

# Be the Man That God Created You to Be

By

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## Introduction

Why the need for such a paper? There is a dire need for males to be what God designed them to be, not what our contemporary culture chooses to believe. God designed specific roles for males and females. Human society is God's construct not some evolutionary, ever-changing views. This paper is for the church of the Lord Jesus Christ, not the sin laden world. In a fallen world, we expect there to be turmoil especially in the marriage relationship. Unbelievers are slaves to their sin and in bondage to the god of this world, Satan, who desires nothing but destruction. In Christ, we are a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17). Because of the indwelling work of the Holy Spirit, redeemed man is different, even though there are still vestiges of sin in our lives.

My major assumption is that the reader acknowledges the abiding authority of Scripture, meaning that the Bible is our guideline for living. The Scripture is without error in all matters, not subject to the ever-changing whimsical beliefs of our culture. Grievously, parts of the visible church of the Lord Jesus have been infected by worldly philosophy pertaining to the roles of males and females particularly in the marriage covenant.

This paper is designed to set forth those biblical principles that God has clearly laid out for redeemed males. **It should be the foremost desire of a godly Christian man to be what God has commanded him to be.** Therefore, every Christian male should constantly be asking himself - am I this man? Am I manifesting these traits that God commands?

Throughout the paper, when I make comments referencing being "real men," I am seeking to convey how the Bible defines masculinity. Biblical texts that say, "show yourself a man," or "act like men" are examples of what biblical manhood looks like. A man may anatomically and hormonally be a man, but that obviously does not constitute the essence of biblical masculinity.

While the paper's focus is for Christian males, Christian women, especially single ones, should read it in order to know what to look for in a prospective husband. A single male who is **significantly deficient** in these biblical principles is not someone she should be interested in, nor should a godly father allow his daughter to be pursued by such a male.

Biblical masculinity embraces a zeal for personal godliness, a devotion to prayer, a vibrant faith in God's promises, a commitment to lead in family worship and a commitment to public worship, boldness in biblical convictions, diligence in work, servant leadership, selfless love that seeks to provide physical and emotional protection, humility, and gentleness. The attitude that religion is for women and children is a woeful perspective, and the notion that gentleness is a female attribute demonstrates that this male does not understand Scripture. The Bible contains some godly examples of biblical masculinity that warrant our attention. Foremost, the Lord Jesus Christ is the epitome of masculinity. He was truly "a man's man."

## The admonition to prove yourself a man

Two passages explicitly reference being a man. The first is found in 1 Kings 2:1-3:

As David's time to die drew near, he charged Solomon his son, saying, I am going the way of all the earth. **Be strong, therefore, and show yourself a man.** And keep the charge of the Lord your God, to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes, His commandments, His ordinances, and His testimonies, according to what is written in the law of Moses, that you may succeed in all that you do and wherever you turn (Emphasis is mine).

The second passage is in I Corinthians 16:13-14:

Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, **act like men**, be strong. Let all that you do be done in love (emphasis is mine).

These two passages do not reflect the totality of biblical masculinity, but they do set forth some vital characteristics. David linked manhood with strength, but it's essential that we understand how the Bible uses the word, "strong." Fundamentally, it has nothing to do with physical strength. In David's charge to his son, showing oneself to be a man is directly linked with obedience to God's commandments, living a life in conformity with God's law. The male who does not consciously seek godliness can never be considered, "a man." He may be physically impressive, but without that love for God's word, he has failed the test of showing himself to be a man.

In first Corinthians 16:13-14, the apostle Paul directly links three godly traits to acting like men. They are being alert, standing firm in the faith, and being strong. And, the overarching characteristic that ties all these three together is love. These three characteristics are all present imperatives, meaning that they are commands not suggestions. First, to act like a man is to be **continually alert**, but alert to what? Jesus commanded His disciples in Matthew 26:41 that they were to constantly be watching and praying so that they might not enter into temptation for the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak. First Peter 5:8-9 states:

Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world.

Acting like a man means to be constantly watching out for spiritual danger. While the devil no longer has any control over the Christian, the devil through his diabolical temptations seeks to cause much trouble for the believer. One of the devil's tactics is through persecution of believers;

he will seek to greatly discourage us. Being alert means that we can resist him by being firm in the faith.

Second, acting like a man, in the Corinthians passage, is to **stand firm in the faith**, which means to be steadfast and unyielding in one's trust in Jesus Christ as the central truth of the Christian gospel even amidst many temptations and opposition. But, to stand firm in the faith implies that one knows the word of God and is consciously seeking to pattern one's life after that word. The male who does not know biblical doctrine is one who will not be alert to spiritual danger and will be subject to being deceived because he's not grounded in Scripture.

Third, the first Corinthians passage commands us to be **strong**, but strong in what? This is where our study of the usage of "strong" in the Old Testament will illumine us to its meaning. I have alluded to its meaning when I quoted first Kings 2:1-3, but we will soon take a more in-depth look at what this means.

Ephesians 6:10-18 is a pivotal passage for all Christians, male and female, but since the emphasis of this paper is on biblical masculinity, we will see how it applies to Biblical manhood. The passage reads:

Finally, **be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might**. Put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore, take up the full armor of God, that you may be able to resist the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming missiles of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, with all prayer and petition pray at all times and the spirit and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints.

The only way to defeat the schemes of the evil one is to be strong in the Lord and in His might, meaning that we fight spiritual forces only in the power of our God. We are engaged in spiritual warfare where much is at stake. We must put on God's armor in order to engage in spiritual battle with the forces of darkness. Unless we are committed to biblical truth and put up that shield of faith, we will be subject to great spiritual harm. Please note that the offensive part of that armor is the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. The way that Jesus defeated the devil in the wilderness was by quoting God's word, and this is how we will defeat him as well.

I noted earlier that this passage applies to both male and female, but our emphasis is upon biblical masculinity which means that the male who does not put on the whole armor of God is one that not only brings spiritual harm to himself but to all his family members for which he is

responsible. This immature male will have no capacity to make spiritual decisions honoring to the Lord; he will lead his family into one spiritual disaster after another. Because he does not know the word of God, he cannot wield the sword of the Spirit against the forces of darkness. His spiritual immaturity has put himself and his family in great peril.

As it applies to biblical masculinity, standing fast in faith has great implications for the church in this world. Jude 3 tells us that we must earnestly contend for the Faith once delivered to the saints. One cannot earnestly contend for the Faith apart from sound biblical doctrine. It means that the biblical man must never surrender to worldly wisdom (Colossians 2:8); he must stand firm for the purity of the gospel against all those who would corrupt it. While the faithful visible church acknowledges that only males can serve as elders and deacons, one of the foremost criterion for an elder of the church is that he holds fast to the faithful word and is able to exhort with sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict sound doctrine (Titus 1: 9). The elder is to be no novice! He is to be fearless in his defense of the Faith. **More mistakes are made among churches by placing males into positions of leadership who are not “strong” in the Scriptures.** There is much truth in this statement - as the church elders go, so goes the church. Weak leaders produce weak congregants.

In 1Corinthians 16:13-14, to act like a man means that everything he does must be done in love. It is the foremost characteristic of the biblical man. Love is said to be the perfect bond of unity (Colossians 3:14). First Corinthians 13:1-8 describes the nature of biblical love. While love does involve emotion, emotion is not the primary characteristic of love. Love is an action! The male who tells someone that he loves them but who doesn't manifest the characteristics of love has deceived himself and is not practicing love despite what he says.

## **I. Biblical masculinity embraces a zeal for personal godliness**

We have just seen that “proving oneself to be a man,” entails a commitment to Scripture. Biblical masculinity manifests itself in a zeal for personal godliness. He is no nominal Christian but one who takes the Lordship of Jesus Christ very serious. To be zealous for godliness means to have an intense and passionate desire to live a life in conformity with the word of God. This zeal is not simply a feeling but an active pursuit of God's holiness rooted in a desire to honor the Lord. This true zeal is guided by knowledge and wisdom where his actions are rooted in biblical truth, not impulsive feelings.

Godliness manifests itself as a devotion to God stemming from an awe of His holiness which wants to emulate God's character, which is found only in Scripture. It can never be said that a man is godly who is not enthralled with God's word. To know God and to love Him means that we consciously seek to pattern our lives in conformity with God's commandments by the power of the Holy Spirit.

## **II. Biblical masculinity exhibits a devotion to prayer**

The apostle Paul exhorted the Colossian church to be devoted to prayer. Colossians 4:2-4 says:

Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving; praying at the same time for us as well, that God may open up to us a door for the word so that we may speak for the ministry of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned; in order that I might make it clear in the way I ought to speak.

There are two very important grammatical points in the text. Being devoted to and keeping alert in prayer are present imperatives meaning that we are commanded to continually be devoted to and keeping alert in prayer. Being devoted to and keeping alert in prayer is the act of making prayer a regular and intentional part of one's life, not an occasional activity. Prayer is not something that we only do when there is a physical need or some crisis that has arisen. We are exhorted to pray without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17). This act of prayer is also a present imperative - the Christian life is to be one of constant prayer before our God. Prayer is to be a constant practice. It was Jesus who told his disciples in Matthew 26:41:

Keep watching and praying, that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.

Jesus' exhortation is a command as well. We are to constantly be watching and praying since we are in a spiritual battle with the forces of darkness. Being devoted to prayer demonstrates that we acknowledge our own inability to fight Satan. The biblical man knows that he needs divine help. We will note in an upcoming section that the biblical man is a man who is given the responsibility to lead his family in every respect. For a male to neglect prayer as a priority is to put his family in jeopardy.

When we look at great biblical examples of masculinity, we will see that prayer was a pivotal feature in all of their lives.

### III. Biblical masculinity demonstrates a vibrant faith in God's promises

#### The Golden connection

There is a vital relationship among several beautiful biblical truths, which I refer to as the golden connection. Understanding this relationship is life transforming, and it forms a fundamental nature of biblical masculinity. While these truths apply to both male and female, these glorious traits have been exemplified in godly men throughout biblical history. These traits are the hallmark of biblical masculinity, and no male can be said to be truly a man without manifesting these traits.

The golden chain begins with a **faithful God**. God's nature is the wellspring from which all biblical truths spring forth. God is a holy God who cannot deny Himself. The divine perfection of God's faithfulness is the foundation for our faith and confidence. Once we understand the application of this precious biblical doctrine, it is life transforming.

We can surely rely on God's character:

God is not a man, that He should lie, nor the Son of Man, that He should repent, has He said, and will He not do it? Or has He spoken, and will he not make it good? (Numbers 23:19)

This is a most wonderful promise that the Lord will most assuredly bring to pass everything that He has revealed in His word. When things are seemingly so dismal, we can count on our God to fulfill all His promises toward us.

God's faithfulness is everlasting:

Know therefore that the Lord your God, He is God, the faithful God, who keeps His covenant and His loving kindness to a thousandth generation with those who love Him and keep His commandments; (Deuteronomy 7:9)

God's faithfulness is expressed in His promises. The golden chain is then expressed in **faith in those promises**. Living by faith then leads to **courage or fearlessness**. Being strong is directly linked with courage in Scripture. Let's look at Moses' last counsel given to the congregation of Israel as they were poised to finally enter the Promised Land under Joshua's leadership. Here is his counsel to the nation:

'Be strong and courageous, do not be afraid or tremble at them, for the Lord your God is the One who goes with you. He will not fail you or forsake you.' Then Moses called to Joshua and said to him in the sight of all Israel, 'Be strong and courageous, for you shall go with this people into the land which the Lord has sworn to their fathers to give them,

and you shall give it to them as an inheritance. And the Lord is the One who goes ahead of you; He will be with you. He will not fail you or forsake you. Do not fear, or be dismayed. (Deuteronomy 31:6-8)

As believers in the Lord Jesus, we too should heed such an exhortation. Why did Moses tell the congregation and Joshua to be strong and courageous, and to not be afraid or tremble at the inhabitants of the land? They had a promise from God! God assured them that He would not fail or forsake them! And notice that they were exhorted not to fear or be dismayed but rather to be strong and courageous. Here is the biblical proof that courage is tied with faith. Here is the proof that we should never be afraid because God has given us a special promise - **He will never fail us or forsake us!** No matter what challenging circumstances arise we can face them with courage and without fear as we cling to God's promises. We should not fear because our God is with us.

This is what Joshua said to the congregation of Israel upon assuming leadership just prior to their entering into the land. We must remember that God had promised Israel the land of Canaan. Joshua said to them what God had told him:

No man will be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I have been with Moses, I will be with you; I will not fail you or forsake you. Be strong and courageous, for you shall give the people possession of the land which I swore to their fathers to give them. Only be strong and very courageous; be careful to do according to all the law which Moses my servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, so that you may have success wherever you go. This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, then you will have success. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous! Do not tremble or be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go. (Joshua 1:5-9)

We must not miss the exhortation to meditate upon the law of God day and night in order to be obedient to the Lord. We are exhorted to be strong and courageous and not to be afraid because we have the promise that our God is always with us wherever we go! We can extrapolate from this that there are no circumstances in our lives that should cause us to be fearful. No matter the intensity of our afflictions, **we are to be strong and courageous.** Our courage to face any circumstance is rooted in our faith in God's promises. We must remember-**where there is faith there is no fear.** There is often a mistaken notion about courage. Some tout that courage is an action despite possessing fear, but this is not even remotely close to what the Bible actually says.

**Courage and fear cannot coexist.** Isaiah 41:10 states:

Do not fear, for I am with you; do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, surely I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

We see this wonderful biblical truth in Psalm 23:4-5:

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil; for Thou art with me Thy rod and Thy staff, they comfort me. Thou dost prepare a table for me in the presence of my enemies.

Confidence in the promises of God and the realization of His abiding presence gives us courage so that we will not experience fear. Psalm 56:3-4 says:

When I am afraid, I will put my trust in Thee. In God whose word I praise, in God I have put my trust; I shall not be afraid what can mere man do to me?

We must see the glorious transition from fear to trust to no fear. The remedy to fear or anxiousness is to put our trust in God, and the word of God is where we find God's promises of His deliverance.

When Jesus came walking on the water on the Sea of Galilee to the disciple's boat, the immediate reaction of the disciples was that of fear thinking that they were seeing a ghost. After all, men don't walk on water. Jesus' response to their fear is seen in Matthew 14:27- "But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, 'Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid.'" If we have the living God in our presence we should never fear; we should never lack courage. Biblical courage is the willingness to act out of obedience to God's purposes and promises, relying on His strength and guidance.

What better example do we have in the New Testament than our Lord Jesus Christ's teaching on faith? We see Jesus emphasizing the following great principle - **where there is faith there is no fear**. Let's look at Mark 4:35-41. This is where Jesus stills the sea when He and His disciples were in a boat on the Sea of Galilee. Jesus had finished teaching the multitudes with various parables, and He told His disciples that they should get into a boat and cross over the Sea of Galilee to the other side. During their crossing, a great storm arose jeopardizing their boat. Mark 4:37 says that waves of water were breaking over the boat so much so that the boat was already filling up. Amazingly, Jesus was sound asleep in the back of the boat. With a boat filling up with water in a fierce storm, it is understandable, in one sense, that the disciples would be fearful for their lives. All the disciples rushed to the back of the boat where Jesus is sleeping. The disciples say to Jesus, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing" (v. 38)? Jesus is aroused from His sleep and rebukes the wind, and says to the sea, "Hush, be still" and the sea became perfectly calm (v. 39). What Jesus says to His disciples is most noteworthy. Jesus said to them, "**Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith**" (v. 40)? Let's consider the circumstance that Jesus and His disciples were in. There was a massive storm, and the boat was filling up, meaning

that it would normally sink. Most of us would be fearful for our lives, but Jesus rebukes them! Why are you afraid? And, how is it that you have no faith? Here is our great principle taught by Jesus - **where there is faith there is no fear**. Yes, the circumstances were apparently dire, but what the disciples failed to comprehend is that they had the Creator of the universe in the back of the boat. Amazingly, once Jesus calms the sea, the disciples became very much afraid and said to one another, “Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?” While the disciples had seen many wonders, they still had not grasped the magnitude of who Jesus really was.

Here is the manifestation of biblical masculinity. The man of God is strong and courageous. He is a man of faith in the promises of God. He is a man who is fearless in the face of danger only because he trusts in the faithfulness of his God, not in his own physical prowess, nor in his intellectual capacity. He is a man who meditates (contemplates with great scrutiny) upon the law of God. He is a man committed to the sole authority of Scripture, believing that as he faithfully patterns his life after God’s word, he shall be prosperous in all that he does.

We must affirm that living by faith and not by fear is an exhortation to both male and female, but the reason I am including it as an example of biblical masculinity is because the Scripture mandates males to be leaders in their home and in the church; hence, it is imperative that it is seen in males.

I must ask my male readers these sobering questions: How serious are you about the study of Scripture? Do you study it every day? Do you plead with your God to help you cherish God’s word? Are you a man who has unwavering faith in the promises of God? If you cannot answer “yes” to these questions, then you need to repent, asking God to forgive you of your spiritual lethargy and plead with Him to truly make you a biblical man.

#### **IV. Biblical examples of godly masculinity**

We will take a look at some notable examples in biblical history. While these exemplary lives are a testimony to biblical masculinity, we must bear in mind that these are still fallible men who at times committed acts that were sinful. Nonetheless, where they were faithful, we should emulate their godly example.

##### **Abraham**

Victory belongs to those who walk by faith and not by sight (2 Corinthians 5:7). It is important that we observe how the Bible defines faith:

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. For by it the men of old gained approval. By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible...And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He rewards those who seek Him. (Hebrews 11: 1-3, 6)

How did the men of old gain approval from their God? Walking by faith. Biblical faith is not wishful thinking where the attitude is, "I hope this will come to pass but I'm not sure." Biblical faith conveys an assurance and a conviction. It is a certainty of what is hoped for, and a conviction of things that we cannot see. **This certainty is rooted in the promises of God.** Just because we cannot visibly see God does not mean that we cannot know with certainty that He exists. Sadly, there are people who will say, "I will not believe in God unless I can see the evidence for His existence." While there is evidence for God's existence (Romans 1:18-19), our faith does not rest upon the foundation of evidence:

For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one also hope for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it. (Romans 8:24-25)

The certainty of what we hope for by faith is based upon the authority of God's word. We believe God at face value, meaning we don't question Him by demanding that He submit to our puny reason. No, we must humble ourselves before the Almighty God who is the I AM THAT I AM. This is what Hebrews 11:6 is exhorting us to do. It is by faith that we believe that God exists and that His promises are true. As the verse teaches, it is impossible to please Him without faith! Do you want to have victory as you face life's circumstances? Then you must walk by faith and not by sight; you must humble yourself before your God. Despite what the circumstances are telling you, you rest upon the solid rock of God's promises, in a faithful God who will not lie. You eagerly wait with perseverance in that which you cannot see but hope for. Hebrews chapter 11 has been referred to as "the hall of fame of faith." Noah believed in God's warning of an impending great flood when it had never rained upon the earth. Yet, Hebrews 11:7 says that by faith Noah believed in "things not yet seen, and then in reverence prepared the ark in accordance to what God had commanded (Genesis 7:5). Think about this! Noah could have said, "What is rain?" Noah did not engage in some conversation with God; he simply believed God because God said it.

In Hebrews 11:8, we are told that Abraham by faith obeyed God by going out to a place to receive an inheritance of which he did not know where he was going. By faith, Abraham lived as an alien in the Land of promise, dwelling in tents while looking for "the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God (Hebrews 11:9-10). Abraham's stay in the land of Canaan was a temporary place where he drove pegs into the ground to keep his tents in place. Abraham's faith reached beyond the promise of a land even though God promised him a land for his descendents. By faith, Abraham knew that his earthly dwelling cannot be compared with the

heavenly city of which God Himself was the architect and builder. By faith, Abraham envisioned an eventual gathering of all believers into one glorious dwelling of God. Hebrews 12:22-23 refers to “the heavenly Jerusalem” which is the church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

There’s a good reason why the Jewish nation referred to Abraham as their “father of faith.” He stands out as a magnificent example of walking by faith and not by sight. We know from Genesis 12:2 that God was going to make a great nation from Abraham, and that in him all the families of the earth would be blessed (Genesis 12:3). In Genesis 15, Abraham is wondering how all of this is going to come to pass seeing that his wife, Sarah, was barren and he was 100 years old. God told him that the promise of an heir would come forth from his own body (Genesis 15:4). This was God’s promise. To encourage Abraham, God told him to go outside and look toward the heavens at the starry sky and try counting the number of stars. God said to him, “So shall your descendents be” (Genesis 15:5). What was Abraham’s response to God’s promise of something that he could not see? Genesis 15:6 says, “Then he believed in the Lord; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness.”

We see Abraham’s wife, Sarah, being held out as a great example of walking by faith and not by sight:

By faith even Sarah herself received ability to conceive, even beyond the proper time of life, since she considered Him faithful who had promised; therefore, also, there was born of one man, and him as good as dead at that, as many descendents as the stars of heaven in number, and innumerable as the sand which is by the seashore. (Hebrews 11:11-12)

It is noteworthy of a dialogue between the angel of the Lord, Abraham, and Sarah recorded in Genesis 18. The angel of the Lord said to Abraham, “Where is Sarah your wife?”

Abraham replied by saying, “Behold, in the tent” (v. 9).

The angel of the Lord said, “I will surely return to you at this time next year; and behold, Sarah your wife shall have a son.”

Sarah happened to be listening behind a door (v. 10).

When Sarah heard the angel saying to Abraham of this promised child, she laughed saying to herself, “After I have become old, shall I have pleasure, my Lord being old also” (v. 12)?

The Lord said to Abraham, “Why did Sarah laugh, saying, ‘Shall I indeed bear a child, when I am so old’” ( v. 13)?

The angel of the Lord said, “Is anything too difficult for the Lord? At the appointed time I will return to you, this time next year, and Sarah shall have a son” (v. 14).

Paul uses Abraham’s great faith as the prototype of one who is justified by faith and not by works. We see Abraham’s great faith:

In hope against hope he believed, in order that he might become a father of many nations, according to that which had been spoken, so shall your descendents be.’ And without becoming weak in faith he contemplated his own body, now good as dead since he was about 100 years old, and the deadness of Sarah’s womb; yet, with respect to the promise of God, he did not waver in unbelief, but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully assured that what He had promised, He was able also to perform. (Romans 4:18-21)

There are so many wonderful things expressed in this passage. Abraham fully recognized on a human level that to have a child when he’s 100 years old and for barren Sarah at 90 years of age to have a child is seemingly impossible. This was Abraham and Sarah’s circumstance. But, the seemingly impossible circumstance did not cause Abraham to waver in unbelief. God had promised, and that is all that Abraham needed to know. He did not doubt God’s promise, and amazingly he grew stronger in faith giving glory to God and being fully assured that God was faithful to His promise. One great lesson that we should learn from this is: **all that faith needs is a promise!** So, is this true of you? Can you say in your heart that all you need is God’s promise?

Young men, cultivate now a love for God’s precious word. Saturate your mind with God’s promises and beg God Almighty to give you a faith to trust Him no matter what. It is a prayer that your heavenly Father most assuredly will answer. If you are a young man wanting to be married one day with children, you will need to be their spiritual leader. You must lead them by being a man of faith. When the storms of life come against your family, you must gather them around you and lead them to trust in God’s precious promises. As you do this, you will bring great comfort to your godly wife and children, for they will see that their leader, their husband and father, is a man who knows God and who seeks to cultivate in them a hope, not despair. In doing so, you will prove yourself to be a man.

## **Joshua and Caleb**

One of the greatest passages that demonstrates the relationship of faith in contrast to fear is found in Numbers chapters 13 and 14. The historical context is that the nation of Israel led by Moses was poised to go into the Promised Land:

Then the Lord spoke to Moses saying, ‘Send out for yourself men that they may spy out the land of Canaan, which I am going to give to the sons of Israel; you shall send a man from each of their father’s tribes, everyone a leader among them.’ So Moses sent them from the wilderness of Paran at the command of the Lord, all of them men who were heads of the sons of Israel. (Numbers 13:1-3)

The first thing we should notice is what God said to Moses with regard to the prospects of conquering the land of Canaan. God said that He was going to give the land to Israel. This was God's promise! The twelve spies were sent forth "at the command of the Lord." In Numbers 13:17-20, Moses tells the twelve spies to determine whether the people are strong or weak, whether they are few or many, what the land is like; is it good or bad. Also, the spies were to report whether the inhabitants lived in camps or in fortified cities. Fundamentally, this was a military reconnaissance. What happened is one of the saddest events recorded in Scripture. In Numbers 13:25-33, the twelve spies returned giving their report to the nation of Israel. The spies acknowledged that the land certainly did flow with milk and honey and showed them its fruit. They brought back from the Valley of Eschol, which means the valley of cluster, evidence of the land's fruitfulness. They had cut down a branch with a single cluster of grapes having to carry it on a pole between two men (Numbers 13:23). This was physical evidence of the goodness of the land. They should have remembered that God had promised years earlier that He was going to give them a very fruitful land.

But the assessment of ten spies was tragic. They said, "Nevertheless, the people who live in the land are strong, and the cities are fortified and very large; and moreover, we saw the descendants of Anak, and the pagan people such as the Amalekites who had terrorized Israel during their exodus from Egypt were living there. The descendants of Anak were the giants. These giants were called the Nephilim (Numbers 13:30). The impact of the report of the ten spies was profound so much so that Caleb, who was one of the twelve spies, had to quiet the people (Numbers 13:30). As we shall soon see, this report terrified the nation.

It's vital that we see the contrast between Caleb and the ten spies. Caleb exhorted the nation to attack and take possession of the land saying, "For we shall surely overcome it" (Numbers 13:30). Caleb had confidence as opposed to that of the ten spies. Caleb believed the promise of God! He had faith that they would prevail simply because God said that they would. In contrast to this great faith, the ten spies said, "We are not able to go up against the people, for they are too strong for us." So they gave out to the sons of Israel a bad report of the land which they had spied out saying, "The land through which we have gone, in spying it out, is a land that devours its inhabitants; and all the people we saw in it are men of great size. There also we saw the Nephilim, (the sons of Anak are part of the Nephilim); and we became like grasshoppers in our own sight, so we were in their sight" (Numbers 13:31-33).

The contrast between Caleb and the ten spies couldn't be more obvious; it is a contrast of faith and fear. Faith produces courage while fear is paralyzing. Faith is based upon the promise of God while fear is based upon unbelief in God's promise.

The circumstances don't matter to one who has faith in God's promises. Faith doesn't care if there are giants in the land who live in fortified cities. Unbelief spawns fear, and it is like a cancer that spreads to the whole body if unchecked. Numbers 14: 1-9 records the impact of unbelief upon the nation. The whole congregation of Israel lifted up their voices and cried all

night! (v. 1). Moreover, unbelief does more than just create fear; it leads to grumbling and rebellion (v. 2). The sons of Israel grumbled against God's ordained leadership of Moses and Aaron. They wished that they would have died in Egypt rather than dying in the wilderness as free men (v. 2). They were convinced that their wives and little ones would become plunder at the hands of the nations that occupied the land of Canaan (v. 3). They thought it would be better to return to Egypt and be slaves again (v. 3). This paralyzing fear rooted in unbelief produced outright rebellion against God's ordained leadership; they thought about selecting a leader that would lead them back to captivity.

Unbelief in God's promises has severe consequences. Moses and Aaron fell on their faces in the presence of the congregation of Israel. They were utterly astonished at their unbelief. Both Joshua and Caleb sought to remind the people that the land that they spied out was a good land. They said to the people, "If the Lord is pleased with us, then He will bring us into the land, and give it to us - a land which flows with milk and honey. Only do not rebel against the Lord and do not fear the people of the land for they shall be our prey. Their protection has been removed from them, and the Lord is with us; do not fear them" (vs. 8-9).

Let's be sure we understand what it means for the Lord to be pleased with us. He is pleased with us if by faith we trust in His promises. Remember, God promised victory! All that Israel had to do was obey! Joshua and Caleb, men of faith in God's promise, said that these giants who occupied the fortified cities had their protection removed from them. They were easy pickings. The two men of faith reminded Israel that the Lord is with us; do not fear them. But, when there is unbelief there is fear, and this unbelief is rebellion against God (v. 9). A refusal to walk by faith and to walk by sight is a very serious sin. The congregation of Israel did not heed the godly exhortations of Joshua and Caleb but wanted to stone them to death (v. 10). Well, God had enough, and the glory of the Lord appeared (v. 10).

God said to Moses:

And the Lord said to Moses, 'How long will this people spurn Me? And how long will they not believe in Me, despite all the signs which I have performed in their midst? I will smite them with pestilence and dispossess them, and I will make you into a nation greater and mightier than they.' (Numbers 14:11-12)

If it were not for the intercession of Moses on behalf of the people, God would have destroyed them. Moses pled with the Lord that if He killed them what would the nations think after hearing about His fame. Moses pled with God that if He destroyed them, the nations would think that God was impotent to bring them into the land that He had promised them by oath (Numbers 14:16). Moses pled with the Lord to let His power be great just as God had declared. Moses appealed to God's slowness to anger, His abundant loving kindness, and His forgiveness of sin while not clearing the guilty. Moses asked God to pardon their iniquity according to the

greatness of His loving kindness (Numbers 14:18-19). God responded to Moses' intercessory prayer by pardoning them according to Moses' word (Numbers 14:20). While pardoning their great sin by not wiping them off the face of the earth, He would not clear the guilty. God's judgment was as follows. All those men who saw His glory manifested by His great signs which He performed in Egypt and in the wilderness by putting Him to the test ten times would not see the Promised Land (Numbers 14:22-23). God said to Moses and Aaron, "How long shall I bear with this evil congregation who are grumbling against Me? I have heard the complaints of the sons of Israel, which they are making against Me" (Numbers 14:26-27). All those grumblers perished in the wilderness except for Joshua and Caleb, for they are the only ones who lived by faith in God's promise. The children of the rebellious men would be shepherded for forty years in the wilderness, suffering for their fathers' unfaithfulness. The unfaithful leaders were spying for forty days; hence, God's judgment would be for forty years; a year for every day they were in the land (Numbers 14: 31-35).

We need to understand the spiritual application of this sad incident in Israel's history. Failure to believe in God's promise only leads to sad consequences. Joshua and Caleb exhibited the principle - where there is faith there is no fear. Sadly, those who chose not to trust in God's promise were dominated by fear, and it led to severe consequences.

We must not miss the lesson of this sad chapter in biblical history. It is a contrast of real men (Joshua and Caleb) with weak males (10 spies). Real men exhibit faith and courage while weak males exhibit unbelief and fear. The 10 spies were leaders in Israel, but their weakness infected a whole nation, which led to God's severe judgment upon the unfaithful. While children do not share in the guilt of the sins of their fathers (Ezekiel 18:20), the children of the unfaithful still had to endure the pain of wandering for 40 years in the wilderness until their unfaithful parents perished.

Husbands and fathers take heed! Your unfaithfulness can reap severe consequences for your wife and children. They can suffer for your bad decisions. The Bible says that to whom much is given, much is required. It is a privilege to be a head of a household. The exercise of godly leadership should bring honor and respect, but ungodly leadership brings shame. Determine to be a real man!

## **David**

David stands out as a prime example of biblical masculinity, despite some of his serious sins, David is known as the man after God's own heart. When God had rejected King Saul for his disobedience, God chose the shepherd boy, David, to replace him as king of Israel (1 Samuel 13:14). What were those serious sins that he committed? First, he committed adultery with Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah, who was at war with Israel's enemies where David should have

been as king of Israel. Second, David committed murder in order to cover up his adulterous affair and the resulting pregnancy. David gave orders to his battle commander, Joab, to place Uriah in the front line of the fiercest battle and then to withdraw from him so that he would most assuredly be killed. One might be prone to ask, “How can David be called the man after God’s own heart in light of being an adulterer and murderer?” It only demonstrates that in the best of men, sin is always lurking. While God forgave David when he repented of his sin, not requiring the death penalty for him, David paid a dear price, for the Lord had the child die in infancy.

David’s grievous sins were not the defining characteristic of his life. The thrust of his life was that of obedience to the Lord. David is attributed to writing 73 of the 150 Psalms in the Bible. David’s heart for God permeates the Psalms. David’s heart is seen in Psalm 27:8 – “When thou did say, seek my face, my heart said to Thee, Thy face, O Lord, I shall seek.” One only has to read the Psalms to see David’s devotion to prayer. It was his life blood!

In Psalm 119:111-112 we see David’s commitment to God’s word- “I have inherited thy testimonies forever, for they are the joy of my heart. I have inclined my heart to perform thy statutes forever, even to the end.” It is noteworthy that God speaks so highly of David even after David’s death. Here are God’s words spoken to Solomon at the dedication of the Temple:

And as for you, if you walk before me as your father David walked, in integrity of heart and uprightness, doing according to all that I have commanded you and will keep my statutes and my ordinances, then I will establish the throne of your kingdom over Israel forever just as I promised to your father David, saying, ‘you shall not lack a man on the throne of Israel.’ (1 Kings 9:4-5)

On one level, David can be seen as “a man’s man.” After all, he took down the giant Goliath with one stone from his sling. Goliath had intimidated the entire Israeli army including King Saul. They were all greatly afraid (1 Samuel 17:24). Fear makes cowards of us; where there is fear there is no courage. Israel’s fear was based on their own realization that in their own strength they could not defeat Goliath. But notice the contrast of David with the army of Israel. David says, “For who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should taunt the armies of the living God?” David’s concern was the honor and glory of God.

David demonstrated his faith and fearlessness in taking on mighty Goliath. Seeing that David was but a youth, King Saul was hesitant to let David be Israel’s champion. But David responded:

Your servant was attending his father’s sheep. When a lion or a bear came and took a lamb from the flock, I went out after him and attacked him, and rescued it from his mouth; and when he rose up against me, I seized him by his beard and struck him and killed him. Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear; and this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, since he has taunted the armies of the living God. And David said, ‘the Lord delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear,

he will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine.’ And Saul said to David, ‘go and may the Lord be with you.’ (1 Samuel 17:34-37)

From a worldly perspective, some males might say, “So, he chases after a lion and bear and in hand-to-hand combat takes them down. Now that’s impressive! I suppose David is a real man.” While David’s storytelling obviously impressed Saul, this is not what makes David a glowing example of biblical masculinity. Now it is true that biblical masculinity entails skills of war. After all, David did say in Psalm 144:1-“Blessed be the Lord my Rock, who trains my hands for war, and my fingers for battle.” But this is not the key to David’s success against Goliath. When David went out to face the giant Goliath, we see this dialogue between David and Goliath:

When the Philistine looked and saw David, he disdained him; for he was but a youth, and ruddy, with a handsome appearance. And the Philistine said to David, ‘Am I a dog, that you come to me with sticks? And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. The Philistine also said to David, ‘Come to me, and I will give your flesh to the birds of the sky and the beasts of the field.’ Then David said to the Philistine, ‘**You come to me with a sword, a spear, and the javelin**, but I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have taunted. This day the Lord will deliver you up into my hands, and I will strike you down and remove your head from you, and I will give the dead bodies of the army of the Philistines this day to the birds of the sky and the wild beasts of the earth, **that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, and that all this assembly may know that the Lord is not delivered by sword or by spear; for the battle is the Lord’s and He will give you into our hands.** (1 Samuel 17:42-47)  
(emphasis is mine)

This pagan giant of a man (over 9 feet tall) did not intimidate David in the least. Where did David’s fearlessness come from? It came from his total commitment to his faith in the true and living God! As I have said earlier, **where there is faith, there is no fear.** And with his sling containing one stone, he plants that stone into the forehead of Goliath sending him to the ground where David then takes Goliath’s own sword and decapitates him.

David was a glowing example of biblical masculinity because of his heart for God that sought the glory of God, and whose heart was committed to the commandments of God. David truly exemplified the truth of Isaiah 41:10:

Do not fear, for I am with you; do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.

## **Jehoshaphat**

Jehoshaphat was the fourth king of the kingdom of Judah, and was one of the very few godly kings of Judah. Let's see why Jehoshaphat is a glowing example of biblical masculinity. As king of Judah, he is Judah's leader. The greatness of Jehoshaphat is that he illustrates the power of prayer, trust in the living God, and that victory comes through reliance on God, rather than on human strength.

Jehoshaphat was informed that a great multitude was coming against him. Initially, he was afraid because he knew militarily that he was no match against this great army coming against Judah. Jehoshaphat does what we all should do in face of great danger. He seeks the Lord in prayer and proclaims a fast for the entire nation. Jehoshaphat's leadership impacts the entire nation to seek the Lord (2 Chronicles 20:4). **Real men often inspire others to faithfulness.** Please note the greatness of Jehoshaphat's prayer before the entire assembly of Israel:

O, Lord, the God of our fathers, art thou not God in the heavens? And art Thou not ruler over all the kingdoms of the nations? Power and might are in Thy hand so that no one can stand against Thee. Didst Thou not, O our God, drive out the inhabitants of the land before Thy people Israel, and give it to the descendents of Abraham Thy friend forever? And they lived in it, and have built Thee a sanctuary there for Thy name, saying, should evil come upon us, the sword, or judgment, or pestilence, or famine, we will stand before this house and before Thee (for Thy name is in this house) and cry to Thee in our distress, and Thou wilt hear and deliver us (2 Chronicles 20: 5-9).

First, the nation's leader is exhibiting true godly leadership by leading the nation in prayer. Biblical masculinity leads people in the way of godliness by reminding them of the greatness of their God. Jehoshaphat acknowledges the sovereignty of God over the nations of the earth. He reminds the nation of God's past faithfulness in driving out Israel's enemies and God's faithfulness in giving the land to Abraham's descendents. In other words, God is always faithful to His promises. Jehoshaphat reminds the Lord of His presence in His earthly temple. Jehoshaphat is pleading with his God to defend His holy house, and he has confidence that His God will hear this prayer and deliver them.

Please note the humility and honesty of this godly king in 2 Chronicles 20:12:

O, our God, wilt Thou not judge them? For we are powerless before this great multitude who is coming against us; nor do we know what to do, but our eyes are on Thee.

A godly leader does not exhibit self-reliance, for he acknowledges his limitations and that his only hope is in his God. In this prayer, Jehoshaphat is echoing what David had recognized:

The King is not saved by a mighty army; a warrior is not delivered by great strength, a horse is a false hope for victory; nor does it deliver anyone by its great strength. Behold, the eye of the Lord is on those who fear him, on those who hope for his lovingkindness. (Psalm 33:16-18)

How does God respond to such prayers? The Lord spoke saying, “Listen, all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem and King Jehoshaphat: thus says the Lord to you, ‘do not fear or be dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours but God’s (2 Chronicles 20:15). Great, humble prayers move the Almighty to do wondrous things on our behalf! God said, “You need not fight in this battle; station yourselves, stand and see the salvation of the Lord on your behalf, O, Judah and Jerusalem, do not fear or be dismayed; tomorrow go out to face them, for the Lord is with you”(2 Chronicles 20:17). This was God’s promise to this godly king leading his people. Jehoshaphat’s response is what our response should be to God’s faithfulness regarding His promises to us:

And Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face in the ground, and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem fell down before the Lord, worshiping the Lord. And the Levites, from the sons of the Korahites, stood up to praise the Lord God of Israel, with a very loud voice. (2 Chronicles 20:18)

God’s deliverance of Judah is one of the most amazing events in biblical history. In the early morning hours, Jehoshaphat stood and said:

Listen to me, O, Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem, put your trust in the Lord your God, and you will be established. Put your trust in His prophets and succeed. And when he consulted with the people, he appointed those who sing to the Lord and those who praised him in holy attire, as they went out before the army and said, ‘Give thanks to the Lord, for His lovingkindness is everlasting.( 2 Chronicles 20:20-21)

One of the things that I love about this passage is who the king appointed as the vanguard (tip of the spear) for the army. It was the professional singers! If you are a church choir member, imagine yourselves being the front line in facing a seemingly unbeatable foe. But remember, God had promised that Judah would not have to wield the sword or shoot an arrow because the Lord was going to fight on their behalf. What follows will thrill your heart.

**And when they began singing and praising**, the Lord set ambushes against the sons of Ammon, Moab and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah; so they were routed. For the sons of Ammon and Moab rose up against the inhabitants of Mount Seir destroying them completely, and when they had finished with the inhabitants of Seir, they helped to destroy one another. When Judah came to the lookout of the wilderness, they looked toward the multitude; and behold, they were corpses lying on the ground, and no one had escaped. And when Jehoshaphat and his people came to take their spoil, they found much among them, including goods, garments, and valuable things which they picked for themselves, more than they could carry. And they were three days taking the spoil because there was so much (2 Chronicles 20:22-25) (Emphasis mine).

Singing and praising God is the means that God uses to destroy a vast army where no one escapes alive! Let's never forget that it was the prayer of a godly king with his people reminding God of His great promises that brings about the great victory.

Biblical masculinity is marked by those given to earnest prayers who exalt the majesty and sovereignty of God on behalf of themselves and their families. At any time, especially during times of crises, the real man leads his wife and children to the very throne of God, trusting in God to be true to all of His promises.

## **Hezekiah**

Hezekiah is one of the greatest examples of biblical masculinity. He was 25 years old when he became king of Judah. He demonstrates himself to be a real man in light of his zeal for the glory of God, his unwavering trust in the Lord, his total commitment to the commandments of God, and his great leadership during the time of great crisis which led to one of the greatest prayers in the Bible. His zeal for pure worship, his wholehearted trust in the Lord and His commandments is seen as follows:

And he did right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his father David had done. He removed the high places and broke down the sacred pillars and cut down the Asherah. He also broke in pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made, for until those days the sons of Israel burned incense to; and it was called Nehushtan. He trusted in the Lord, the God of Israel; so that after him there was none like him among all the king of Judah, nor among those who were before him. For he clung to the Lord; he did not depart from following him, but kept His commandments to the Lord and commanded Moses. (2 Kings 18:3-6)

Notice that he was a man after God's own heart just like David. His zeal for pure worship is demonstrated by his destruction of pagan worship altars throughout Judah. His trust in the Lord was unparalleled, for there was none before or after him that trusted God like him. He clung to the Lord in keeping God's commandments, demonstrating his wholehearted devotion to his God.

Hezekiah's great leadership was shown in a time of great danger for the city of Jerusalem. The great Assyrian empire had come against Jerusalem. No nation had been able to resist the military might of the Assyrians. On a human level, Assyria was virtually an undefeatable foe. It had come to lay siege against Jerusalem with great confidence that Jerusalem would be taken. Rabshakeh was the official spokesman for Sennacherib, the King of Assyria. Rabshakeh had come to intimidate the inhabitants of Jerusalem to not trust in Hezekiah and to surrender. Rabshakeh said that none of the gods of the nations were able to deliver them from the Assyrians and what made

them think that Judah's God would deliver them. Hezekiah demonstrated his great leadership by telling the inhabitants of Jerusalem not to answer the intimidating questions, which they obeyed.

Hezekiah's godliness is further shown by his reaction to the insults of the Assyrians. He tore his clothes and covered himself with sackcloth and entered the house of the Lord (2 Kings 19:1). Real men, as noted earlier, are men of prayer. The act of covering oneself with sackcloth is a symbolic act signifying mourning, repentance, and humility before God. The sackcloth, being a rough material, is very uncomfortable and represents the person's internal state of distress and contrition. Biblical masculinity entails a leadership that is marked by genuine humility before one's God. This man acknowledges his utter dependence upon his God, pleading with his God to hear and show mercy. Such prayers move heaven to act!

Rabshakeh presents a most insulting letter to Hezekiah. The letter insults Jehovah by saying He cannot deliver Jerusalem since all the other gods of the nations were unable to deliver their worshipers from the hands of the Assyrians. The Assyrians assumed Jehovah is no different from the other gods of the conquered nations.

When messengers gave this letter to Hezekiah, he took the letter and spread it out before the Lord in the house of the Lord. I consider Hezekiah's prayer to be one of the greatest prayers in the entire Bible:

And Hezekiah prayed before the Lord and said, 'O, Lord, the God of Israel, who art enthroned above the cherubim, Thou art the God, Thou alone of all the kingdoms of the earth. Thou has made heaven and earth. Incline Thine ear, O Lord, and hear; open Thine eyes, O, Lord, and see; and listen to the words of Sennacherib, which he has sent to reproach the living God. Truly, O Lord, the kings of Assyria have devastated the nations and their lands and have cast their gods into the fire, for they were not gods but the work of men's hands, wood and stone. So they have destroyed them. And now, O Lord our God, I pray deliver us from his hand that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou alone, O, Lord art God.' (2 Kings 19:14-19)

The greatness of this prayer is that it focuses upon the glory and honor of God. Obviously, Hezekiah does not want to perish at the hands of these pagans, but he wants deliverance for God's honor. His prayer recognizes God's sovereignty over all nations. Yes, it is true the Assyrians have destroyed all the other nations but their gods were no gods at all. He wants deliverance so that all people will know that Jehovah is the true and only God of heaven and earth.

The assurance for Judah's deliverance was issued by the prophet Isaiah that God indeed had heard Hezekiah's prayer. Since the insult of the Assyrians was directed at Jehovah, Jehovah has determined to fight for Judah. They will not have to anything. God determines that the Assyrians

will not shoot one arrow or come before it with any shield, or throw up mounds against it. God says:

By the way that he came, by the same he shall return, and he shall not come to the city, declares the Lord. For I will defend the city to save it for My own sake and for My servant David's sake. (2 Kings 19:33-34)

The defeat of the Assyrians was devastating:

Then it happened that night that the angel of the Lord went out, and struck 185,000 of the Assyrians; and when men rose early in the morning, behold, all of them were dead. (2 Kings 19:35)

Sennacherib had no choice but to depart to his home in Nineveh where it came about that as he was worshipping his god, Nisroch, that two of his sons murdered him (2 Kings 19: 37). There is only one true God who delivers and that is Jehovah who will come to defend His people who humble themselves before Him and to plead for Him to vindicate His name. It is only fitting that the pagan Assyrian king is murdered in the temple of his god who obviously could not save him.

Let every Christian male aspire to be like a Hezekiah! Be a man who clings to the commandments of God, be the man who trusts God with unwavering commitment which inspires those under his leadership to trust in God, and lead by demonstrating a devotion to prayer for God to vindicate His holy name.

## **Josiah**

Josiah will be the last king that I will discuss as one who was exemplary of biblical masculinity. He was a man after God's own heart just like David:

And he did right in the sight of the Lord and walked in all the way of his father David, nor did he turn aside to the right or to the left. (2 Kings 22:2)

Josiah's greatness is also seen in his response to the finding of the lost book of the law of Moses. Upon hearing the reading of Moses' law he tore his clothes because he realized that his fathers had not observed the word of the Lord which has prompted God's wrath upon the nation (2 Chronicles 34:19, 21). Because the nation had forsaken the Lord and burned incense to other gods, God was going to bring calamity upon the nation (2 Chronicles 34:24-25). There was no stopping of this calamity, but God said that because Josiah's heart was tender before God and

that he humbled himself before Him by tearing his clothes and weeping before the Lord, God would not bring calamity during Josiah's lifetime (2 Chronicles 34:27-28).

We see the greatest example of godly leadership in Josiah when he stands before the entire nation and reads the entirety of the book of the law and makes covenant before the Lord:

And the King stood by the pillar and made a covenant before the Lord, to walk after the Lord, and keep His commandments and His testimonies and statutes with all his heart and all his soul, to carry out the words of this covenant that were written in this book. And all the people entered into the covenant. (2 Kings 23:3)

Josiah was not a man of mere words, for he carried out the greatest reform in the history of Judah finally ridding the land of all pagan worship centers. This demonstrates Josiah's zeal for the purity of worship, This zeal for worship is further demonstrated in having Judah celebrate the Passover which had not been observed since the days of the judges, which was approximately 300-400 years (2 Kings 23:4-22). There was no one like him:

And before him there was no king like him who turned to the Lord with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses; nor did any like him arise after him (2 Kings 23:25)

The difference between the two godly kings, Hezekiah and Josiah, is as follows: Scripture says Hezekiah **trusted the Lord like no other** and did not depart from following the Lord. Josiah **turned to the Lord** like no other. The one instance of Josiah not trusting the Lord leads to his death at the hands of Neco king of Egypt who had come to make war on the Euphrates, which was not a war against Josiah. The Egyptian king had warned Josiah not to "stick his nose in someone else's business." Josiah did not heed the warning; consequently, he was killed in battle, a battle that he should never have engaged in. Despite this unwise action, the Scripture speaks of Josiah's devotion to the law of God (2 Chronicles 35:20-27).

As I conclude this section on the godliness of several of Judah's kings, they serve as exemplary models of biblical masculinity. They were each men of great fidelity to God's commandments processing a zeal for godly worship and who inspired those under their charge to greater godliness. They were true leaders! Each young man aspiring to be a husband and father one day should look to these men as those to imitate. Being mere men, they all had their sins; therefore, we emulate their redeemed characteristics, not everything they did.

## **V. Biblical masculinity and leadership**

### **Male headship (leadership)**

If we are going to understand masculine leadership, we must understand how God created mankind, male and female. The godly male must understand how God created him and how he must relate to his female companion.

God designed male and female with unique characteristics, reflecting different aspects of His image designed for the godly functioning of human society, particularly in the family. Each gender contributes unique strengths and roles to reflect God's nature and to complement each other. Since both are made in God's image (Gen. 1:27), they each have dignity in their personhood. The woman is to be granted honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life (1 Peter 3:7). The female reflects God's image just as much as the male. The uniqueness and richness of feminine qualities are no less than those masculine qualities. Both find their origin in the divine being. Man (male and female) is the pinnacle of God's creation. To represent God properly in this world requires both men and women. It is no coincidence that Satan likes to attack us in this realm. Since God designed male and female to share dignity as God's image and to exercise dominion over the world as God's co-rulers (vice regents), it's no surprise that Satan wants to sabotage God's purpose for mankind. One of the saddest realities of fallen humanity is the denigration of women in virtually all human cultures throughout history. In many cultures they have been treated like chattel. Such treatment is reprehensible. In the history of the world, it has been the Christian faith that has brought back dignity to womanhood.

### **The male was divinely created to be the leader**

I want to reiterate that God's intention for the male to be the leader in the home and church is not in any way an indication of the male's superiority over the woman. It's a matter of God's ordained structure for human society.

It is no minor theological point that God created Adam first (Gen. 2:7). To Adam, God gave the commandment that he could eat from any tree of the garden except from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 2:16-17). In the creation, God said that everything He created was good. It is interesting that there is one thing that God said was not good. Genesis 2:18 says: "Then the Lord God said, 'It's not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him.'" As Adam was naming the beasts of the field (Gen.2: 20), he noticed that there

was no suitable helper for him as there was in the animal world; therefore, God caused a deep sleep to fall upon man, and as he slept God took one of his physical ribs and made a woman from it and then brought the woman to the man. The biblical account describes Adam's response to the creation of the woman:

And the man said, this is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of Man. (Gen. 2:23)

The Hebrew word for man is "ish," and the Hebrew word for woman is "ishshah). The fact that the female is called "woman" indicates that she was taken out of man. Genesis 2:24-25 emphasizes that a man leaves his father and mother and cleaves to his wife, becoming one flesh with her. The union of a man and woman constitutes a new family unit for society.

Adam's response to seeing woman recognizes a shared humanity and intimacy. It signifies his recognition of her as being one who shares his essence in nature, distinct from the animals. It emphasizes a profound spiritual, emotional, and physical bond intended for marriage. The Bible commentator, Matthew Henry, is known for his great comment on Eve's creation:

That the woman was made of a rib out of the side of Adam; not made out of his head to rule over him, nor out of his feet to be trampled upon by him, but out of his side to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected, and near his heart to be beloved. (Matthew Henry commentary on Genesis 2:23)

The term "suitable helper" does not imply some slavish subservience but rather a complementary and vital partnership, indicating a strong and necessary partner for Adam to fulfill God's purposes. However, her creation does demonstrate her God ordained role in the marriage relationship. God's ordained structure within the marriage relationship is seen in 1 Corinthians 11:3:

But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and **the man is the head of a woman**, and God is the head of Christ.(Emphasis is mine)

1 Corinthians 11:7-10 emphasizes what Genesis says about woman's creation:

For a man ought not to have his head covered, since he is the image and glory of God; but **the woman is the glory of man, for man does not originate from woman, but woman from man; for indeed man was not created for the woman's sake, but woman for the man's sake.** Therefore the woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels. (Emphasis is mine)

This in no way diminishes the dignity and value of the woman. It simply reflects God's ordained structure for the marriage relationship. The man was made first and made head of the creation and is the image of the divine dominion. The woman was made out of man to reflect man's glory. She is to be in subjection to her husband and to honor him out of whom she was made.

The woman was made for the man, to be his help-meet, and not the man for the woman. She was naturally made subject to him because she was made for him, for his use, and comfort. It is incumbent upon husbands to not misapply or abuse the fact that his wife was made for him to be of his use and comfort. Men specifically are made to work, to exercise dominion over the world in terms of their vocation or calling. She was made to help him in this capacity. His wife should want to help him in this calling.

The male needs the woman. Adam needed someone to bear children, to care for the home while he was performing his duties of providing for his family. God gives women an emotional ability to empathize and work with children in a way that males are not. In a later section we will look at the traits of gentleness and compassion noting that these are not exclusively female traits; however, these traits find greater expression often times in women than in men. This is no surprise because she was created to be a nurturer of children in the home. When a young male child is hurt, who do they most often run to? The mother. Now grant it, the mother has more contact with the child because the father is at work; nonetheless, a mother's solace of her child is not quite the same as that of a father. She will often pick up the child, kiss him and give words of comfort. Not that a father would not seek to comfort the child, but there may be the attitude, "Come on boy, quit the crying, you'll be okay." As the male child grows into early manhood, if the household is not in emotional turmoil, he has a closeness with his mother. As I was growing up as a young male, one of the worst things that could be said to me was an insult towards my mother. Amusingly, if another boy said to me, "Why your mama wears army boots," this was grounds for a fight.

A woman who adopts the attitude of modern feminism, "I don't need a man, and I can do anything that he can do," is blatantly setting aside God's intention for mankind and foolishness to even think that she can do anything that a man can do. Such thinking will only lead to the woman's frustration in life. She was created to help man and to have children. The notion of couples who don't want to have children is a very self-centered mentality, and one that actually leads to the disintegration of culture. It has been established that any human culture whose birth rate drops below 2.0 children per family is a culture that cannot be sustained.

The male's headship is affirmed from 1 Peter 3:1-7. The wife is exhorted to be submissive to her own husband, even to those who may be disobedient to the word with the hope that he can be won with the word as he observes her godly behavior (vs.1-4) Submission implies the acknowledgment of headship. This godly behavior is seen in her being of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious to the Lord. The headship of her husband is seen in the example given by the apostle. Godly Sarah, the wife of Abraham, referred to her husband as "lord." This is no slavish relationship; it simply demonstrated her recognition of her husband as her authoritative head. In a later section, we will deal with how the husband in this passage is to relate to his wife. He is not to abuse his headship, but we will see that he has a greater obligation even towards her.

We see male headship clearly set forth in Ephesians 5:22-24:

Wife's, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. **For the husband is the head of the wife** as Christ also is a head of the church, He Himself being the Savior the body. But if the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything.

In the marriage relationship, the husband is the authoritative head, and his wife owes him obedience "in everything." Of course, in interpreting Scripture with Scripture, a wife's submission is "in the Lord." Obeying her husband in everything cannot be construed for her to obey a husband who abuses her, who asks her to clearly violate scriptural commands. Her first obligation is always to Christ. Colossians 3:18 exhorts wives to be subject to their husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. This "as is fitting in the Lord" would set forth the limitations on her submission. Male headship has biblical limitations. In an upcoming section, we will deal with the husband's biblical obligation from Ephesians 5, which has far more reaching implications than perhaps a wife's obligation to submit to him.

### **Male headship in the church**

A proper interpretation of Scripture clearly sets forth male headship in the church, that is, in public worship. Sadly, even among some "conservative" churches there has been a departure from only males leading in worship. A worldly feminism has infected the church in many respects whereby the typical objection is that Paul was some ancient chauvinist. It's not that women cannot properly understand the Scripture because there are many wise and biblically astute women. The issue is: what is God's ordained structure for public worship?

Women are not to be teachers of men in the church nor exercise authority over men, but they are to remain silent in corporate worship. One of the most relevant biblical texts is 1 Timothy 2: 8,11-15:

Therefore I want the men in every place to pray, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and dissension... Let a woman quietly receive instruction with entire submissiveness. But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man but to remain quiet. For it was Adam who was first created, and then Eve. And it was not Adam who was deceived, but the woman being quite deceived, fell into transgression. But women shall be preserved through the bearing of children if they continue in faith and love and sanctity with self-restraint.

Our first observation from v.8 is that the Greek word for “men” is the word, “aner” which refers only to males; hence, the exhortation for a man to lift up their holy hands in prayer is restricted to males in corporate worship. Males are to lead in corporate prayer, not women. We do not believe this restriction applies to other gatherings where women are present such as in midweek prayer meetings because they are not considered a leadership role or formal teaching.

In public worship, a woman is not to teach or exercise authority over a man (aner), for public teaching is an exercise of authority. Women are to remain silent, that is, they are silent in terms of public teaching. For a woman to exercise authority entails telling a man what to do. We know from Scripture that in other contexts, women could teach males. Women may and ought to teach their children at home the principles of religion. Timothy, as a child, had known the Holy Scriptures; being taught by his mother and grandmother ( 2 Tim.3:15) Aquila and his wife Priscilla expounded unto Apollos the way of God more perfectly; but then they did it privately (Acts 18:26).

The most powerful and inescapable reason for only males teaching and exercising authority in the church is a twofold reasoning of the inspired apostle Paul found in 1 Timothy 2:13-14:

For it was Adam who was first created, and then Eve. And it was not Adam who was deceived but the woman being quite deceived fell into transgression.

Adam was first formed, then Eve; she was created for the man, and not the man for the woman (1 Cor. 11:9); then she was deceived, and brought the man into the transgression. The man’s priority in creation is a major argument for male headship in the church. It clearly points to man’s leadership in public worship. For a woman to speak publicly in the church would violate the creation ordinance. Second, women are not to exercise authority over men because Eve was deceived, not Adam. Adam and Eve were proto-types. The headship of Adam in creation carries over to the church down through the ages. Eve’s deception has implications for her daughters down through the generations. Why would the inspired apostle use Eve’s deception as a reason for women not to exercise authority over men if there was not something in her that was passed on to all subsequent women? The implication is that there is something about Eve that made her more inclined to deception than her male counterpart, which could explain why the devil picked her out and not Adam.

By deduction, we can infer male headship in the church by how the Scripture describes the passing on of sin to future generations. Scripture says that through one man, sin entered into the world (Rom. 5:12). Even though Eve, the woman, being deceived by the devil led in the transgression, Adam is seen as the responsible person in terms of being the covenantal head of the human race. Eve may have been deceived, but Adam willfully partook of the forbidden fruit.

Male headship in the church is also clearly established in passages such as in 1 Timothy 3:2 and in Titus 1:6 where these two passages refer to prospective elders to be “husbands of one wife.” Moreover, Titus 1:9 says that one of the qualifications for an elder is for the man to be able to

exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict. We've already seen that the Scripture relegates teaching to males in the church.

### **Implications for male leadership in the home and church**

A husband and father has a moral obligation to lead his family in its spiritual growth. This leadership flows out of his personal commitment to Scripture and his desire to be godly. Biblical masculinity demands that he is the spiritual leader in his home. His foremost desire should be to model Christ likeness for his family. For a male to relegate spiritual teaching primarily to his wife is an outright abdication of God's expectations. For the husband and father to not be the spiritual leader in the home is a contradiction of the creation ordinance where the wife is to be the helper, not the leader. She is to have a supportive role not the primary role. When present in the home, he should lead in Bible study and prayer. He should take the initiative in being a spiritual visionary for his family. He may want his family to be engaged in writing missionaries and praying for them, being engaged in pro-life activities, finding ways for them to be engaged in evangelistic endeavors or visitation to retirement centers in order to minister to the elderly who often are very lonely. Now, because of his vocation, he may be absent from his home for a time. In this case, the godly man encourages his wife to assume spiritual leadership of their children, but once he returns home, he resumes his leadership position.

Spiritual leadership in his home does not preclude the input of his godly wife. He should consult with his wife on what she thinks could be helpful for the spiritual welfare of the family. She may have ideas that he did not think of. Of course, he is to be the ultimate decision-maker in the home. The husband and father needs to understand that "the buck stops with him." After consulting with his wife, he then makes the final decision. **A godly woman wants her husband to take the initiative!** After all, she understands that she was created for the man, to be his help meet. The heart of every godly woman yearns to submit to a godly husband and father.

The godly husband and father not only leads his family in spiritual worship, but he leads them to public worship, choosing a Bible centered church where the gospel is clearly preached. Where his family worships is no minor decision, but it can have profound ramifications for his family. It must be a church committed to sound biblical doctrine. What kind of preacher is leading worship? A weak church with weak church leaders will eventually take its toll on his family. He must carefully study what the prospective church stands for. Family worship is essential, but the Scripture puts a premium on corporate worship. Psalm 87:2-3 says:

The Lord loves the gates of Zion more than all the other dwelling places of Jacob.  
Glorious things are spoken of you, O, city of God.

We read in Hebrews 10:23-25:

Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembly together, as the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more, as you see the day drawing near.

The local church is essential for the spiritual growth of a family. It is where the body of Christ gathers to worship the true and living God, and where the spiritual gifts of the saints are operating. The exercise of one's spiritual gift "causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love." One of the most important aspects of the local assembly is that it is where we stimulate one another to love and good works. We encourage one another with God's word; we comfort one another when we are grieving and afflicted.

### **Biblical masculinity takes the lead in teaching and child discipline**

We have already looked at the husband and father taking the lead in family worship, but we want to address the importance of teaching and discipline in the home. The Proverbs clearly sets forth the father as the instructor of wisdom and knowledge for his children. The entirety of Proverbs 2 is a father's exhortation to his sons (and by implication his daughters) to receive his sayings, and to treasure his commandments and to be attentive to wisdom, inclining one's heart to understanding, pleading with his children to cry out for discernment and to seek out wisdom with the earnestness of one who searches for hidden treasures. The purpose of this instruction is for the child to learn how to walk in righteousness, avoiding the path of the wicked. **The assumption of this Proverb is that the father's commandments are the commandments of God.** The father is not giving worldly counsel. The father who does not know the word of God, loving it with all his heart, is a father who is ill-equipped to give godly direction to his children. Proverbs 3 is a father's exhortation to his children for their hearts to keep God's commandments. And, the promise associated with this obedience is longevity of life (vs. 1-2). It is an exhortation for his children to manifest kindness and truth (v. 3). He exhorts them to trust in the Lord with all their heart, not leaning on their own understanding (v.5). His teaching is an exhortation for them not to be wise in their own eyes but to fear the Lord and turn away from evil (v.7). His teaching is for his children not to reject the Lord's discipline or loathe His reproof, for whom the Lord loves He reproves even as a father, the son in whom he delights (vs. 11-12). The godly and biblical man takes the lead in disciplining his children. The father informs his children that his discipline of them is for their godliness. A father who neglects this important task and relegates it to his wife as the primary discipliner is one who is abdicating his biblical responsibility. This does not mean that the wife does not discipline the children, especially when her husband is not home. The point is - the father is to take the lead in disciplining the children. The father teaches his children to not be afraid but to trust in the Lord (vs. 24-26). These are but some of a father's exhortations in Proverbs 3.

Proverbs 4 contains additional wonderful exhortations of a father to his children. His children are to heed their father's instruction so that they may gain understanding. He exhorts his children not to abandon his instruction (vs. 1-2). He exhorts his children's hearts to hold fast to his commandments, to acquire wisdom and understanding, for they will guard them (vs. 4-6). The godly father's instruction is not simply verbal, but he models all that he is instructing. Proverbs 3:11 states-"I have directed you in the way of wisdom; I **have led you** in upright paths." There are many more expectations of a father to his children, but this shall suffice for the time being. You should get the point of what God commands a father to do in his home with reference to his children!

Proverbs 6:20-23 is noteworthy:

My son, observe the commandment of your father, do not forsake the teaching of your mother; bind them continually upon your heart; tie them around your neck. When you walk about they will guide you; when you sleep they will watch over you; and when you awake they will talk to you. For the commandment is a lamp, and the teaching is light; and reproofs for discipline are the way of life.

Note that the mother is involved in the teaching of her children. Children's obedience to their father and mother is essential for the children's spiritual welfare, but the Scripture is clear that when the father is present he is the leader in instructing his children.

Proverbs 13:1 demonstrates that the father is the primary discipliner in his home - "a wise son accepts his father's discipline, but a scoffer does not listen to rebuke."

Ephesians 6:4 is an admonition to fathers:

And, fathers, do not provoke your children to anger but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

Fathers are to deal with their children with tenderness and love. Here are some ways that fathers are guilty of exasperating their children.

- Dealing unfairly or cruel treatment. This would include favoritism, excessive or inconsistent discipline, and harsh or demeaning language.
- Inconsistent discipline where they don't know what to expect. One day he can be excessively lenient and another unduly harsh. This leads to their frustration.
- Demands that are trivial or unreasonable such as constant criticism for minor flaws and an expectation of perfection where the child feels that he or she cannot do anything right in the eyes of their father. This can be very frustrating. This can create a hopeless attitude.

- Excessive focus on personal achievement. The father must never live out his fantasies in the lives of his children. He may push them too hard to excel in academics or sports. I once knew a wealthy father who was once a professional baseball player. His 13-year-old son was a gifted golfer, and his father once told me that he would spend \$50,000 a year to transport his son to youth golf tournaments around the country. On one occasion, his son did not perform very well in a tournament, and the father told me and a friend who was standing next to me, “I felt like throwing the \*\*\*\*\*out of the airplane. My friend said to me later, being facetious, “I guess that really motivated the son to be better.”
- A lack of love and affection. The father may neglect or be emotionally distant, rarely giving them a hug and telling them that he loves them. God forbid that he thinks such displays of affection are unmanly.
- He never admits wrongdoing to his children, thinking that admitting mistakes is a sign of weakness, when in reality, children appreciate a father who admits to mistakes or sinful behavior. Years ago, I once dealt with my oldest son in an unduly harsh way. His behavior deserved a reprimand, but the way I said it, and what I said to him was harsh. My middle son, who was soon to go off to the Iraqi war, told me that if I had said something like that to him that he might not see me again. My youngest son heard exactly what I said to his older brother and agreed that his brother ought to be reprimanded, but he told me that I ought to seriously go to his brother and ask for forgiveness for what and how I said it. Fortunately, my youngest son spoke wisdom to his father. I went off to pray and contemplate what I should say to my oldest son. The Lord convicted me of my harshness, and I determined to go and ask him to forgive me for my harsh words. I determined not to try to minimize my actions by saying, “You know what you did was wrong, and you deserved to be reprimanded.” No, I simply asked him to forgive me, which he was more than willing to do. A very tense family event was peacefully resolved. This event actually occurred on Christmas Eve afternoon. One can only imagine that if I had not confessed my sinful behavior what our Christmas Eve and Christmas Day would’ve been like.

What are some positive things that a father can do to not exasperate his children? And, what are some ways for him to nurture his children in godliness?

- When administering discipline, he does it with the child’s best interests at heart, focusing on teaching and guidance for the child in righteousness. He should **always use the Scripture** so that the child understands that discipline is of the Lord, not of the father’s whimsical preferences. Again, such procedure demands that the father knows the Scripture!
- To be a teacher of God’s word, modeling godly behavior in their presence is absolutely crucial for their spiritual development. He demonstrates to his children that he is not a hypocrite, demanding certain things of them when he is not behaving in a godly way.
- He creates a clear and consistent environment where children can feel comfortable talking about their feelings and concerns to their father.

- He sets clear and consistent boundaries, helping them feel secure and understanding fatherly expectations. My wife once told me that when she was a young girl, her father essentially did not set boundaries for her. She said that she told her friends one day that she had to be home at a certain hour when in reality that was not true. She set her own boundaries, which was kind of amazing.
- He should encourage a certain level of independence, providing opportunities for them to make choices and age appropriate risks which can help them develop confidence and self-reliance. Of course, a father must be very careful in what kind of independence he's allowing. A godly father understands the pitfalls of the world, and the tactics of our enemy, the devil.
- He should create a positive and supportive home environment. When there is tension between the husband and wife on an ongoing basis, this is very exasperating for a child, and it creates a very spiritually unhealthy environment for everyone, and it gives a skewed view of marriage life. This child should not have the attitude, "Well, I guess this is typical married life."

## **VI. Biblical masculinity shows boldness in maintaining biblical convictions**

Biblical boldness is not arrogance or rashness, but rather a confident and courageous approach to his faith, speech, and actions, often in the face of opposition or danger. It is characterized by a fearless proclamation of truth and a steadfast adherence to one's convictions, empowered by faith in God and His word. This boldness is often manifested in how he shares the gospel, standing up for what is biblically right, and praying with confidence.

There are two great historical examples of a holy boldness in maintaining biblical convictions. The first was Athanasius, who was a Christian theologian of the fourth century. He was Bishop of Alexandria known for his strong opposition to Arianism and his defense of the Nicene Creed. Arianism was an ancient heresy of the church that denied the full divinity of Christ, claiming that He was a created being rather than co-eternal with God the Father. This heresy had swept the Christian world for a time. Despite facing opposition from emperors, bishops, and other theologians, Athanasius remained steadfast in his beliefs, enduring five exiles for his biblical conviction. When confronted by other theologians with the fact that the whole Christian world had embraced Arianism and that he was alone in his views, Athanasius replied, "Then, Athanasius, contra mundum (against the world)." Athanasius grounded his arguments from Scripture and highlighted the importance of the Nicene Creed (325 AD) which expressed the Son's unity with the Father. Though alone for a time, Athanasius' unwavering commitment to the word of God eventually triumphed in the Christian church. His legacy reminds us that boldness in maintaining doctrinal integrity is worth every sacrifice.

Another great historical example of such manly convictions is that of Martin Luther, the one credited with starting the Protestant Reformation in the 1500s. When Luther was challenged by the Roman Catholic Church to recant his teachings on Scripture, his famous reply was - "Here I stand; I can do no other." Luther knew very well what was at stake. If found guilty, which was a virtual given, he would be burned at the stake as a heretic. Here was a man's man who was willing to die for his biblical convictions, but his sovereign God had other plans for Luther, and the world has never been the same since.

Athanasius and Martin Luther are but two glowing examples that when real men show forth boldness in their biblical convictions, God will use them mightily to change the world!

### **Biblical examples of masculine boldness**

#### **Moses**

Moses exhibited biblical boldness in returning to Egypt to deliver God's people out of bondage. He came to Pharaoh's court **demanding** the release of the Israelites. What person would ordinarily make such demands to a mighty ruler? Pharaoh could have easily had Moses executed, but a sovereign God had other plans. When Moses encountered God at the burning bush who informed him that he was going to be used by the true and living God to free God's people, Moses responded by saying, "Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the sons of Israel out of Egypt" (Ex. 3:11)? God responded, "Certainly I will be with you" (Ex. 3:12).

God promised to give Moses miraculous powers to convince Pharaoh that he should free the Hebrews. The true and living God was decimating the land of Egypt with all these horrific plagues, but Pharaoh still hardened his heart to not let Israel go, which God had said would happen. After the 9<sup>th</sup> plague of darkness over the entire land, Pharaoh had had enough and said to Moses, "Get away from me! Beware, do not see my face again, for the day you see my face you shall die" (Ex. 10:28)! Moses responded by saying, "You are right; I shall never see your face again" (Ex. 10:29)!

The "backbreaker" was the final 10<sup>th</sup> plague. God informed Moses that at midnight the angel of death would descend upon the land and all the firstborn of Egypt would die, which included Pharaoh's own son. God commanded Moses to instruct the people to put the blood of a slaughtered Lamb on the doorpost of their houses. Every Hebrew house having that blood was spared this horrific event. The angel of death would passover these houses. With this cataclysmic plague, Pharaoh finally relented and insisted that Moses take his people and leave. Of course, we know that Pharaoh will later change his mind and pursue Israel to destroy them

only to have himself and his entire army drowned when God brought back the waters that He had parted (Psalm 136:15).

What was the basis of Moses' boldness? It was God's promise to be with him! **Boldness is the expression of faith in a divine promise!**

### **Joshua and Caleb**

We've already noted earlier that Joshua and Caleb were the only two spies that trusted in God's promise of victory whereas the other 10 spies had shrunk in cowardice (fear) by dwelling on the circumstances. It took boldness for Joshua and Caleb to stand against the other spies. The spirit of unbelief had infected the entire nation to the point that they were ready to appoint another leader besides Moses to return to Egypt.

Moses, Joshua, and Caleb stood upon a biblical conviction rooted in faith in a divine promise.

### **David**

We've already noted earlier that David's boldness to face the giant, Goliath, which no other Israelite was willing to do, not even King Saul. David's holy boldness is seen by his commitment to defend the honor of the living God so that the whole earth might know that there is a God in Israel and that the whole assembly of Israel might understand that the Lord does not deliver by sword or by spear; for the battle is the Lord's (1 Samuel 17:46-47). David's boldness was rooted in a firm conviction that a sovereign God rules the universe. We could say- holy boldness is an expression of an unwavering faith in sound biblical doctrine.

### **Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego**

These three young Hebrew males were part of the captives brought to Babylon when Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Jerusalem. Nebuchadnezzar had commanded the people to bow down to a golden image of himself, and those who refused to obey would be cast into a furnace of blazing fire. In obedience to God, these three young men refused to bow and were brought to Nebuchadnezzar. Their holy boldness rooted in a conviction of faithfulness to Jehovah prompted them to say to the king:

If it be so, our God who we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire; and he will deliver us out of your hand, O King. But even if he does not, let it be known to you, O King, that we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up. (Daniel 3:17-18)

These three young males, based on their convictions to remain faithful to their God were willing to die for those convictions. Most of us know the rest of the story that God providentially chose to spare them, but these three young men did not know they would be spared.

So, young and old Christian males, **are you willing to die for your biblical convictions?**

## **Daniel**

Daniel was one of the young Hebrews carried off to Babylon, who arose in the echelons of Babylonian government. Daniel served under Darius, who had conquered Babylon. By this time, Daniel was probably in his 80s. His rise in civic power made him the object of envy among Babylon's satraps and commissioners. In a vain attempt to try to find corruption in Daniel, which they could not, they devised a plan to bring Daniel down. These corrupt men went to King Darius:

All the commissioners of the kingdom, the prefects and the satraps, the high officials and the governors have consulted together that the king should establish a statute and enforce an injunction that anyone who makes a petition to any God or man besides you, O king, for 30 days shall be cast into the lion's den. 'Now, O king, establish the injunction and sign the document so that it may not be changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which may not be revoked.' Therefore King Darius signed the document, that is, the injunction. (Daniel 6:7-9)

What was Daniel's response and actions to this injunction? He was put into a moral dilemma, and his enemies probably knew that. Either comply to this injunction or be faithful to his biblical convictions and perish in the lion's den. Daniel's response was indicative of a godly man sold out to his biblical convictions. He deliberately disobeyed the injunction in such a way that everyone could not help but notice his "act of rebellion." Daniel 6:10 says:

Now when Daniel knew that the document was signed, he entered the house (now in his roof chamber he had windows open toward Jerusalem); and he continued kneeling on his

knees three times a day, praying and giving thanks before his God, as he had been doing previously.

Of course, Daniel was discovered by the corrupt officials who brought Daniel to King Darius. When they reminded the king of the irrevocable law of the Medes and Persians, Darius was very distressed for he had set his mind on delivering Daniel (Daniel 6:13). But the corrupt officials kept reminding Darius of the irrevocable law. Darius saw no other alternative but to follow through on throwing Daniel into the lion's den. What is amazing is Darius' confidence that Daniel's unwavering service to his God would prompt his God to deliver him (Daniel 6:16):

Then the king gave orders, and Daniel was brought in and cast into the lion's den. The King spoke and said to Daniel, 'your God whom you constantly serve will Himself deliver you'

Darius spent the entire night fasting, with no entertainment, virtually getting no sleep, being concerned about Daniel's welfare (Daniel 6:17). The king arose at dawn and quickly came near the den saying:

He cried out with a troubled voice. The king spoke and said to Daniel, 'servant of the living God, has your God, whom you constantly serve, been able to deliver you from the lion's den?' And Daniel spoke to the king, 'O King, live forever! My God sent his angel and shut the lions' mouths, and they have not harmed me, in as much as I was found innocent before Him; and also toward you, O King, I have committed no crime. (Daniel 6:20-22)

Daniel's deliverance had a profound positive affect upon Darius, but he was infuriated with the corrupt officials who sought to kill Daniel by cunning means. They and their families paid a horrific price for their sin, for we read:

Then the king was very pleased and gave orders for Daniel to be taken up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no injury whatever was found on him, **because he had trusted in his God.** The King then gave orders, and they brought those men who had maliciously accused Daniel, and they cast them, their children, and their wives into the lion's den; and they had not reached the bottom of the den before the lions overpowered them and crushed all their bones. (Daniel 6:23-24) (Emphasis is mine)

We cannot help but be reminded of what the Proverbs say about the wicked's evil plotting- "he who digs a pit will fall into it, and he rolls a stone, it will come back on him"(Proverbs 26:27). This verse illustrates the principle that we reap what we sow.

The positive impact of Darius's deliverance because of his faith in Jehovah was quite profound:

Then Darius King wrote to all the peoples, nations, and men of every language who were living in all the land: make your peace abound! 'I make a decree that in all the dominion

of my kingdom men are to fear and tremble before the God of Daniel; for He is the living God and enduring forever, and His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed, and His dominion will be forever. He delivers and rescues and performs signs and wonders in heaven and on earth, who has also delivered Daniel from the power of the lions.’ (Daniel 6:25-27)

This is an amazing story on multiple levels. First, it is a glorious example that biblical men stand on their convictions no matter what. Daniel was willing to die for his biblical convictions in order to remain faithful in prayer to his God. Second, we have to be amazed at the witness of Daniel to King Darius. Obviously, Daniel had endeared himself to the king because of his faithfulness as a Babylonian official, which explains Darius’ stress that he had been trapped by the corrupt officials. Darius’ decree sent to all corners of the Mede and Persian empire is an amazing testimony to the sovereignty of the true and living God. **Here is a glowing example that standing upon biblical convictions can have a powerful impact on men.** Daniel 6:28 says that Daniel enjoyed success in the reign of Darius and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.

Now, someone might say, “God doesn’t always deliver His faithful servants.” This is true. God’s deliverance of His faithful servants is not some automatic promise in all circumstances. It is a general promise seen in various parts of the Psalms, but we must always submit ourselves to the providential will of our God, who might choose to have us martyred for the Faith which we see in the lives of Christ’s apostles and other Christians down through the ages. Regardless of whether God will deliver us from the hands of our enemies, one thing remains true - the Lord honors those with biblical convictions, either in life or in death.

## **Peter and John**

One of the first things we should recognize about the apostles is the transition from being cowards to bold preachers of the gospel. They had all abandoned Jesus, just as Jesus predicted. What accounts for this transition? It is the pouring out of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, which I have often said to be one of the greatest events in human history. Jesus had promised His disciples at the Last Supper that He would not leave them as orphans, even though He was leaving this world in person. He promised that He would send the comforter who would guide them into all truth through His word (John 14:16-18; 26-27; 16:5-15; 17:17).

Peter and John were boldly preaching the resurrection of Jesus with great success among the people of Jerusalem where about 5000 men believed, which would be in addition to the 3000 that believed at the preaching of Peter on the Day of Pentecost, bringing about a very sizable number of Christian converts. This success obviously concerned the Sanhedrin, who then had Peter and John arrested. The Sanhedrin had observed the boldness of Peter and John:

Now as they observed the boldness of Peter and John, and understood that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were marveling, and began to recognize them as having been with Jesus. (Acts 4:13)

The Sanhedrin ordered Peter and John not to spread any more preaching of Jesus among the inhabitants of Jerusalem. They commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus (Acts 4:17). Did this order quiet Peter and John? Hardly! Peter's response to the Sanhedrin's command shows forth that they were biblical men totally committed to their biblical convictions. Peter said:

‘Whether it is right in the sight of God to give heed to you rather than to God, you be the judge; for we cannot stop speaking what we have seen and heard.’

Seeing that Peter and John had committed no crime, the Sanhedrin threatened them and let them go for fear of the people of Jerusalem who were glorifying God. When Peter and John related to the believers what had happened to them, they prayed and were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak the word of God with boldness (Acts 4:31).

More and more people were being converted to Christ in Jerusalem (Acts 5:14). The apostles were given power to perform miracles in Jesus' name. The Sanhedrin was incensed that Peter and John did not obey the command to no longer preach about Jesus. The Sanhedrin had Peter and John brought back to them where we find this interchange between the Sanhedrin and Peter and John:

‘We gave you strict orders not to continue teaching in this name, and behold, you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us. But Peter and the apostles answered and said, ‘We must obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom you had put to death by hanging him on a cross. He is the one whom God exalted to His right hand as a Prince and a Savior to grant repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins, and we are witnesses of these things; and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey Him. (Acts 5:28-32)

Biblical men filled with the Holy Spirit cannot be kept quiet! Their preaching and witness bearing flows out of an earnest desire to obey their Lord. They are willing to suffer the consequences.

We vividly remember our courageous Canadian brothers in Christ, who during the Covid restrictions by a tyrannical government, were willing to go to jail before they obeyed the unbiblical command to close church services. Praise God that those who were imprisoned were eventually vindicated. God honored their bold stand upon biblical convictions. **During times of great trial, biblical men rise to the forefront inspiring God's people to greater faithfulness.**

## **Paul and Barnabas**

The boldness of Paul and Barnabas in preaching the gospel is highlighted in Acts 13:46 when they were at the synagogue in Antioch of Pisidia:

And Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly and said, ‘it was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first; since you repudiate it, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles.

Paul encouraged the Ephesian believers to pray on his behalf for boldness in his preaching:

And pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mysterious of the gospel for which I am an ambassador in chains that in proclaiming it I may speak boldly as I ought to speak. (Eph. 6:19-20)

Real men are courageous (fearless) in standing upon their biblical convictions. You cannot keep them quiet, and you cannot intimidate them, for they are willing to die for God’s cause! They will earnestly contend for the Faith once delivered to the saints (Jude 3).

For what it’s worth, let me say the following to single Christian males wanting to get married to a godly young lady. Women, because they were created to be followers, are attracted to males who exhibit boldness in their convictions. A male who fearlessly lives out his convictions with regard to his faith is viewed as a strong spiritual leader for a family. He is viewed as a dependable husband and father. His adhering to his biblical convictions signifies integrity and faithfulness, which a godly woman highly values. While arrogance is not attractive, boldness in one’s faith and trust in God is appealing, for it demonstrates a man who is not afraid to stand up for what he believes and who relies on God for strength and guidance. These qualities are most valued in a woman when she sees him as humble and kind in standing upon his convictions.

## **VII. Biblical masculinity is diligent in his work, providing for his family**

The command to work for a male reaches back to the dawn of creation. When God created Adam from the dust of the earth, he placed him in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 2:8, 15) commanding him to cultivate the garden and keep it. The male was created to work; therefore, it is not surprising that males find their greatest fulfillment in life through their work. This does not mean that a husband should neglect his wife or his children for his work, but it does demonstrate God’s fundamental call in his life, and the Scripture says that the woman was created for the man

to be his helper. Together husband and wife exercise dominion over the earth. A wife should do what she can to encourage her husband in his calling in life, even if his vocation periodically changes. When he has had a challenging day at work, he should be able to come home and find comfort from his godly wife. If he were to lose his job, he should find solace in the arms of his godly wife.

The biblical man is diligent in his work. Proverbs speak directly to this:

Poor is he who works with the negligent hand, but the hand of the diligent makes rich.  
(10:4)

The hand of the diligent will rule, but the slack hand will be put to forced labor. (12:24)

A slothful man does not roast his prey, but the precious possession of a man is diligence.  
(12:27)

The soul of the sluggard craves and gets nothing, but the soul of the diligent is made fat  
(13:4)

Do you see a man skilled in his work? He will stand before kings; he will not stand before obscure men. (22:29)

Colossians 3:23 exhorts a man – “Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men;” The godly male demonstrates diligence because he understands that ultimately he is working for the Lord, not merely for men. Let me reiterate that such commands do apply to females as well, but our emphasis is on males being responsible and diligent workers.

The biblical man has foresight; he prepares for the future; he prepares a house for a future wife with children. Proverbs 24:27 - “Prepare your work outside, and make it ready for yourself in the field; afterwards, then, build your house.” A man needs to be financially capable of supporting a wife and eventual children.

A wise male should plan for his wife to get pregnant, meaning that he needs to do all that he can to prepare for the financial security of his home.

There is a severe warning for the slothful:

But if anyone does not provide for his own, especially for those of his household, has denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel. (1 Timothy 5:8)

**God created male and female with distinct roles and abilities**

We have already noted that God created Adam first from the dust of the ground. Then, God created Eve from Adam's rib. We noted earlier that Adam was already engaged in work to fulfill the task of exercising dominion over the earth, and Eve was created to be his helper, but her help as a female would be different than another male helping a male. When God brought the woman to Adam after her creation, Adam named her, "Eve," which means that she would be "mother of all living" (Gen. 3:20). The woman would be the bearer of children, which points to a primary role in her life. The apostle Paul understood the importance of the woman's role in creation. After recognizing that the woman is in submission to the man, the inspired apostle writes:

However, in the Lord, neither is woman independent of man, nor is man independent of woman. For as the woman originates from the man, so also the man has his birth through the woman; and all things originate from God.

We see the distinction between the roles of male and female clearly in God's curse upon Adam and Eve for their sinful rebellion in eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The curse pronounced upon Adam is seen as follows:

Cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field, by the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, you return to the ground, because from it you were taken for you are dust, and to dust you shall return. (Genesis 3:17-19)

God's curse pronounced upon Eve is seen as follows:

I will greatly multiply your pain in childbirth, in pain you shall bring forth children; yet your desire shall be for your husband and he shall rule over you. (Genesis 3:16)

A word should be said about the phrase, "your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you." There have been various interpretations of what this means, but we believe the best interpretation held by many is that it reflects the sinful propensity of women to want to usurp their husband's headship, which would elicit normally the man's reaction to dominate his wife by "putting her in her place." It would make no sense to interpret that the woman's desire for her husband would mean that she has an emotional dependence upon him and have sexual desires for him, for these are godly desires in a woman. Even the godliest of women will confess that sometimes they have to struggle with submission to their husbands. I was married to a very godly woman for 46 years before the Lord chose to take her to glory because of cancer. My dear wife was an immense help in my Christian ministry; she truly was God's help meet for me. As godly as she was, she did have a strong personality, and at times expressed her feelings to me in what I thought was disrespectful speech to her husband. This was not common, but during those times, I would have to remind her that she was speaking to her husband. This is not to imply that I always thought I was right, but when she spoke in a disrespectful tone, she would later ask for my forgiveness. I did not have to prod her; she realized that she was in error in disrespecting her husband. One of the things that I most appreciated about my wife is that she was totally

committed to the Lord and to the authority of Scripture. In any discussion we had or disagreement, I could always count on her going back to Scripture.

The man was created deliberately by God with greater physical strength than the woman. He was designed fundamentally for work in carrying out the dominion mandate, which would normally require the necessity of physical strength. The woman was created to be the bearer of children where she would nurture those children in a safe home that the husband provided.

First Timothy 5:14 says:

Therefore, I want younger widows to get married, **bear children, keep house**, and give the enemy no occasion for approach (Emphasis is mine)

Older women are to encourage younger women to be sensible, pure, **workers at home**, kind, being subject to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be dishonored. Titus 2:5); Titus 2:5 (Emphasis is mine).

After giving the reasons why women are not to teach or exercise authority over men in the church, his reasons are rooted in the creation ordinance:

But women shall be preserved through the bearing of children if they continue in faith and love and sanctity with self restraint. (1 Timothy 2:15)

The King James Version translates the Greek word, “sozo” as “saved,” whereas the New American Standard Version translates it as “preserved.” This word is most commonly used in the New Testament to refer to our salvation from sin. This is the most common use, but it’s not the exclusive use because to infer that a woman is saved from her sin through childbearing would contradict the theology of Scripture. Hence, “preserved” is a better translation. The best interpretation which takes into account the context of women not exercising authority over men is that abandoning their intended roles by demanding teaching in an authoritative position in the church, women are setting aside their true fulfillment through childbearing. God calls women to be faithful, helpful wives, raising children to love and worship God and managing the household wisely (1 Timothy 5:14; Titus 2:3-5).

Women are naturally drawn to babies. They love seeing them and holding them. It’s not unusual for a woman to see a baby and say, “They are so cute; can I hold them?” I can assure you that is not a typical reaction to a baby by a male. She says to him, “Do you want to hold the baby?” “No, that’s okay.” It’s not that men don’t like babies per se, but we were not created to be child bearers and nurturers like women. If a family wants a babysitter and you have an available female and male, who’s going to get the call? Now, if someone were to threaten a baby, then the assailant ought to be ready to be taken down by a male, who has an instinctive sense to protect children and women.

While there is no explicit command forbidding a wife from working outside the home, we should proceed with extreme caution. It must always be understood that her primary calling is to be a homemaker. Proverbs 31 is often held up as an example of women working outside of the home. While some of these principles do apply, not every wife has business acumen (v.16), and she may not have clothing skills to sell at the marketplace (v. 24). But one overarching observation from Proverbs 31 is that everything she did was for the welfare of her husband and children. Verse 27 says that she looks well to the ways of her household, and does not eat the bread of idleness. Consequently, such an industrious woman receives the admiration of her husband and children (vs. 28-30).

The man was created physically stronger to fight off potential threats to his home. When the rebuilding of Jerusalem, under Nehemiah, was threatened by external enemies we read:

‘When I saw their fear, I rose and spoke to the nobles, the officials, and the rest of the people;’ do not be afraid of them; remember the Lord who is great and awesome, and fight for your brothers, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your houses.  
(Nehemiah 4:14)

David was a man skilled in war:

Blessed be the Lord, my rock, who trains my hands for war, and my fingers for battle  
(Psalm 144:1)

Males went off to war to protect their families, not women, because men were endowed by their Creator with the physical strength to engage in battle. In Numbers 1:2-3, only the males were numbered for war.

The male understands that he needs to be the protector of women and children. Though I would not say this is mandatory for males, but learning how to fight in terms of self-defense would be a good skill to learn for a male.

I once had a humorous episode with my youngest son, who in his younger days, was a very skilled black belt in tae kwon do.

He once told me, “Dad, do you know how to disarm a man who is pointing a pistol at you and break his wrist?”

I said, “No, but I’m open to being taught as long as you don’t break my wrist.”

After numerous failing attempts to follow his instructions, he finally said, “Dad, my recommendation for you is to run.”

It’s no coincidence that males are drawn to things like hunting and very physical sport activities. There is a definite difference in how young boys and girls play. Though societal norms and expectations often influence behavior in the sexes, boys tend to engage in more active, physical

play, often involving competition and rough and tumble activities while the girls tend to gravitate towards more verbal, cooperative, and imaginative play. Males are often aggressive, which is something not necessarily bad, but it has to be tempered by Christian graces. It's not unusual for a male when angered to hit something rather than break down crying.

We need to give one last admonition to males. One can be very physically fit, able to shoot guns, able to effectively defend oneself and others, able to financially provide for family; however, if the other traits already mentioned aren't manifested in one's life, and those that are about to be addressed, then you cannot claim to be truly a biblical man. One may not have mastered these traits, but they need to be there to a certain degree!

## **VIII. Biblical masculinity manifests itself in servant leadership**

### **Jesus is the quintessential example of manhood**

I trust that the reader wants to be the man that God has commanded him to be; otherwise, you would not be reading this. Jesus Christ is the embodiment of true manhood. In order to be the biblical man, one must know what it means to be Christ like. Jesus said in Luke 6:40:

A pupil is not above his teacher; but everyone, after he has been fully trained, will be like his teacher.

The very purpose of our salvation was that we might become conformed to the image of His son. Romans 8:29-30 sets forth what theologians call, the *ordo salutis* (the order of salvation):

For whom He foreknew He also predestined **to become conformed to the image of His son**, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren; in whom He predestined, these He also called; and whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified. (Emphasis is mine)

The heart of every godly Christian is to be like Christ, and one day to be with Christ. One of the wonderful promises of the new covenant is expressed in 2 Corinthians 3:18:

But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.

The godly male is a man who longs to be transformed into Christ's image. He wants to be like Christ. Paul exhorted the Ephesians in 5:1-2:

Therefore **be imitators of God**, as beloved children; and walk in love just as Christ also loved you, and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma. (Emphasis is mine)

We see this incredible exhortation for us to imitate Christ and to walk in love just as Christ loved us, exhibiting **selflessness and sacrifice**. The apostle John exhorted us in 1 John 2:6:

the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked.

Biblical masculinity wants to imitate Christ in every way. Jesus is the example of true manhood. Of course, this passage is not restricted to males, but the focus of this paper is upon what constitutes genuine biblical masculinity.

If a male wants to be a true leader, as God has commanded him to be, he must become a leader like Jesus who was a **servant leader**. Jesus powerfully demonstrated servant leadership when he washed the disciples feet at the Last Supper:

And so when He had washed their feet, and taken His garments again, He reclined at the table again, He said to them, ‘Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord and you are right for so I am. If I then, the Lord and Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you. Truly, truly, I say to you, a slave is not greater than his master; neither is one who is sent greater than the one who sent him. If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them. (John 13:10-17)

When the disciples got into a debate as to which one of them was the greatest, Jesus had to expose their worldly thinking:

You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. It is not so among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave; just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and He gave His life a ransom for many. (Matthew 20:25-28)

The Christian life and the path to true manliness is diametrically opposed to the thinking and practices of the world. Manly leadership follows Christ’s example of servanthood. Real men put the needs and desires of others before their own. Wanting to be great, in and of itself, is not a sinful desire; the key is how one wants to be great. The path to greatness is downward in Christ’s kingdom by being a servant leader, a willingness to lay down one’s life for the sake of others, just like Christ laid down His life for His sheep.

Biblical manliness strives to be such a person. Paul exhorted the Philippians:

Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who although He existed in the form of God did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself taking the form of a bondservant, and being made in the likeness of men, and being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name. (Philippians 2:3-9)

The Christian leader is a servant leader. He puts his life on the line for the sake of others. He desires to please others. The text says that we do look out for our own interests at the expense of others. Real men lead by example! The real test for manliness will be how he conducts himself in his family, particularly before his wife. Servant leadership is **costly**. Jesus said:

I am the good Shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep. (John 10:11)

This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that one laid down his life for his friends. You are my friends, if you do what I command you. (John 15:12-14)

Males, you have a choice before you at all times - will you follow the typical worldly mindset, or will you follow Christ? Will you exalt yourself, or will you humble yourself and impress your Lord by following in His footsteps? True greatness is humbling oneself before the eyes of others. Fathers, do your children see you exemplifying servanthood in your home? Husbands, does your wife see you as a humble servant in your relationship to her? Children will normally obey such fathers, and the wife will gladly follow such a man; she will respect and admire such a leader.

### **Biblical manliness follows Christ's fearlessness**

The story of Jesus entering the temple and forcefully driving out the money changers with a whip and overturning their tables is a story that some males would say, "Now there's a man who doesn't take anything from anybody." Yes, Jesus was bold and fearless, but what is the motivation for such boldness? It is a boldness rooted in a zeal for God's honor and glory:

And they came to Jerusalem. And He entered the temple and began to cast out those who were buying and selling in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who were selling doves; and He would not permit anyone to carry goods through the temple and began to teach and say to them, 'Is it not written, My house

shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations? But you have made it a robber's den. (Mark 11:15-17)

And the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. And He found in the temple those who were selling oxen and doves, and the money changers seated. And He made a scourge of cords, and drove them out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen; and he poured out the coins of the money changers, and overturned their tables; and to those who were selling doves he said, 'take these things away; stop making My Father's house a house of merchandise. His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for Thy house will consume Me. (John 2:13-17)

We should understand that this story is not a mandate for Christians to imitate in some literal way what Jesus did. First, there is no holy, physical temple in the New Testament age. Individual believers and the gathered church collectively is the temple of the Holy Spirit, where God dwells. Jesus' motivation was for the honor and glory of God. His actions were driven by a desire to restore the temple to its intended purpose as a "house of prayer for all nations." Jesus is prompted by a holy anger directed to the merchants and money changers who had turned the temple into a marketplace, prioritizing profit over genuine worship and exploiting worshipers. They had set up in the Court of the Gentiles space intended for non-Jews to worship God, making it difficult for them to do so.

Jesus was fearless in His denunciation of the scribes and Pharisees, calling them blind guides, those who neglect the weightier matters of the law, full of robbery and self-indulgence, hypocrites, whitewashed tombs which on the outside appear beautiful but inside full of dead men's bones, lawless, serpents, a brood of vipers, those who killed the prophets, and those who will not escape the sentence of hell (Matthew 23:23-33).

Biblical masculinity would emulate Christ's zeal for God's honor and glory. It would seek to be fearless in preserving God's honor and glory in whatever situation a man found himself. In seeking God's honor and glory, the biblical man can be fearless, adopting the mentality of the Psalmist:

The Lord is my light and salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the defense of my life; whom shall I dread? (Psalm 27:1)

The Lord is for me; I will not fear; what can man do to me? (Psalm 118:6)

### **Jesus models masculinity in its fullest sense**

In Jesus, we see traits commonly associated with masculinity such as fearlessness, and being a protector and provider. But, Jesus exhibited traits commonly associated with femininity such as

gentleness, compassion, and on occasions, He wept. This does not mean that Jesus was in touch with His “feminine side.” It demonstrates that gentleness, compassion, and weeping are genuine masculine traits as well, even though these traits are often more readily seen in women than in men.

Our American culture in recent years has despised masculinity, often referring to commonly understood male behavior as “toxic masculinity.” Sadly, those attacking masculinity seem to think that it consists of the characteristics listed below, which is not even remotely what the Bible teaches about masculinity.

- emotional suppression where there is pressure to suppress emotions or vulnerability stemming from phrases like “boys don’t cry.”
- Aggression and dominance where there is a glorification of violence and aggression as a sign of strength and masculinity. This can manifest itself in bullying, physical aggression, or the need to control others in relationships.
- Sexual aggression and entitlement where the idea is that men are entitled to women’s bodies and that sexual aggression is acceptable, which can lead to disrespect, harassment, and violence against women.
- Rejection of femininity where men view anything associated with femininity as weak or inferior.

Jesus embodied true manhood in its full orbéd sense. He was stalwart in mission, bold, obedient to the point of death, fearless in His proclamation of truth, sacrificial in acts of love, and determined to do His Father’s will.

The world hates the biblical Jesus - this Jesus is too audacious, too narrow minded; too much like a female being gentle, compassionate, and empathetic. We have to remind ourselves that the world is on the path to destruction in hell. Biblical manliness could care less what the world thinks of him as a follower of Christ. True manliness is not the “big macho” man lifting great weights. It is **Christ likeness**.

## **IX. Biblical masculinity exhibits humility**

Weak males seem to think that humble behavior is unmanly, that a man must demonstrate to others and to his wife and children an attitude of superiority and invincibility. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Since Jesus is the embodiment of genuine masculinity, then we should recognize that His humble behavior was an essential part of that biblical masculinity. We have already noted that Jesus

epitomizes a servant leader. Humility marked the earthly life of the Lord Jesus. Jesus' humility is foremost seen in His willingness to leave the glory of heaven and humble Himself to take on human form and become obedient to the point of death on the cross in order to be the Savior of sinners (Philippians 2:5-8).

In Jesus' admonishment to His disciples about their desire to exalt themselves, Jesus said that greatness in the kingdom of heaven is by not lording it over others but becoming the servant of all. **The very essence of servanthood is humility** (Mark 10:35-45).

When Jesus washed the disciples' feet, it was an act of humility, and the purpose for that, as explained by Jesus, was to give them an example of what they ought to do to one another (John 13:5-15). Males thinking of themselves as superior to others would not think of lowering themselves to perform such tasks. Jesus said: "And whoever exalts himself shall be humbled, and whoever humbles himself shall be exalted (Matthew 23:12).

Jesus said some very comforting things in the Matthew 11:28-30:

Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest, take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and **humble in heart** and you shall find rest for your souls, for My yoke is easy, and My load is light. (Emphasis is mine)

Jesus said that we should learn from Him because He is humble in heart. Manliness is following the pattern of Jesus Christ. Biblical commands to be humble and to avoid pride are replete in Scripture, demonstrating that these character traits are vitally important to follow and to avoid.

Let's take a look at some admonitions to be humble:

You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders, and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Humble yourselves, therefore under the mighty hand of God that He may exalt you at the proper time, casting all your anxiety upon Him, because He cares for you. (1 Peter 5:5-7)

At all times, we must clothe ourselves with humility towards others, conveying the idea of a conscious effort to put aside pride and self-importance, embracing a spirit of submission and service, like a servant putting on an apron to serve. The admonition to demonstrate humility and to avoid pride is no minor thing. God opposes the proud! But God exalts the humble! The proud

man is the self-sufficient man, thinking that he can get himself out of all circumstances, but the humble man acknowledges his need for help and casts his anxieties at the feet of Jesus.

The humble man is dependent on God, not independent. In the spiritual warfare that we are all engaged in, the humble man relies not on human strength, but on God's grace. He does so through the Holy Spirit's power. Humility recognizes our own limitations and sinfulness, while the proud man relies on his own strength and wisdom. Submitting to God is aligning one's life with God's will - Scripture!

Passages in Proverbs on humility and pride:

When pride comes, then comes dishonor, but with the humble is wisdom. (Proverbs 11:2)

Everyone who is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord; assuredly, he will not be unpunished. (Proverbs 16:5)

Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before stumbling. It is better to be of a humble spirit with the lowly than to divide the spoil with the proud. (Proverbs 16:18-19)

Before destruction the heart of man is haughty, but humility goes before honor. (Proverbs 18:12)

The reward of humility and the fear of the Lord are riches, honor and life. (Proverbs 22:4)

A man's pride will bring him low, but a humble spirit will obtain honor. (Proverbs 29:23)

If there was ever an incentive for males to exhibit humility and avoid pride, here it is. Those who think it unmanly to show humility are fools. With humility comes wisdom, honor and prosperity before the Lord. Destruction and dishonor goes with the proud, and the male who thinks it's beneath his dignity to humble himself before others, particularly his own family, will be brought low. So, a man can choose to humble himself or refuse to do so. In his refusal to lower himself in the sight of others is essentially a self pronouncement of judgment upon himself.

The arrogant man is one who is often a tyrant in his own household; he conveys the attitude, "It will be my way or the highway." This is not being the final decision-maker as a leader, but a foolish mentality that brings great harm to his family. This male thinks he doesn't need the counsel of a godly wife; and he creates an atmosphere of undue fear among his children who are afraid even to bring up a dissenting opinion. The arrogant man is a bully who often beats down his wife and children into submission. He is a male who does not tolerate dissenting opinions.

What is the end result of such a foolish man? Great dishonor, and the likely loss of his wife and family.

## **X. Biblical masculinity manifests gentleness and compassion**

### **Gentleness is a characteristic of biblical masculinity**

We have documented that Jesus was truly “a man’s, man.” Jesus’ earthly life was marked by gentleness and compassion; hence, these qualities should never be seen as exclusively feminine ones. If we males are going to imitate Christ and grow in His likeness, we **must** follow in the footsteps of Christ’s gentleness and compassion; otherwise, let’s don’t consider ourselves real men.

Jesus regularly demonstrated gentleness and compassion via his interactions with others, particularly those considered outcasts, marginalized, or suffering. He showed love and kindness to all, with the exception of the scribes and Pharisees who were morally corrupt and abusing the people. Jesus had an empathy for the pain and struggles of those around him. He healed the sick and afflicted. Yes, these were signs demonstrating his Messiahship, but it still showed his compassion. He welcomed the marginalized. He associated with tax collectors, and sinners and other people considered as outcasts by society. Jesus wept with those who mourned, like at the death of Lazarus where he felt the pain of Mary and Martha’s loss of their brother.

Jesus is called “gentle” when he arrives in Jerusalem on a donkey rather than a warhorse (Matthew 21:5).

Jesus referred to Himself as gentle:

Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am **gentle** and humble in heart, and you shall find rest for your souls, for My yoke is easy, and My load is light. (Matthew 11:28-30) (Emphasis is mine)

This highlights that Jesus was not harsh, or unapproachable but rather understanding, empathetic, and willing to help those who were struggling. Gentleness is not weakness; rather, it signifies strength under control. He had profound power, but He used it to serve and heal, not to dominate or oppress.

In His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus emphasized the importance of gentleness when He said, “Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth” (Matthew 5:5).

The apostle Paul stressed the importance of gentleness as a vital Christian virtue. Gentleness is one of the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22). Paul reminds the Thessalonians of how he and his apostolic team dealt with them:

But we proved to be gentle among you, as a nursing mother tenderly cares for her own children. Having thus a fond affection for you, we were well pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God but also our own lives, because you had become very dear to us. (1 Thessalonians 2:7-8)

The inspired apostle understood gentleness as a major characteristic of women. A mother tenderly cares for her children, which is an exhortation of how we should treat one another. Gentleness is seen as an expression of love towards people – “you had become very dear to us.” Yes, gentleness is best seen as a feminine trait, but it is one that should manifest itself in males as well, especially leaders. Prospective church elders are expected to be “gentle” (1 Timothy 3:3). We have noted earlier that one of the responsibilities of church elders is to maintain and promote doctrinal integrity and to refute those who contradict, silencing those who trouble the church (Titus 1:9, 11). But **how** they do this is vitally important; they are not to be harsh:

Brethren, even if a man is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in the **spirit of gentleness**; each one looking to yourself, lest you too be tempted. (Galatians 6:1) (Emphasis is mine)

And the Lord’s bondservant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, **with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition**, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will. (2 Timothy 2:24-26) (emphasis is mine)

Now I, Paul myself urge you by the meekness and **gentleness of Christ**-I who am meek when face-to-face with you, but bold towards you when absent! (2 Corinthians 10:1) (Emphasis is mine)

People like to be treated with respect, even unbelievers. Wisdom dictates that we learn how to talk to people in an attempt to persuade them to salvation and godliness. Imagine the reaction of a person to this kind of approach, if I were to say to them, “Only an idiot would hold such views as yours.” Most assuredly, they would instantly shut down and not even consider the merit of

my argument. I may have a very sound argument, but my methodology of insulting them has sabotaged my argument's merit. Colossians 4:6 states:

Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned, as it were, with salt, so that you may know how you should respond to each person.

Biblical masculinity doesn't scoff at gentleness, thinking that it is unmanly, something that women do but not men. Jesus and the apostle Paul were men's men. Without manifesting gentleness, no male can truly be considered a man. The husband and father who deals with his wife and children in a harsh way rather than in a gentle manner of speech is a fool. His foolishness is highlighted by the fact that he thinks he can persuade them by his harsh speech and actions.

**What** we say is important, but **how** we say it is equally important. Our goal should be to persuade people to the truth of God's word, not "browbeat" people. Proverbs 16:21, 23 is an amazing truth in dealing with people:

The wise in heart will be called discerning, and sweetness of speech increases persuasiveness... The heart of the wise teaches his mouth, and adds persuasiveness to his lips. (Proverbs 16:21)

Pleasant words are honeycomb, Sweet to the soul and healing to the bones. (Proverbs 16:24)

There is one who speaks irrationally like the thrusts of a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing. (Proverbs 12:18)

Like apples of gold in settings of silver is a word spoken in right circumstances. (Proverbs 25:11)

A man has joy in an apt answer, and how delightful is a timely word! (Proverbs 15:23)

Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit (Proverbs 18)

We must never underestimate the power of the tongue; it can be used for great comfort or tremendous harm. The Proverbs have cautioned men to guard their mouths and be of few words (Proverbs 10:19; 17:28), meaning that we should carefully weigh our words before speaking. Truly, death and life are in the power of the tongue, and we will reap its fruit, be it good or bad.

It's amazing the impact upon a person when someone brings an encouraging word to them, especially at the appropriate time. A person may be discouraged, despairing of life to some degree, or perhaps they have suffered the loss of a loved one. Have you ever received a card from a friend or loved one that really encouraged you? I have several times, and just where do you think those cards are, even from years back? They are in my office desk drawer where occasionally I will pull them out and have my heart warmed. One of the greatest acts of compassion, demonstrating a genuine love, is to write someone a personal note of encouragement! There is real life in those words.

Just as powerful as encouraging words are to us, the rash, harsh, and judgmental words spoken to us can be like "a dagger into our hearts." Have you ever received those kinds of words? Occasionally and rarely I have received those words that were not really given in love. They are devastating, and it takes a long time to recover from the emotional hurt. I consider myself a genuinely masculine man by the grace of God, though I long to be more so. When I received those words, it drove this man to tears, and as I had to relate the incident to other men, I broke down crying. What was the worst part of Job's suffering? It was the un-biblical and cruel counsel of his three friends. It was that that sent Job over the edge with a complaining spirit.

We must be judicious in our use of the tongue in public. But let me speak bluntly to husbands and fathers. You can bring great joy to your wife and children with your words, or you can bring great grief to them by your ill-timed and judgmental attitude. A husband can crush the spirit of his wife by his words. Children can be devastated by a harsh father, crushing their spirit.

A husband and father should send "love notes" to his wife and children. In the 46 years of my marriage to a godly woman, there were times that I decided to send a love note to my wife on her birthday or anniversary. Now, my wife did like to be taken out to dinner on these special occasions, but even though she liked flowers she used to say, "They are nice, but I have a tendency to kill every plant given to me." On several of these special occasions, I decided to write a love note to my wife expressing to her how much I valued her as a godly woman and how much she was an indispensable help to me in my ministry. Every time that I did that, I would come in later to see her in tears. The restaurant may be nice, the flowers may be beautiful, the candy may be delightful, but words spoken at the right time are priceless!

Fathers should express in words to his children those things that he admires in them. Most of the time children are accustomed to being "chewed out." Sons and daughters will appreciate love notes from their father; it will surely brighten their day, and whether it is typed or handwritten, I doubt they will find their way into the trashcan.

### **Compassion is a characteristic of biblical masculinity**

I noted earlier that the Scripture exhorts us to be imitators of God, to be Christ like. This would mean that the trait of compassion is not optional for any of us, particularly males. If God is a compassionate God, then we must be compassionate. God in His very nature is compassionate:

The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in loving kindness... Just as a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him. (Psalm 103:8, 13)

Remember, O, Lord, Thy compassion and Thy lovingkindness, for they have been from of old. (Psalm 25:6)

Answer me, O, Lord, for Thy lovingkindness is good; according to the greatness of Thy compassion, turn to me. (Psalm 69:16)

For He will deliver the needy when he cries for help, the afflicted also, and him who has no helper, He will have compassion on the poor and needy, and the lives of the needy he will save. (Psalm 72:12-13)

God demonstrates His compassion by redeeming men out of their sins:

Who is a God like Thee, who pardons iniquity and passes over the rebellious act of the remnant of His possession? He does not retain his anger forever, because He delights in unchanging love. He will again have compassion on us; He will tread our iniquities underfoot. Yes, Thou will cast all their sins into the depths of the sea. (Micah 7: 18-19)

The Lord Jesus Christ, being God in the flesh, was a man of great compassion. Jesus showed His compassion in His healing of the sick:

And when He went ashore, He saw a great multitude, and felt compassion for them and healed their sick. (Matthew 14:14)

And as they were going out from Jericho, a great multitude followed Him. And behold, two blind men sitting by the road, hearing that Jesus was passing by, cried out saying, 'Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David!' And the multitude sternly told them to be quiet; but they cried out all the more, saying 'Lord, have mercy on us, 'Son of David!' And, Jesus stopped and called them, and said, 'What do you want me to do for you?' They said to Him, 'Lord, we want our eyes to be opened.' And **moved with compassion**, Jesus

touched their eyes; and immediately they regained their sight and followed Him. (Matthew 20:29-34) (Emphasis is mine)

And a leper came to Him, beseeching Him and falling on his knees before Him, saying to Him 'If you are willing, You can make me clean. And **moved with compassion**, He stretched out His hand, and touched him, and He said to him, ' I am willing: be cleansed.' And immediately the leprosy left him and he was cleansed. (Mark 1:40-42)

Jesus' compassion extended beyond the healing of the sick. His compassion was towards those in bondage to their sins, needing redemption:

And seeing the multitudes, He **felt compassion for them**, because they were distressed and down cast like sheep without a shepherd. Then He said to His disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few, therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest. (Matthew 9:36-38) (Emphasis is mine)

God commands us to be compassionate:

Thus says the Lord of hosts said,' Dispense true justice, and **practice kindness and compassion** each to his brother; and do not oppress the widow or the orphan, a stranger or the poor; and do not devise evil in your hearts against one another. (Zechariah 7:9-10) (Emphasis is mine)

And it happened that as He was reclining at the table in the house, behold many tax gatherers and sinners came and were dining with Jesus and His disciples and when the Pharisees saw this, they said to His disciples, 'why is your teacher eating with the tax gatherers and sinners?' But when He heard this, He said, 'It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick. But go and learn what this means, **I desire compassion, and not sacrifice**, for I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners.' (Matthew 9:10-13) (Emphasis is mine)

Men can get all wrapped up in external religion, emphasizing ritual but neglecting what God really desires. Jesus gave a scathing condemnation of the scribes and Pharisees for their neglect of the weightier matters of the law: justice, and mercy, and faithfulness (Matthew 23:23).

What does it mean to really love our neighbors as ourselves? We must learn compassion!. Compassion is an empathetic feeling that moves a person to action to alleviate suffering. It entails understanding another's pain, feeling sorry for their misfortune, and actively seeking to relieve their distress.

Is it enough to sympathize with their plight, expressing sorrow for their lot in life? First, we need to understand the needs of other people, meaning that we put ourselves “in their shoes.”

If we’re going to be followers of Christ desiring to be Christ like, we **must** be compassionate as He was. We do not have the ability to do miracles of healing like Jesus, but we must be compassionate to those who are physically suffering. And, we **must** have compassion for the souls of men who are in bondage to sin and Satan, dwelling in darkness and under the shadow of death. We must have a heart of compassion, not wanting men to perish in their sins in hell forever.

Biblical masculinity is brought to one of its greatest manifestations when gentleness and compassion is exhibited.

## **XI. Biblical masculinity nourishes and cherishes his wife**

The marriage relationship between a man and a woman emphasizes its divine institution as a covenant between one man and one woman, reflecting God’s relationship with His people, particularly the relationship of Christ with His church. The church is viewed as the bride of Christ, and Christ as the bridegroom. Understanding this relationship sets forth the obligations of a husband and a wife to one another.

Ephesians 5:22-33 demonstrates these obligations:

Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He himself being the Savior of the body. But as the church is subject to Christ, so also wives are to be to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her; that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with word, that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she should be holy and blameless. So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church, because we are members of His body. For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh. This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church. Nevertheless let each individual among you also love his own wife even as himself; let the wife see to it that she respect her husband.

The family is a sacred institution. We have seen that the marriage relationship and the command to multiply and fill the earth means that the husband and wife were meant to have children. Our text begins with the moral obligation of the wife to be subject to her husband, as to the Lord. In earlier sections, we noted that the wife's call to submission was rooted in the fact that she was created to be her husband's helper. Woman was made for man, not man for woman (1 Corinthians 11:9). She is to be submissive to her husband because he is her authoritative head (v.2). The phrase, "as to the Lord" reflects her commitment to Christ, for as she willingly and cheerfully submits to the Lord Jesus, she should willingly and cheerfully submit to her husband "in everything." Of course, "everything" can't be construed in an absolute way. The husband cannot command his wife to disobey the clear commands of Scripture.

The husband is the head of his wife in the same way as Christ is the head of His church. A home without a head is an invitation to disaster, for that would lead to chaos. We have already noted in an earlier section of this paper that God has assigned to the husband the role of being the head of the wife by virtue of his priority in creation. He is her leader, and to whom much is given, much is expected. The husband has the greater responsibility and accountability before God. The husband's headship implies more than rulership, as is clear from the words which follow, namely, as "Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body." To be sure, the husband has authority and should exercise authority over his wife but never in a domineering way. Christ is the Savior of the body; likewise, in a real sense, the husband is the Savior of his wife in being her protector and provider. Just as Christ has a vital interest in the welfare of His church so does the husband toward his wife.

Verse 25 sets forth the awesome responsibility that a husband has for his wife; it is a responsibility that every Christian male should plead with his Lord to give him the power to perform his duty. Even the best of Christian men recognize their incapacity in themselves to carry out their divine responsibility, which would be a major reason why a real man is devoted to prayer. The command is: Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave himself up for her." The verb, "love" is a present imperative conveying the responsibility of **constantly loving his wife**. The husband has no excuse to say, "My wife is not being submissive; in fact, she is being quite stubborn with an ornery attitude. Moreover when I make sexual advances towards her, she gives me the cold shoulder, saying "I'm not in the mood; I have a headache and besides you've been mean towards me of late." The husband thinks and says to her, "Don't you understand your biblical obligation to not deprive your husband of sex? Don't you know that you don't have authority over your body to deny me my sexual rights as a husband (1 Corinthians 7:3-5)? Do the actions of a wife dictate to the husband how he should respond? Hardly! A sinful response of a husband is to "not love his wife." Then the ungodly spiral begins – "If she is not what she is supposed to be and has jilted me in some way, then I will give her the cold shoulder in return. I am her authoritative head, and I will put her in her

place. Is this how love behaves? A Christian husband should frequently study first Corinthians 13 to understand what love looks like:

Love is patient, love is kind, and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. (1 Corinthians 13:4-7)

Any Christian male, who studies this portion of Scripture, will likely find himself often times woefully lacking. He may have the attitude, "I can't do this." And, in one sense he is correct because he can't do this in his own strength; he needs the power the Holy Spirit changing his attitude and motivating him to do what God commands regardless of his feelings, regardless of how his wife is behaving. The godly male will evaluate his behavior in light of God's authoritative word. Yes, his wife may have been unsubmitive; she may have shown disrespect by her verbal comments; she may have given him the cold shoulder when she shouldn't have, but this does not negate the standing divine command - **constantly love your wife as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her**. The husband has the moral obligation to mimic Christ's love, which can be overwhelming in the mind of a husband. How did Christ love the church? He gave Himself up for her on the cross; He laid down His life voluntarily for her. He loved her when she did not love Him! The husband should remember what Romans 5:6-8:

For while we were still helpless, at the right time, Christ died for the ungodly. For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. But God demonstrates His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

God didn't say to the husband that his love for his wife goes only so far in terms of how she behaves towards him. Christ loved his church **when we were still sinners!** Love is self-sacrificing, and the husband has been called to a life of self-sacrifice towards his wife. Jesus said:

I am the good Shepherd; the good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. (John 10:11)  
Greater love has no one than this that one laid down his life for his friends. You are my friends, if you do what I commanded you. (John 15: 13-14)

The husband's wife is not simply his friend. She is "bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh" (Gen. 2: 23). This puts everything in a new perspective for the husband doesn't it? He may come to realize that being her head is not what he thought it was all about. He may have a rude awakening, but one that he must soberly take to heart. All the weight is on him, not her.

Ephesians 5:26-27 sets forth the spiritual responsibility and obligation that a husband has for his wife:

that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she should be holy and blameless.

Again, the husband must mimic Christ as his example. Christ died for His church in order to **sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word in order to present her as a bride with no spot or wrinkle, holy and blameless.**

In verses 28-29, we see another divine imperative for the husband to perform on an ongoing basis towards his wife – “So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself for no one hated his own flesh, but **nourishes** and **cherishes** it, just as Christ also does the church.”

### **The husband cherishes his wife**

Let’s examine nourishing and cherishing. I will begin with cherishing his wife just as Christ cherished his spiritual bride. No man ever beat himself up, never starved himself, but went to great lengths to provide for himself. In essence, in the right sense, he loves himself. Cherishing one’s wife is to give great value to her, see her as a precious jewel. The husband’s cherishing attitude is seen in these ways:

An excellent wife, who can find? For her worth is far above jewels. (Proverbs 31:10)

Many daughters have done nobly, but you excel them all. Charm is deceitful and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the Lord she shall be praised. (Proverbs 31:29-30)

Behold, you are beautiful, my love; behold, you are beautiful. (Song of Solomon 1:15)

Cherishing one’s wife should be seen far more than a duty but a delight. He doesn’t want his wife to think he is only with her because God says I’m not allowed to leave; I want her to think my greatest delight is sharing my life with her. To cherish one’s wife is to adopt the attitude of Adam when God brought a new creation which was created from his own body. He was excited to finally have someone suitable for him. One thing that can kill the attitude of cherishing in a husband is for him to compare his spouse with someone else. The tendency is to compare a spouse’s weaknesses to someone else’s strengths.

There are practical ways for a husband to demonstrate that he cherishes his wife. It is a neurological reality that hugging releases Oxytocin, a neuropeptide often called the “cuddle chemical” that fosters feelings of closeness and bonding. I mentioned earlier the importance of “love notes.” Together with love notes, the husband should give more frequent compliments, expressing thankfulness for what she does for him.

There is a psychological blessing when a husband cherishes his wife. The more actions that he does to show that he cherishes her like cleaning the dishes that she normally does or having a special night out without the children, giving her a back or foot rub, fosters even more positive emotions toward her and to cherish her even more. If a husband does more of these things, this is likely to prevent her from the thought, “He’s doing these things because he wants to have sex tonight.” I use Facebook primarily as a platform to promote Christ’s kingdom. When I see a post of a wife’s birthday, I have frequently said, “I hope your hubby will give you a 5 minute foot rub.” It’s amusing, but I am more serious than trying to be funny.

### **The husband nourishes his wife**

What about the command to constantly **nourish** one’s wife? The godly husband follows the example of Jesus and how He sanctifies His spiritual bride. Christ sanctifies His church by the washing of water with the word so that she will be holy and blameless.

The word, “sanctify” often carries the connotation of being made holy. The husband is under God’s command to see that his wife is being made holy, and he is the one mainly responsible for this. **He must be her spiritual leader; he must do everything that he can to see his wife grow in the word of God.** It is by regular spiritual leadership, using the word of God, that his wife grows in her relationship to Christ. He points her to Christ for strength; he inspires his wife to greater faith in the promises of God. This does not mean that the wife’s growth in holiness is restricted to her husband’s leadership; she should have her own times of private prayer and Bible study, but her husband has that responsibility to see that she is growing in godliness. He leads her to a Christ centered church that faithfully preaches the word of God.

A husband that manifests these qualities of cherishing and nourishing will find a happy and loving wife. Since woman was made for man, and not man for woman, a wife that experiences such cherishing and nourishing will follow this man to the ends of the earth. She will most gladly submit to such a godly man. Her heart yearns for this kind of man, and when she finds him, she rejoices.

## **XII. Conclusion**

The church is in dire need of biblical masculinity. We need males to be real men who gladly take the reins of leadership at home and in the church. We need men who will stand on biblical convictions and willing to die on that hill, if necessary. We need men on their knees, pleading with their God to make them into “real men” who can change the world. We need real men who see women as gifts of God to cherish and nourish, not as objects of pleasure to dominate. We need men to inspire their progeny to take dominion of the world for the glory of God in Jesus Christ.

### **Soli Deo Gloria**

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