

**MAN** by Carl Beyer

As I write this article, my son, the one and only Arkulas, is about to turn eighteen years old. It goes through my mind that he will become a man on his birthday. But certainly, a birthday does not make a man. There are a number of people I know who are well beyond eighteen years old and I do not believe they have reached manhood. And who sets the standard for manhood? Well, since I am writing this article, I will be setting the standard.

The standard I will not set is anything to do with any physical requirements. There are plenty of big strong males who are little boys in big bodies. We all know the type who believes that power makes right. Those males who shield their weakness by being physically powerful have not reached manhood in my book. Please, no calling me out to prove that you are more of a man than I.

My first standard is a Man's Word. The value of a man is the value of his word. If a man's word is of no value then what is his value? This is especially true of promises. Do not promise what you cannot fulfill. How simple is that? The old adage of "A man's word is his bond" still holds true with me. In my perfect world there would be no written contracts because you would simply give your word. This also is directly related to being honest. For your word to be true it has to be honest.

My second standard is being a gentleman. A man does not mistreat women. A man is not violent with women. A man treats every woman like the precious creation of God that she is. The only time a man raises his hand around a woman is in her defense.

My third standard is being responsible. This means to be accountable for your actions and for those in your care. Take responsibility for your actions, imagine that. That almost seems foreign to what the media bombards us with daily. Being responsible means you do not blame everyone else for your actions. You are responsible for your actions. Being responsible for those in your care is doing the best financially and emotionally for your family and/or ones in your care. Be a man, get a job, keep the job and put bread on the table and a roof overhead.

My fourth standard is being a stand-up guy. This means that people know that when times are tough you will be there for them. A man is not one who disappears when help is needed. A man extends himself to others and not just out of his excess. When a man sees you working he does not watch you work while he is idle, but jumps in and asks how he may help. A man is someone who makes the time to help others.

My fifth standard is loyalty. Starting first in your relationship with your spouse, never, never stray, be loyal. Then be loyal to your friends. Stand up for them and stand beside them. No cheating on your spouse and no cheating on your friends.

My sixth standard is morals. A man is of high moral character. You will not find a real man hanging out in places of ill repute. What a man surrounds himself with is what he is. This one standard will help with keeping all the previous standards. Simply put, do what is right and do not worry

about what anyone else may say.

My last standard is setting an example. OK, if you are doing all the above you should be setting an example, but I am thinking specifically of a father-son relationship. I am so proud of my son and I hope I have done right by him in setting a good example. It does no good to preach a good example but show a bad example. There was a clear example of my being a bad example when my son was young. We were out driving and he said "Dad I got this one" and he proceeded to tell off the other driver just as I would have. OK, I have a little driving rage sometimes. I am mellowing with age though. When I see him following my good example I hope it makes up for the flaws he sees in me.

I am sure some of you have a much different perspective on being a man and I respect that as long as your perspective is also based on morals and responsibilities. I had no good example of being a man in my household when I was growing up so I had to seek out that example myself. I am grateful for those who showed me what a real man is. Be that example, not only to your own family, but to those whose lives you touch. I had plenty of bad examples when I was growing up but I was blessed with never buying into their philosophy. I spent about two years with a farmer who lived by the motto of "Look out for number one". What a waste of time and energy. I cannot tell you how many times he gave me his motto. Of course I was thinking that his number one was not me so be careful with that guy. He thought he was instructing me, but in reality he was teaching me what not to do. My next boss would give you the shirt off his back. What a man. He was tough, loyal, moral, and responsible; I owe that man; may he rest in peace.

I hope I have been a good example to my boy. I pray he will be able to take the good examples and use them. I also hope he recognizes my flaws will avoid those examples. I pray that I have been able to give him a moral core that will guide him through life. God Bless Arkulas.

God bless you all. The women may stop reading now. All you men stand up and be men. Stand up and be that shining example. Stand up and have your word be your bond. All you men raise your boys to become men that you are proud of. God Bless the men of our parish.