Muhammad, Peace and Blessings upon him. This should give him dignity without arrogance. He does not need to erase his background to be accepted, and he does not need to imitate every surrounding trend to be whole.

At the same time, parents should avoid making culture feel identical to Islam. Some boys become angry because every family preference is presented as religion. Clothing, career expectations, marriage preferences, food habits, language, and community reputation can all be mixed together with deen until the boy cannot tell what Allah commanded and what people simply prefer. This confusion can damage religious identity.

Teach Islam clearly and culture honestly, without calling everything haram because it is unfamiliar or calling everything Islamic because it is traditional.

Young men need access to scholars and teachers who can distinguish revelation from culture. When boys ask questions, they should be guided to knowledge, not dismissed with anger. A boy who understands Islam clearly is less likely to resent it unfairly.

Identity is also tied to future purpose. Many boys feel anxious because they do not know how to become men in a world where education, work, housing, marriage, and status all feel difficult. Some respond by becoming passive. Others become angry. A few attach themselves to ideologies that promise instant superiority. What they need is patient formation.

A young man should be taught to build gradually: prayer first, then discipline, then knowledge, then work ethic, then brotherhood, then service, then readiness for family when Allah opens that door, not every boy matures at the same speed. Constant comparison can destroy motivation. A father who says, "Look at your cousin," may think he is motivating his son, while actually deepening shame.

Consistency gives boys a path. A young man can begin with one prayer improved, one hour less online, one better friend, one regular class, one gym routine, one honest conversation, one act of service, one sincere dua at night. Small repeated steps build identity better than occasional emotional bursts.

A boy should not be told that he is hopeless because he is not yet disciplined. He should be shown how discipline is built.

Isolation, anger, and identity confusion feed one another. A boy feels lost, so he isolates. Isolation increases shame and unguarded screen use. Shame produces anger. Anger damages

relationships, and broken relationships deepen isolation until someone interrupts the cycle with mercy, structure, and truth.

The cycle can be interrupted when a parent reconnects before lecturing, a father spends time with his son without only correcting him, a mentor shows consistent concern, a masjid gives young men belonging and responsibility, a friend invites him toward salah instead of sin, and the boy himself makes tawbah and takes one honest step back to Allah.

There is a way out, because anger is not destiny, isolation is not identity, and shame is not permanent. By Allah's permission, a young man can change, learning to speak instead of explode, connect instead of disappear, repent instead of despair, and build an identity rooted in worship rather than wounded pride.

This requires adults to stop seeing boys only as problems. Yes, many boys are struggling with serious sins and attitudes. Some are disrespectful. Some are addicted. Some are lazy. Some have absorbed poisonous ideas. These issues must be addressed clearly. Yet beneath many of these behaviors is a young person who has not been guided with enough presence, wisdom, and love.

Muslim boys need strengthening. They need fathers who speak, mothers who are supported, mentors who are patient, brothers who remind, masjids that welcome, and communities that understand the age they are living in. They need discipline, but not humiliation. They need boundaries, but not emotional abandonment. They need Islamic identity, but not cultural confusion presented as revelation.

Anger must be redirected into courage for obedience, isolation must be replaced with brotherhood upon truth, and identity must be rooted in servanthood to Allah.

When this happens, a boy begins to see himself differently. He is no longer just the angry son, the isolated teenager, the addicted young man, the failure at school, the disappointment, or the one who does not care. He becomes a servant of Allah in formation. He becomes someone who can repent, work, pray, learn, repair, and grow.

The Prophet Peace and Blessings upon him is the model for identity. He was strong but not cruel, gentle but not weak, firm but not harsh, emotionally alive but not controlled by emotion, and connected to Allah in every state. Muslim boys need to be shown this model until it becomes more attractive than the false versions of manhood offered to them.

A young Muslim man does not need anger to feel powerful. He does not need isolation to feel safe. He does not need online tribes to know who he is. He needs Allah, prayer, discipline, righteous companionship, meaningful work, honest mentorship, and a community that sees his potential before his worst habits harden into adulthood.

The crisis is real, but so is the way back. Anger can be disciplined, isolation can be broken, and identity can be rebuilt. The boy who seems distant today may become, by Allah's mercy, a man of prayer, purpose, restraint, and service tomorrow.

The work begins when someone stops only asking, "What is wrong with him?" and begins asking, "Who is helping him become who Allah created him to be?"

Chapter 3: Online Masculinity Gurus and Radicalization

Many young Muslim men are not being disciplined by fathers, scholars, mentors, or righteous older brothers. They are being disciplined by algorithms.

A boy opens his phone because he is bored, lonely, angry, curious, ashamed, or tired of feeling weak. The screen gives him voices that sound confident. These men speak with certainty. They promise strength, respect, money, discipline, women, dominance, and escape from humiliation. They make him feel that the confusion inside him has a simple explanation. Society is against men, women cannot be trusted, religion has been weakened, softness is failure, and the only way to survive is to become hard.

For a young man who feels unseen, this confident online certainty can feel like guidance, even when it is not.

The danger is that much of it is not guidance, but woundedness dressed as strength, ego presented as masculinity, and resentment sold as truth. Sometimes it even borrows Islamic words, quotes religious concepts selectively, and wraps itself in talk of leadership, obedience, modesty, and tradition, yet when you look closely, the heart of the message is not taqwa, but anger.

This is why online masculinity culture has become so powerful among some Muslim boys and young men. It gives them a language for their frustration. It tells them they are not weak. They are being held back. It tells them their loneliness is not a wound to heal, but proof that the world is corrupt. It tells them their anger is not something to discipline, but something to sharpen. It gives them enemies before it gives them adab.

Islam does not raise men this way, because Prophetic strength is built on taqwa, mercy, discipline, and justice.

Allah says:

“And do not follow that of which you have no knowledge. Indeed, the hearing, the sight, and the heart, about all those one will be questioned.” Qur'an 17:36

This ayah is extremely relevant to the digital age. A young man's hearing, sight, and heart are constantly being fed. The videos he watches, the clips he repeats, the voices he admires, the jokes he laughs at, the women he learns to mock, the scholars he learns to dismiss, the anger he consumes, and the suspicion he allows into his chest are not harmless. He will be questioned about what he allowed to shape him.

The online world does not merely entertain. It forms identity, reshaping what a boy admires, fears, repeats, and imitates.

A boy may begin by watching fitness advice, business motivation, or confidence tips. Some of that may be beneficial if it encourages discipline, health, work ethic, and responsibility. Islam does not reject strength, ambition, or self-improvement. A Muslim man should not be lazy, weak-willed, careless with his body, or dependent on others when he is able to strive. The problem begins when discipline becomes arrogance, self-improvement becomes self-worship, and masculinity becomes hostility toward women, parents, scholars, or the wider Muslim community.

The Prophet Peace and Blessings upon him said:

“A strong believer is better and more beloved to Allah than a weak believer, while there is good in both.” Sahih Muslim, Hadith 2664.

This hadith gives young men a healthy vision of strength. Strength is good when it serves iman. A strong believer uses strength to worship Allah, protect the weak, work honestly, control desire, serve family, speak truth, and carry responsibility. Strength is not given so a man can despise others. It is not a license to mock women, bully weaker men, chase status, or turn the heart into stone.

Online masculinity gurus often understand that young men are hungry for strength, but they do not always guide that hunger toward Allah. They may tell boys to train, earn, stop complaining, wake up early, and take responsibility. Those points can be useful. Yet mixed into them may be contempt, shamelessness, obsession with wealth, harsh speech about women, pride, and a constant need to prove superiority. This mixture is dangerous because the truth in it makes the poison easier to swallow.

A young Muslim man must therefore learn to separate benefit from corruption before he allows any voice to shape his heart.

Allah says:

“And do not mix the truth with falsehood or conceal the truth while you know.”
Qur'an 2:42

Truth mixed with falsehood can be more dangerous than open falsehood. If someone says men should be disciplined, that is good. If he says men should avoid pornography, that is good. If he says men should become responsible, protect family, and stop wasting time, that can be good. Yet if he then teaches arrogance, mockery, woman-hatred, obsession with dunya, contempt for sincere scholars, or rebellion against parents under the name of manhood, the Muslim must not drink the poison because there is some water in the cup.

The young man should ask: does this voice make me closer to Allah or closer to my ego? Does it make me more disciplined in salah or only more obsessed with image? Does it make me more merciful to my mother, sisters, and future wife, or more suspicious and harsh? Does it teach me to control my desires, or does it simply redirect desire toward wealth, dominance, and admiration? Does it make me humble before revelation, or does it make me feel above advice?

These questions expose the difference between Islamic masculinity and online performance, because one serves Allah while the other often serves ego.

Online masculinity often trains young men to express anger confidently, while the Sunnah trains them to control it, and that difference matters. A man can appear powerful while being enslaved to his temper, dominate arguments while failing before his nafs, and silence others while being unable to silence the rage inside himself, but the Prophet Peace and Blessings upon him defined strength by restraint, not domination.

Radicalization begins when anger becomes identity and a wounded heart starts treating resentment as guidance.

Not every young man who watches masculinity content is radicalized, as many are simply searching for guidance, confidence, discipline, and a way out of weakness. Some are tired of being mocked, others are confused by gender politics, family pressure, racism, loneliness, failure, or sexual shame, and a few are trying to become better but do not know where to look, which is why online spaces can take a real wound and attach it to a false worldview.

A boy who feels rejected by girls may be taught to despise women. A young man who feels powerless may be taught to crave control. A teenager who feels judged by society may be taught that cruelty is self-defense. Someone confused by secular gender debates may be pushed into a reactionary identity that mistakes harshness for Islam. A man hurt by one woman may be taught to generalize that pain onto all women.

Islam forbids this kind of injustice, even when pain gives a young man reasons to feel hurt or cautious.

Allah says:

“And do not let the hatred of a people prevent you from being just. Be just; that is nearer to righteousness.” Qur'an 5:8

Even if a young man has been hurt, he must remain just: a woman rejecting him unfairly does not make all women corrupt, a bad marriage does not make marriage a trap, disrespect does not justify contempt, and confusion caused by modern feminism does not permit him to abandon the Prophetic standard of mercy. Pain does not cancel justice.

This is where many online gurus fail, by turning personal pain into a complete worldview and giving a young man's frustration a target. They may speak about women as if women are a single enemy, reduce marriage to power, and speak of obedience without kindness, leadership without service, and masculinity without fear of Allah.

The Quran does not allow men to speak about women as though they are beneath them.

Allah says:

"Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you."
Qur'an 49:13

Nobility is taqwa, not being male, rich, muscular, feared, desired, or followed online, and a woman is not low because she is female, emotional, dependent in some matters, divorced, unmarried, or struggling. Allah's measure is righteousness, and although roles exist in Islam and men and women have different responsibilities, roles are not permission for arrogance.

The Prophet Peace and Blessings upon him said:

"Arrogance is rejecting the truth and looking down on people."
Sahih Muslim, Hadith 91.

Looking down on women is arrogance. Looking down on weaker men is arrogance. Looking down on poor men, emotional men, struggling men, unmarried men, or men who are trying to repent is arrogance. Some online masculinity spaces do exactly this: they create hierarchies of contempt. The wealthy man looks down on the poor. The fit man mocks the overweight. The married man humiliates the single. The loud man mocks the gentle. The sexually experienced man mocks the chaste, or the supposedly "high value" man mocks everyone he considers beneath him.

This is not Islam, but pride wearing the language of strength and pretending to be manhood.

A young Muslim man should want strength, but he should fear arrogance more than weakness. Weakness can be treated with discipline, training, knowledge, and effort. Arrogance can destroy the heart while the person thinks he is becoming better.

Allah says:

"And do not turn your cheek in contempt toward people and do not walk through the earth exultantly. Indeed, Allah does not like everyone self-deluded and boastful." *Qur'an 31:18*

This ayah should be placed in front of every young man chasing online status, reminding him not to walk with pride, look at people with contempt, or become self-deluded. A man may build his body, money, style, and confidence while his soul becomes ugly, and if success makes him harder, more arrogant, less merciful, and less obedient to Allah, then it is not true success.

Online masculinity often measures men by money, body, women's attention, social dominance, and public confidence. The Prophet Peace and Blessings upon him measured men by their treatment of family. A man can be admired online and still be a failure in the place that matters most. If his mother fears his temper, if his wife feels emotionally unsafe, if his children avoid him, if his sisters know him as harsh, if he serves strangers but humiliates family, then his masculinity is broken.

A young man should ask himself whether the voices he follows are making him better at home: does he speak more respectfully to his mother, help more, protect his sisters without controlling them unjustly, prepare to be a husband who lives with kindness, and become more responsible with money, time, prayer, and desire? If the answer is no, then the content is not building him properly.

The Prophet Peace and Blessings upon him said:

"Fear Allah regarding women." Sahih Muslim, Hadith 1218.

This advice destroys the heart of woman-hating masculinity. Fear Allah regarding women. That includes the mother who served you, the sister who grew beside you, the wife who may one day trust you, the daughter who may learn from you, and the believing women of the Ummah whose honor is not yours to mock. A man who fears Allah regarding women will not turn them into content, jokes, targets, or enemies.

This does not mean every woman is righteous. Islam is not naive. Some women are unjust. Some manipulate, lie, harm, shame, or destroy families. Men can be victims of emotional, financial, or social harm too. Justice requires acknowledging that. Yet the sins of some women do not justify contempt toward women as a whole. A Muslim man must respond to individual wrong with individual justice, not collective hatred.

The same principle applies to men, because some men may be abusive, lazy, deceitful, or cruel without making all men villains. Islam refuses lazy generalizations and calls every soul to account.

Allah says:

"Every soul, for what it has earned, will be retained." Qur'an 74:38

Each person answers for their own deeds. Online radicalization often works by replacing individual accountability with group resentment. It tells young men that their failures are always someone else's fault: women, parents, society, scholars, weak men, immigrants, the West, the East, or the entire modern world. Some of these forces may genuinely create pressure, but a Muslim cannot surrender his moral agency.

A young man is still responsible for salah, speech, desire, work, character, friendship, and repentance. Blame may explain the battlefield, but it does not fight the battle for him.

This meaning gives young men a path: do what you can, start with the obligations, pray, lower your gaze, leave haram content, control the tongue, speak to parents with respect, build strength lawfully, earn halal, seek knowledge, choose better friends, repent when you fall, stop feeding your anger, cut off voices that poison your heart, and replace them with people who bring you closer to Allah.

The danger of online gurus is not only their ideas. It is also their emotional grip. They make young men feel understood. That is powerful. A boy who feels unseen by his father may attach to a stranger who speaks to his pain. A young man who feels weak may admire a personality who appears untouchable. A teenager who feels confused may prefer someone who gives simple answers with absolute confidence.

This is why communities cannot defeat harmful online influence with criticism alone. They must offer something better.

Online figures can become a kind of close companion, especially when a young man listens to them more than he listens to his parents, imam, teachers, or real friends. Through repetition, their worldview, tone, jokes, anger, and suspicion begin to enter him and shape the way he sees the world.

This is companionship, even if he never meets them, because the heart is affected by the voices it repeatedly welcomes.

A Muslim should be careful who becomes close to his heart by asking whether this person prays, honors Allah's limits, speaks with knowledge, respects scholars, protects the dignity of Muslims, makes haram seem normal, profits from outrage, makes him more humble or more arrogant, and reminds him of death or only success in dunya.

If a voice makes sin feel exciting and obedience feel weak, it is not a voice to follow.

Allah says:

"Friends, that Day, will be enemies to each other, except for the righteous."
Qur'an 43:67

This ayah should frighten anyone whose identity is built around corrupt companionship. The people who bonded over sin, arrogance, mockery, and misguidance may become enemies on the Day of Judgment. Online communities can feel powerful now, but every alliance that was not built on taqwa will be tested.

Young men need real brotherhood, not just followers, fans, or group chats. They need brothers who pray with them, train with them, correct them, remind them, and help them become better. They need mentors who combine strength with humility. They need men they can admire without being spiritually poisoned.

The Muslim community should be that building for young men. If we do not strengthen them, someone else will recruit them. The recruitment may not always be into political violence. It may be into hatred, shamelessness, misogyny, arrogance, despair, religious extremism, or a life built entirely around ego. Radicalization is not only one thing. It can mean a heart being pulled away from balance into obsession.

Some young men become religiously radicalized through the same emotional pathway. They begin with loneliness and anger, then find online voices that give them certainty. These voices may teach them to distrust scholars, condemn ordinary Muslims, obsess over arguments, speak without knowledge, and treat harshness as proof of sincerity. The young man may start praying more, dressing more religiously, or using Islamic vocabulary, yet his heart becomes harder, his manners worsen, and his family experiences his “religion” as contempt.

This is a dangerous deception, because the outside may look more religious while the heart becomes harder.

Wisdom, good instruction, and the way arguments are handled are all part of da’wah. A young man who becomes harsher, more arrogant, more reckless in takfir, more dismissive of scholars, and more eager to humiliate Muslims has not become more prophetic, even if he has gained information, because he is losing adab.

The Prophet Peace and Blessings upon him said:

“Whoever says to his brother, ‘O disbeliever,’ then it returns to one of them.”
Sahih Muslim, Hadith 60.

This hadith should terrify young men who become careless with declaring Muslims outside Islam, because online religious radicalization often gives inexperienced youth the confidence to speak on matters far beyond their knowledge. They may watch clips, read posts, join channels, and suddenly think they can judge scholars, communities, families, and entire groups, but this is not courage, it is danger.

A young Muslim should seek knowledge through sound scholars, not anonymous rage. He should learn gradually. He should understand that seriousness in religion is not measured by how many people he condemns. The early path of knowledge includes humility, patience, proper teachers, and fear of speaking about Allah without knowledge.

Allah says:

“And do not say about what your tongues assert of untruth, ‘This is lawful and this is unlawful,’ to invent falsehood about Allah.” Qur'an 16:116

Declaring halal and haram without knowledge is serious, even though online culture makes everyone feel qualified. Islam does not, so a young man should be very careful before turning religious clips into certainty, especially when the clips are designed to provoke rather than teach.

There is also a softer form of radicalization, becoming unable to see people as human. A young man may begin sorting everyone into categories: weak men, low value men, modern women, simps, hypocrites, liberals, extremists, sellouts, feminists, traditionalists, losers, enemies. Once people become labels, cruelty becomes easier.

Mercy is not optional, and a Muslim man can be firm without losing mercy, reject falsehood while remaining just, and criticize harmful ideas without dehumanizing people. If his online diet makes him less merciful to people, something is wrong with what he is consuming.

This does not mean young men should become naïve. There are harmful ideologies. There are real attacks on family, modesty, masculinity, faith, and Muslim identity. There are people who mock Islam. There are movements that confuse young men and women. A Muslim must be aware and principled. Yet awareness without mercy becomes paranoia, and principles without knowledge become slogans.

This Prophetic teaching does not call for weakness. It calls for prophetic wisdom. A young man who wants to defend Islam should not become a reason people flee from Islamic manners. If his younger siblings, mother, sisters, friends, or classmates only experience his religion as anger, mockery, and superiority, he may be driving people away while imagining he is defending truth.

The internet also rewards performance, and a young man may begin copying the speech patterns of online figures until he speaks in extremes, makes dramatic claims, starts every discussion like a debate, treats humility as losing, and becomes more interested in sounding right than being right before Allah.

Allah says:

“And the servants of the Most Merciful are those who walk upon the earth easily, and when the ignorant address them, they say words of peace.” Qur'an 25:63

The servants of the Most Merciful are not described as people addicted to confrontation. They walk with humility. They do not need to win every exchange. A young man should ask whether his online habits are making him from the servants of the Most Merciful or from the servants of argument.

Masculinity gurus often sell a life of constant self-display: show success, show the body, show confidence, show dominance, show that you are desired, and show that you are above others. Islam teaches a different orientation, calling a man to do good for Allah, hide some deeds, lower the gaze, guard the tongue, give without showing off, serve without needing applause, and let private worship be stronger than public image.

A young man should purify his intention. Is he training because Allah loves strength and he wants discipline, or because he wants admiration? Is he earning money to provide and be independent, or because wealth has become his worth? Is he learning Islam to obey Allah, or to defeat people? Is he speaking about masculinity to build responsibility, or to feed ego?

Intentions matter, because the same outward action can become worship or ego depending on the heart behind it.

Online radicalization often happens when boys feel humiliated and want to reverse the feeling. Weakness becomes a craving for superiority, rejection becomes a desire to reject others first, and invisibility becomes a hunger to be feared or admired. Islam offers a healthier cure, dignity through servanthood to Allah.

Allah says:

“Whoever desires honor, then to Allah belongs all honor.” Qur'an 35:10

Honor is with Allah, and a man does not become honorable by humiliating women, mocking weaker men, collecting followers, displaying wealth, or winning online arguments. True honor comes through obedience, taqwa, truthfulness, restraint, and sincerity, and if a path to honor requires disobedience to Allah, it is not honor.

Parents need to understand this crisis without panic, because simply saying “do not watch that” may not work if the guru is meeting an emotional need no one else is meeting. A father should ask why his son is drawn to that content, whether he is looking for discipline, confidence, male attention, answers about women, anger relief, religious certainty, or a sense of superiority, because the answer will show what is missing.

Then the father, mentor, or community must provide a better path. If the boy wants discipline, help him train and pray, if he wants confidence, give him responsibility. If he has questions about women, teach him Quran and Sunnah with balance. If he is angry, help him name and

control it. If he wants religious certainty, connect him to sound scholars. If he feels weak, show him how strength is built through effort, not contempt.

Parents and leaders are responsible. The flock now includes digital influences that enter the home silently. A father may not know the men raising his son through the phone. A mother may sense that her son is changing but not know why. An imam may see young men becoming harsher but not know which channels are feeding them. Communities need to become aware without becoming paranoid.

This responsibility places a burden on the man before it gives him any sense of status. A husband or father who speaks about leadership must also accept service, restraint, fairness, provision, emotional presence, and accountability before Allah. Authority without taqwa becomes pressure. Authority with mercy becomes protection.

Allah says:

“So ask the people of knowledge if you do not know.” Qur'an 16:43

Knowledge has people. It has teachers, chains, discipline, humility, and accountability. A young man should not take his religion from anyone simply because they speak loudly, dress impressively, use Islamic phrases, or attack people he dislikes, but should ask who this person's teachers are, whether they are known for sound belief, whether recognized scholars trust them, whether they speak with adab, whether they correct themselves when wrong, and whether they are calling to Allah or to themselves.

Firmness has a place in Islam, but prophetic firmness was never ego-driven. The Prophet Peace and Blessings upon him upheld Allah's limits, corrected wrong, and stood against injustice while keeping his heart free from personal pride, humiliation, and needless harshness.

The Prophet Peace and Blessings upon him said:

“Allah does not take away knowledge by snatching it away from the people, but He takes away knowledge by taking away the scholars, until when no scholar remains, people will take ignorant ones as leaders. They will be asked and will give verdicts without knowledge; they will go astray and lead others astray.” Sahih Muslim, Hadith 2673.

This hadith speaks directly to the danger of ignorant leadership. Online platforms can turn ignorant people into leaders quickly. If they are asked religious questions and answer without knowledge, they may go astray and lead others astray. Young men must be careful not to confuse reach with reliability.

The solution is not to tell young men to reject all online content, because beneficial knowledge, reminders, lectures, and advice can be found online when sourced properly. The solution is insight: follow sound scholars and trustworthy teachers, take practical advice from people qualified in their areas, and avoid content that inflames the nafs, normalizes haram, mocks Muslims, spreads hatred, or makes arrogance feel religious.

A young man should build an online diet the way he builds a food diet, recognizing that some things nourish, some poison, some excite but weaken, and some should never enter the body or the heart.

The soul can be purified or corrupted. Online consumption is part of that process. A young man who wants success must ask whether his daily content purifies or corrupts him. If he leaves a video more humble, disciplined, hopeful, repentant, and obedient to Allah, there may be benefit. If he leaves more angry, lustful, arrogant, suspicious, or cruel, he should fear what is happening inside him.

Masjids and families also need to offer young men a better masculinity than the internet by teaching the Sunnah of manhood clearly. The Prophet Peace and Blessings upon him was brave without recklessness, gentle without weakness, modest without being socially useless, and firm without cruelty, while serving his family, accepting counsel, controlling anger, honoring women, protecting the weak, worshipping deeply, and carrying responsibility.

The Messenger of Allah, Peace and Blessings upon him, is the model, not online personalities, so a young Muslim man should compare every masculinity message to him. Did the Prophet Peace and Blessings upon him mock women, make wealth the measure of worth, encourage arrogance, use strength to humiliate, drive people away from Allah through harshness, or neglect his family while appearing righteous outside?

The answer is clear when his example is placed before these false models.

A Muslim man's identity must be built from revelation, not reaction. If the surrounding world confuses gender, if some women act unjustly, if some men become weak, if online debates become loud, he should return to Quran and Sunnah. Reaction alone will always be unstable because it allows the thing you hate to shape you.

Islam gives young men something better than reaction. It gives them worship, discipline, brotherhood, responsibility, chastity, service, knowledge, and the hope of standing under Allah's shade as young men who grew up in worship.

The Sunnah forms men who can deal with women through justice and dignity. It does not train them to worship women, fear women, blame women for every wound, or treat them as opponents. A young man learns modesty, mercy, responsibility, and boundaries together.

Radicalization loses power when a young man has real purpose. He should have worship that grounds him, work that disciplines him, friends who strengthen him, teachers who guide him, family who knows him, service that humbles him, and physical routines that build him. The emptier his real life is, the more powerful the online world becomes.

This is why the answer must be practical, giving young men real alternatives instead of only warning them against false ones.

Parents should speak to sons about what they watch without panic or mockery. Fathers should become emotionally present enough that sons do not need strangers to define manhood. Mothers should be supported rather than left alone to fight the internet. Imams should address masculinity with balance, not only condemn boys after they are already captured. Older men should mentor younger men through prayer, sport, work, service, and honest conversation. Young men themselves must take responsibility for what they allow into their hearts.

Muslim men need cooperation upon righteousness. Build circles where young men can train, study, pray, work, serve, and speak honestly without being mocked. Give them a place to ask about desire, anger, marriage, doubt, work, and identity. Teach them how to become men without hating women, without worshipping money, without despising weakness, and without confusing harshness for Islam.

A young man who has already been influenced by harmful content should not despair, because influence can be undone by Allah's permission. Repent, unfollow what poisons you, replace it with beneficial teachers, speak to a trustworthy mentor, stop feeding hatred, learn the seerah, read Quran with reflection, serve your mother, attend the masjid, build discipline in real life, and make dua for a clean heart.

A young man may have absorbed arrogance, misogyny, lust, mockery, or religious harshness, but he can return because Allah's mercy is not closed. The path back begins with honesty: admit what shaped you, what it made you feel, and where it moved you away from the character of the Prophet Peace and Blessings upon him, then rebuild.

This Prophetic teaching gives hope to every young man who realizes he has been walking down a dangerous road, return before the ideas become character, before contempt becomes normal, before anger becomes your personality, and before you carry these wounds into marriage, fatherhood, community, and religion.

The crisis of online masculinity gurus is not only that they are loud, but that Muslim boys are lonely enough to listen, angry enough to believe, and under-mentored enough to imitate. The solution is not silence, but stronger guidance.

Young men need a masculinity rooted in the Prophet Peace and Blessings upon him: disciplined, merciful, courageous, modest, responsible, emotionally controlled, protective without

oppression, confident without arrogance, and strong enough to serve. They need fathers and mentors who embody this before influencers counterfeit it. They need scholars who speak clearly to their realities. They need communities that give them brotherhood and purpose.

The online world will keep calling them. It will keep offering identity, certainty, and power. Islam must be presented to them as more truthful, more honorable, and more complete than anything the algorithm can sell.

A young Muslim man does not need to become hard to become strong, hate women to become masculine, mock scholars to become confident, worship wealth to become responsible, or live in reaction to a confused world.

He needs to belong to Allah, follow the Messenger of Allah, Peace and Blessings upon him, seek sound knowledge, discipline his nafs, choose righteous companions, and build a life where his strength becomes mercy rather than poison.

That is how young men are protected from radicalization, not by leaving them empty and telling them only what to avoid, but by giving them a Prophetic vision of manhood worth living for.

Chapter 4: Pornography and Escapism

Pornography is not only a private sin. For many young Muslim men, it has become a place they run to when they do not know how to face themselves.

A boy may begin with curiosity, boredom, loneliness, desire, peer pressure, or a single accidental exposure. Over time, the habit can become something much deeper than lust. It becomes a way to escape stress, failure, rejection, family tension, school pressure, emotional emptiness, and the quiet fear that he is not becoming the man he is supposed to be. The screen gives him pleasure without responsibility, intimacy without vulnerability, control without maturity, and relief without healing.

That is why this chapter is not only about pornography as desire. It is about pornography as escape.

A young man may hate the sin and still return to it. He may promise Allah that he will stop, then fall again when he is alone. He may delete apps, clear history, cry after salah, feel disgusted with himself, and still find himself pulled back during a weak moment. This cycle can make him feel like a hypocrite. He may begin to think that his iman is fake, his repentance is useless, and his future is already ruined.

Shame then becomes part of the addiction, not merely a feeling after the sin but one of the forces that pulls him back.

The sin creates shame, and shame creates the emotional pain that sends him back to the sin. He does not return because he is happy, but often because he feels trapped, numb, lonely, bored, anxious, or spiritually defeated. The pleasure lasts briefly, the guilt stays longer, and after a while he may not even feel much pleasure anymore, only relief from feeling.

Islam does not treat this lightly. Pornography is built on looking at what Allah has forbidden, feeding desire outside halal, and training the heart toward zina. It corrupts the gaze, imagination, body, and soul. Yet Islam also does not help young men by burying them under despair. A sin must be named clearly, and the door back to Allah must remain open.

Allah says:

“Tell the believing men to lower their gaze and guard their private parts. That is purer for them. Indeed, Allah is Acquainted with what they do.” Qur'an 24:30

This ayah begins with the gaze because the gaze is a doorway. What enters through the eyes does not stay outside the person. It shapes desire, memory, expectation, and imagination. A young man who repeatedly watches pornography is not only seeing something haram in the moment.

He is training his heart to seek pleasure without covenant, without mercy, without responsibility, and without Allah's limits.

Allah says:

"And do not approach unlawful sexual intercourse. Indeed, it is ever an immorality and is evil as a way." Qur'an 17:32

The Quran does not only say do not commit zina. It says do not approach it. This includes the paths that lead toward it: the gaze, private messaging, flirtation, fantasy, obscene content, sexualized entertainment, and anything that weakens the barrier between the person and the major sin. Pornography is one of the strongest modern pathways toward zina because it makes the forbidden available instantly, privately, repeatedly, and without social consequence at first.

The consequence, however, still comes in ways that slowly touch the heart, the gaze, the prayer, and the way a young man relates to others.

It comes in the heart, in prayer, in how a young man sees women, in the way he thinks about marriage, in his ability to feel satisfied with what is halal, and in secrecy, guilt, and emotional numbness. The world markets pornography as entertainment, while Islam exposes it as corruption of the soul.

The Prophet Peace and Blessings upon him said:

"Allah has written for the son of Adam his share of zina, which he will inevitably encounter. The zina of the eyes is looking, the zina of the ears is listening, the zina of the tongue is speaking, the zina of the hand is touching, the zina of the foot is walking, the heart desires and wishes, and the private parts confirm that or deny it." Sahih Muslim, Hadith 2657.

This hadith shows that zina has paths before the final act. The eyes, ears, tongue, limbs, and heart can all move toward sin. Pornography gathers many of these doors together. The eyes look, the ears listen, the heart desires, the body reacts, and the soul becomes stained. A young man may tell himself, "At least I am not committing zina," but the Sunnah teaches him to take the earlier steps seriously.

At the same time, he should not use this hadith to fall into hopelessness. The point is not to say, "I am already ruined." The point is to wake up before the path goes further. The private parts may confirm or deny. A person can still stop. He can close the door. He can repent. He can refuse to let the first step become the next step.

Pornography is especially dangerous for boys because it often reaches them before maturity. Many boys are exposed before they understand marriage, modesty, consent, tenderness, responsibility, or the sacredness of intimacy. Their first lessons about sexuality may come from an industry built on exploitation, performance, aggression, fantasy, and addiction. By the time religious advice reaches them, their imagination may already have been trained by haram.

This is one reason shame alone does not work as a path to change.

A teenager who has been exposed for years does not simply need to hear that pornography is haram. He needs to understand what it has done to him and how to rebuild. He needs to know that desire is not evil in itself, but it must be governed by Allah. He needs to learn that the body can be trained, the gaze can be lowered, habits can be replaced, and repentance can be sincere even after repeated failure.

The Prophet Peace and Blessings upon him said:

“O young men, whoever among you is able to marry, let him marry, for it is more effective in lowering the gaze and guarding chastity. Whoever is not able should fast, for it will be a shield for him.” Sahih Muslim, Hadith 1400.

This hadith speaks directly to young men. It recognizes desire. It does not shame them for having it. The Prophet Peace and Blessings upon him gave a halal path through marriage for those able, and a spiritual discipline through fasting for those unable. This is a balanced approach: desire is acknowledged, chastity is commanded, and practical means are given.

Many young men today are not able to marry early. Education, money, housing, family expectations, emotional immaturity, and community pressure can delay marriage for years. During that delay, desire does not disappear. If the community makes marriage difficult while refusing to speak honestly about chastity, it leaves young men in a dangerous gap.

This does not mean every young man should marry before he is ready, because marriage is responsibility. A man who is addicted, immature, financially reckless, emotionally unstable, or unable to treat a wife with mercy should not imagine marriage will automatically cure him, because a wife is not a rehabilitation center and marriage cannot replace taqwa, discipline, repentance, and character.

A young man must work on himself before marriage and continue working after it.

Pornography damages future marriage because it trains a man to consume rather than connect. Real marriage involves patience, communication, emotional presence, responsibility, and mercy. A wife is a human being with a soul, history, body, moods, needs, limits, and rights before Allah.

Pornography teaches the opposite. It turns people into images, bodies into products, and intimacy into selfish pleasure.

Marriage is described with closeness, covering, protection, and comfort. Pornography is the opposite of this. It exposes, consumes, objectifies, and disconnects. A young man who wants a blessed marriage must protect his heart from anything that teaches him to see women without dignity.

Pornography also makes ordinary life feel dull by giving intense stimulation with no effort, until real life feels slow, salah feels slow, study feels slow, family conversation feels slow, and halal recreation feels slow. Even future marriage may feel slow because the brain has been trained on constant novelty, so a young man may begin to seek stronger content, more extreme images, and longer sessions simply to feel what he once felt quickly.

This is why escapism is so dangerous. The more he escapes, the weaker he becomes in facing reality. Stress, boredom, sadness, rejection, and failure are part of life. A Muslim man must learn to face them with salah, dua, discipline, movement, brotherhood, work, rest, and honest conversation. If he trains himself to escape every difficult feeling through pornography, he becomes emotionally weaker even if he appears normal outside.

Allah says:

“And seek help through patience and prayer, and indeed, it is difficult except for the humbly submissive.” Qur'an 2:45

Patience and prayer are not abstract solutions, because they train the soul to remain present in difficulty. A young man fighting pornography must learn to sit with discomfort without obeying it, to know that an urge can rise and fall, to understand that boredom is not an emergency, and to see that loneliness needs healing, not just numbing, while salah reconnects him to Allah and patience keeps him from running to the screen the moment pain appears.

The Prophet Peace and Blessings upon him said:

“Paradise is surrounded by hardships, and the Fire is surrounded by desires.” Sahih Muslim, Hadith 2822.

This hadith explains the struggle clearly: the road to Paradise includes hardship, while the road to the Fire is surrounded by desires. Pornography is easy at the point of access and heavy after the act, while chastity is heavy at the point of restraint and sweet after the victory, so a young man must learn to think beyond the next five minutes because the urge promises relief, but the soul pays the price.

Many boys and young men fall because their lives have no structure. Late nights, locked doors, endless scrolling, no exercise, weak salah, loneliness, and private devices create the perfect environment for relapse. A person cannot keep placing himself near the fire and then wonder why he is burned.

The first step is honesty about triggers: when does the fall usually happen, late at night, after an argument, after seeing something on social media, during boredom, after stress, when alone in a room, after missing salah, during sadness, or after feeling rejected? Each pattern teaches something, because the sin may look random, but habits usually have a rhythm.

A young man serious about change must change the environment, not only the intention, because good intentions matter but weak environments overpower weak moments. Keep the phone away at night, remove private access where possible, use filters and accountability tools if needed, avoid platforms that trigger desire, sleep earlier, fill time with worship, training, work, study, and real companionship, stop following accounts that awaken lust, and do not test yourself with “small” glances, because the nafs is not defeated by pretending danger is harmless.

Allah says:

“And those who strive for Us, We will surely guide them to Our ways.”
Qur'an 29:69

Guidance is connected to striving. A young man cannot say he wants purity while making no serious changes. Striving may mean deleting content, losing certain friends, changing routines, confessing to a trusted mentor, fasting, attending the masjid more often, seeking counseling, or using technology restrictions. The effort itself is part of worship.

This struggle should not be fought alone if the habit is deeply rooted. Many young men need someone trustworthy to help them. Not someone who will shame them, expose them, or treat them as disgusting, but someone mature enough to combine seriousness with mercy. A father, older brother, imam, counselor, or trusted friend can become part of the way out. Silence protects the addiction. Wise disclosure can weaken it.

A young man does not become less masculine by seeking help. Real masculinity includes admitting weakness before it destroys you. If a man can ask a mechanic to fix a car and a doctor to treat illness, he should not be too proud to seek help for a sin that is damaging his heart. The believer is strengthened by other believers.

Parents also need to understand that ignoring this topic will not protect their sons. Many boys are exposed earlier than parents imagine. Silence leaves them to learn from the internet, friends, jokes, and secret shame. Conversations must be age-appropriate, modest, and wise, but they must

happen. Boys need to hear about lowering the gaze, online dangers, the sacredness of the body, the harms of pornography, and the door of tawbah before they are trapped.

A father has a special role here. If he only speaks through anger, his son will hide. If he speaks with calm honesty, the son may one day come to him before a habit becomes severe. A mother may also need to guide her son, especially where the father is absent or emotionally unavailable, but boys need trustworthy male guidance on desire, discipline, and manhood.

Protection includes digital protection, so parents should not hand children unrestricted devices and then act surprised when the world enters their hearts. Protecting sons requires boundaries, supervision, conversation, alternative activities, and emotional connection, because a boy who feels close to his parents is more likely to receive guidance, while a boy who feels only watched may become better at hiding.

Pornography also distorts how young men see women. It can make them impatient with modesty, suspicious of marriage, entitled to pleasure, and unable to appreciate women as whole human beings. It may feed both desire and contempt at once. A young man can become obsessed with women while also looking down on them. This contradiction is common in corrupt masculinity: craving what one also disrespects.

Islam breaks this contradiction by commanding modesty and dignity for men and women together.

Allah says:

“Indeed, the Muslim men and Muslim women, the believing men and believing women, the obedient men and obedient women, the truthful men and truthful women, the patient men and patient women, the humble men and humble women, the charitable men and charitable women, the fasting men and fasting women, the men who guard their private parts and the women who guard, and the men who remember Allah often and the women who remember, Allah has prepared for them forgiveness and a great reward.” Qur'an 33:35

This ayah places men and women together before Allah in worship, truthfulness, patience, humility, charity, fasting, chastity, and remembrance. Women are not objects for male consumption. They are servants of Allah. A young man who watches pornography is training himself to look at women in a way that contradicts this Quranic vision. He must fight to restore the dignity of how he sees them.

Guarding chastity is not only about avoiding physical zina. It includes guarding the imagination, the gaze, the phone, the conversation, the private moment, and the heart's direction. Chastity is a

form of strength. In a world where access is easy, the young man who restrains himself for Allah is not weak. He is fighting a serious battle.

The Prophet Peace and Blessings upon him said:

“Whoever guarantees for me what is between his jaws and what is between his legs, I will guarantee Paradise for him.” Sahih al-Bukhari, Hadith 6474.

The tongue and private parts are two major doors to ruin or salvation. Pornography often corrupts both. It corrupts desire and then corrupts speech through dirty jokes, objectifying language, and shameless conversation. A young man should guard both doors. Speak cleanly. Look cleanly. Live cleanly, if he falls, return quickly.

The return must be sincere, not theatrical. Some young men repent emotionally after every relapse but make no plan. They cry, feel terrible, promise never again, then leave the same triggers in place. Sincere repentance includes leaving the sin, regretting it, resolving not to return, and taking means to avoid it. If he falls again because of weakness, he repents again, but he should also ask what he failed to change.

Allah says:

“And turn to Allah in repentance, all of you, O believers, that you might succeed.” Qur'an 24:31

Repentance is not only for people who rarely sin. It is for believers. A young man fighting pornography may need to repent many times, but repentance should move him forward. Each tawbah should teach him something: a trigger to avoid, a weakness to guard, a dua to make, a routine to change, a person to ask for help, a time of day to protect.

The Prophet Peace and Blessings upon him said:

“All the children of Adam are sinners, and the best of sinners are those who repent.” Jami at-Tirmidhi, Hadith 2499.

This hadith gives hope without making sin small. The best sinner is not the one who excuses the sin, jokes about it, normalizes it, or gives up resisting. The best sinner is the one who repents. A young man should not allow repeated falls to turn into surrender. Shaytan wants him to say, “This is who I am.” Islam teaches him to say, “This is what I did, and I am returning to Allah.”

Escapism must be replaced with purpose. If pornography is being used to escape loneliness, then brotherhood must be built. When it becomes a way to avoid stress, healthier forms of relief are needed; when it masks failure, the young man needs goals and small wins; when it numbs emotional pain, someone must help him name that pain; and when it fills the emptiness of life, worship, service, learning, and discipline must enter his days.

A person cannot only remove a false refuge. He must build a true one.

Allah says:

“Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah hearts are reassured.”
Qur'an 13:28

The heart needs reassurance. Pornography gives stimulation, not reassurance. It excites the body while leaving the soul more restless. Remembrance of Allah gives a different kind of peace. It may not produce instant pleasure like the screen, but it nourishes the heart in a way sin never can.

A young man should begin building a daily return to Allah. Guard the five prayers. Make wudu when urges rise. Recite Quran even if a little. Say istighfar after a fall, not as a ritual without thought, but as a real plea. Make dua specifically: “O Allah, purify my heart, guard my chastity, and make what is halal beloved to me.” Keep good company. Attend the masjid even when ashamed. Shame should push him toward Allah, not away from Him.

The masjid should be a place where young men can return. If a boy thinks he must become clean before entering the mosque, he has misunderstood the purpose of the mosque. He comes to be cleaned. He comes to pray, learn, repent, and sit with people better than himself. Communities should not be naïve about sin, but they should also not create an atmosphere where struggling young men feel permanently unwelcome.

A young man trapped in pornography needs glad tidings of return, not false comfort that sin is harmless. Give him hope, then give him a path. Warn him of the danger, then show him the door. Speak of Allah’s punishment when needed, but also speak of Allah’s mercy so despair does not swallow him.

Some young men may need professional support, especially when pornography use is compulsive, connected to trauma, or tied to depression, anxiety, or deep isolation. Seeking help does not mean Islam is insufficient. It means using permissible means while relying on Allah. A counselor cannot replace tawbah, and tawbah does not always remove the need for practical treatment. Both can work together when the help is appropriate and does not contradict Islam.

Escapism also thrives when young men are not prepared for discomfort, because modern entertainment trains the nafs to expect constant relief while Islam trains the believer to endure. Fasting is one of the clearest examples, teaching hunger without panic, desire without obedience, and restraint for Allah.

Fasting should not be treated as a magical switch, but as training. It weakens desire, strengthens will, and reminds the body that it is not the master. A young man fighting pornography should use fasting wisely, along with sleep discipline, exercise, structured time, and avoidance of triggers.

He should also avoid the arrogance of thinking he can handle temptation alone. A person in recovery from any powerful habit should not test himself unnecessarily. Do not browse when tired. Do not scroll aimlessly at night. Do not follow accounts that awaken desire. Do not keep private access open and call it confidence. Humility means knowing your weakness and planning around it.

Allah says:

“Indeed, the soul is a persistent enjoiner of evil, except those upon which my Lord has mercy.” Qur'an 12:53

The nafs must be treated honestly. It can command evil. A young man should not be shocked that temptation exists inside him. The goal is not to pretend he has no desire. The goal is to place desire under the mercy and law of Allah. This requires vigilance.

Pornography also affects how young men understand women's pain. If a boy repeatedly consumes women as images, he may struggle to care about the emotional and spiritual reality of women in marriage, motherhood, and family life. He may become impatient with the idea that a wife needs tenderness. He may see women through fantasy, then become disappointed by reality. This is one reason pornography belongs in a book about the crisis facing young Muslim men. It does not stay private. It shapes future husbands and fathers.

A man who wants to be a husband must learn to see women through the lens of Islam before marriage. They are not bodies on a screen. They are daughters of families, servants of Allah, future mothers, worshippers, strugglers, and souls who will stand before Allah just as he will.

Pornography offers excitement without tranquility, desire without affection, and consumption without mercy. A young man who wants the marriage described in this ayah must fight the habits that make such a marriage harder. He should not wait until nikah to begin purifying his gaze. Preparation for marriage begins long before the proposal. It begins with the eyes, the heart, and the phone.

A father should speak to his son about this without turning the conversation into humiliation. A boy needs to hear, “This is haram, it will harm you, and I will help you fight it.” He does not need insults that make him hide deeper. He needs firmness with mercy. The father may feel uncomfortable, but silence is more dangerous than discomfort.

Mothers also need support, because some discover a son’s pornography use and feel shocked, disgusted, afraid, or personally betrayed. They should seek wise guidance and avoid reacting in a way that destroys trust, since the sin is serious but panic can push the boy into secrecy, and if the father is present and capable he should take responsibility for guiding his son, while a trusted male mentor may be needed if he is not.

Communities should discuss this topic with modesty and seriousness. Khutbahs and youth programs should address lowering the gaze, digital discipline, repentance, marriage preparation, and the harms of pornography without vulgarity. Boys should hear about this before addiction hardens. Young men should know where to seek help. Married men should not imagine they are immune. This sin has entered many lives quietly.

Allah says:

“Successful indeed is the one who purifies it, and failed indeed is the one who corrupts it.” Qur'an 91:9-10

Purification is possible, but it takes work. The heart will not become clean by accident in a world designed to dirty it. A young man must choose purification repeatedly: at night, when alone, after stress, after failure, after desire rises, after seeing a trigger, after a relapse, and when the thought comes, “Just once.” Each moment is a chance to choose Allah.

There may be relapses, but a relapse should not become a collapse. If he falls, he should stop immediately, make ghusl if required, pray, repent, remove the trigger, and learn from what happened, instead of spending days drowning in self-hatred while despair wastes time that should be used for return.

The Prophet Peace and Blessings upon him said:

“By the One in Whose Hand is my soul, if you did not sin, Allah would replace you with people who would sin and seek forgiveness from Allah, and He would forgive them.” Sahih Muslim, Hadith 2749.

This hadith does not encourage sin. It encourages repentance. Allah loves the servant who returns. A young man should never use this hadith to become casual about pornography. Instead, he should use it to reject despair after he has sinned. The door is open, so walk through it.

Escaping pornography also requires building a life that is harder to escape from because it has meaning. A young man should not live as a passive consumer. He needs salah in the masjid, physical training, study, work, service, brotherhood, family responsibility, and goals that make him useful. An empty life will keep calling for artificial pleasure.

Free time is a blessing, but unmanaged free time can become a doorway to ruin. The young man should protect his evenings, weekends, and private hours. Rest is needed, but drifting is dangerous. A schedule is not just productivity advice. It can be a shield for chastity.

The deeper goal is not merely to stop watching pornography, but to become a man who no longer runs from his life. A man who faces stress with patience, desire with discipline, shame with repentance, loneliness with brotherhood, boredom with purpose, and weakness by seeking Allah's strength.

Allah says:

"And whoever fears Allah, He will make for him a way out." Qur'an 65:2

There is a way out. It may not appear all at once. It may begin with one honest dua, one deleted app, one night with the phone outside the room, one fast, one conversation with a mentor, one week of guarded eyes, one return to the masjid after shame, one refusal when the urge rises. These small victories matter because they prove that the nafs is not unbeatable.

A young man fighting pornography should not define himself by the sin, but by his return to Allah. He is not the addiction, the relapse, or the shame, but a servant of Allah being called back to purity.

The world will keep offering escape, while Islam offers freedom through repentance, discipline, and a heart that returns to Allah.

Escape numbs pain for a moment, while freedom teaches the soul to stand before Allah with honesty. Escape hides the wound, but freedom brings it into repentance, discipline, and healing. Escape turns women into images, while freedom restores modesty and dignity, and escape weakens the will, while freedom strengthens it through worship.

Pornography is a serious disease in the lives of many young Muslim men, but it is not stronger than Allah's mercy, not stronger than sincere repentance, and not stronger than a life rebuilt around taqwa. The path is difficult, yet Paradise is surrounded by hardships. The young man who struggles, falls, rises, repents, lowers his gaze, changes his habits, seeks help, and keeps returning to Allah is not hopeless.

He is fighting for his soul, and that fight is worth every sacrifice made for Allah.

Chapter 5: Why Many Young Men Avoid Marriage

Many young Muslim men are not rejecting marriage because they hate the Sunnah. Some are avoiding it because they do not feel ready to become the kind of men marriage requires.

They may speak casually about wanting a wife one day, joke about marriage with friends, admire the idea of companionship, and feel the pull of desire like every other young man. Yet when marriage becomes real, something inside them hesitates. The thought of responsibility feels heavy. The cost feels impossible. The fear of failure becomes louder. The examples of broken homes around them make marriage look risky. Online arguments between men and women make trust feel difficult. Some have become used to private sin, digital escape, and emotional independence in ways that make real commitment feel frightening.

This is a different angle from simply saying, “Young men do not want marriage anymore.” Many do want it, but they are anxious about what marriage will demand from them.

A young man may ask himself whether he can provide. He may wonder whether he can handle a wife’s emotional needs. He may fear being compared to wealthier men. He may feel ashamed that he still struggles with pornography, anger, laziness, or poor discipline. He may want companionship but dread conflict. He may have seen his father become harsh, silent, absent, or defeated by family pressure, and he quietly wonders whether marriage will do the same to him.

Avoidance often begins where fear is not spoken, especially when a young man has no safe place to admit what he feels unprepared to carry.

Islam does not treat marriage as a joke. It is a serious covenant, a protection for chastity, a place of mercy, and a responsibility before Allah. At the same time, Islam does not ask young men to approach marriage through fantasy. A man who enters marriage must understand that a wife is not an escape from loneliness, a cure for addiction, a servant for comfort, or a trophy proving manhood. She is a servant of Allah with rights, feelings, needs, limits, and dignity.

Allah says:

“And among His signs is that He created for you from yourselves spouses that you may find tranquility in them, and He placed between you affection and mercy.”
Qur'an 30:21

This ayah gives a beautiful vision of marriage, but it also exposes why many young men feel unprepared. Tranquility, affection, and mercy do not appear automatically after nikah. They require character. A husband must learn patience, communication, responsibility, self-control, financial honesty, emotional presence, and the ability to place another person’s wellbeing beside his own.

Some young men have never been trained for this. They were told to avoid zina but not taught how to become husbands. They were warned about women but not taught how to understand them. They were told to provide but not shown how to build a stable life gradually. They were told to be leaders but not taught that leadership in Islam is service and accountability.

A man cannot be prepared for marriage by desire alone, because marriage requires character, responsibility, mercy, and self-control.

This Prophetic teaching is direct and merciful. It recognizes the strength of desire in young men. It encourages marriage for those who are able and gives fasting as a path of discipline for those who are not. It does not shame desire, and it does not pretend that every young man is ready at the same time. Ability matters.

The problem today is that “ability” has become confused. Some families make marriage so expensive that capable young men feel incapable. Some young men use “not ready” as an excuse when the real issue is fear, addiction, laziness, or unwillingness to sacrifice. Some communities speak about marriage constantly but provide no practical support. The result is confusion. Young men are told marriage protects chastity, while the path to marriage feels blocked by money, culture, fear, and immaturity.

Allah says:

“And let those who do not find the means to marry keep themselves chaste until Allah enriches them from His bounty.” Qur'an 24:33

This ayah speaks to those who cannot yet marry. It commands chastity while they wait for Allah’s opening. That waiting period is not meant to be filled with pornography, casual relationships, flirtation, emotional games, and secret sin. It is meant to be a time of preparation: building faith, discipline, income, emotional maturity, and trust in Allah.

A young man who cannot marry yet should not live as if marriage is irrelevant. He should live like someone preparing for an amanah.

That preparation begins with salah. A man who cannot remain consistent with prayer should be careful before imagining he is ready to lead a home spiritually. It continues with work ethic. A man does not need to be wealthy, but he should be serious about halal provision. Preparation also includes learning how to control anger, lower the gaze, speak truthfully, keep promises, manage money, respect women, and seek advice when he does not know.

Marriage reveals what was already inside a person, whether that is discipline and mercy or selfishness and avoidance.

If a young man is selfish before marriage, marriage will expose it. If he is undisciplined before marriage, marriage will strain under it. If he uses pornography before marriage and never fights it seriously, marriage will not automatically purify his imagination. If he avoids hard conversations before marriage, he may avoid them after marriage too. Nikah is blessed, but it is not magic.

Allah says:

“Good women are for good men, and good men are for good women.”
Qur'an 24:26

This ayah should not be used simplistically, as if every difficult marriage means one spouse was secretly bad. Life is more complex than that. Still, it teaches that moral quality matters. A young man who wants a righteous wife should ask what kind of husband he is becoming. Is he seeking a woman of deen while neglecting his own? Is he asking for modesty while feeding his gaze? Is he asking for obedience while not learning kindness? Is he asking for loyalty while still living emotionally attached to haram?

A man should not prepare a list for his future wife while leaving his own soul untrained.

One major reason young men avoid marriage is financial fear. Housing is expensive. Wages may feel low. Education takes years. Family expectations can be heavy. Wedding costs are often inflated. Some men support parents or relatives. Others are still trying to find stable work. A young man may look at all of this and think marriage is impossible unless he becomes wealthy first.

Islam does not require a man to be rich before marriage. It requires responsibility, honesty, and ability according to circumstance. A man must not deceive a woman or her family about his financial reality. He should not marry while refusing to work or expecting others to carry his duties. Yet families should also stop making marriage look like a luxury project.

Allah says:

“Marry off the unmarried among you and the righteous among your male slaves and female slaves. If they are poor, Allah will enrich them from His bounty, and Allah is All-Encompassing and Knowing.” *Qur'an 24:32*

This ayah encourages the community to help people marry. It also reminds believers not to make poverty an absolute barrier when there is righteousness and a path forward. The verse does not call for recklessness. It calls for trust in Allah and a community culture that does not block marriage through pride.

Many young men avoid marriage because they feel they must arrive fully established before anyone will consider them. They need a strong income, savings, a home, a car, a large wedding, furniture, gifts, and enough confidence to satisfy two families. Some of this comes from genuine concern for stability, but much of it comes from cultural pressure. If a man waits until every worldly condition is perfect, he may delay marriage for years while his desires, loneliness, and private struggles grow stronger.

The Prophet Peace and Blessings upon him said:

“When someone whose religion and character you are pleased with comes to you, then marry him. If you do not do so, there will be turmoil in the land and widespread corruption.” Jami at-Tirmidhi, Hadith 1084.

Religion and character are central. This does not mean finances are irrelevant, because a husband has responsibilities. It means families should not make wealth, status, ethnicity, career prestige, or wedding display more important than deen and character. When good men are blocked for shallow reasons, corruption can spread. Young people are left vulnerable, bitterness grows, and the halal path begins to feel closed.

Another reason young men avoid marriage is that they have seen too many unhappy marriages. They grew up watching fathers and mothers argue, tolerate each other coldly, live as strangers, or stay together only because divorce was shameful. Some saw men crushed by financial pressure and women exhausted by emotional labor. Others saw husbands treated as wallets, wives treated as servants, children used in conflict, or relatives constantly interfering.

A boy who grows up around unhealthy marriage may develop a quiet fear: “Why would I enter that?”

This fear is understandable, but it should not become a permanent rejection of marriage. Bad examples show what must be healed, not what Allah intended marriage to be. The fact that some homes are broken does not cancel the Quranic vision of tranquility, affection, and mercy. It simply means young men need better preparation, better models, and more honest conversations before they marry.

Allah says:

“They are clothing for you and you are clothing for them.” Qur'an 2:187

A wife is not meant to be an enemy and a husband is not meant to be a burden. Spouses are meant to be garments for one another, close, protective, covering, warming, and dignifying. Many young men have never seen this lived well, because they have seen marriage as tension,

control, sacrifice without tenderness, or duty without friendship, so communities need to show them that a Muslim marriage can be more than survival.

This does not mean presenting marriage as constant romance. Marriage includes bills, tiredness, disagreements, in-laws, children, illness, disappointment, and long seasons where love must be practiced as action more than feeling. A healthy marriage is not one without pressure. It is one where pressure is handled with mercy, honesty, and fear of Allah.

This Prophetic teaching should shape how young men imagine marriage. Being a husband is not about being served endlessly. It is a path to becoming better before Allah through how one treats family. Marriage can expose selfishness so it can be purified. It can teach patience, generosity, restraint, tenderness, and responsibility. A young man should not avoid marriage simply because it will demand growth from him. Growth is part of the point.

Some young men avoid marriage because online gender wars have made them distrust women. They hear stories of betrayal, divorce, false accusations, financial exploitation, disrespect, and unrealistic expectations. Some of these stories are real. Men can be hurt. Men can be treated unjustly. Men can be emotionally damaged by women. Islam does not deny that.

Yet online culture often takes individual pain and turns it into general suspicion. A young man hears enough stories and begins to view marriage as a trap. Women become categories rather than people. He starts looking for danger everywhere. He may become more interested in protecting himself from a hypothetical bad wife than preparing himself to become a good husband.

Allah says:

“O you who have believed, avoid much suspicion. Indeed, some suspicion is sin.”
Qur'an 49:12

Suspicion can poison the heart before marriage begins. A man should be careful in choosing a spouse, ask good questions, involve family wisely, seek references where appropriate, and pray istikhara. Caution is not wrong. However, living in constant suspicion will make marriage impossible. Trust cannot grow where a man enters every conversation expecting betrayal.

The same applies to women who are taught to distrust all men. Both sides are being harmed by online fear. Islam calls believers to justice, not paranoia.

If a young man was hurt by one woman, he must still be just to others. If he has seen bad marriages, he must not assume every marriage is doomed. If he has heard frightening stories, he must not allow fear to replace taqwa. Marriage requires wisdom, but wisdom is not the same as bitterness.

Pornography and digital escapism also make some young men avoid marriage. Private sin offers false intimacy without responsibility. A screen never asks for emotional maturity. It does not require provision, patience, communication, apology, or sacrifice. The young man can consume desire while remaining alone, in control, and unchallenged.

Real marriage is different. It asks him to become present. It asks him to be vulnerable. It asks him to care about another person's body, emotions, family, rights, and spiritual life. For someone trained by pornography, marriage may feel difficult not because marriage is the problem, but because the soul has been conditioned toward selfish pleasure.

Purity before marriage protects marriage after it. A young man who lowers his gaze is not only avoiding sin today. He is preserving his future ability to love with dignity. If he spends years training his eyes on haram, he may carry those distortions into marriage. His wife may then suffer from expectations created by sin she had nothing to do with.

This does not mean a man who struggled with pornography can never marry. He can repent, heal, and become a righteous husband by Allah's mercy. However, he must not treat marriage as a quick fix while refusing to fight the addiction. He should seek help, build discipline, guard his eyes, and be honest with himself about whether he is ready to carry the trust of a wife.

Raising boys requires justice and excellence together. Justice protects them from cruelty and neglect, while excellence pushes families beyond bare minimums toward patience, warmth, responsibility, useful discipline, and the kind of mercy that makes obedience easier to receive.

Another reason young men avoid marriage is emotional immaturity. Some have never learned how to speak about feelings, handle disappointment, apologize, or listen without defensiveness. They may be able to work, study, train, and joke with friends, yet become uncomfortable when a serious emotional conversation begins. Marriage exposes this quickly.

A wife may ask for reassurance, and he hears criticism. She may express hurt, and he becomes defensive. She may want time together, and he feels controlled. She may cry, and he feels confused or irritated. If he grew up in a home where feelings were ignored, he may not know how to respond except by shutting down, mocking, leaving, or getting angry.

This kind of man may avoid marriage because he senses, even if he cannot explain it, that he is not emotionally ready.

Gentleness can be learned. Emotional maturity is not weakness. It is part of good character. A young man preparing for marriage should learn how to listen, how to apologize, how to disagree without contempt, how to calm himself before speaking, how to show affection, and how to ask for help. These are not secular ideas replacing Islam. They are practical ways of living with kindness.

Marriage also frightens young men because failure feels public. If a man stays single, his weaknesses can remain private. Once married, his financial ability, emotional maturity, sexual discipline, family leadership, conflict style, and religious seriousness are all tested in front of another person. That vulnerability can be intimidating.

Some young men would rather remain in fantasy than be known in reality.

Fantasy allows them to imagine the perfect wife, the perfect home, the perfect version of themselves. Reality asks them to wake up tired, pay bills, comfort a crying child, apologize after a harsh word, manage in-laws, lower their gaze at work, and choose mercy when ego wants victory. A man who avoids reality may remain emotionally young for a long time.

Allah says:

“Do the people think that they will be left to say, ‘We believe,’ and they will not be tested?” Qur'an 29:2

Marriage is one of the tests through which a person's character appears. It is not the only test, and not every person is required to marry at every stage of life, yet for many people, marriage becomes a mirror. It shows what they need to fix. A young man who avoids marriage forever because he fears that mirror may be avoiding an important path of growth.

This does not mean rushing into marriage while unprepared. There is a difference between preparation and avoidance. Preparation says, “I am not ready yet, so I will build myself.” Avoidance says, “I do not want responsibility, so I will delay while doing nothing.” One is wisdom. The other is escape.

A young man should ask himself honestly which path describes him: if he lacks money, is he working seriously toward halal provision, if he struggles with desire, is he lowering his gaze and fighting private sin, if he fears conflict, is he learning communication and self-control, if he distrusts women, is he seeking balanced Islamic guidance rather than feeding suspicion, if he feels immature, is he taking responsibility in smaller areas before marriage, and if he says marriage is too expensive, is he also willing to accept a simple wedding and modest beginning? Honest answers reveal whether he is preparing or hiding.

The Prophet Peace and Blessings upon him said:

“Three have a right upon Allah to help them,” and he mentioned “the one who marries seeking chastity.” Jami at-Tirmidhi, Hadith 1655.

This hadith gives hope to sincere young men. A man who seeks marriage to guard his chastity is not alone. Allah helps whom He wills. This does not remove the need for effort, work, planning, and responsibility, but it should comfort the young man who fears he cannot do it. If his intention is pure and his path is halal, he should have hope in Allah's help.

Communities must make this help visible, because young men need marriage education before they are desperate. They need older married men who can speak honestly without turning marriage into either fantasy or misery, guidance on finances, mahr, communication, intimacy with modesty, in-laws, emotional responsibility, and the rights of spouses, examples of simple weddings and realistic beginnings, support in fighting pornography and building chastity, and fathers who do not only demand marriage, but help them become capable.

Families also need to stop humiliating young men who are trying. A man earning modestly but lawfully should not be mocked. A young couple willing to begin simply should not be shamed. A proposal should not be destroyed because the man is not yet wealthy if he has religion, character, seriousness, and a realistic plan. At the same time, families have a right to ask whether he is responsible, truthful, and able to maintain a household at a basic level.

Balance is needed, so young men are neither crushed by impossible expectations nor allowed to hide from responsibility.

This dua should shape the desire for marriage. A wife and children who are comfort to the eyes are not merely status markers. They are part of a life built around Allah. A young man should want a family that helps him worship, not only a household that makes him look grown. He should ask Allah for a marriage of mercy, faith, protection, and responsibility.

Some young men avoid marriage because they fear losing freedom. They are used to their own schedule, spending, entertainment, sleep, friendships, and private habits. Marriage means considering someone else. Children, if Allah grants them, increase that responsibility further. For a man used to living mainly for himself, this can feel like loss.

Islam teaches that not all freedom is good, because freedom from responsibility may feel easy while keeping a person shallow. A man grows by carrying the right burdens for Allah, and marriage is one of those burdens when entered properly, asking him to become less selfish, more disciplined, more patient, and more useful.

Marriage should be part of this strengthening. A husband and wife can help one another pray, resist sin, serve family, raise children, and remain steady through hardship. A man who fears marriage only as a loss of freedom may not yet understand the strength that can come from righteous companionship.

Still, marriage is not the only source of meaning. A young man who is not yet married must not live as if life is on pause. He should worship, work, serve, learn, build brotherhood, honor

parents, and prepare. Waiting for marriage should not become waiting to become a real person. The single years can either weaken him or form him.

Allah says:

“And those who say, ‘Our Lord, avert from us the punishment of Hell. Indeed, its punishment is ever adhering.’” Qur'an 25:65

A young man should remember the Hereafter in his choices. Avoiding marriage may seem easier now, but if it leads him into years of zina, pornography, wasted time, and spiritual decay, then the ease is false. Marriage may seem difficult, but if it helps him guard chastity and build a life of worship, then its difficulty carries mercy.

The question is not only, “Am I scared of marriage?” A deeper question is, “What is my fear causing me to become?”

Fear can be useful when it pushes a young man to prepare, seek knowledge, save money, improve character, and choose carefully, but it becomes destructive when it makes him avoid responsibility while feeding desire through haram, or traps him in cynicism, passivity, addiction, and suspicion.

A young man does not need to be perfect before marriage. Perfection is impossible. He does need sincerity, basic responsibility, willingness to learn, and fear of Allah. He should be honest about his weaknesses and actively working on them. He should not deceive a woman into carrying burdens he refuses to face. He should also not delay forever because he thinks every flaw must disappear first.

Marriage is a place of growth, but it should not be entered as an excuse to avoid growth.

Steady preparation matters. A young man should pray, work, save, exercise self-control, seek knowledge, reduce harmful habits, build better friendships, and serve at home with consistency. A man prepared by steady discipline will approach marriage differently from a man who only becomes serious when desire overwhelms him.

Young men also need to understand that marriage is not only about receiving love. It is about giving mercy. Many men want a wife who comforts them, respects them, beautifies herself for them, supports them, and helps them feel less lonely. These desires are not wrong when kept within halal and balanced by responsibility. The issue is whether he is becoming the kind of husband who can give as well as receive.

He should ask whether he can comfort her, respect her, lower his gaze for her, protect her from his family's unfairness, help her when she is tired, provide according to his ability, apologize when wrong, keep her secrets, and lead her toward Allah through mercy rather than pressure.

A man who only asks what marriage will give him has not yet understood marriage.

Allah says:

“And do not forget graciousness between you.” Qur'an 2:237

Graciousness is needed before marriage, during marriage, and even if marriage ends. A young man should enter marriage with generosity of spirit, not a contract-war mindset. Rights matter, but a home cannot survive on rights alone. It needs kindness, patience, forgiveness, humor, tenderness, and willingness to carry one another through difficult days.

The fear of divorce also makes some young men avoid marriage. They have seen painful separations, custody battles, financial disputes, community gossip, and emotional damage. This fear is not baseless. Divorce can be very painful. Yet avoiding marriage entirely because some marriages end is like avoiding all work because some businesses fail. The risk should make a man wiser, not permanently frozen.

Islam gives guidance for choosing carefully, treating spouses well, seeking reconciliation, and separating with dignity if necessary. A young man should learn these teachings instead of letting fear be his teacher.

Allah says:

“Either retain them in kindness or release them in kindness.” Qur'an 2:229

This ayah shows that both marriage and divorce are governed by kindness. A man who fears Allah will not use marriage to harm, nor divorce to punish. If young men were taught this balance, some of the fear around marriage would reduce. The goal is not to pretend every marriage lasts. The goal is to make marriage and, if necessary, separation subject to taqwa.

The way forward for young men is not shame. Telling them they are weak, selfish, or useless may create defensiveness. Some need firm correction, especially if they are using excuses while falling into haram. Yet many also need a path. They need older men to say, “Marriage is serious, and you can prepare for it.” They need families to say, “We will not demand what Allah did not demand.” They need communities to say, “We will help make halal possible.” They need scholars and mentors to say, “Fear Allah, but do not despair.”

A young man avoiding marriage should begin with truth. Is he avoiding because he is not ready, or because he is comfortable with irresponsibility? Is the barrier financial, emotional, spiritual, or cultural? Is he genuinely unable, or is he delaying because haram has become easy? Is he afraid of women because of real concerns, or because online voices have poisoned his view? Is he waiting for a perfect wife while making little effort to become a better man?

These questions should be answered privately before Allah, where excuses fall away and the heart has to be honest.

Allah says:

“And your Lord knows what their breasts conceal and what they declare.”
Qur'an 28:69

Allah knows the real reason. A young man may convince family, friends, and even himself, but Allah knows whether the delay is wisdom or escape. That knowledge should not crush him. It should make him honest.

If he is not ready, he should prepare, if he is able, he should not delay without reason, if he has sinned, he should repent, if he is afraid, he should seek guidance, if culture has blocked the path, he should look for a halal way with wisdom, and if he needs help, he should ask trustworthy people.

Marriage is not the solution to every wound facing young Muslim men. It will not automatically cure loneliness, addiction, anger, laziness, or confusion. Yet avoiding marriage without building oneself can deepen those wounds. The balanced path is to honor marriage, prepare for it seriously, remove unnecessary barriers, and enter it with humility when Allah opens the door.

The Ummah needs young men who do not run from responsibility and do not rush into it foolishly.

It needs men who understand that marriage is worship before it is romance, mercy before it is control, responsibility before it is comfort, and a covenant before it is a social event. It needs families who make the halal path realistic. It needs communities that support chastity with more than lectures. It needs fathers and mentors who teach boys how to become husbands before desire and loneliness push them into confusion.

A young man who avoids marriage because he fears Allah and wants to prepare properly may be acting with wisdom. A young man who avoids marriage so he can remain attached to comfort, private sin, suspicion, or immaturity is being called to wake up.

The door of marriage should not be made impossible, and the weight of marriage should not be made light.

Between those two extremes is the Islamic path: prepare with sincerity, seek Allah's help, simplify what people have complicated, guard chastity while waiting, and step forward when ability, character, and trust in Allah come together.

Chapter 6: Fathers Who Were Never Taught Fatherhood

Many Muslim fathers are expected to raise sons into men while carrying wounds from boyhood that were never healed.

They may know how to work, provide, discipline, stay silent, endure hardship, and keep the family moving. They may know how to pay bills, fix problems, protect reputation, and warn their children against obvious dangers. Yet when their sons need emotional guidance, calm conversation, spiritual companionship, affection, mentorship, or help understanding manhood, many fathers feel lost.

This does not always come from lack of love. Some fathers love their sons deeply but were never shown how to express that love beyond provision and correction. They were raised by men who were distant, harsh, tired, absent, or emotionally silent. They learned that manhood means carrying pain alone. They learned that affection weakens authority. They learned that sons become strong by being toughened, not understood. So they repeat what they inherited, even when they can see that it is not reaching their children.

A father can be present in the house and absent from the heart of his son.

This is one of the quiet crises facing young Muslim men today. They are growing up with fathers who may sacrifice greatly, yet struggle to mentor them. The father works hard, but does not know how to speak. He cares, yet only shows it through pressure. He fears for his son's future, but expresses fear as anger. He wants his son to be religious, but often speaks about Islam through warnings, shame, and comparison. He wants respect, while the son wants connection. Both may love each other, but neither knows how to cross the distance.

This command places responsibility on the family, and fathers carry a serious share of it. Protecting a son from the Fire is not only done by telling him what is haram. It also requires forming his heart, helping him love Allah, teaching him how to fight desire, showing him how to repent, guiding his anger, and giving him a model of masculinity rooted in taqwa. A father who only gives rules may protect the outside for a time, but the inside may remain vulnerable.

Many fathers were never protected this way themselves, which helps explain their silence without excusing the harm it may cause.

They were told to be quiet, be strong, work hard, obey elders, and stop complaining. Some grew up in poverty, migration, war, family instability, racial pressure, or homes where affection was rare. Others had fathers who provided food and shelter but did not provide emotional safety. A man who was never held with gentleness may find it difficult to hold his own son with gentleness. He may not reject love. He may simply lack its language.

This matters because sons often interpret emotional absence as rejection, even when the father believes his sacrifice is proof of love.

A boy may not understand that his father is tired, traumatized, financially stressed, culturally shaped, or emotionally untrained. He only knows that his father rarely asks how he is. He only knows that conversations become lectures. He only knows that mistakes bring anger faster than guidance. He only knows that his father's approval feels difficult to earn. Over time, the boy stops bringing his inner life home.

The Prophet Peace and Blessings upon him said:

"Each of you is a shepherd, and each of you is responsible for his flock."
Sahih Muslim, Hadith 1829.

Fatherhood is shepherding. A shepherd does not merely own the flock. He watches, guides, protects, notices weakness, responds to danger, and remains accountable for those under his care. A father's responsibility is therefore more than income, discipline, or household authority. He is responsible for the spiritual and emotional climate his son grows in.

This does not mean fathers must become perfect or constantly soft. Sons need discipline. They need boundaries, correction, and consequences. A father who refuses to correct his son out of fear of hurting his feelings is not helping him. Yet correction without connection often produces either rebellion or hidden shame. The son may obey outwardly while inwardly growing distant, bitter, or double-lived.

A father's firmness should feel like guidance, not humiliation, so correction becomes a path back rather than another wound.

Gentleness is not weakness. It is strength under control. A father can be gentle and still be clear. He can correct firmly without insulting. He can refuse wrong behavior without crushing his son's dignity. He can warn against sin while keeping the door of return open. This balance is difficult for men who were raised with harshness, but it is part of the Prophetic path.

Some fathers fear that if they become emotionally available, their sons will become weak. This fear is understandable in cultures where survival required toughness. Many fathers grew up believing that softness leads to disrespect. Yet the Sunnah does not teach that mercy ruins boys. It teaches that mercy forms hearts.

The Prophet Peace and Blessings upon him kissed Al-Hasan ibn Ali while Al-Aqra ibn Habis was sitting with him. Al-Aqra said, "I have ten children and I have not kissed any of them." The Messenger of Allah Peace and Blessings upon him looked at him and said:

"Whoever does not show mercy will not be shown mercy."
Sahih Muslim, Hadith 2318.

This hadith directly challenges the idea that affection weakens fatherhood. A man boasted that he did not kiss his children, and the Prophet Peace and Blessings upon him did not praise him for being strong. He linked lack of mercy with being deprived of mercy. Sons need mercy from fathers. They need to experience warmth, not only commands.

A boy who receives affection from his father is not automatically spoiled. He is more likely to feel secure. A son who knows his father loves him is often more willing to accept correction. Love gives discipline a place to land, without love, discipline can feel like rejection.

The Prophet Peace and Blessings upon him also said:

“He is not one of us who does not show mercy to our young and recognize the rights of our elders.” Sunan Abu Dawud, Hadith 4943.

Mercy toward the young is not optional decoration in Islam. It is part of the character of the Ummah. A father who wants his son to respect elders must also show the son what mercy from elders looks like. If a boy only experiences older men as harsh, dismissive, and emotionally unreachable, respect may turn into fear rather than love.

Many fathers confuse fear with respect, but fear may control a son outwardly while leaving his heart distant.

Fear can make a son lower his voice. It can make him hide mistakes. It can make him obey when watched. Respect is deeper. Respect grows when a son sees truthfulness, consistency, fairness, worship, self-control, and mercy. A father who wants respect should ask whether his son sees those qualities in him. Authority gives a father a position, but character gives him influence.

This Prophetic teaching is essential for fathers. A father may overpower a son with volume, threat, silence, or anger, but that is not the strength the Prophet Peace and Blessings upon him praised. Real strength appears when a father controls himself at the moment he feels disrespected, afraid, or disappointed. Many fathers lose their sons not because they corrected them, but because they corrected them with uncontrolled anger.

A son remembers the tone, being called useless, being compared to someone else, being mocked when he cried, and receiving a lecture when he needed help, and these memories can shape how he sees his father, himself, and sometimes religion.

A father may say, “I only wanted what was best for him.” That may be true. Yet good intention does not erase harmful method. A father can want his son to succeed while still wounding him through shame. He can want him to pray while making prayer feel like pressure rather than connection. He can want him to become a man while never showing him how a righteous man deals with weakness.

Sons are included in “people.” A father should not speak worse to his son than he would speak to a stranger. Good words do not mean flattering a child or ignoring wrongdoing. They mean speech that is truthful, just, and dignified. A father can say, “This behavior is wrong and must stop,” without saying, “You are a failure.” He can say, “I am disappointed by what you did,” without saying, “You always ruin everything.” The difference matters.

Many fathers also struggle because they do not know how to apologize. They may believe apologizing lowers them in front of their children. In reality, a sincere apology can increase a father’s authority because it shows integrity. A son who sees his father admit wrong learns that manhood is not pretending to be flawless. It is returning to truth.

Fathers are included in this. A father may sin through anger, neglect, harsh speech, unfair comparison, emotional absence, or failing to guide. His path is not denial. His path is tawbah. He can repent to Allah and repair with his son where possible. A father who says, “I was wrong to speak that way,” may heal something that years of silence made heavy.

Some fathers think their sons already know they love them. The son may not know. Provision may be love from the father’s perspective, but the son may experience it as duty without closeness. A father may work long hours and feel that every bill paid says, “I love you.” The son may appreciate that later, but during boyhood he may still need words, time, guidance, and interest.

Love should not have to be decoded only after adulthood, when a son is finally old enough to reinterpret silence as sacrifice.

A son needs to hear that his father is proud when he does well. He needs encouragement when he struggles. He needs correction that does not erase hope. He needs to know his father cares about more than grades, money, reputation, and obedience. He needs to know that his father wants his heart to belong to Allah, not merely his behavior to look respectable.

Allah says:

“And enjoin prayer upon your family and be steadfast therein.” Qur'an 20:132

This ayah commands the family to prayer, but with steadfastness, so fathers should call sons to salah consistently, not only angrily. Prayer should be connected to Allah, gratitude, manhood, discipline, and the Hereafter, because if salah is only mentioned during fights, the son may associate it with conflict, while a wise father invites, models, reminds, and continues patiently.

The father’s own salah matters deeply. A son watches whether his father prays on time, whether prayer softens him, whether the masjid is part of his life, and whether religion changes his character. If the father demands religious discipline but does not embody it, the son will notice. Hypocrisy in the home damages trust.

This Prophetic teaching should shape a father's religious guidance. Making things easy does not mean making haram halal or lowering Allah's commands. It means helping the son come toward obedience rather than making him feel that return is impossible. Give glad tidings of Allah's mercy. Teach the seriousness of sin without making the boy believe he is permanently dirty. Warn him, but do not drive him away.

Many young men hide pornography, doubts, missed prayers, bad friends, anxiety, and shame because they fear their fathers' reactions. This does not mean fathers should be casual about sin. It means sons need a door through which they can return. If confession always leads to explosion, a boy learns secrecy. If every struggle becomes disgrace, he stops seeking help until the problem has grown roots.

A father should become someone his son can fear disappointing, but not fear approaching.

That balance is rare and precious, and boys need to see it lived before they are expected to embody it.

The father who was never taught fatherhood may also struggle with conversation. He may not know what to ask. He may feel awkward sitting with his teenage son. He may only know how to discuss school, work, chores, or problems. Beginning can feel strange, especially if years of distance have already passed, yet awkward effort is better than polished absence.

A father can start simply. Take him for a drive. Eat with him without checking the phone. Ask what he thinks about something. Share a story from your own youth. Tell him about a mistake you made and what it taught you. Ask what he finds difficult about being Muslim at school or online. Speak about desire, anger, work, marriage, and salah before the internet teaches him first. Do not turn every answer into a lecture. Some conversations are seeds.

Allah says:

"And those who say, 'Our Lord, grant us from among our spouses and offspring comfort to our eyes and make us an example for the righteous.'" Qur'an 25:74

This dua shows that righteous families are something to ask Allah for. A son becoming comfort to his father's eyes is not guaranteed through biology. It requires dua, effort, example, and mercy. Fathers should make dua for their sons by name. They should ask Allah to protect them from pornography, bad company, drugs, arrogance, despair, weak iman, and confusion. They should ask Allah to make them men of salah, chastity, courage, mercy, and beneficial knowledge.

Dua should also be paired with action. A father cannot make dua for his son's guidance and then remain uninterested in his life. Ask Allah, then show up.

Fathers need to know their sons' companions, both offline and online, including who shapes their thinking, who makes them laugh, who they admire, which influencers define manhood for them, what they watch when alone, and what kind of group chats they are in. A father who does not know these things may be absent from the real world his son inhabits.

This does not mean spying without wisdom or treating the son as a criminal. It means being involved enough that guidance is possible. Younger boys need firm boundaries and supervision. Older boys need trust with accountability. All sons need fathers who understand that digital companionship can shape the heart as powerfully as physical friendship.

Many fathers were raised before this level of digital temptation existed. They may not understand how pornography, gaming, online masculinity gurus, atheistic content, anti-Islamic arguments, and constant comparison affect boys. Their own youth had temptations, but not a private device carrying the world into the bedroom. Fatherhood today requires learning new dangers.

A father should not be too proud to learn, especially when his son's faith, emotional safety, and future manhood are at stake.

If a father does not know how to guide his son through digital addiction, doubts, anger, or emotional isolation, he should ask those who know. This may include scholars, counselors, experienced fathers, teachers, or trusted mentors. Seeking help does not reduce his fatherhood. It strengthens it. A shepherd who sees danger and asks for guidance is better than one who pretends there is no danger.

Some fathers avoid emotional connection because they are carrying their own shame. They feel they have failed too much to guide their sons. Perhaps they were absent for years. Perhaps they were harsh. Perhaps they were trapped in work, sin, depression, or marital conflict. They may think, "It is too late now." This thought can become an excuse for continued distance.

It is not too late to become better, even if some opportunities were lost.

This meaning is for fathers too. A father who regrets his past can repent. He may not be able to erase all consequences, and his son may not trust him immediately. Healing may take time, yet despair helps no one. Begin with Allah. Admit what needs to be admitted. Change what can be changed. Become consistent. A son may resist at first because he is used to disappointment, but steady sincerity can soften hearts by Allah's permission.

Fathers should also avoid demanding emotional closeness from sons they have not patiently nurtured. If a father was distant for years, the son may not open up after one conversation. Trust is rebuilt through repeated safety. Do not punish him for being guarded. Show up again. Speak gently again. Keep promises again. Apologize when needed. Over time, the son may begin to believe that the change is real.

Consistency matters in fatherhood. One emotional conversation does not repair years of silence. One outing does not create mentorship. One apology does not rebuild trust completely. Yet consistent effort can change the direction of a relationship. A few minutes daily, a weekly walk, regular salah together, shared work, or repeated honest conversations can become a new foundation.

Fatherhood also requires helping sons become responsible, not merely emotionally comfortable. A father should not confuse connection with indulgence. Sons need chores, discipline, study, work ethic, respect for mothers, service to family, and accountability for salah and behavior. A father who only becomes a friend and stops being a guide has also failed.

The difference is that responsibility should be taught with purpose, so a boy understands he is being prepared rather than merely controlled.

A son should learn why work matters, why prayer matters, why lowering the gaze matters, why serving his mother matters, why controlling anger matters, why money must be halal, why marriage requires maturity, and why a man must keep his word. Commands become more powerful when their meaning is taught. A boy who understands the wisdom behind discipline is more likely to internalize it.

A father should talk to his son about desire before desire becomes secret shame. He should teach him that attraction is natural but must be governed by Allah. He should speak about lowering the gaze, pornography, online temptation, and the beauty of chastity with modesty and seriousness. If he cannot do this well, he should find a trustworthy male mentor who can help.

Silence does not preserve innocence in this age. Silence often leaves boys to be educated by the worst possible teachers.

The father who was never taught fatherhood may feel uncomfortable discussing these matters because no one discussed them with him. Yet his discomfort is not more important than his son's protection. A father must sometimes learn what his own father never taught him.

Young men need this guidance before they are drowning in temptation. A father should help his son think about marriage realistically: not as fantasy, not as an escape from sin, not as a status event, but as responsibility, mercy, provision, and companionship. He should help him prepare through discipline, work, character, and faith. He should also challenge cultural barriers that make marriage unnecessarily difficult.

A father's relationship with the mother of his children teaches his sons more than many speeches. If he honors her, helps her, speaks gently, and protects her dignity, his sons learn. If he mocks her, ignores her labor, shouts, withholds affection, or treats her like a servant, they also learn. Boys often become husbands shaped by what they watched.

This command is part of fatherhood because sons observe how husbands live with wives. A father may teach his son to respect women, but if he does not respect the woman in his home, the lesson weakens. The son needs to see kindness practiced under stress, not only spoken about when convenient.

The Prophet Peace and Blessings upon him said:

“The best of you are the best to their families, and I am the best of you to my family.” Jami at-Tirmidhi, Hadith 3895.

A father should want his son to inherit this standard. Being best to family means the father’s private character matters. If he is generous outside but harsh inside, the son sees the split. If he is respected in the masjid but feared in the home, the son may begin to see religion as performance. If he serves strangers but not family, the son learns hypocrisy without anyone naming it.

Fathers must let the Sunnah enter the home, not only through words, but through patience, service, mercy, prayer, and repentance.

This includes how they treat daughters too, because sons watch that. If daughters are controlled harshly while sons are excused, boys learn injustice. If sisters carry housework while brothers rest, boys learn entitlement. If a father values sons over daughters, boys learn arrogance and daughters learn pain. A son raised in that atmosphere may later struggle to treat his wife as a full human being.

Justice begins at home. Fathers should be fair between children, attentive to different needs, and careful not to let culture override Islam. Sons need love and discipline. Daughters need love and dignity. Both need Islam taught through mercy and truth.

A father who was never taught fatherhood may also struggle with play. He may see play as pointless or childish, yet play can become a doorway to connection. A boy who plays sport with his father, builds something with him, trains with him, works beside him, or travels with him may open emotionally in ways he would not during a formal lecture. Shared activity often allows sons to speak without feeling interrogated.

The Prophet Peace and Blessings upon him allowed warmth, play, and tenderness in family life, so his home was not a place of cold authority. A father should create memories with his son that are not only about correction, because a son needs to remember laughter, not only lectures.

This does not require wealth. A walk, a drive, a simple meal, a game, a shared repair job, a masjid visit, or exercise together can matter. The point is presence.

Some fathers are physically absent because of work. This is a real challenge. Long hours, shift work, business pressure, and financial survival can drain a man. A father may come home with

little energy left. His exhaustion deserves compassion. Yet he should still ask how to give his son something consistent, even if small. A tired father can still make dua with his son, hug him, send a message, pray Fajr together on a day off, or spend ten focused minutes without a phone.

The issue is not always quantity. Quality and consistency can carry great weight.

Allah says:

“So fear Allah as much as you are able.” Qur'an 64:16

A father should do what he can, not surrender because he cannot do everything. If he works long hours, he should not use that as an excuse for total emotional absence. If he has limited time, he should make that time sincere, if he lacks knowledge, he should learn, if he made mistakes, he should repent. Allah does not demand perfection, but He does demand taqwa according to ability.

Communities need to help fathers, not only criticize them. Many fathers are drowning quietly. They are told to provide, lead, be emotionally present, understand digital dangers, guide religion, support wives, raise sons, protect daughters, handle money, manage relatives, and remain strong. Some want to do better but have no model. Lecturing them harshly may increase shame without giving tools.

Masjids and community groups should create spaces where fathers can learn fatherhood. This should include the fiqh of family rights, which is important, but also practical mentorship in speaking to teenagers, guiding boys through pornography and anger, building trust, disciplining without humiliation, supporting mothers, balancing work and home, apologizing when wrong, teaching salah with love, and raising sons who do not become emotionally absent men.

Fathers need strengthening too. A man cannot pour wisdom he never received unless he is helped to learn it. Older righteous men should mentor younger fathers. Imams should speak to fatherhood with realism. Communities should honor provision, but also teach that fatherhood includes presence. Wives should encourage sincere growth where possible, though they should not be expected to carry all the emotional work alone.

A father who wants to change should begin with humility. He can ask his son, “How can I be a better father to you?” The answer may hurt. It may be awkward. The son may shrug. He may say nothing. He may say something that feels unfair. Still, the question itself can open a door. A father can also ask his wife what she sees in his relationship with the children. She may have noticed things he missed.

Humility is not humiliation. It is strength before Allah and protection from the arrogance that destroys families.

A father should not walk through his home with arrogance. He should carry authority with calmness. The home should not tense every time he enters. His presence should bring safety, not fear. Sons need to respect their fathers, but fathers should not confuse a fearful silence with a healthy home.

The goal is not to create fathers who are soft in the wrong way. Boys do not need passive fathers who avoid hard truths. They need fathers who can say no, set limits, challenge laziness, demand prayer, warn against sin, and teach responsibility. Yet this firmness must come from love for Allah and concern for the son, not from ego, rage, or cultural pride.

A father should be able to say, “I will not allow this behavior,” and also, “I love you and I am here to help you change.” Those two sentences belong together.

The Prophet Peace and Blessings upon him said:

“Help your brother, whether he is an oppressor or oppressed.” A man said, “O Messenger of Allah, I help him if he is oppressed, but how do I help him if he is an oppressor?” He said, “By preventing him from oppressing.”
Sahih al-Bukhari, Hadith 6952.

A father should help his son by stopping him from wrong. If the son is disrespectful, addicted, dishonest, cruel, or drifting, love requires intervention. Yet intervention should aim to save him, not shame him. Prevent him from oppressing himself and others, while making it clear that repentance and growth are possible.

Many sons are waiting for their fathers to become approachable. They may never say it openly. They may act indifferent. They may say they do not care. Yet deep inside, many boys still want their fathers to notice them, guide them, approve of them, and believe in them. A father’s sincere attention can reach places lectures cannot.

The crisis facing young Muslim men will not be solved only by blaming fathers. Mothers have roles. Sons have responsibility. Communities have duties. The digital world is powerful. Friends matter. Personal choices matter. Yet fathers remain central because sons often look to men to learn how to become men.

If fathers are absent, boys will search elsewhere, if fathers are harsh, boys may imitate harshness or flee from masculinity altogether, and if fathers are silent, boys may trust louder voices online.

If fathers are present, merciful, disciplined, and religiously grounded, boys receive a model that can protect them for life.

This is why fatherhood must be revived as an Islamic responsibility, not only a biological fact.

A father should not only want a righteous son. He should want to become an example for the righteous. His son should be able to look at him and see something worth carrying forward: prayer, honesty, work, mercy, courage, humility, service, and repentance. Even if the father did not receive that from his own father, he can become the turning point in the family line.

The father who was never taught fatherhood does not have to remain untaught.

A father can still learn from the Quran, the Sunnah, righteous men, his own mistakes, and even the pain in his son's eyes. He can begin before distance becomes permanent.

A generation of Muslim boys needs fathers who do more than provide and warn. They need men who guide, listen, correct, model, repent, protect, and show mercy. They need fathers who understand that raising a son is not only about making him successful in dunya, but helping him stand before Allah with a sound heart.

Fatherhood is an amanah. Some men inherited it without preparation, but Allah does not close the door of growth. A father can begin again with tawbah, dua, humility, and consistent effort. His son may not change overnight, and the relationship may take time to heal, but every sincere step matters.

The boy who once knew only his father's anger may come to know his mercy, the son who once hid his struggles may begin to seek his guidance, and the father who once repeated what wounded him may become the man who breaks the cycle.

That is how families heal, not by pretending the past did not happen, but by allowing the Quran and Sunnah to teach men a fatherhood they may never have received, then living it with enough sincerity that their sons can finally feel guided rather than merely controlled.

Chapter 7: Masculinity in the Sunnah

Muslim boys are being offered many versions of manhood, but not all of them lead to Allah.

Some versions tell them that masculinity is dominance. Others tell them it is money, physical strength, emotional coldness, sexual access, public confidence, or the ability to control a household. Some young men are told to become harsh because the world is harsh. Others are told to reject traditional manhood completely because they have only seen it used badly. Between these extremes, many Muslim boys are confused.

The Sunnah gives a clearer path, shaping manhood through worship, mercy, courage, discipline, and accountability.

Masculinity in Islam is not built on ego. It is built on servanthood to Allah. A man is not truly strong because people fear him, admire him, desire him, or obey him. He is strong when his nafs does not own him, when his anger does not control him, when his desires are governed by taqwa, when his strength protects rather than harms, and when those under his care feel safe with him.

Allah says:

“Men are in charge of women by what Allah has given one over the other and what they spend from their wealth.” Qur'an 4:34

This ayah is often quoted in conversations about men and family, but it is sometimes quoted without its burden. Being in charge is not a decoration for male pride. It is a responsibility before Allah. A man who wants authority without accountability has misunderstood the ayah. Leadership in Islam is not domination. It is carrying an amanah with justice, provision, protection, mercy, and fear of Allah.

A young man must understand this before marriage, before fatherhood, and before he begins speaking confidently about women, family, and obedience. If his idea of leadership is built on being served, he is not ready. If he thinks masculinity means never listening, never apologizing, never serving, and never admitting weakness, then his model is not the Prophet Peace and Blessings upon him.

The Messenger of Allah Peace and Blessings upon him was the strongest of men, yet his strength was never cruelty.

He led armies, stood firm against persecution, carried revelation, faced betrayal, endured grief, taught a nation, and remained steadfast under burdens no ordinary man could carry. At the same time, he was gentle with children, merciful to women, loyal to his family, patient with people's weaknesses, and humble in his home. His masculinity did not need arrogance to prove itself.

Allah says:

“So by mercy from Allah, you were gentle with them. And if you had been harsh and hard-hearted, they would have dispersed from around you.” Qur'an 3:159

This ayah shows that gentleness was part of his leadership. Harshness drives hearts away. A man may force people to comply outwardly, but he cannot create love through fear. He may win the argument and lose the heart. He may control the room and destroy trust. The Prophet Peace and Blessings upon him gathered people through mercy, not through hard-heartedness.

This does not mean he was weak. He was firm when firmness was required. He upheld Allah's limits. He corrected wrong. He stood against injustice. He did not allow truth to be sacrificed for people's comfort. Yet his firmness was guided by revelation, not ego. His anger was for Allah, not for personal pride. His correction was purposeful, not humiliating.

The young Muslim man needs this distinction. Harshness is easy. Any angry person can be harsh. Self-control is harder. Mercy with strength is harder. Remaining principled without becoming cruel is harder. That is why Prophetic masculinity must be learned, not assumed.

The Prophet Peace and Blessings upon him said:

“Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, let him speak good or remain silent.” Sahih Muslim, Hadith 47.

A man's tongue reveals his character. Many young men think masculinity is shown through sharp replies, insults, sarcasm, public humiliation, or winning every exchange. The Sunnah teaches restraint. A man does not need to comment on everything. He does not need to respond to every provocation. He does not need to crush someone with words because he can. Speaking good or remaining silent is not weakness. It is discipline.

This matters in the home. A father's tongue can build or break a son. A husband's tongue can make a wife feel safe or small. An older brother's tongue can protect or humiliate. A young man's group chat can become a place of brotherhood or a place where hearts are poisoned with mockery, lust, and arrogance.

Masculinity in the Sunnah begins with worship, because a man who wants to be strong must first stand before Allah as a servant. If he cannot humble himself in salah, lower his gaze, control his tongue, or repent, then his talk about confidence, discipline, leadership, and strength will easily become pride, incompleteness, shallowness, or self-deception.

Allah says:

“Successful indeed are the believers, those who are humble in their prayer.”
Qur'an 23:1-2

Humility in prayer is part of successful faith. A man may be physically strong, socially confident, and financially ambitious, yet still be weak if he cannot humble himself before his Lord. Salah trains masculinity by forcing the ego to bow, the body to submit, the tongue to remember, and the heart to return. A young man who protects his prayer is already building the foundation of manhood.

The Prophet Peace and Blessings upon him said:

“The first matter that the servant will be brought to account for on the Day of Resurrection is the prayer.” Sunan an-Nasai, Hadith 465.

This should sober every young man, because before his money, body, status, followers, marriage, career, or reputation, his prayer stands as a central matter of account. Any masculinity that makes salah feel secondary is false, and a man who is serious about becoming strong must be serious about prayer.

The Sunnah also teaches that real manhood includes responsibility for others. A Muslim man does not live only for himself. He cares for parents, protects family, honors trusts, helps the weak, serves the community, and understands that leadership is not a performance. Many boys today are trained to think first about personal success: their income, body, image, freedom, and comfort. Islam trains the man to ask what Allah has entrusted to him.

Allah says:

“Indeed, Allah commands you to render trusts to whom they are due.”
Qur'an 4:58

A man's body is a trust. His time is a trust. His parents are a trust. His wife, if Allah grants him marriage, is a trust. His children, if Allah grants them, are trusts. His income is a trust. His knowledge is a trust, even his influence among friends is a trust. Masculinity in the Sunnah means becoming reliable with what Allah places in your hands.

A young man who cannot keep promises is not ready for leadership. Someone who lies easily, wastes hours, breaks commitments, blames everyone else, and refuses accountability should not

speak loudly about being a man. Manhood is not claimed through words. It is proven through trustworthiness.

The Prophet Peace and Blessings upon him said:

“The signs of the hypocrite are three: when he speaks, he lies; when he promises, he breaks his promise; and when he is entrusted, he betrays the trust.”
Sahih Muslim, Hadith 59.

This hadith should shape a young man’s self-assessment by making him ask whether he tells the truth when lying is easier, keeps his word when no one can force him, and protects what has been entrusted to him. These questions matter more than how masculine he appears, because a dishonest man is weak even if people fear him, and a man who betrays trust is broken even if he looks successful.

Masculinity in the Sunnah also includes modesty. Some young men think modesty is mainly for women, while men are free to look, joke, flirt, expose, and consume. This is ignorance. Modesty is part of faith for men and women. A man without haya becomes shameless with his eyes, tongue, phone, clothing, desires, and private habits.

The Prophet Peace and Blessings upon him said:

“Modesty is part of faith.” *Sahih Muslim, Hadith 35.*

This hadith is short but deep. Modesty protects a man from becoming cheap. It teaches him that not every desire should be followed, not every thought should be spoken, not every attraction should be pursued, and not every private urge should be obeyed. A modest man is not awkward or weak. He is guarded. His dignity is not for sale.

Pornography, dirty jokes, staring at women, boasting about desire, and treating marriage as a place of selfish pleasure are not signs of manhood. They are signs of an undisciplined soul. The Sunnah calls men to purity.

Lowering the gaze is not only avoidance. It is training. It teaches a man that he is not an animal led by every image. It protects his future marriage, his heart, and the dignity of women. A young man who lowers his gaze for Allah is practicing a form of strength that the world rarely praises, but Allah knows it.

The Sunnah’s masculinity is also emotionally alive. Some boys are taught that men do not feel, do not cry, do not need comfort, and do not express fear. This produces men who are emotionally

locked, not men who are truly strong. The Prophet Peace and Blessings upon him felt grief, love, concern, tenderness, and mercy. His heart was alive, but his emotions were governed by Allah.

When his son Ibrahim died, the Prophet Peace and Blessings upon him wept. He said:

“The eyes shed tears and the heart grieves, but we do not say except what pleases our Lord.” Sahih Muslim, Hadith 2315.

This is Prophetic emotional strength. He did not deny grief. He did not pretend the heart was unaffected. He also did not speak in a way that displeased Allah. Young Muslim men need this model. Feeling sadness is not weakness. Being overwhelmed and then sinning with the tongue is weakness. Grief with sabr is faith. Pain with obedience is strength.

This matters because many boys are spiritually harmed by emotional numbness, if they cannot express sadness, they may express rage, if they cannot admit fear, they may act arrogant, and if they cannot grieve, they may escape into screens, lust, or isolation. The Sunnah does not ask men to become stone, but to become servants of Allah in every emotional state.

Masculinity in the Sunnah includes mercy toward women without losing proper boundaries. Some young men hear discussions about women’s rights and become defensive. Others hear online rhetoric and begin to view women as opponents. Islam offers neither hatred nor worship of women. It commands justice, modesty, mercy, and responsibility.

Allah says:

“And live with them in kindness.” Qur'an 4:19

This command should enter the heart of every young man before marriage. A wife is not someone to defeat. She is not a servant of ego. She is not an object for desire. She is a servant of Allah with rights over her husband. Living with kindness includes speech, spending, intimacy, disagreement, family pressure, and emotional care. If a man is not willing to learn kindness, he is not prepared for marriage.

The Prophet Peace and Blessings upon him said:

“The most complete of the believers in faith, are those with the best character, and the best of you, are the best to their women.” Jami at-Tirmidhi, Hadith 1162.

This hadith makes treatment of women a measure of faith and character. A man may speak about leadership, obedience, and rights, but his character is exposed by how he treats the women under

his care. If his mother fears his temper, if his wife feels humiliated, if his sisters experience contempt, or if women hear religion from him only as pressure, then something is wrong.

Being good to women does not mean accepting every demand, erasing differences, or abandoning Islamic structure. It means treating them with the character Islam commands. A man can lead without tyranny, correct without insult, protect without control, and disagree without contempt.

Masculinity in the Sunnah also includes service. This has been mentioned in earlier chapters because it is central, but here it must be understood as part of manhood itself, not merely marriage advice. The Prophet Peace and Blessings upon him did not see service as a threat to dignity. He served Allah, served the Ummah, served his family, and lowered himself in humility.

Allah says:

“And lower your wing to those who follow you of the believers.” Qur'an 26:215

Lowering the wing means humility and gentleness toward the believers. A man does not become smaller by serving those Allah placed around him. He becomes more complete. The arrogant man fears service because he thinks it lowers him. The Prophetic man serves because his honor is with Allah, not with people's image of him.

This is important for boys. A son should not be raised to think that cleaning, helping, carrying, cooking, caring for younger siblings, or serving parents is beneath him. These acts train the nafs. A boy who refuses service at home may one day refuse service in marriage, fatherhood, and community life. The Sunnah forms men who are useful, not ornamental.

Masculinity also requires courage. Some modern discussions overcorrect against harshness until they make manhood sound passive. The Sunnah does not teach passivity. A Muslim man should be brave in obeying Allah, speaking truth, defending the vulnerable, resisting desire, earning halal, and standing firm under pressure. Courage is not only physical. Sometimes the bravest act is leaving a sinful gathering, apologizing after wrongdoing, refusing easy money, confronting one's addiction, or choosing a simple halal path when friends mock it.

Standing firm is part of manhood. A Muslim man should not bend every time society changes, friends pressure him, or desire calls him. He stands for Allah, yet the same verse commands justice. Courage without justice becomes aggression. Firmness without fairness becomes oppression. A man must be brave and just together.

This Prophetic teaching teaches moral courage. A man does not help his friend by supporting him in wrongdoing. He helps him by stopping him. If a brother is mocking women, cheating in business, abusing his wife, neglecting prayer, consuming pornography, spreading extremism, or humiliating others, loyalty does not mean silence. Loyalty means helping him return to justice.

Young men need this kind of brotherhood. Many male friendships are built on joking, entertainment, or shared habits, but not enough are built on saving one another from the Fire. A Prophetic man is not afraid to advise with wisdom. He does not enjoy exposing people, and he does not become self-righteous, but he cares too much to watch a brother destroy himself.

Masculinity in the Sunnah also includes financial responsibility without worshipping wealth. A man should strive to earn halal, provide where obligated, avoid laziness, and not live dependent on others when he is able to work. At the same time, wealth is not the measure of manhood. A poor man with taqwa is more honorable than a rich man with arrogance.

Allah says:

“And in the heaven is your provision and whatever you are promised.”
Qur'an 51:22

Provision is from Allah. A man works, plans, learns, trades, applies, saves, and spends responsibly, but he knows his rizq is not created by his ego. This protects him from both laziness and pride. He does not sit back and blame destiny while refusing effort, and he does not become arrogant when Allah opens doors for him.

The Prophet Peace and Blessings upon him said:

“The upper hand is better than the lower hand.” Sahih Muslim, Hadith 1033.

This hadith encourages dignity, giving, and not being unnecessarily dependent. A young man should want to become someone who gives, supports, and carries responsibility, yet the aim is not showing off wealth. The aim is usefulness for Allah's sake. Earning halal, supporting parents, preparing for marriage, helping the poor, and giving charity are all part of mature manhood.

Masculinity also requires humility before knowledge. Many young men speak loudly before learning deeply. They watch clips, read posts, enter debates, and begin judging scholars, families, women, communities, and entire societies with little grounding. Confidence without knowledge is dangerous.

A Muslim man should fear speaking about Allah without knowledge. Manhood is not proven by having an opinion on everything. Sometimes the most masculine sentence is, “I do not know.” Another is, “I need to ask someone knowledgeable.” Humility before knowledge protects a man from misleading himself and others.

The Prophet Peace and Blessings upon him said:

“Whoever Allah intends good for, He gives him understanding of the religion.”
Sahih Muslim, Hadith 1037.

Understanding religion is a gift. A young man should seek it seriously. He should learn aqidah, purification, prayer, halal and haram, character, family rights, financial dealings, and the seerah. He should not rely only on motivational clips or arguments. Knowledge gives masculinity direction, without knowledge, strength may be misused.

Masculinity in the Sunnah also means controlling the private self. Public confidence is easy compared to private obedience. A young man may look disciplined outside while losing every battle alone at night. Allah sees the private room, the phone, the hidden chat, the secret desire, the lie, the envy, the arrogance, and the quiet repentance.

Allah says:

“He knows that which deceives the eyes and what the breasts conceal.”
Qur'an 40:19

This ayah should make a young man honest. Allah knows the glance that others miss. He knows what is hidden in the chest. Masculinity is not only what people see. It is what a man does when no one sees him except Allah. If he wants to become strong, he must begin there.

The Prophet Peace and Blessings upon him said:

“Fear Allah wherever you are, follow a bad deed with a good deed and it will erase it, and treat people with good character.” Jami at-Tirmidhi, Hadith 1987.

This hadith gives a complete program. Fear Allah wherever you are, including online, alone, angry, tempted, praised, criticized, wealthy, poor, single, married, and tired. If you fall, follow the bad deed with good. Treat people with good character. A young man who lives by this hadith will not need fake masculinity. He will be building the real thing.

The Sunnah's masculinity is balanced. It is worship without isolation from responsibility. Strength without cruelty. Mercy without weakness. Confidence without arrogance. Modesty without social uselessness. Leadership without tyranny. Service without humiliation. Emotion without chaos. Discipline without harshness. Courage without injustice.

This balance is rare because extremes are easier: harshness can be called strength, passivity can be called peace, chasing money can be called provision, avoiding responsibility can be called freedom, and consuming religious content can be called knowledge. The Prophetic path is harder because it disciplines the whole man.

Allah says:

“There has certainly been for you in the Messenger of Allah an excellent example for whoever has hope in Allah and the Last Day and remembers Allah often.”
Qur'an 33:21

The Prophet Peace and Blessings upon him is the measure. Every version of masculinity must be brought to him. If a man's masculinity makes him arrogant, it is not Prophetic. If it makes him harsh to family, it is not Prophetic. If it makes him careless with women's dignity, it is not Prophetic. If it makes him addicted to praise, wealth, lust, or argument, it is not Prophetic. If it makes him more prayerful, truthful, disciplined, merciful, responsible, modest, and courageous for Allah, then it is closer to the Sunnah.

Young Muslim men do not need masculinity copied from influencers, street culture, corporate ambition, political anger, or reaction against modern confusion. They need masculinity purified by revelation. They need to see that Islam does not ask them to become weak. It asks them to become men whose strength is owned by Allah, not by ego.

A young man should build his masculinity through the daily acts that shape the soul: praying on time, lowering the gaze, speaking truth, keeping promises, serving parents, protecting siblings, earning halal, training the body, seeking knowledge, choosing righteous friends, controlling anger, making tawbah quickly, and showing mercy when he has the power to be harsh.

None of this is glamorous in the way the internet defines glamour. Much of it is hidden. Much of it is repeated. Much of it receives little applause, yet Allah sees it.

Allah says:

“So whoever does an atom's weight of good will see it, and whoever does an atom's weight of evil will see it.” Qur'an 99:7-8

Every restrained glance, controlled word, honest apology, fulfilled promise, protected trust, halal earning, quiet prayer, and moment of mercy will be seen. Every hidden betrayal, arrogant insult, lustful look, broken trust, and cruel use of strength will also be seen. This reality should make a man serious.

Masculinity in the Sunnah is not about appearing powerful. It is about becoming trustworthy before Allah.

The crisis facing young Muslim men will not be solved by making them ashamed of being men, and it will not be solved by feeding their egos. It will be solved by calling them back to the Messenger of Allah, Peace and Blessings upon him, whose manhood was strong enough to carry truth, humble enough to serve, gentle enough to heal, and disciplined enough to submit completely to Allah.

That is the model young Muslim men need. That is the model fathers must live. That is the model communities must teach. And that is the model that can turn confused boys into men of worship, responsibility, mercy, and courage.

Chapter 8: Brotherhood, Discipline, and Purpose

A young Muslim man cannot become strong alone, because brotherhood, mentorship, and righteous company help carry him through weakness.

He may think independence means needing no one. He may imagine that real masculinity is built in isolation, through private struggle, personal ambition, physical training, money, and silent endurance. Some of those things may have value when guided by Islam, but a man who has no righteous brotherhood around him is exposed in ways he may not realize.

Isolation weakens discipline. Bad company corrupts purpose. Empty friendships waste years. Online communities can imitate brotherhood while quietly feeding arrogance, lust, anger, and distraction. A young man needs people around him who do more than entertain him. He needs brothers who remind him of Allah, challenge his excuses, protect his dignity, correct him with sincerity, and make obedience feel possible.

This is not a small part of the crisis facing young Muslim men. Many boys have friends, but few have brotherhood.

They may have people to joke with, game with, train with, drive with, watch sports with, or sit with for hours, yet when salah is missed, no one asks, when pornography becomes a habit, no one knows, when anger is growing, no one names it. When doubts appear, no one guides him to knowledge. When life loses meaning, no one calls him toward Allah. That kind of friendship can fill time while leaving the heart alone.

Allah says:

“By time, indeed, mankind is in loss, except for those who have believed and done righteous deeds and advised one another to truth and advised one another to patience.” Qur'an 103:1-3

This short surah gives a complete map for brotherhood. Human beings are in loss except those who believe, do righteous deeds, and advise one another to truth and patience. A young man cannot treat faith as a private project only. He needs people who help him remain upon truth and endure the struggle of obedience. Truth without patience can become harsh. Patience without truth can become weakness. Brotherhood brings both together.

This is different from the shallow loyalty many young men mistake for brotherhood. A real brother does not help you hide from Allah. He does not laugh while you destroy yourself. He does not encourage sin because he wants your approval. He does not flatter your ego when you are wrong. He wants Jannah for you, even if that means saying something you do not want to hear.

The Prophet Peace and Blessings upon him said:

“None of you truly believes until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself.” Sahih Muslim, Hadith 45.

This hadith changes the meaning of male friendship. Loving for your brother what you love for yourself means wanting his guidance, protection, dignity, repentance, success, chastity, and closeness to Allah. If you would not want your own heart destroyed by sin, do not watch your friend’s heart collapse in silence. If you want Allah to forgive you, help your brother find the path of forgiveness. If you want a righteous future, do not normalize habits that will ruin his.

Brotherhood in Islam is not sentimental. It has responsibility inside it, including advice, patience, loyalty to truth, and concern for the Hereafter.

A young man should ask what kind of friendships he is building: do his friends make salah easier or harder, does their company increase his modesty or weaken it, does he leave them feeling closer to Allah or more stained, do they speak about women with dignity or with filth, do they encourage discipline or waste, and are they people he would want beside him on the Day of Judgment?

These questions are serious because companionship shapes identity, habits, speech, desires, and the direction of the heart.

Allah says:

“And keep yourself patient with those who call upon their Lord in the morning and evening, seeking His face, and do not let your eyes pass beyond them, desiring adornments of the worldly life.” Qur'an 18:28

This ayah teaches the believer to remain close to people of sincere worship, even if worldly glamour is elsewhere. Young men are often drawn to impressive people: the wealthy, confident, popular, stylish, loud, successful, or dominant. Yet the Quran tells the believer to keep patient with those who call upon Allah sincerely. Their company may not always look exciting, but it protects the heart.

A young man needs at least some friends whose presence makes sin feel ugly again.

He needs brothers who pray, even if imperfectly. He needs brothers who speak about the Hereafter, even if briefly. He needs brothers who can laugh without becoming shameless, train without becoming arrogant, work without worshipping money, and discuss problems without

turning everything into gossip. These people may not be easy to find, but they are worth searching for.

The Prophet Peace and Blessings upon him said:

“A person is upon the religion of his close friend, so let one of you look at whom he takes as a close friend.” Sunan Abu Dawud, Hadith 4833.

This hadith should make young men careful. Close friends do not merely sit beside you. They enter your habits, speech, humor, desires, standards, and sense of normal. If your closest friends treat prayer lightly, you will likely begin treating it lightly. If they speak crudely about women, your tongue may follow. If they mock sincere Muslims, your heart may become embarrassed by righteousness. If they waste nights online, your discipline will weaken with them.

The opposite is also true. Righteous companions make obedience easier. They do not remove your struggle, but they change the atmosphere around it. A young man who is surrounded by brothers trying to pray, improve, earn halal, lower the gaze, seek knowledge, and become useful will find it harder to remain careless. Good company does not make him perfect, but it pulls him upward.

Brotherhood also protects young men from false identities. A boy alone with his insecurities may attach himself to online tribes, ideological anger, pornography, gangs, empty entertainment, or shallow status. Righteous brotherhood gives him a healthier belonging. He becomes part of something real: a circle of believers trying to obey Allah together.

Allah says:

“The believers are but brothers, so make settlement between your brothers and fear Allah that you may receive mercy.” Qur'an 49:10

Brotherhood is not optional decoration, because Allah names the believers as brothers. This bond should be felt in the masjid, in youth circles, in homes, at school, at work, and in moments of personal struggle, so a young man should not feel that he has to become righteous alone, and the Ummah should contain places where he is known, guided, corrected, and loved for Allah's sake.

Yet brotherhood without discipline becomes social comfort. Young men can gather under Islamic labels and still waste time, gossip, argue, chase entertainment, or avoid growth. Brotherhood is meant to strengthen obedience, not replace it with a religious-looking hangout.

Discipline gives brotherhood direction, turning good company into a path of worship rather than only social comfort.

Many young Muslim men do not lack information. They know salah is obligatory. They know pornography is haram. They know wasting time is harmful. They know disrespecting parents is wrong. The problem is often not awareness. It is weakness of routine, environment, and will. They live without structure, then wonder why their desires control them.

Islam builds discipline through repeated worship. Salah interrupts the day before the day becomes owned by dunya. Fasting trains desire. Zakat disciplines attachment to wealth. Hajj teaches sacrifice, patience, and submission. The believer is not left to vague spirituality. Islam gives a rhythm that trains the body and soul.

Allah says:

“Indeed, prayer has been decreed upon the believers at fixed times.” Qur'an 4:103

Prayer at fixed times is one of the greatest forms of discipline in a Muslim's life. A young man who arranges his day around salah is learning that Allah comes before mood, entertainment, work, sleep, and social life. Each prayer is a return to order. When he neglects it, the rest of life becomes easier to disorder.

The Prophet Peace and Blessings upon him was asked which deed is most beloved to Allah. He said:

“Prayer at its proper time.” Sahih Muslim, Hadith 85.

A young man serious about discipline should begin here, looking at prayer before complex self-improvement plans, business goals, gym routines, marriage, or online debates. He should ask whether Fajr is protected, whether salah is delayed without excuse, whether he prays because his parents remind him or because he knows he is standing before Allah, and whether the masjid is part of his life or only something for Ramadan and Eid.

Discipline that does not begin with prayer is incomplete, because salah is the foundation that orders the rest of a young man's life.

This does not mean physical routines, study plans, work goals, or exercise are unimportant. They matter. A young man benefits from training his body, waking early, learning skills, earning money lawfully, reading beneficial books, and keeping his environment clean. Yet all of that should serve worship, not replace it. A man can be disciplined in the gym and careless with Fajr. He can be disciplined in business and loose with the gaze. He can be disciplined in study and arrogant with parents. That is not full Islamic discipline.

Allah says:

“And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me.” Qur'an 51:56

Purpose begins here. The young Muslim man was not created mainly to become rich, admired, married, muscular, independent, influential, educated, or comfortable. Those things may come and may be used for good, but his central purpose is worship of Allah, when this purpose is forgotten, discipline becomes scattered. He may work hard for money but remain spiritually empty. He may train his body but neglect his soul. He may chase status but lose sincerity.

Purpose gives discipline meaning, so effort is no longer only about self-image but about living for Allah.

A boy who does not know why he exists will struggle to resist pleasure, because he will not understand why he should wake up for Fajr, lower the gaze, avoid haram money, stay patient with parents, work hard when entertainment is easier, control anger when rage feels powerful, or protect time when endless scrolling feels comforting.

The answer is not merely, “Because you have to.” The deeper answer is because he belongs to Allah, will return to Allah, and has been given a short life in which every choice is shaping his akhirah.

Allah says:

“Did you think that We created you uselessly and that to Us you would not be returned?” Qur'an 23:115

A young man is not created uselessly. His time is not meaningless. His desires are not random. His energy is not for waste. His friendships are not neutral. His phone is not outside accountability. His strength is not for ego. His life is moving toward return. When he understands this, purpose becomes heavier than entertainment.

Many young men drift because no one has invited them into a serious life. They are told what to avoid, but not what to build. They are warned against sin, but not given responsibility. They are treated as risks, not potential leaders. If a boy is only told, “Do not do haram,” he may avoid some wrong but still remain empty. He needs to hear, “Allah created you for worship, and the Ummah needs men who are useful.”

Usefulness is one of the keys to purpose. A young man should not live only as a consumer. Let him serve. Let him help at the masjid. Let him support younger boys. Let him visit the sick, feed the poor, clean after events, assist elders, learn adhan, organize beneficial activities, tutor

children, help his parents, and carry tasks that require reliability. Purpose grows when responsibility is entrusted.

The Prophet Peace and Blessings upon him said:

“Allah continues to help the servant as long as the servant helps his brother.”
Sahih Muslim, Hadith 2699.

Helping others can rescue a young man from self-absorption. Many boys are trapped inside their own moods, insecurities, desires, and frustrations. Service widens the heart. When he helps someone else for Allah, he begins to see that his life has value beyond private pleasure and personal status. He becomes useful, and usefulness builds dignity.

Brotherhood, discipline, and purpose strengthen one another. Brotherhood gives support. Discipline gives structure. Purpose gives direction, if one is missing, the others weaken. A young man with purpose but no brotherhood may become isolated and eventually tired. Brotherhood without discipline can become pleasant but unproductive. Discipline without purpose may become dry, harsh, or ego-driven.

The Islamic path brings them together, so brotherhood supports discipline and discipline serves a purpose greater than ego.

A group of young men can meet for Fajr, train together, study a book, check on each other's goals, serve the community, and speak honestly about struggles. They can create an environment where prayer is normal, repentance is normal, hard work is normal, modesty is normal, and helping one another is normal. This kind of brotherhood does not need to be dramatic. It needs to be sincere and consistent.

The Prophet Peace and Blessings upon him said:

“Deeds are only by intentions, and every person will have only what he intended.”
Sahih Muslim, Hadith 1907.

Intention protects brotherhood from becoming a social club and discipline from becoming ego worship. Young men should ask whether they are training to show off or to become strong servants of Allah, studying to win arguments or to obey Allah with knowledge, working hard to boast or to provide and give, and helping others for praise or for Allah's pleasure.

The same action can rise or fall depending on intention, which is why young men must keep returning their efforts to Allah.

Young men need to renew intention often because ego easily enters male spaces. A group that begins with self-improvement can become competitive in a diseased way. Brothers can start comparing bodies, income, religious knowledge, marriage prospects, cars, or social status. Advice can become arrogance. Discipline can become performance. Even Islamic work can become a place where young men seek recognition.

Allah says:

“And they were not commanded except to worship Allah, sincere to Him in religion.” Qur'an 98:5

Sincerity is the soul of purpose. Without sincerity, a young man may appear disciplined while being inwardly hungry for people's eyes. He may serve the masjid because he wants status. He may seek knowledge because he wants superiority. He may speak about brotherhood while using brothers to feel important. Sincerity keeps the heart facing Allah.

Brotherhood also requires trust. Many young men hide their struggles because they fear being exposed or mocked. A healthy circle of brothers must protect confidentiality. If a young man admits he is struggling with prayer, pornography, anger, doubts, or despair, that confession should not become gossip. Advice should be sincere, not humiliating.

Concealing faults does not mean ignoring harm or hiding crimes. It means not exposing a brother's private weakness unnecessarily. Young men need spaces where they can seek help without being destroyed socially. If every weakness becomes a joke, no one will speak until the sin has consumed them.

At the same time, brotherhood must not become a place where sin is protected under the name of loyalty. If a brother is harming someone, abusing a spouse, dealing drugs, spreading extremism, exploiting others, or committing serious wrongdoing, silence is not loyalty. Wisdom is needed. Private sins require sincere help. Harm that affects others may require intervention. The goal is always to bring the matter closer to Allah's justice.

Allah says:

“The believing men and believing women are allies of one another. They enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong, establish prayer, give zakah, and obey Allah and His Messenger.” Qur'an 9:71

Believers are allies in obedience, and enjoining right and forbidding wrong are part of that alliance. Young men need to learn how to advise without arrogance and receive advice without

defensiveness, because a brother who corrects you sincerely is not your enemy, but may be one of Allah's means of saving you from yourself.

Discipline in brotherhood should be practical. Young men benefit from agreed habits: praying together, memorizing small portions of Quran, attending a weekly class, exercising, checking screen time, saving money, learning skills, and serving others. The group should not become so intense that it burns out, nor so casual that nothing changes. Moderation is important.

The Prophet Peace and Blessings upon him said:

"Take on only as much as you can do, for Allah does not grow weary until you grow weary." Sahih Muslim, Hadith 782.

This hadith teaches sustainability. Young men often begin with extreme plans, then collapse. They decide to change everything in one week: sleep, gym, Quran, study, work, food, phone, friends, and worship, when they fail, they feel hopeless. A better path is steady discipline. Build routines that can last. Increase gradually. Let consistency shape identity.

Purpose also requires knowledge of priorities. Some young men become disciplined in things that are secondary while neglecting obligations. They may spend hours debating politics but miss salah. They may build business plans while disrespecting parents. They may train their bodies but ignore the Quran. They may attend events but refuse to fix private sins. Purpose must be ordered by revelation.

Allah says:

"Race toward forgiveness from your Lord and a Garden whose width is like the width of the heavens and earth, prepared for those who believed in Allah and His messengers." Qur'an 57:21

This is the race that matters. Young men are competitive by nature. Islam redirects competition toward forgiveness and Paradise. Compete in prayer, knowledge, service, generosity, self-control, and good character. Compete in who can forgive faster, repent quicker, help more quietly, and remain steadier when tempted. This competition purifies rather than corrupts.

A young man should ask how his life benefits others. Does his presence make his home easier or harder? Does he help his mother, guide younger siblings, support the masjid, strengthen friends, or contribute to the Ummah? Or is he only consuming food, internet, attention, and comfort?

Purpose begins when a man stops living only to be served and starts asking how his strength can benefit others for Allah's sake.

This does not mean he must become overburdened or neglect his own development, because he still needs rest, learning, work, health, and personal growth. Yet growth should make him more useful, not more self-absorbed, until discipline helps him become a mercy to those around him.

Allah says:

“And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression.” Qur'an 5:2

This ayah can shape Muslim male spaces. Cooperate in righteousness and piety. Build circles that help with prayer, study, work, marriage preparation, service, physical health, and emotional maturity. Do not cooperate in sin and aggression. Do not create groups where backbiting, lust, arrogance, racism, sectarian hostility, violence, or mockery become bonding tools.

Some young men bond through sin because it is easier than bonding through sincerity. They share dirty jokes because honest conversation feels vulnerable. They mock others because mutual improvement feels uncomfortable. They waste time together because discipline would expose weakness. Islamic brotherhood calls them higher.

A brotherhood built on Allah can still have laughter, sport, food, travel, and ease. It does not have to feel like a constant lecture. The difference is that halal enjoyment remains within a larger purpose. Friends can laugh and still pray. They can train and still stay humble. They can discuss business and still remember the Hereafter. They can relax without becoming heedless.

Young men need glad tidings in brotherhood. A circle that only criticizes will eventually push people away. Encouragement matters. Celebrate a brother returning to prayer. Encourage small progress. Make space for repentance. Remind him that Allah's mercy is near. Warn him when needed, but do not make righteousness feel impossible.

Discipline should be firm, but hope must remain alive so that correction leads to growth rather than despair.

Purpose also protects against despair, because some young men feel useless when they are not yet successful and begin comparing themselves to wealthy men, married men, confident men, or men with clear careers. Social media makes everyone else's life look more advanced, and a young man may begin to think he is behind permanently.

Islam measures progress differently. The first question is not whether he has achieved what people admire. The first question is whether he is moving toward Allah.

A good life is tied to iman and righteous deeds, not merely social milestones. A young man working modestly but praying, serving parents, lowering his gaze, learning, and improving may

be more successful before Allah than someone admired by people but empty inside. Purpose must be protected from comparison.

At the same time, Islam does not encourage passivity. A young man should not use spirituality as an excuse for laziness. He should work, study, seek halal income, build skills, prepare for marriage if able, strengthen his body, and become reliable. Dunya is not worshipped, but it is used for obedience.

A young man should want to give, not always receive. He should want to support family, help the poor, fund good projects, and stand with dignity. This requires effort. Brotherhood can help by creating a culture where men encourage each other to work honestly, avoid debt where possible, stay away from haram income, and think beyond selfish spending.

Discipline also includes guarding time, because many young men lose years without noticing as hours disappear into scrolling, gaming, pointless debates, entertainment, and sleeping late. Then they feel anxious because life is not moving, while time is one of the clearest places where purpose becomes visible.

Allah says:

“And it is He who has made the night and the day in succession for whoever desires to remember or desires gratitude.” Qur'an 25:62

Day and night are opportunities for remembrance and gratitude. A young man should not treat time as disposable. He should plan his days around prayer, work, learning, service, health, and rest. This does not require an extreme routine. It requires enough order that life stops being controlled by impulse.

Health and free time are often wasted by young men because they feel endless. Later, they realize how much could have been built. A young man should use his strength before it weakens, his free time before life becomes crowded, and his youth before regret teaches him what advice could have taught earlier.

Brotherhood can help protect time. Friends can agree to meet for beneficial things. They can stop normalizing late nights that destroy Fajr. They can replace some entertainment with service or training. They can remind one another when habits slip. A good circle makes discipline socially supported rather than lonely.

A young man should also learn to be alone with Allah. Brotherhood is important, but it should not become dependence on people. There are moments when no brother is present. The phone is in his hand, the urge is rising, anger is boiling, laziness is calling, or doubt is whispering. In that moment, his private relationship with Allah must carry him.

Allah says:

“And He is with you wherever you are.” Qur'an 57:4

This awareness is the deepest discipline. Allah is with you wherever you are: in the room, in the car, online, at school, at work, in the gym, with friends, away from family, before dawn, after sin, and during temptation. This does not mean Allah is physically inside creation, as Islamic belief preserves Allah's transcendence, but it means His knowledge, seeing, hearing, and care encompass the servant. A young man who lives with awareness of Allah will not be the same in private.

Purpose becomes strongest when a man remembers death. This is not meant to make him gloomy. It is meant to make him serious. Many boys live as if adulthood is guaranteed, old age is guaranteed, repentance later is guaranteed, and time will always remain. Islam breaks that illusion.

Allah says:

“Every soul will taste death, and you will only be given your full compensation on the Day of Resurrection.” Qur'an 3:185

A young man will die. His friends will die. His phone, body, money, arguments, desires, and reputation will not follow him except through what they became in deeds. Remembering death gives weight to life. It makes discipline meaningful and brotherhood urgent. Friends should help one another prepare for that meeting, not distract one another from it.

The Prophet Peace and Blessings upon him said:

*“Remember often the destroyer of pleasures,” meaning death.
Jami at-Tirmidhi, Hadith 2307.*

Remembering death destroys false pleasure, not true meaning. It does not remove joy from halal life. It removes the illusion that sin is worth it. It reminds young men that their time is short and their return is certain. A brother who reminds you of death with wisdom has given you a gift.

This chapter must be careful not to repeat earlier discussions of loneliness and brotherhood as social pain only. Here, the focus is formation. Brotherhood is not merely emotional support. Discipline is not merely productivity. Purpose is not merely motivation. Together, they form young men who can resist the forces pulling them apart.

A disciplined brotherhood gives young men a place to practice manhood before marriage and fatherhood. In that environment, they learn to show up on time, keep promises, speak honestly, advise without humiliating, receive correction without collapsing, work with others, serve without applause, control jokes, avoid gossip, and stay steady when enthusiasm fades.

These are not small skills. They are the muscles of future leadership, marriage, fatherhood, and service to the Ummah.

A man who cannot be reliable with brothers may struggle to be reliable with a wife. A man who cannot keep a commitment to a study circle may struggle with family duties. A man who cannot control his tongue among friends may wound his children later. Brotherhood is a training ground.

Allah says:

“Indeed, Allah loves those who fight in His cause in a row as though they are a solid structure.” Qur'an 61:4

This ayah speaks of fighting in Allah's cause, and its context should not be carelessly expanded into reckless ideas. Yet the image of believers as a solid structure shows the beauty of ordered, united strength for Allah. Young men need disciplined unity, not scattered emotion. They need to stand together for what pleases Allah with knowledge, restraint, and lawful service, not chaotic energy.

Purpose must always be kept within sound guidance. Some young men search for meaning and are pulled into extremism, political obsession, gang identity, or reckless activism. They want brotherhood and purpose, but without knowledge those desires can be manipulated. Islam does not bless every cause simply because it feels intense. Purpose must be governed by Quran, authentic Sunnah, scholars, wisdom, and the limits of Allah.

Allah says:

“Do not exceed limits. Indeed, Allah does not like those who exceed limits.” Qur'an 2:190

A young man seeking purpose must be warned against transgression. Strong feelings are not proof of truth. Brotherhood can be used for good or evil. Discipline can serve worship or oppression. Purpose can lead to service or fanaticism. The difference is guidance. A Muslim man must remain within Allah's limits.

This is why knowledge must accompany brotherhood. Young men need circles connected to reliable Sunni scholarship, not just enthusiasm. They should learn how to worship properly, how

to understand priorities, how to avoid extremism, how to deal with differences, and how to speak about religion with humility. Brotherhood without knowledge may become loud and unstable.

Understanding religion is a sign of Allah's intended good, so young men should not be satisfied with motivation alone. They need fiqh, aqidah, tafsir, hadith, seerah, and tazkiyah according to their level, because knowledge gives purpose clarity and protects discipline from becoming harsh and brotherhood from becoming tribal.

Purpose also requires hope. Some young men have wasted years and feel they started too late. They may think the disciplined brotherhood described here belongs to better people. That thought is from despair. A young man can begin now. He can seek better friends, repair prayer, join a class, serve at the masjid, reduce screen time, and build slowly. Allah opens doors for those who turn to Him.

Striving brings guidance, and although the first steps may be small, they matter. A young man does not need to transform overnight to begin, but he needs sincerity, effort, willingness to continue after failure, and good brothers who help him stand again.

Repentance is part of brotherhood and discipline. A circle of young men should not pretend no one sins. They should create a culture where sin is taken seriously and repentance is normal. A brother falls, then returns. He is helped, not mocked. He is reminded, not abandoned. He is held accountable, not humiliated.

This is how young men heal, through repentance, brotherhood, discipline, and people who help them return without humiliating them.

The crisis facing Muslim boys is not only that they are angry, isolated, addicted, or confused. It is that many have not been given a strong enough alternative. Brotherhood gives them belonging. Discipline gives them structure. Purpose gives them direction toward Allah. When these three come together, a boy begins to become a man.

Through brotherhood, discipline, and purpose, he begins to understand that his life is not for drifting, strength is not for ego, friendship is not only entertainment, time is not disposable, worship is not separate from manhood, and Allah created him for something greater than private pleasure and public image.

This is the path young Muslim men need: support instead of shame, worship alongside motivation, accountability within friendship, mercy joined to discipline, and knowledge guiding purpose. They need a brotherhood that helps them obey Allah, a discipline that trains the nafs, and a purpose that stretches from this world into the Hereafter.

A generation raised like this will not be easily captured by screens, gurus, addictions, or despair. They will still struggle because every generation struggles, but they will have the tools to return. They will have brothers beside them, habits beneath them, and Allah as the aim before them.

That is how scattered boys become steady men, by Allah's permission, through brotherhood, discipline, worship, and purpose.

Chapter 9: Helping Young Men Return to the Mosque

Many young Muslim men do not leave the mosque through a loud rejection. They simply stop feeling that they belong there.

They may still attend Eid. They may come in Ramadan. They may enter for a janazah, a family event, or when guilt becomes heavy enough. Yet the mosque no longer feels like a spiritual home. It feels like a place for older men, small children, already-practicing Muslims, certain ethnic groups, or people who know how to behave. For the young man who is inconsistent, ashamed, addicted, angry, doubtful, or socially disconnected, the mosque can feel like a place he is supposed to respect from a distance rather than return to with his whole self.

This is a serious loss, because the mosque should be one of the first places a wounded young man feels able to return.

The mosque is not just a building where prayers happen. It is meant to be a place where hearts are gathered around Allah, where believers stand shoulder to shoulder, where knowledge is taught, where repentance feels possible, where lonely people are noticed, and where the next generation learns that Islam is not only inherited at home but lived with others. When young men drift from the mosque, they often drift from more than a prayer space. They drift from brotherhood, mentorship, accountability, and a living connection to the Ummah.

Allah says:

“And the mosques are for Allah, so do not invoke with Allah anyone.”
Qur'an 72:18

The mosque belongs to Allah. It should not feel owned by one age group, one culture, one committee, one class, or one style of Muslim. It is not the private territory of elders, donors, families, or those who have already found stability in religion. It is a house of worship where the broken, guilty, young, confused, and inconsistent should be able to return to Allah without feeling that people's eyes are blocking the door.

This does not mean the mosque has no adab. Young men must respect the sanctity of the masjid. They should not treat it like a hangout with no manners. They should lower their voices, dress respectfully, avoid joking during worship, protect cleanliness, honor elders, and understand that the mosque is not a youth club in the worldly sense. Yet adab should be taught with wisdom, not with hostility that makes them feel unwelcome before they have even learned.

Allah says:

“O children of Adam, take your adornment at every masjid.” Qur'an 7:31

The mosque deserves dignity. A young man should not come careless in body, clothing, speech, or attitude. At the same time, a community should remember that some young men arrive rough because no one has patiently taught them better. A boy who comes in tracksuit pants, stands awkwardly, does not know where to sit, smells of cigarettes, or looks uncertain may still be closer to guidance than the one who never comes at all. The response should not be to embarrass him, but to help him rise.

The Prophet Peace and Blessings upon him said:

“Make things easy and do not make things difficult. Give glad tidings and do not drive people away.” Sahih Muslim, Hadith 1734.

This hadith should shape the way mosques deal with young men. Making things easy does not mean making sin acceptable or removing standards. It means opening a path toward obedience that people can actually walk. Giving glad tidings does not mean ignoring Hellfire, but it does mean speaking about Allah’s mercy, forgiveness, reward, and the honor of returning. Driving people away can happen through harsh speech, public embarrassment, ethnic cliques, coldness, suspicion, and lectures that only condemn without guiding.

Many young men already feel judged before they enter. They may be struggling with pornography, missed prayers, drugs, vaping, bad friends, doubts, anger, depression, or shame. Some feel they are too sinful to sit among worshippers. Others worry that people will notice their inconsistency. A young man might think, “Everyone here knows what they are doing except me.” If the first thing he receives is a harsh stare, a sarcastic correction, or an elder complaining about “youth today,” he may not return for months.

A mosque that wants young men back must make repentance feel possible, while still calling them to prayer, discipline, and truth.

This meaning belongs in the heart of every young man who feels too dirty to return. Allah does not close the door because a servant has sinned. A young man may have wasted years, fallen into private sin, mocked religion, missed prayers, or lived far from Allah, yet the path back remains open.

A young man returning to the mosque after sin should not be treated as an inconvenience. His return may be beloved to Allah. People might only see an inconsistent youth, while Allah may see a servant taking the first step out of darkness. Communities must be careful not to crush what Allah is opening.

Helping young men return to the mosque begins before they disappear. Boys should grow up associating the masjid with worship, warmth, brotherhood, service, and meaning. If their only memories are being shouted at for noise, ignored by adults, pushed aside by cultural politics, or

dragged to prayers without explanation, the mosque may feel emotionally distant even if it remains religiously important.

A boy needs to experience the mosque as a place where he is formed.

That formation should include prayer, Quran, manners, respect for elders, and knowledge. It should also include being known by name, trusted with small responsibilities, invited into beneficial activities, and surrounded by older boys and men who model Islamic manhood. Young men are more likely to return to a mosque that once made them feel seen.

Young men need to feel part of this believing alliance. They should not be treated only as risks to manage or problems to complain about. They are future husbands, fathers, workers, volunteers, teachers, protectors, and worshippers. A mosque that only speaks about young men when they misbehave has already failed to imagine their potential.

One of the most effective ways to bring young men back is to give them responsibility. Let them help set up chairs, clean after events, support elderly worshippers, manage parking with adab, assist in youth programs, learn the adhan, distribute food, help with charity drives, organize sports linked to prayer, or mentor younger boys under supervision. Responsibility tells a young man, “You are needed here.” That message can be more powerful than a hundred complaints about his absence.

A mosque should be a building of hearts before it is a building of walls. Young men strengthen the community when they are guided properly, and the community strengthens them when it refuses to abandon them. If one part of the building is weak, the answer is not to mock it. The answer is to reinforce it.

Many mosques need to rethink their relationship with youth programs. Sometimes youth work is treated as entertainment on the side, separate from the serious life of the masjid. At other times, it becomes only lectures and warnings, with no space for honest questions, friendship, activity, or practical mentoring. Young men need more than pizza nights, and they need more than being shouted at in khutbahs. They need a full pathway into Islamic adulthood.

That pathway should include worship, knowledge, brotherhood, discipline, service, physical activity, emotional guidance, and access to trustworthy older men. A young man should be able to ask about desire, pornography, doubts, anger, marriage, work, parents, and identity without being mocked or exposed. If he cannot ask in the mosque, he may ask someone online who does not fear Allah in advising him.

A mosque should connect young men to people of knowledge. This does not mean every imam must become a therapist, youth worker, career adviser, and father figure at once. It means the mosque should create responsible channels: scholars for religious questions, counselors for mental health issues where needed, mentors for life guidance, and trained volunteers who

understand youth realities. Young men need to know where to go before their private struggles become public crises.

The khutbah also matters. Young men are listening, even when they look disengaged. A khutbah that only complains about the youth may confirm their belief that the mosque sees them as a burden. A khutbah that speaks honestly about their struggles while calling them to Allah with dignity can awaken something inside them. They need to hear about prayer, chastity, repentance, work ethic, respect for parents, brotherhood, the dangers of pornography and drugs, and the honor of being young in worship.

This Prophetic teaching should be repeated to young men with warmth. A young man in worship is not boring, weak, or strange. He is honored by Allah. When he comes to Fajr while his peers sleep, Allah sees. When he returns to the masjid after a relapse into sin, Allah sees, when he chooses prayer over entertainment, Allah sees. When he sits in a gathering of knowledge despite feeling out of place, Allah sees.

Young men need a noble identity attached to the mosque. They should not feel that the masjid is only for elders nearing the end of life. It is also for youth at the beginning of serious struggle. The mosque should be where they learn that manhood means standing before Allah, serving others, controlling desire, seeking knowledge, and belonging to something greater than the self.

Allah says:

“Only those maintain the mosques of Allah who believe in Allah and the Last Day, establish prayer, give zakah, and do not fear except Allah.” Qur'an 9:18

Maintaining the mosques is not only paying bills or keeping doors open. It includes filling them with worship, sincerity, knowledge, and people whose hearts are attached to Allah. Young men should be invited into this maintenance. Let them understand that the masjid is not something other people run while they watch from outside. It is a trust they will one day inherit.

A major barrier for young men is the feeling that mosque culture does not understand their lives. Some are dealing with school pressure, loneliness, racism, family conflict, digital addiction, gender confusion in wider society, financial anxiety, and constant online temptation. If mosque messaging speaks as though the only issue is laziness, it will miss the deeper battle. Laziness exists, and it should be challenged, but many young men are also overwhelmed, ashamed, and under-mentored.

The Prophet Peace and Blessings upon him said:

“Religion is sincere advice.” Sahih Muslim, Hadith 55.

Sincere advice must be truthful and well-aimed. If a young man is lazy, advise him against laziness, if he is addicted, help him fight addiction, if he is confused, guide him to knowledge, if he is lonely, connect him to brotherhood, if he is angry, teach him self-control. If he is ashamed, open the door of repentance. One kind of advice will not reach every wound.

Mosques also need to become safer from unnecessary humiliation. Some young men stop attending because they were corrected harshly in public. Perhaps they made a mistake in prayer, wore something inappropriate, laughed too loudly, parked badly, or did not know an etiquette. Correction may have been needed, yet the method pushed them away.

The Prophet Peace and Blessings upon him showed remarkable wisdom in correction. Anas ibn Malik, may Allah be pleased with him, said:

“I served the Prophet Peace and Blessings upon him for ten years, and he never said to me, ‘uff,’ and he never said about something I had done, ‘Why did you do that?’ or about something I had not done, ‘Why did you not do that?’”
Sahih Muslim, Hadith 2309.

This hadith does not mean no one is ever corrected, because the Prophet Peace and Blessings upon him did correct people. It shows his gentleness, patience, and restraint, especially with a young servant in close daily life, and those who correct youth in the mosque should learn from this because a young person’s dignity is not something to break casually.

A mosque that humiliates young men may produce outward silence, but not love. A mosque that corrects with wisdom can teach adab while keeping hearts near.

This is especially important for young men who already feel like outsiders. Converts, refugees, boys from broken homes, youth with weak Islamic knowledge, those from poorer families, and young men who look different from the dominant ethnic group may already feel watched. A single harsh experience can confirm their fear that the mosque is not for them.

Allah says:

“And hold firmly to the rope of Allah all together and do not become divided.”
Qur'an 3:103

The mosque should gather believers, not deepen divisions through ethnicity, class, age, or reputation. Young men should see older Muslims from different backgrounds as brothers, not gatekeepers. Cultural warmth matters here. A smile, greeting, invitation to sit, or simple “I haven’t seen you in a while, good to see you” can soften a young man’s heart.

The Prophet Peace and Blessings upon him said:

“Do not consider any good deed insignificant, even meeting your brother with a cheerful face.” Sahih Muslim, Hadith 2626.

A cheerful face can be da'wah inside the mosque. Some young men return nervously. They do not need immediate interrogation. They need warmth. A smile does not solve every issue, but it says, “You are welcome among believers.” For a young man who feels distant from Allah, that can matter.

The physical and social design of the mosque also affects youth. If every program is only for children or elders, teenagers and young adults may disappear. If there is no space for supervised brotherhood, they will create their own spaces elsewhere. If classes are only delivered in a style that assumes advanced knowledge, newcomers may feel lost. If all leadership roles are held tightly by older men without pathways for younger involvement, the next generation will remain consumers rather than caretakers.

Young men should not be handed authority without maturity, but they should be given a path toward responsibility. This requires training. Teach them how to serve, how to speak, how to organize, how to respect scholars, how to deal with conflict, how to avoid showing off, and how to keep the masjid's sanctity. Do not simply complain that they are irresponsible while refusing to form them.

Community leaders are shepherds too. They will be asked about the people under their care, including young men drifting from the mosque. Parents are shepherds. Imams are shepherds. Teachers and older brothers carry responsibility according to their influence. A young man's absence should not be accepted as normal without concern.

Parents have an important role in helping sons return. A father who never attends the mosque cannot be surprised if his son sees it as unimportant. A mother who only uses the mosque as a threat or shame tool may unintentionally make it feel heavy. Children learn from atmosphere. If going to the masjid is always rushed, angry, forced, and joyless, the heart may not attach to it.

This does not mean parents should wait until children feel inspired. They should command prayer and take religious responsibility seriously, yet they should also build meaning. Speak about why the masjid matters. Share stories. Let sons sit with good men. Attend together without every visit becoming a correction session. Make the mosque part of family life before adolescence turns it into a battlefield.

Steadfastness is key. Parents should keep inviting, reminding, and modeling prayer with patience. A son who resists at fifteen may return at twenty if the door remained open. A father

who prays with consistency, speaks with mercy, and keeps inviting his son without contempt may plant seeds that grow later.

Young men themselves must also take responsibility. It is easy to blame the mosque, parents, culture, or elders. Some criticism may be valid. However, the mosque belongs to Allah, and a young man cannot abandon salah or brotherhood simply because people are imperfect, if someone was rude, that was their sin. If the committee is difficult, that is a test. If the lectures feel boring, seek beneficial knowledge while still honoring the prayer. Do not let people's shortcomings become your excuse to distance yourself from Allah.

Allah says:

“And establish prayer and give zakah and bow with those who bow.” Qur'an 2:43

The command to bow with those who bow reminds the believer that worship has a communal dimension. A young man should fight to be among worshippers. Even if his iman is weak, let him stand in the row, even if he feels ashamed, let him enter. Even if he knows only a little, let him learn. Even if he is inconsistent, let him return again.

The Prophet Peace and Blessings upon him said:

“Prayer in congregation is twenty-seven times superior to prayer prayed individually.” Sahih Muslim, Hadith 650.

This reward should motivate young men. The masjid is not only a social space. It is a place where prayer in congregation carries immense virtue. A young man who rearranges his schedule for the masjid is not wasting time. He is investing in the Hereafter. The more his heart attaches to congregation, the harder it becomes for isolation and sin to swallow him.

The Prophet Peace and Blessings upon him also said:

“Whoever goes to the mosque in the morning and evening, Allah will prepare for him hospitality in Paradise every time he goes in the morning and evening.” Sahih Muslim, Hadith 669.

This hadith gives beauty to repeated attendance. Each journey matters. The young man who walks or drives to the masjid while fighting his nafs is being honored in a way people cannot see. He may feel ordinary, but Allah is preparing reward for him.

A mosque that wants young men to return should teach these rewards often. Boys need to know that the steps to the masjid are not meaningless. They need to hear that Allah sees their effort, especially when friends are elsewhere, sleep is tempting, or shame whispers that they do not belong.

The Prophet Peace and Blessings upon him said:

“Shall I not tell you of that by which Allah erases sins and raises ranks?” They said, “Yes, O Messenger of Allah.” He said, “Perfecting ablution when it is difficult, taking many steps to the mosques, and waiting for prayer after prayer.” Sahih Muslim, Hadith 251.

This hadith gives the mosque a path of purification. A young man trying to escape sin should attach himself to wudu, steps to the masjid, and waiting for prayer. These acts erase sins and raise ranks by Allah’s mercy. The mosque becomes part of recovery, not merely a place he attends after he has already become righteous.

This is important for young men struggling with addiction. Many wait to become “clean” before returning. They tell themselves they will come back after they stop pornography, drugs, partying, missing prayers, or bad company. That delay is dangerous. The mosque is not a graduation stage for the already purified. It is one of the places where purification happens.

Of course, a young man should not bring sin into the masjid or disrespect its sanctity. He should not come intoxicated, spread corruption, or use the mosque as cover for bad behavior. Yet if he is sincere and struggling, he should come. Let the prayer, Quran, brothers, and reminders help him fight.

Allah says:

“Indeed, prayer prohibits immorality and wrongdoing.” Qur'an 29:45

Prayer restrains when the servant takes it seriously. A young man may not feel this effect immediately, especially if his heart has been dulled by sin. Still, he should not abandon prayer because he sins. He should hold tighter to prayer because he sins. Over time, sincere salah can become one of the strongest forces pulling him away from immorality.

Mosques need mentorship structures that are consistent rather than occasional. A single youth night may inspire temporarily, but young men need regular contact with righteous men. Weekly circles, small mentoring groups, Fajr meetups, skills workshops, service teams, sports linked to prayer, Quran circles, and open question sessions can create continuity. The goal is not to entertain youth endlessly. The goal is to help them become men attached to Allah.

Older men should be invited into this work, but not every older man is suitable. Young men need mentors with patience, sound aqidah, good character, emotional maturity, and respect for scholars. A mentor should not use youth to spread personal agendas, harshness, conspiracy thinking, political obsession, or gender resentment. The mosque must protect young men from both neglect and misguidance.

Allah says:

"Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction."
Qur'an 16:125

Wisdom is necessary, because some young men need firmness, some need hope, and others need answers, friendship, structure, or someone to notice their absence. A wise mosque does not use one tone for everyone, but learns how to reach different kinds of youth without compromising truth.

The mosque also needs to address real issues directly. Young men are facing pornography, drugs, gambling, atheism, depression, gender confusion, racism, unemployment, family breakdown, online radicalization, and fear of marriage. If the mosque avoids these topics completely, youth may assume Islam has nothing practical to say. These subjects should be handled with modesty, knowledge, and care, but silence leaves the field open to harmful voices.

A khutbah or class should not become vulgar, sensational, or obsessed with sin. It should name realities enough to guide people. Young men respect honesty. They know when adults are pretending. They need Islamic guidance that speaks to their actual lives, not only an imagined version of youth problems from another era.

Understanding religion protects young men. The mosque should not only motivate them. It should teach them. Motivation may bring a young man for one night. Knowledge can keep him steady for years by Allah's permission. Teach him how to purify himself, pray properly, repent, lower his gaze, deal with parents, earn halal, choose friends, prepare for marriage, and understand the basics of belief. Give him foundations, not only feelings.

Young men also need to see the mosque as a place of brotherhood, not only instruction. After prayer, someone should speak to them, notice if they are missing, invite them to sit, and know their names, because a mosque can be full of people and still leave a young man alone, while the Sunnah calls believers to connection.

If the mosque does not help young men form good friendships, bad friendships will fill the gap. Friendship is not a side issue. It is one of the strongest influences on religious life. Mosques should create environments where young men can meet righteous peers naturally through worship, service, learning, and lawful recreation.

This should be done with care. Youth spaces must remain spiritually serious. Brotherhood should not become loudness, flirting, showing off, wasting time, or forming cliques that exclude others. The best youth culture combines warmth with adab, belonging with responsibility, and friendship with remembrance of Allah.

Helping young men return also means dealing with the shame of inconsistency. A young man may come for a week, disappear for a month, return for Jummah, vanish again, then reappear in Ramadan. Communities often become frustrated, but inconsistency is part of many people's journey back. Welcome the return without pretending absence does not matter. A gentle "It's good to see you again. Try to come more often" may reach him better than "Where have you been?"

Teach young men consistency gently: if he cannot attend every prayer in the mosque, begin with one prayer regularly, if he cannot attend every class, begin with one weekly circle, and if he cannot change his whole life at once, help him build a steady step, because small consistency can become a bridge to deeper commitment.

Mosques should also be careful with ethnic and class barriers. A young man from a poorer family, a convert background, a refugee community, or a different culture may feel that he is entering someone else's social territory. If leadership, language, food, jokes, and friendships all revolve around one group, others may pray and leave without ever belonging.

The mosque belongs to Allah, not to a tribe, class, ethnicity, age group, or social circle.

Allah says:

"Indeed, this Ummah of yours is one Ummah, and I am your Lord, so worship Me." Qur'an 21:92

Young men need to feel the reality of one Ummah. A mosque should not make them feel that ethnicity is the real membership card. Language and culture have their place, but they must not block brotherhood. A young man should be able to enter and feel that iman matters more than surname, suburb, wealth, accent, or background.

Another barrier is lack of meaningful male role models. If young men only see committee arguments, harsh elders, absent fathers, or public speakers with poor character, they may not associate the mosque with healthy masculinity. The mosque must cultivate men worth following: men who pray, work, serve, control anger, respect women, honor elders, mentor youth, and remain humble.

The Prophet Peace and Blessings upon him is the model. Men in the mosque should reflect something of his mercy, courage, humility, and wisdom. Young men are not only listening to

what older men say. They are watching how they behave after meetings, during disagreements, with cleaners, with children, with women, with converts, with the poor, and with youth who make mistakes.

When mosque culture contradicts the khutbah, young men notice, and the contradiction can make religious advice feel hollow.

Helping young men return requires both invitation and expectation. Do not lower the religion to keep them interested. Do not make the mosque so entertainment-driven that salah becomes background. Young men need to be called upward. They need to be told that Allah created them for worship, that their lives matter, that sin is serious, that prayer is obligatory, that manhood requires discipline, and that the Ummah needs them.

The tone should be dignifying, not despairing, so young men feel called upward rather than written off.

A young man should leave the mosque thinking, “I have work to do, and Allah can help me,” not, “Everyone here thinks I am hopeless.” He should feel challenged and wanted at the same time. That balance can revive hearts.

Young men should be taught that guidance comes with striving. Returning to the mosque may feel awkward at first. Keep coming. Learning to pray with focus may take time. Keep praying. Finding righteous friends may be slow. Keep searching. Leaving old habits may be painful. Keep striving. Allah guides those who struggle for Him.

This chapter also needs to speak to the young man directly: do not wait for the perfect mosque before you return. Some mosques will have problems. Some people will be harsh. Some programs will be weak. Some elders will misunderstand you. Some leaders may not know how to speak to your generation. Still, the prayer is for Allah. The sujud is for Allah. The Quran recited there is from Allah. Do not let imperfect people keep you from the house of Allah.

If you find a better mosque with sound teaching and healthy brotherhood, attend it. If your local mosque lacks youth support, still pray there when you can and seek knowledge elsewhere. If someone hurt you, do not let their mistake become the reason you lose reward. Return for Allah, not for people.

Allah says:

“Whoever should hope for the meeting with his Lord, let him do righteous work and not associate in the worship of his Lord anyone.” Qur'an 18:110

The young man's intention must be for Allah, if people welcome him, let him thank Allah. If people ignore him, let him still worship Allah. If people misunderstand him, let him seek Allah's pleasure. The mosque is a means of drawing near to Allah, not a stage for social approval.

At the same time, communities should not use this truth to excuse neglect. Yes, youth should come for Allah, but leaders must still remove unnecessary barriers. Both responsibilities stand together. Young men must return sincerely, and mosques must become more merciful, wise, and serious about guiding them.

Helping a young man return to the mosque may relieve a distress no one else sees. His distress may be loneliness, addiction, doubt, shame, anger, or purposelessness. A mentor, friend, imam, or elder who helps him take one step back toward Allah may be relieving something heavy from his heart.

This work should begin before crisis appears. A young man should be noticed before he is arrested, addicted, suicidal, openly hostile to Islam, or completely absent. Pay attention to the quiet withdrawal, the boy who used to attend but stopped, the young man standing alone after salah, the teenager who looks uncomfortable in the masjid, and the one who jokes too much because seriousness feels vulnerable. Noticing should lead to gentle connection rather than public labeling.

Better still, build systems where no one has to notice alone. Youth mentors, small groups, attendance circles, family outreach, and regular activities can create a net of care. A young man should be missed when absent and welcomed when present.

This is community work, requiring parents, imams, committees, youth workers, fathers, older brothers, teachers, and young men themselves to cooperate. A mosque cannot carry everything alone, and a family cannot always do it alone either, because the crisis is shared and the response must be shared.

Helping young men return to the mosque is not about making them look religious for the community. It is about reconnecting them to Allah, salah, brotherhood, knowledge, service, and a vision of manhood shaped by the Sunnah. The aim is not to fill rows with bodies while hearts remain absent. The aim is to help young men become worshippers who know why they are there.

A young man attached to the mosque is not automatically safe from every sin, but he has a place to return. He may still struggle, but he is near reminders. He may still fall, but he is close to prayer. He may still feel lonely, but he can find brothers. He may still be confused, but he can ask people of knowledge. He may still be weak, but the house of Allah gives him a direction for strength.

The mosque will not solve every crisis facing young Muslim men, but any solution that does not bring them back to the mosque is incomplete.

Young men need the mosque as a living home for worship, brotherhood, repentance, discipline, and purpose, where the row, the Quran, the adhan, sincere elders, reminding brothers, and sujud all help pull their hearts back from the noise of the world.

All of that can be said as one truth. Young men need the mosque not as a place of shame, performance, or occasional attendance, but as a living home for worship, brotherhood, repentance, discipline, and purpose.

If the Ummah wants strong young men, it must help them return to the houses of Allah. If young men want strength that lasts, they must stop standing at the edge and come back in. The door is open, and every sincere step toward it is seen by Allah.

Chapter 10: Raising Strong Men Without Harshness

A generation of Muslim boys does not need to be crushed into manhood. It needs to be guided into strength.

Many people confuse harshness with discipline. They think a boy becomes strong by being shouted at, compared, shamed, dismissed, hardened, and left to figure out his emotions alone. They believe tenderness will spoil him, conversation will weaken him, and mercy will make him soft. So the boy grows up learning how to hide pain, not how to master it. He learns how to fear correction, not how to love truth. He learns how to look strong while feeling empty inside.

Islam offers something better, forming strength through mercy, accountability, worship, and disciplined love.

The Sunnah does not raise weak men, and it does not raise cruel men. It forms believers whose strength is governed by Allah, whose anger is disciplined by taqwa, whose desires are restrained by modesty, whose leadership is softened by mercy, and whose confidence does not depend on humiliating others. A strong Muslim man is not a man without emotion, nor is he a man controlled by emotion. He is someone whose inner life has been trained to obey Allah.

The beginning of strength is humility before Allah. A boy who learns to stand in salah, bow, prostrate, ask forgiveness, and return to Allah is being trained in the deepest form of discipline. Before he learns how to lead people, he must learn how to submit to his Lord. Before he is taught to protect a family, he must learn how to protect his own heart from arrogance, lust, anger, and despair.

This book began by looking at the emotional vacuum facing Muslim boys. Many are surrounded by noise but missing guidance. They have entertainment, screens, online personalities, and endless distraction, yet few have men close enough to notice their loneliness, shame, confusion, anger, or spiritual distance. When fathers, mentors, and communities are absent, other voices step in. Some of those voices offer discipline, but without mercy. Others offer confidence, but without humility. A few offer belonging, but at the price of hatred, sin, or radicalization.

A Muslim boy should not have to be raised by algorithms when fathers, mentors, mosques, and brothers in Islam can guide him with truth and mercy.

Protecting sons from the Fire is not only warning them against haram. It includes forming their hearts before haram becomes attractive, building their love for Allah before shame pushes them away, teaching them how to repent before despair traps them, and giving them purpose before false identities capture them. A father, mother, imam, teacher, or mentor who wants to protect boys must do more than control behavior. They must help shape belief, character, worship, and emotional strength.

Anger was another major theme because many young men carry pain through rage. They may not know how to say they feel unseen, so they become disrespectful. They may not know how to explain shame, so they become arrogant. They may not know how to ask for help, so they isolate. Harshness may silence anger temporarily, but it rarely heals the wound beneath it.

This Prophetic teaching should define strength for every Muslim boy. Strength is not volume, intimidation, emotional coldness, or the ability to dominate an argument. Strength is self-control when the nafs wants to explode. It is holding back the insult, walking away from sin, seeking refuge with Allah, making wudu when anger rises, and refusing to let one moment of rage destroy trust.

A harsh home may create boys who appear obedient, yet inwardly they may be afraid, resentful, secretive, or numb. A merciful home with clear boundaries creates something different: boys who understand that discipline is for their protection, correction is not rejection, and returning to truth is more important than protecting ego.

The Prophet Peace and Blessings upon him said:

“Allah is Gentle and loves gentleness in all matters.” Sahih Muslim, Hadith 2593.

Gentleness is not the absence of discipline. It is discipline purified from cruelty. A father can be gentle and still forbid sin. A mother can be merciful and still set limits. A teacher can correct firmly without humiliating. An imam can warn against Hellfire while still opening the door of repentance. The problem is not firmness. The problem is when firmness becomes ego, contempt, or emotional violence.

Online masculinity culture has exposed how hungry many young men are for direction. They want confidence, strength, discipline, money, respect, and a way out of weakness. Some of those desires are not wrong. Islam does not call men to laziness, passivity, or weakness. A Muslim man should strive, work, train, provide where responsible, protect where able, and carry himself with dignity. Yet when masculinity is separated from revelation, it often becomes arrogance, suspicion, lust, and contempt.

A strong Muslim man remains just even when hurt. If he has seen bad marriages, he does not hate women. If he has been rejected, he does not become bitter. If society confuses gender roles, he returns to Quran and Sunnah rather than reacting with rage. If other men become weak, he does not build his identity by mocking them. Justice is part of strength.

Pornography and escapism also revealed a deeper crisis. Many young men are not only fighting desire. They are running from stress, loneliness, failure, boredom, and shame. Pornography offers them false relief without responsibility. It trains them to consume rather than connect, to hide rather than heal, and to seek pleasure without covenant or mercy.

Lowering the gaze is training for manhood. It teaches the young man that he is not a slave to every image, urge, or private moment. It protects his future wife, his imagination, his worship, and his ability to love with dignity. A community that wants strong men must teach boys chastity before addiction takes root, and it must teach repentance before shame becomes a prison.

A boy who falls is not finished. A young man who sins can return. The goal is not to normalize sin, but to normalize tawbah. Harshness often makes boys hide. Mercy with accountability helps them come forward before the sin becomes a lifestyle. The best guidance tells the truth about the danger while still showing the way back to Allah.

The chapter on marriage showed that many young men avoid commitment not because they reject the Sunnah, but because they fear responsibility, failure, financial pressure, emotional exposure, and the possibility of becoming like the unhealthy marriages they have witnessed. Some are genuinely not ready. Others are hiding behind delay while remaining attached to comfort and private sin. The solution is not to shame them into marriage, nor to let them drift indefinitely. They need preparation.

This Prophetic teaching gives balance. Marriage is encouraged for those who are able, and fasting is a discipline for those who are not. A strong young man does not treat marriage as a fantasy, a cure for loneliness, or a way to be served. He prepares through prayer, work, emotional maturity, chastity, financial honesty, and knowledge of rights. He understands that a wife is an amanah, not an accessory to manhood.

The crisis of fathers who were never taught fatherhood must also be remembered. Many fathers love their sons but do not know how to guide them emotionally. They know how to provide and correct, yet struggle to listen, mentor, apologize, or speak about desire, doubt, fear, and identity. Some inherited silence from their own fathers and now pass it down unintentionally.

This Prophetic teaching should soften fathers. Affection does not weaken sons. Mercy does not erase discipline. A boy who receives love from his father is more likely to receive correction from him. A son who knows his father's heart will not need to search for fatherhood in dangerous places. Many boys do not need perfect fathers. They need fathers who are present, humble, consistent, and willing to learn what they were never taught.

Masculinity in the Sunnah was the center of this book's answer. The Prophet Peace and Blessings upon him was strong without cruelty, gentle without weakness, brave without arrogance, emotionally alive without being unstable, and firm without being harsh. His Sunnah does not allow boys to become passive, and it does not allow them to become oppressive.

Every model of manhood must be measured against him. If a version of masculinity makes a young man more prayerful, truthful, responsible, modest, merciful, disciplined, useful, and humble before Allah, it is closer to the Sunnah. If it makes him arrogant, harsh, lustful,

suspicious, addicted to status, careless with women's dignity, or dismissive of scholars, then it is not Prophetic, even if it uses Islamic language.

Brotherhood, discipline, and purpose were also essential. A boy cannot become strong only through private motivation. He needs righteous company, steady habits, and a reason to live beyond pleasure and image. Brotherhood gives him support. Discipline gives him structure. Purpose gives him direction toward Allah.

This is the foundation of healthy brotherhood. Young men need brothers who advise them to truth and patience, not friends who only entertain them. They need circles where prayer is protected, private sin is fought, time is valued, service is normal, and repentance remains open. Through brotherhood, discipline, and purpose, a young man begins to understand that his life is not for drifting, strength is not for ego, friendship is not only entertainment, time is not disposable, worship is not separate from manhood, and Allah created him for something greater than private pleasure and public image.

The mosque then becomes a necessary home for this formation. Helping young men return to the mosque is not about filling rows for appearance. It is about reconnecting them to Allah, salah, Quran, brotherhood, knowledge, service, and spiritual identity. A young man attached to the masjid has a place to return when shame becomes heavy, when sin pulls at him, when loneliness grows, and when he needs to remember who he is.

This is one of the noblest identities a young man can carry. He may not be rich. He may not be famous. He may not be admired online. He may still be fighting his nafs every day. Yet if he grows in worship, returns to Allah, and struggles for righteousness in youth, he is walking toward a shade that the world cannot give.

Raising strong men without harshness means bringing all of this together in a balanced Islamic vision of manhood.

A strong young Muslim man needs love and limits, mercy and accountability, fathers and mentors who listen rather than only lecture, mothers who nurture without excusing entitlement, a mosque that welcomes him without lowering the religion for him, brothers who strengthen him without flattering his ego, and knowledge, worship, and responsibility that ground, humble, and mature him.

Allah says:

“Indeed, Allah commands justice, excellence, and giving to relatives, and forbids immorality, bad conduct, and oppression.” Qur'an 16:90

This ayah gives the balance families need. Justice prevents oppression. Excellence lifts people beyond the bare minimum. Giving to relatives keeps mercy alive in the family. Immorality, bad conduct, and oppression are rejected. Raising boys requires this full balance. If parents show only harshness, boys may break or harden. If they show only softness, boys may become entitled. If they show justice and excellence together, boys are more likely to become men with both strength and mercy.

A strong boy must learn responsibility early. He should help in the home, respect his mother, serve his father, protect siblings without controlling them, speak truth, keep promises, guard salah, lower his gaze, use time well, and understand that comfort is not the purpose of life. These lessons should be taught gradually, consistently, and with meaning. A child does not become responsible because adults complain about him. He becomes responsible when responsibility is trained into him.

Fathers are shepherds. Mothers are shepherds in their own responsibilities. Imams, teachers, mentors, and community leaders carry responsibility according to their influence. A generation of boys cannot be left to screens and then blamed for being lost. Shepherding means watching, guiding, correcting, protecting, and knowing the condition of those under one's care.

Raising strong men also means allowing boys to feel without becoming ruled by feelings. A boy should be able to say he is hurt, afraid, ashamed, or confused. He should not be mocked for tears, dismissed for anxiety, or humiliated for needing help. At the same time, he must learn that feelings do not justify sin. Anger does not justify disrespect. Desire does not justify pornography or zina. Sadness does not justify abandoning salah. Shame does not justify lying. Fear does not justify cowardice.

This is emotional strength. The heart grieves, the eyes cry, and the tongue remains obedient to Allah. Boys need this model. They do not need to become stone. They need to become servants of Allah in grief, anger, desire, disappointment, and fear.

Harshness often comes from adult fear. Parents see the dangers around boys and panic. They see drugs, pornography, atheism, gender confusion, gangs, online radicalization, laziness, and disrespect, so they react with pressure. The fear is understandable, but fear alone does not raise healthy men. Fear may control for a while, yet it cannot replace guidance.

Wisdom is required. Some boys need firmness. Some need gentleness first. Some need structure. Some need brotherhood. Others need counseling, knowledge, fatherly attention, better friends, or protection from digital temptation. The same approach will not reach every son. Raising strong men requires adults to know the boy in front of them, not only the idea of what boys should be.

This does not mean parents should become weak or endlessly accommodating. There are moments when a father must say no clearly. There are moments when a mother must set a firm boundary. There are sins that must be stopped, friendships that must be challenged, devices that

must be restricted, habits that must be confronted, and disrespect that must not be allowed. Mercy without firmness can produce a boy who does not understand limits.

Firmness, however, should be for Allah, not ego. A parent should ask, “Am I correcting him because Allah’s limits matter, or because I feel personally insulted? Am I trying to guide him, or am I trying to win? Am I protecting his dignity while correcting him, or am I using shame because I am angry?” These questions can save a household from confusing discipline with emotional reaction.

The Prophet Peace and Blessings upon him said:

“Whoever is not merciful to people, Allah will not be merciful to him.”
Sahih Muslim, Hadith 2319.

Mercy must remain present even during correction, so a boy knows that his sin is serious and Allah’s mercy is greater, that his parents are disappointed in his action but not finished with him as a person, that repentance is expected rather than hopeless, and that strength includes returning after failure.

Strong men are also raised through service. Boys who are never asked to serve may become men who expect everyone to serve them. A son should not be treated like a guest in his own home. Let him carry groceries, wash dishes, clean his space, help younger siblings, visit relatives, support community work, and learn the dignity of usefulness. Service breaks entitlement.

Helping others draws Allah’s help. A young man who serves is being trained away from self-absorption. He begins to see that his strength has a purpose beyond himself. He learns that manhood is not only about what he can gain, but what he can carry for Allah’s sake.

Strong men must also be trained in modesty. A boy who is allowed to stare, joke crudely, consume pornography, and speak about women as objects is not becoming strong. He is becoming enslaved to desire. A young man who lowers his gaze, guards his private moments, and treats women with dignity is showing real strength.

Modesty should be taught to boys as part of iman. It is not only for girls. A modest young man guards his eyes, tongue, clothing, phone, humor, and private life. He does not make shamelessness look masculine. He does not confuse access to haram with freedom. He understands that dignity is protected by limits.

Communities also need to stop raising boys through comparison. Constantly comparing a son to cousins, siblings, other students, wealthier men, more religious boys, or more successful peers often produces shame rather than growth. Some boys need challenge, but comparison can make

them feel permanently behind. A better approach is to call him toward his own obligations and potential before Allah.

Allah says:

“Allah does not charge a soul except with what it can bear.” Qur'an 2:286

Every boy has his own test. Some are naturally disciplined. Some struggle with attention, anger, sadness, or confidence. Some mature late. Some need more structure. Some carry wounds no one sees. The standard of Allah remains, but the path of nurturing must consider the person. Wise adults do not excuse sin, yet they do not crush a boy because his growth looks different from someone else's.

Raising strong men without harshness requires hope. Many adults speak about young men as if they are already lost. They complain about their laziness, addictions, disrespect, confusion, weakness, and absence from the mosque. Some of the concerns are real, but constant despair becomes part of the problem. Boys who only hear that their generation is ruined may stop believing they can become righteous.

Guidance is possible. A boy addicted to screens can change. An angry teenager can learn restraint. A young man trapped in pornography can repent and heal. A son distant from the mosque can return. A father who was emotionally absent can reconnect. A group of friends wasting time can become brothers upon purpose. A community that neglected youth can rebuild. Allah guides those who strive for Him.

Small, consistent steps matter in raising boys. One regular conversation between father and son. One weekly masjid visit that feels meaningful. One responsibility given and followed through. One device boundary kept. One apology made by a parent. One habit of praying together. One brotherhood circle that continues after the excitement fades. These steady actions can shape a boy more deeply than occasional emotional speeches.

This book has not argued that young Muslim men are innocent victims of everything around them. They have responsibility. A young man must answer for his prayer, gaze, tongue, anger, friendships, time, and repentance. He cannot blame parents, society, women, the mosque, or the internet for every choice. Islam holds him accountable.

At the same time, accountability without guidance becomes abandonment. Many boys are being asked to resist unprecedented temptations with very little mentorship. They are expected to become men while receiving few examples of healthy manhood, return to the mosque while feeling unseen there, avoid haram while halal pathways are made difficult, control anger without being taught how to process pain, and appear strong while being given either harshness or neglect.

The answer is a Prophetic middle path, where truth is not softened into weakness and mercy is not abandoned for harshness.

If harshness could scatter the companions from around the Prophet Peace and Blessings upon him, what do people think harshness will do to boys already drowning in confusion? Mercy gathered hearts then, and mercy is needed now. This mercy must be joined to truth, because truth without mercy becomes crushing, while mercy without truth becomes weakness.

A strong Muslim man is formed when truth and mercy meet, shaping a heart that is accountable without becoming cruel.

He is told that salah is not optional while being helped to love standing before Allah, warned against pornography while being shown a path of repentance and discipline, taught to respect women while becoming responsible enough for marriage, corrected when arrogant while encouraged when sincere, challenged to work hard while reminded that rizq is from Allah, given tools from the Sunnah to control anger, taught that the mosque is sacred, welcomed back when shame kept him away, and raised with limits without contempt. That is how strength grows without harshness.

The final aim is not merely to produce respectable Muslim men in public. The aim is to raise servants of Allah who are strong in worship, clean in private, useful to family, merciful with the weak, humble before knowledge, steady in hardship, and courageous in obeying Allah when the world pulls them elsewhere.

A good life is not found in emotional numbness, online rage, private sin, status obsession, or fear-based religion. It is found in iman and righteous action. Young Muslim men need to be shown that obedience to Allah is not the death of manhood. It is the purification of manhood.

The Ummah needs strong men, but strength must be defined by revelation. It needs men who pray Fajr, lower their gaze, honor parents, serve without arrogance, provide where responsible, protect without oppressing, speak truth without cruelty, seek knowledge without pride, repent without delay, and lead families with mercy. It needs fathers who break cycles, mentors who show up, mosques that welcome, brothers who remind, and mothers who are supported rather than left to raise sons alone.

A generation raised this way will still face trials. They will still fight desire, doubt, anger, loneliness, and pressure. No upbringing removes the test of life, yet they will have a foundation. They will know where to return. They will have seen strength with mercy, discipline with love, and Islam as guidance rather than mere control.

This is the final measure, not wealth, not dominance, not online status, not physical strength alone, not cultural pride, not fear from others. Taqwa is the measure. If a boy grows into a man

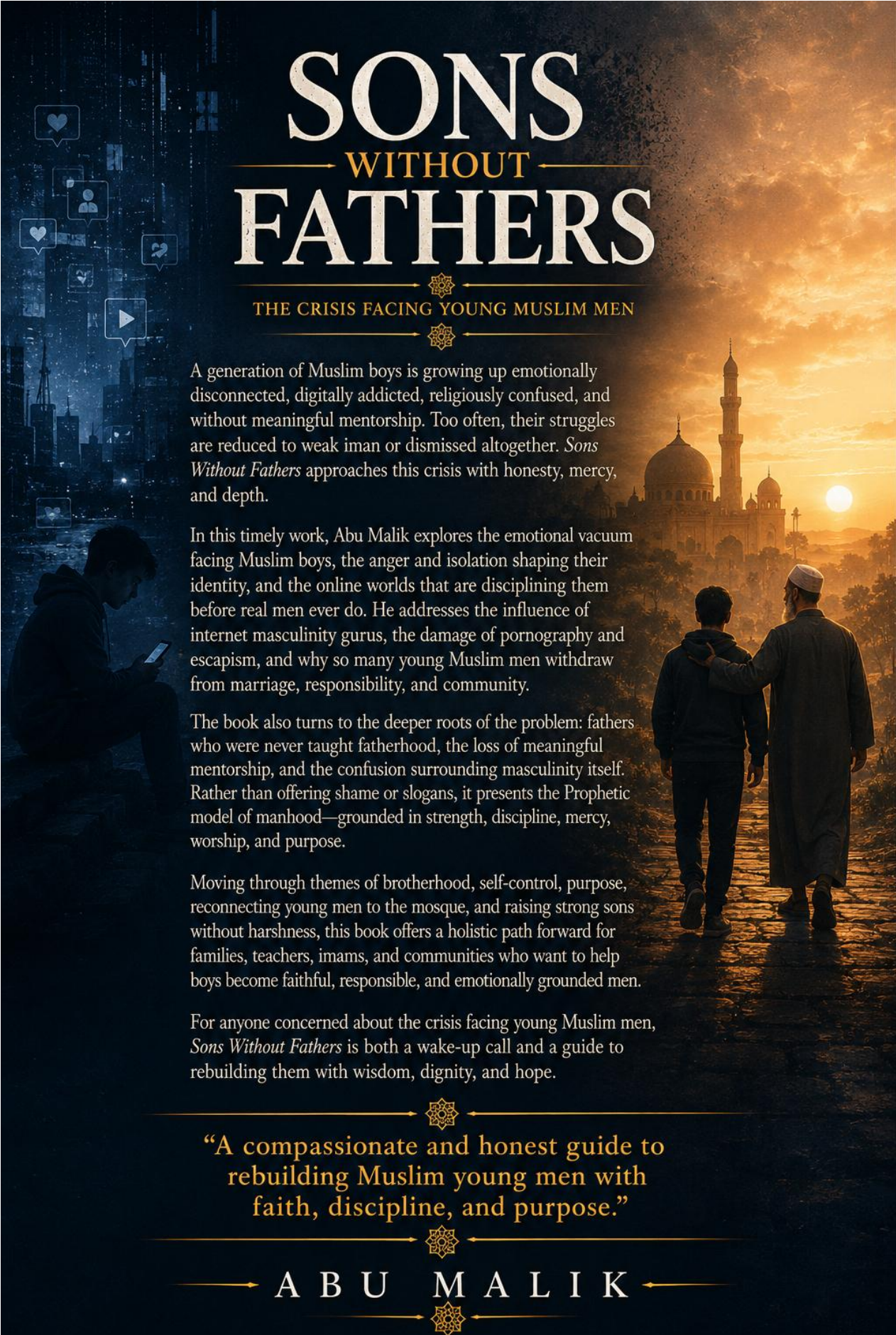
of taqwa, then he has succeeded even if the world does not applaud him. If he grows into a man of ego, lust, cruelty, and heedlessness, then he has failed no matter how impressive he appears.

Raising strong men without harshness means raising boys toward taqwa with every tool Islam gives us: worship, mercy, discipline, brotherhood, knowledge, service, repentance, and the example of the Prophet Peace and Blessings upon him.

The crisis facing young Muslim men is real, but it is not beyond repair. The emotional vacuum can be filled with fatherhood and mentorship. Anger can be trained into self-control. Isolation can be replaced with brotherhood. Online poison can be challenged by Prophetic masculinity. Pornography can be fought through repentance and structure. Fear of marriage can become preparation. Broken fatherhood can be healed. The mosque can become home again. Purpose can return.

This is the work ahead, to raise boys who are not harsh, hollow, ashamed, addicted, or lost, but strong before desire, humble before Allah, gentle with people, firm upon truth, and ready to carry the trusts of manhood with mercy.

That kind of man is not produced by cruelty. He is formed by Islam lived fully.



SONS WITHOUT FATHERS

THE CRISIS FACING YOUNG MUSLIM MEN

A generation of Muslim boys is growing up emotionally disconnected, digitally addicted, religiously confused, and without meaningful mentorship. Too often, their struggles are reduced to weak iman or dismissed altogether. *Sons Without Fathers* approaches this crisis with honesty, mercy, and depth.

In this timely work, Abu Malik explores the emotional vacuum facing Muslim boys, the anger and isolation shaping their identity, and the online worlds that are disciplining them before real men ever do. He addresses the influence of internet masculinity gurus, the damage of pornography and escapism, and why so many young Muslim men withdraw from marriage, responsibility, and community.

The book also turns to the deeper roots of the problem: fathers who were never taught fatherhood, the loss of meaningful mentorship, and the confusion surrounding masculinity itself. Rather than offering shame or slogans, it presents the Prophetic model of manhood—grounded in strength, discipline, mercy, worship, and purpose.

Moving through themes of brotherhood, self-control, purpose, reconnecting young men to the mosque, and raising strong sons without harshness, this book offers a holistic path forward for families, teachers, imams, and communities who want to help boys become faithful, responsible, and emotionally grounded men.

For anyone concerned about the crisis facing young Muslim men, *Sons Without Fathers* is both a wake-up call and a guide to rebuilding them with wisdom, dignity, and hope.

“A compassionate and honest guide to
rebuilding Muslim young men with
faith, discipline, and purpose.”

ABU MALIK