

Practicing Biblical Manhood and Womanhood - Part 1
Various Passages

“Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong. Let all you do be done in love.”

1 Corinthians 16:13-14

Introduction: Rebellion against God and His design runs deep in the heart of mankind. The Creator and Ruler of the universe set the world in order not only to bring Himself glory, but for the good of His creation. When sin entered the world, it corrupted creation and the created order, and man has tried relentlessly to reverse, undo, and breakdown that which God ordained. The dismantling of the family unit of a husband, wife, father, and mother, the audacious changing of God given gender, and the flippant view of sexuality have each been pressured to conform to worldly standards at warp speed. We hear that these areas are merely **social constructs**, created by the hegemony of whoever is in control, and are **fluid** in their makeup. This is particularly an issue when we try to bring **clarity and definition to what it means to BE a man and woman in the way God intended.**

To say there is **confusion** in terms of manhood is an understatement (if you watched the latest iteration of the Olympics you saw this confusion on display!). Men are told to be strong, courageous, independent, leaders, and assertive, and then are torn down for actually acting that way. Our culture wants it both ways, calling men to be responsible but then criticizing if they actually play assert themselves into decision making and care. When a man acts tough, is not overly emotional, and is assertive as a leader, it is now being defined as **toxic masculinity**, a hugely negative connotation. Add into this mix that **men themselves are inept in the Fall**, have acted out of selfish, prideful, and misplaced power in terms of leadership, sex, and domination, and the recipe has been mixed for a reversal of God's intention to the detriment of the **home, church, and society as a whole.**

For the next few weeks we want to spend some time letting the Bible define for us areas that are under attack around us. We want to bring clarity to **manhood and womanhood, diversity and unity in God's church, discipleship, and our identity as servants of Christ Jesus.** When it comes to defining manhood and womanhood, we begin with a few starting points:

- **God defines personhood, sexuality, and roles, not culture** - God has declared His will to us through His Word, enabling us to both bring Him glory AND to thrive in this world. Every single thing He gives to us to obey is for our good, for the betterment of life, and health of all people. This means that our goal is to understand WHAT He commands and to apply it to every situation and scenario, regardless of time or geography. However, it also accounts for the Fall, as we strive to **stay away from extremes**, even in the church (i.e. leadership by men diminishing the voice and gifts of women, strength of men not used to overpower, assertiveness as an excuse for lack of serving, etc.)
- **Men and women are created to COMPLIMENT each other** - God created men and women the SAME, but DIFFERENT. In other words, in personhood, redemption, and bearing the image of our Creator, men and women are the same. We come to Christ the SAME way since we are tainted by sins curse the same way, are given access as sons and daughters the same way, and are empowered by the same Spirit. But we recognize God given, God honoring, God glorifying **differences**. When 1 Cor. 16:13 says to "act like men", Paul recognizes that men and women are different, and that is far from a bad thing, that is how God designed families and the church to thrive with both men and women working together, complimenting each other. To "act like a man" or "act like a woman" are positive statements, not negative ones. God is a God of

unity, but unity in the midst of diversity, and this is experienced in marriages and the interaction between men and women in the church.

- **The gospel is what transforms and redeems** - The gospel changes all things, including our hearts and abilities to reverse the curse. When we come to Christ, He redeems our life and frees our will to make choices consistent with the moral call of obedience. This makes it POSSIBLE for believers to once again function in the intended design of manhood and womanhood. What was expected of Adam and Eve can be reclaimed in the gospel, so there is hope.

Men are created with Primary Responsibilities (Genesis 2:15-25)

Most commands given by God are for all men and women. But there are a few that are issues of **primacy** rather than exclusivity. Even the idea of "responsibility" means that though men have primary responsibilities does not mean women have none! It simply means there are certain areas that certain things are **PRIMARILY** given to men. As we look at Genesis once again, we are reminded how God perfectly delineated the personhood and roles of men and women.

- **Men are given physical responsibility to WORK and HAVE DOMINION OVER CREATION** - In Genesis 1:26-28, mankind was created in the **image of God** to fill the earth, subdue it, and have dominion over it. Notice that this was a command given to both *male and female s* (27) as it would be impossible to fulfill this without each other. But as we come to Gen. 2:15, Adam was given a particular expression of this mandate, before Eve was created. "*The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it.*" Men thusly are to **WORK, and work hard**, as means of both *worship and provision*, both to please God and provide for their families.
- **Men are given Spiritual responsibility to obey and teach God's commands** - "*And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, 'You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.'*" (Gen. 2:16-18). This command was given to Adam alone, and it is never recorded that Eve received this from the Lord herself. The idea is that Adam was given the direct revelation of assumed obedience and parameters of keeping it. The man was not only to keep it himself, but make sure that his family followed God's decree, with his **responsibility being to teach/inform his family of what God desired for them**. In this, men were given the primary responsibility to **protect their families in both positive and negative ways** (i.e. teach God's commands and keep them away from disobedience).
- **Men are given relational responsibilities with others** - Far from being independent and isolated, man was created for relationships with both God and others. "*Then the LORD God said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.'*" (Gen. 2:18). He was given access to all the animals in the world, named them (which showed his leadership role over them) but found they were NOT compatible in relationship to him. So God created a perfect compliment, one that entered into the covenant and sacred relationship of marriage with him ("this is now bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh") uniquely. He not only would hold fast to his wife and become one flesh, but this also set the tone for the fact that men in particular were not created for isolation.

Men are corrupted by Pervasive Reprobation (Genesis 3:16-24; Rom. 5:12, 19)

When sin entered the world, it corrupted everything. From the heart of man to creation itself (Rom. 8:20-21), man and creation are subjected to futility, pain and death itself. But the Fall had specific **consequences to men, which actually explains our confusion and the**

difficulty men have in playing their Biblical role. When Eve was deceived and at the fruit, the world was plunged into an immediate and categorical change, from perfection to tainted goods, from intimacy to separation, from life to death. *How did the Fall and sin affect men's ability in terms of responsibility?*

1. Sin Corrupted men and creation **physically**, making work difficult - If work is a means of worship, and hard work is the expectation to glorify God, the Fall flipped work on its head. Work now became a necessity. Thorns and thistles now inhabited the ground along with fruit and grain (Gen. 3:17-18). Sweat would now be the price paid to eat (3:19), and death looms large over every man as he engages in the never ending task of work. Instead of perfect harmony of work as worship, there is now tension in our daily grind, out of both our selfish hearts (laziness, cutting corners, using work time for personal things) and the disconnect of what we actually do with worship ("*how do I glorify God in arresting someone, making tools, selling insurance, etc?*") What once was a free expression of dominion and image bearing has now become a **burden, or excuse, or false identify.**

2. Sin Corrupted men **spiritually** in his ability to lead, protect, and taking responsibility - **When** Eve ate the fruit in front of her husband (Gen. 3:6), there was a great **abdication and role reversal that took place.** Eve led, Adam passively wimped out, and we all have suffered since then. Adam was given the role to **protect in the truth**, and as the Serpent began to deceive Eve, Adam did not stand in or up and challenge the deceiver of his false narratives ("did God not say?"). Instead of saying the hard word "NO" to Eve, he protected himself in pride and selfishness, and sin became normative. As a result, every PERSON conceived and born from that point on was created **with a sin nature** and under the curse (Rom. 5:12, 19), and **Adam was held responsible.** Men may fail, but it is clear that men are the ones who God holds to answer for their own life and their family. Adam was given the responsibility as the Father of all mankind with sin entering the world. Unfortunately, Adam did not just stop here, but continued down the rabbit hole of sin. When confronted by God Himself as to what had happened, Adam shifted the blame from himself to his wife and God Himself ("the woman YOU gave me!"). Instead of standing up and absorbing responsibility, Adam deflected it, like food off a teflon pan. Men have continued to struggle with standing up since then, preferring to **blame others for their problems, for their shortcomings, or failures.**

3. Sin Corrupted men **relationally** in his ability to interact and care for others - Sin meant that not only would men be prone to blame shifting, but they would respond and react out of **shame and fear**, running away FROM God instead of to Him. Man's relationship with God also was separated from the intimate relationship he once enjoyed. "*Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil. now, lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever ---" therefore the LORD God sent him out of the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken. He drove the man out...*" (Gen. 3:22-24a). In a gracious but definitive way, God kicked Adam and his family out of the Garden, knowing that if Adam had stayed he would have lived in an unredeemed state forever. So instead of walking with God, man is now born into a divided relationship with the God of the universe.

Not only did sin affect man's relationship with God, but it affected Adam's relationship with Eve. He now was willing to throw her under the bus, was willing to **prefer himself to her, to make decisions out of fear, and stay away because of shame.** Not only does this still have implications in marriage (there is a reason men have a hard time communicated, admitting failure, or stay away from their feelings), but men now face an immense amount of **pressure in playing out their responsibilities.** Pressure and responsibility go hand in hand and are intertwined, fused together. Since men must take responsibility in their sin, **pressure gets to breaking points**, which is the "why" behind men leaving, turning to other sins for satisfaction (alcohol, pornography, or literally leaving families, jobs, etc).

So what men face in asking the question, "*what does a Biblical man look like*" is dealing first and foremost with our **sin nature, our separation from God, and our stone cold heart** before jumping to how we **play out manhood the way God intended**.

Men can overcome cursed realities by Particular Redemption (Titus 2:1-10)

This is the path for all people, in all areas of life. We always live out WHO we are. Before we are saved, we can live and reach the level of truth that we know, living as morally as makes sense to us or that we can comprehend. But we cannot change our heart, motives, or will. God has to do that. In the book of Titus (and we can go to many books of the Bible), older and younger men are called to specific character and convictional realities. *What does that look like?*

"For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for the blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works."

Titus 2:11-14

This is called reversing the curse! God's grace is what was needed, not our works. God's grace brought salvation through Jesus Christ, with His motive of **goodness and love** (Titus 3:4). ***"He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being JUSTIFIED BY HIS GRACE we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.*** (Titus 3:5-7). We could not and did not save ourselves, but God did the work necessary through Jesus Christ to buy us back, redeem us from the curse we were born into, and *made us new*. He washed us, regenerated us through new birth, and renewed our mind and heart through the Holy Spirit. We are now ABLE, through forgiveness, to obey, pursue, and do the things we were called to. ***How do men live like Godly, Biblical men? They must first repent of their sin, believe in Jesus as their Savior, and follow Him as their LORD! A Biblical man is a redeemed man, since only when one has a new heart can one have a renewed life.***

When we realize that we are redeemed by God's lavished grace (Eph. 1:7-8), we live each day by that same grace in obedience. Here is what I mean:

1. **A Redeemed man has a new power source to work and renewed work ethic** - Redeemed men no longer work as a means of identity, or value, or the pressure to provide alone. A gospel redeemed man knows that God is the One who ultimately provides (Matt. 6:30-33), so he knows his greatest pursuit is seeking first God and His kingdom. A gospel redeemed man now works to the **glory of God, not as people pleasers or simply to be seen by employers** (Eph. 6:6). Work is now done a service of worship from the heart, seeking to please God, not man (Eph. 6:7). A gospel redeemed man now, because of his relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ and example of the apostle Paul, **work hard to not be a burden to anyone but have something to share** (1 Thess. 4:11-12). We can put off idleness and put on an ethic of hard work, since a man who does not work also should not eat (2 Thess. 3:10-11). A gospel redeemed man works hard because of who He is in Christ, not just because it works better in a capitalistic culture (which it does!). When we no longer have to work for our salvation, we are freed up to work hard to the pleasure of God. Men, this morning, at whatever age or stage you find yourself, answer the question: **Am I marked, in the gospel, by hard work?** Is that my reputation at work? No able bodied man here should be out of work long, but even when a specific job is not available, he is working at other things or to find work. Even in retirement this command is not nullified, but we continue to work hard in God's creation, for

God's people, and as a means of worship for as long as we are able. This is how the gospel frees us.

2. A Redeemed man has a new ability to know God and His Word - Titus 2 is clear about a mature, Gospel redeemed man: **he is healthy in his knowledge of God and character before Him.** *"Teach what accords with sound (healthy) doctrine. Older men are to be sober-minded, dignified, self-controlled, sound in faith, in love, and in steadfastness."* (2:1-2). A maturing, gospel redeemed man will be marked by a healthy intake of sound doctrine, will love Biblical teaching, and will cultivate a growing knowledge of Scripture. **If there is a famine in the land of Christianity, it would be characterized by a drought of Biblical knowledge among its men.** This Biblical intake affects a man's temperament and character: **he will be growing in wisdom, sobriety, seriousness, and self-control.** He is healthy in what he believes, consistent in the way that he loves, and persistent in his growth. Gospel redeemed men should be models and examples of stability, can be counted on, and ones who have allowed the Word to transform them from the inside out. These are men I want to follow, who I want to learn from, who I want to be like.

Men, we cannot live out what we do not believe. We cannot worship Who we do not know. We cannot lead to places we have not gone or are not going. We cannot teach what we have not studied. We cannot commend what we ourselves do not love. We cannot protect with truth if we ourselves don't know it. If we are to BE the godly men God has called us to, we must be relentless in knowing God and His Word, making it the **primary aim of our life and soul, not the secondary or marginal part of life.**

3. A Redeemed man has a new opportunity to Care for Others - A gospel , redeemed man dies to self so that he can lead through service. The reversal of selfish, prideful decisions and self-preservation is to kill the old man and put on the new man in Christ. **"For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God."** (Col. 3:3). This simultaneously frees us to trust Christ AND take responsibility for our actions, families, and God's church. We can continue to live with our wives in an **understanding way, showing her honor as a precious vessel** (1 Pet. 3:7), listening to her, communicating with her, and seeking to please her. We can prefer one another in love (Rom. 12:10). We can seek to love one another, putting aside our preferences, comfort, and insecurities.

Men, the task is large, and we know that in living Biblically we will put ourselves in more discord with our culture. They will look at you with distrust and disdain, and they will hate the light that is shined in their blind eyes. But we will commit to glorifying God in Christ, knowing that we have been freed from our sin, our earned judgment, and our deserved separation from God. **We will act like men, putting on faithfulness, being watchful, and being strong. We will lead, serve, love, listen, die, take responsibility, worship, protect, provide, learn, be healthy in faith, love, and steadfastness, deny our impulses and sinful desires by pursuing Christ as our greatest treasure.** As men take responsibility to the glory of God, women can play their role with joy and security, knowing they are valued, treasured, and loved, and we as individuals, families, and a church can shine before a world who is thirsting for answers, wants what we got, and needs the grace God has lavished. If there was ever a time for men to act like men, it's now! Let's be a group that heeds that call!