

BY DARBY A. STRICKLAND

BECOMING YOU



FOR
BOYS

EVERYTHING YOU WANTED
TO KNOW ABOUT GROWING UP

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**EVERYTHING YOU WANTED
TO KNOW ABOUT GROWING UP**

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HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Think of this book like a trail map for a big adventure—your adventure of growing up! You don't have to read it all at once (that would be like trying to eat a whole pizza in one bite). Instead, you can

- **Read a little at a time.** Pick the chapters that seem most interesting or helpful right now.
- **Talk it over.** If something's confusing—or just plain weird—ask a parent, grandparent, or another trusted adult (coach, mentor, pastor). They're on your team.
- **Pause and think.** Sometimes you'll see questions or activities. These are little rest stops to help you reflect on what you're learning.
- **Come back again.** Your body won't change all at once. You might read something now and return later when it makes more sense.

One more thing: If any of this feels awkward, that's normal. You don't have to figure out puberty on your own. God is with you, and he's given you people who love you to walk beside you. Take a deep breath, turn the page, and get ready—you're becoming the wonderful young man that God designed you to be!

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GOD'S AMAZING DESIGN

YOUR BODY IS A GIFT

Have you ever climbed a tree so high you could see for miles? Or looked up at the night sky and thought, *Whoa . . . God made all of this?* The mountains, the oceans, thunder, lightning, even galaxies—pretty epic, right? But here’s something even more jaw-dropping: God made *you*.

That’s right, God made *your body* on purpose and with joy. He didn’t just make your thoughts or your feelings; he made your muscles, your bones, your voice, and every last hair on your head (yes, even the ones showing up in new places!). The Bible says that when God created people, he formed us from the dust and breathed life into us (Genesis 2:7). Your body isn’t just a shell that you live in. It’s part of who you are, and God calls it *very good* (Genesis 1:31).

With your body, you might be able to kick a ball, wrestle your brother, eat a giant burger, build a tree fort, and cannonball into the pool. You can laugh, sing, high-five, and even feel that tingly chill when something amazing happens. Every part of your body is a gift that shows how brilliant and kind God is.

And get this, Jesus, God's own Son, came into the world in a real human body, just like yours. He had strong legs from walking everywhere. He got hungry and tired. He had friends, a family, and likely some skinned knees. He *knows* what it feels like to grow up.

Because Jesus had a body, we know something huge: Bodies aren't just okay—they're *glorious*.

The Bible says that people are made in God's image (Genesis 1:27). That means you were created to reflect his magnificence. You're not just *a* person. You're *his* person. You belong to him, and he delights in every part of who you are.

Maybe your voice is starting to croak like a frog, or you've noticed your arms are stronger, or new hairs are popping up, and you're like, *Wait, what's that?!* That's normal. Growing up can feel exciting, weird, and even confusing. But don't forget: Every inch of you was made with God's wisdom and love.

JESUS HAD A BODY, JUST LIKE YOU!

Jesus got sweaty, scraped his knees, and even needed sleep. But Jesus never sinned. He used his body to love, by walking miles to help people, lifting the hurting, and giving hugs and hope. He even gave up his body on the cross to rescue yours.

When you belong to Jesus, your whole self—body, soul, and everything in between—is wrapped up in his never-ending love. You are his treasure from head to toe!

GROWING UP IS GOD'S PLAN

Right now, your body is on *mission grow-up*. You might not notice it every day, but big changes are happening. This stage is called puberty, and every guy (and girl) goes through it. It's how God designed you to grow from a boy into a young man.

Some changes are easy to see, like your voice getting deeper, your muscles getting stronger, and your arms suddenly outgrowing your sleeves! But other changes are also happening on the inside. You might start to think differently, feel things more deeply, or notice new questions popping into your brain. That's all part of God's plan.

In this book, we'll explore how your body works, how to take care of it (yes, even your stinky armpits), how to handle big feelings, and how to treat others with respect, even when it's hard. You'll learn what God says about you and what he thinks about all these wild, weird, and wonderful changes.

Here's the best part: You're not growing up by accident. God is shaping you into the man he made you to be—strong in mind, kind in spirit, and full of purpose. And you're never walking alone—Jesus keeps pace with you.



YOUR BODY IS SPECIAL

Take a second and think about all the awesome stuff your body can do. You can use your body in all kinds of amazing ways. You can laugh so hard your stomach hurts, scarf down your favorite snacks, and build epic forts. You can feel the sun on your face, splash in cold water, and hear the crack of a baseball bat hitting a home run.

Pretty amazing, right? That's because your body is an awesome gift from God.

God didn't make you by mistake. He made you—body and soul—on purpose. The Bible says that God created boys and girls in his image (Genesis 1:27). That means your body isn't just something you *have*; it's part of who you *are*. You were made to grow up, enjoy life, care for others, and show the world how great God is.

Your Body Helps You Explore God's Amazing World

God made some wild and wonderful things like towering mountains, thundering waterfalls, roaring lions, and galaxies that sparkle like diamonds. But out of everything he created, you are one of the most amazing.

Why? Because you were made in his image with a mind and body to explore his incredible world.

Your body can likely do all sorts of cool things! Maybe your hands can draw rocket ships, build block castles, and fix wobbly bike wheels. Perhaps your feet can race with your dog, climb a tree, or zoom on a skateboard. Maybe your eyes can spot a rainbow, and your ears can catch the sound of a friend's laugh or a favorite song.

God designed your body to help you move, discover, create, and play. Life is one big adventure, and your body is the gear God gave you for the ride.

Your Body Helps You Show Love

Did you know that your body can be used as a way to love and care for others?

- You can help your younger sibling zip up their coat.
- You can smile or give a thumbs-up to a friend who feels sad.
- You can high-five a friend who made the game-winning shot.
- You can make space at your table or save a seat on the bus.
- You can use your voice to cheer someone up or say, "I'm sorry."
- You can use your strength to carry groceries or hold the door open.

God made you not just for action, but for *connection*. You were created to live in relationships—to love and be loved. You're part of a family, a team, a church, and God's big story.

So whether you're exploring a new trail, making someone laugh, or helping a friend, you're using your body just the way God meant you to. And that's something to smile about.

When you use your body to care for others, you show what God is like. God is helping you grow not just taller or stronger, but kinder, braver, and wiser. And the Bible tells us something really important: God doesn't just look at how tall you are or how cool your haircut is; he looks at your heart (1 Samuel 16:7). That's where real strength begins.

THE STRENGTH OF BEING A BOY

Being a boy isn't about always being the toughest or the loudest. It's about learning to use your strength to serve others. It means growing in *courage* when things are hard, in *gentleness* when someone's hurting, and in *faithfulness* when you make a promise.

You don't have to be the biggest, fastest, or best at everything to matter. You already matter to God. With purpose, he created you and calls you *loved*, *chosen*, and *mine* (Isaiah 43:1-7).

So as your body grows, your voice deepens, and your shoes suddenly don't fit anymore, remember this: God already calls you loved and chosen.

REAL STRENGTH LOOKS LIKE . . .

Saying sorry when you mess up.
Even when it's hard.

Standing up for someone being picked on.

Finishing a chore without being asked.

Asking for help when you don't
understand something.

Telling the truth, even if it gets you in trouble.

Including someone who feels left out.

Speaking kind words instead of mean ones.

Praying for someone who's having a hard day.

True strength isn't just in your arms.
Strength serves. Love leads.



THE BIGGEST CHANGE



As your body is growing, you will notice many changes. Your feelings will grow stronger, and your friendships might change. But the most important change isn't about your body at all—it's about your heart.

The Bible says we all need help because everyone has done wrong, and no one lives the way God designed us to. None of us measures up to how good and perfect God is. That's why God sent Jesus. When you trust him, he makes you brand-new on the inside and welcomes you into his forever family. When you belong to God's family, these amazing promises are yours to hold on to:

- **Jesus forgives me as soon as I ask.** (1 John 1:8–9)
- **Jesus is with me.** He promises to stay close, no matter what changes I face. (Matthew 28:20)
- **Jesus is growing me.** Each day he helps me become more like him in kindness, love, and courage. (Ephesians 4:15)

WHILE MANY THINGS ARE CHANGING

As we talk about all the ways your body changes during puberty, it's important to remember that God is also growing your heart. You are his child, part of his family, and his love for you never, ever changes.

That is really good news because some days you might feel strong and excited while on another you might feel awkward, frustrated, or unsure of yourself. Your body is changing. Your thoughts may change. Even your friendships can change. But Jesus does not.

The Bible says, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever" (Hebrews 13:8). That means he is steady when you feel unsteady. He is kind when you are hard on yourself. He is near when you feel alone. He is faithful every single day.

As you grow, you do not have to wonder if Jesus will get tired of you or stop caring about you. He won't. His love is not based on how tall you are, how strong you feel, or whether you had a good day or a bad one. His love is rooted in who he is.

So when puberty feels confusing or uncomfortable, remember this: Jesus is your steady place. He holds on to you through every change, and he will never let you go.