

“How Do I Encourage My Gender Role-Reversed Kids?”

Thank you so much for [your commentary](#) on encouraging our children to feel blessed in their own unique gender. I have a boy (6) and a girl (7) (and a child of unknown gender on the way). I was really nervous about raising a little boy, because I am one of two girls in my family, and had an absentee father for most of my life.

My little boy is the love of my life. He is so loving and sensitive. His dad has trouble dealing with this side of him. He also has many male qualities, but my girl child is rather rough and teases him unmercifully. How can I encourage them despite their apparent role reversals?

You brought up SUCH a great question, and I wanted to provide as powerful an answer as I could, so I asked a good friend for whom same-sex attraction is part of his story. God has done a huge work of grace in his life to bring him to the point where he can truly enjoy being a man, and has been healed from some of the woundings that came from not being supported in his masculinity when he was a boy. This was his answer for you, and I couldn't be more pleased with what he wrote:

It's OK to be nervous about raising a boy. I think that's natural. However, there are many very helpful resources out right now that will help you in guiding your little man in the right way (i.e., Dr. James Dobson's *Raising Boys* etc.). Dad is perhaps the most important factor in guiding the young man into gender security. Even though Dad might have difficulty dealing with sensitivity and other “less masculine” traits, I urge Dad to look at Jesus, study our Savior, see what godly masculinity is. Come to grips with the fact that what our society deems masculine is often brutal cruelty. The ultimate guidebook for healthy gender

security is none other than the Bible and Jesus is the ultimate example of the godly MAN.

That having been said, in the early years, I believe that it is very important to make sure your children are taught good manners and how to be accepting of people that aren't like themselves—even if they are siblings. If your little girl picks on or teases your little boy, I would encourage you to stop that behavior—through discipline, through reasoning or any other effective method. Your little boy must have an advocate in this early stage of life that is present and visible. It really is best if it is Dad but certainly someone he loves and trusts. And little girl must be taught to respect not only other people but the other gender as well.

On a more scientific note, there is a theory called the neuro-endocrine theory. This theory states that anywhere from the 8th to the 12th week of gestation, there is a hormone wash that is released in the womb that kind of kick-starts the development of gender depending on the chromosome makeup (xx being female and xy being male). Sometimes the hormone wash is not as strong as at others and the process by which the masculine moves into the left brain and the feminine moves into the right brain is not fully completed. This is not to say that any child is less male or female or more so. But it does apparently make some male children more sensitive and creative (right brain) and some female children more aggressive and decisive (left brain). It's not a bad thing or a good thing. Simply a scientific explanation of why some male children might be a bit more sensitive etc.

Hope this helps!

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