

**"Biblical Manhood"**  
**(Ephesians 5:21-31)**  
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**(Ephesians 5:21-31)**

<sup>31</sup> Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

<sup>22</sup> Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. <sup>23</sup> For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. <sup>24</sup> Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

<sup>25</sup> Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her <sup>26</sup> to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, <sup>27</sup> and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. <sup>28</sup> In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. <sup>29</sup> After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church— <sup>30</sup> for we are members of his body. <sup>31</sup> "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh."

For the past couple of weeks we've been looking at the subject of gender and Biblical womanhood and manhood. The reason we're looking at this subject is because of our rapidly shifting culture. Our culture is redefining what it means to be a man and woman. They're saying that there is no difference between the genders. It's saying that traditional gender roles are out, new fluid, gender roles are in. It's telling us that each individual has the right to decide for himself or herself what gender they want to be. Because the message is coming so quickly, and coming from all angles, it's influencing us as adults, but it's especially impacting our children. So we need clarity and truth on these matters and for that we go to God's word.

We first began by determining that when God created humankind, he created us male and female; one man and one woman. Men and women are both equal before God. They both were created in the image of God. But they are also different. They are of course different biologically. But they are also different in their roles. This too was God's design. And then finally, we discovered that men and women need each other. They need each other to procreate, to have children. But they also need each other as they complement each other. Remember when God looked upon the man and saw that he was alone and he says that it was not good. So those were some of the foundational truths we established.

Last week we looked at the subject of Biblical womanhood. In that message we mentioned three things that were unique to womanhood. We said that she was a helper to the man, one who supplies strength where it is lacking. Then we said that a woman is one who possesses a gentle and quiet spirit, which is a woman that is holy, that does not give way to fear, who possesses an inner beauty. Then finally, we tackled the difficult subject of submission. To be a woman, at least in the context of marriage, is to submit to her husband, in following his leadership. Now, these are just bullet points without the complete explanation, so if you were not here last week, please go to our website and listen.

That brings us to today where we'll be tackling the idea of Biblical manhood. Manhood has been under attack for many decades now. For example, when you look at sit-coms, somewhere in the late 80s, we were introduced to the doofus father figure: Al Bundy, from *Married with Children* and Homer from *The Simpsons*. In our culture it somehow became cool and even normal for dads to be stupid. No longer was being a man about strength and leadership. He was replaced by a bumbling idiot.

Around this time is also when the Promise Keepers movement began in the States and soon trickled over into Canada. Promise Keepers was a Christian men's event where tens of thousands of men flooded football stadiums to learn what it meant to be a man. At one such event there was a group of feminists protesting the event and as men were making their way from the parking lot into the stadium they held up their signs saying that Promise Keepers is anti-woman, that it should be banned and shut down. Then some men approached the protesters, asking what was going on, and they voiced their strong opinion as to why there were against Promise Keepers. The men then said to the protesters that Promise Keepers was all about helping men become better husbands and better dads. And that pretty much sucked the wind out of the sails of the protesters. You see, their assumption, and I'm afraid the assumption still exists today, was that to be pro-man is to be anti-woman. Well that's silly. It's a false assumption. It's like saying to be pro-child is to be anti-adult. If anything Promise Keepers, in being so pro man, was being pro woman. In helping men become better husbands and better dads, they were being pro woman.

So, what does it mean to be a Christian man, as opposed to a Christian woman? Or if you're a parent, you might ask, "what image of manhood do I want to show both my sons and my daughters." Now this is very important. We mustn't think that because we only have sons, that we don't need to show them Biblical womanhood or because we only have daughters, that we don't need to show them Biblical manhood. Our children regardless of being boys or girls, need to see in mom and dad, and in the men and women of our church, Biblical womanhood and manhood...so that our boys, when they become men, will know what to look for in women, and our girls, when they become women, will know what to look for in men.

Now, let's first establish some definitions and these definitions apply to both women and men. There are three terms that we need to define. They are sex, gender and gender identity. These definitions and explanations I'm borrowing from a book called "Designed for Joy."

*Sex is biological, recognized in the observable world; gender is sociological, recognized in the perceptions of masculinity and femininity in human society; and gender identity is psychological, recognized as an individual's personal interaction with the observable world within human society.*

Sex (biology):

This is something we cannot choose. It is given to us by God at birth. It has to do with chromosomes. It has to do with the plumbing. It means we are male, not female. No amount of drugs or therapy or surgery can change this.

Gender (Sociological):

*These are the culturally conditioned characteristics that we identify with the God-given realities of maleness or femaleness. In short, this perspective shows us that there is a male way to look, walk, and talk as perceived by societies of men and women, and that when men express themselves this way, they are identified as males. Additionally, when a male doesn't correspond to this societal expectation, it is considered unnatural or strange. Every human culture is ingrained, at some level, with this binary lens of understanding itself. And though these societal markers vary among different places and times, Scripture suggests that it is right for us to abide by them as male and female, so long as they are not sinful.*

Gender identity (psychological):

This is how you feel inside, psychologically. You look at your biology. You look at society's perception of maleness and you feel inside that you are indeed a man.

God's design for us is that our sex, gender and gender identity all align together.

*There are situations, however, when the fallen nature of our world impairs this understanding. Sometimes men may not feel like men, even if they have male anatomy and look like men. For example, transgender individuals typically claim that something is missing in the existential correspondence to their given anatomy and societal appearance. They perceive themselves differently than who they are and how they look. Sadly, these individuals grant this personal perception the ultimate authority and attempt to manipulate the other perspectives through the use of hormones and surgical procedures. Ironically, the goal of becoming transgender is to have all three perspectives saying the same thing, even if by inauthentic, superficial means.*

*In general, to be male is to be created with male anatomy, to be considered male according to the societal perception, and to understand oneself as male in light of one's personal interaction with biology and society. Or put even more plainly, being a male is to naturally have male parts, male traits, and a male sense. (Designed for Joy)*

This is a good description but it's a bit of a technical definition. Here's how another author describes Biblical manhood. He writes, "At the heart of mature masculinity is a sense of benevolent responsibility to lead, provide, and protect women in ways appropriate to a man's differing relationships."

Let's pick this apart a bit. He's telling us that the goal for men is mature masculinity, meaning that we are all masculine in some way and to some degree, but the goal is to attain mature masculinity. So what does mature masculinity look like? It's benevolent responsibility. This is important because much of the maleness that we see is authoritarian, it's abusive, and it's not benevolent at all. To be benevolent is to be good and kind; it's to seek the good of those around you.

Mature masculinity is also the responsibility to lead. This is not to say that women can't or shouldn't lead, but it is saying that in particular, or specifically, men are called to lead. *A friend of mine pastors a church and they had their annual meeting, and in their meeting they went over their bylaws. And one of their bylaws states that an elder shall be male and then it described the role and job description of the elder. I know that in our denomination, both men and women are permitted to be elders, but in his, only a male is allowed. Now, that's not the point of the illustration. So, that point of the bylaw came to floor and the moderator asked, "What should we do with this? Should we amend it, keep it, what should we do?" And everyone was pretty quiet until one of the older ladies in the church stood up and said, "We should keep it the way it is, because if that's not in there then all the men will go fishing and hunting," to which everyone had a good laugh. But everyone in the room knew exactly what she meant. She meant that, if men are not told what their job is, they'll defer their responsibility to women, they'll sit in front of their computers and play video games all day, they'll just spent the entire day on the golf course.*

Men, your job as men, is to lead. You are to lead your wife, your children, and your church. This is your job. Now, is this merely the words of other men, or is this the word of God. Let's take a look:

<sup>25</sup> Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her  
<sup>26</sup> to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, <sup>27</sup> and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. <sup>28</sup> In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. **(Ephesians 5:25-28)**

What we see engrained in this passage is leadership. Let's look at what Christ does for his church. He gave himself up for the church, meaning he laid down his life, he sacrificed, he thought of the benefit he could bring to the church through his sacrifice. He was living out what it meant to think of the needs of others before thinking of your own needs. And then Christ leads by giving us and teaching us the Word of God. It's in his words that he protects the church from error and false teaching. He gives us the words of life, the words of truth, the words that bring us to God, the words that instruct us how to live a life of purpose and joy, and a life that brings glory to God. He aims to present the church as a pure church, holy and blameless. This is Christ in action. This is the benevolent responsibility and leadership of Jesus Christ, to which Paul then writes,

<sup>28</sup> In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.

Men, our benevolent responsibility is to lead, provide and protect the women in our lives and our families, as Christ does the church.

Let's move down a few more verses. Look at Ephesians 6:4

"Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord."

Quick question: Who's Paul talking to here? Is he talking to the moms? Does he say parents? What does he say? Who is he addressing? Dads. Listen to me men. Men, you, with all your godly masculinity, you are to lead your families in the training and instruction of the Lord.

What does that look like?

1. You pray for your family. When Linda was pregnant with our first child, every evening before we went to bed, I placed my hand on her belly and prayed for her and the baby.
2. You teach them the Bible. That can be formally in a family devotion or informally in random life events and teaching moments. But this implies that you yourself are reading the word, so you can teach others. A friend of mine says that he tells the men in his church, 'be the first to wake up every day, read your Bible, so you might have something useful to say to your family when they wake up.'
3. You take them to church.
4. You love your wife. As John Calvin said, "He who does not love his wife is a monster." In your family, in your public life, you display what it looks like to affectionately love, serve, and respect your wife. You don't refer to her in derogatory terms. You don't call her the ball and chain, or the old nag, or something terrible like that.

So, these are some of the images, some of the ways to aspire toward Biblical manhood. But what if you're single? What if you're a single man? Well, just as womanhood is not something that is displayed only in marriage. It can and should be displayed in singleness. The same goes for manhood. So, here's an image that one author painted about what manhood looks like. Here are the ways that this image can be applied. All men should mentor younger men. So in displaying these qualities yourself, you can help younger men become godly men. Husbands and fathers (and mothers) should aspire to raise up boys that look like this. And finally, single men should strive to be like the men described by this author. So, the author approaches manhood this way. He asks, "What do I want my boys to become when they grow up?" "What kind of man do I want him to be?"

1. I WANT MY SONS TO GROW UP TO BE TRUE MEN OF GOD— FIRST IN, LAST OUT, LAUGHING LOUDEST. – By first in and last out is to embrace their calling to lead. And the laughing loudest component means, and to embrace it, to love it, to joyfully accept their calling and responsibility to lead.
2. I WANT MY SONS TO EMBRACE THEIR CALLING AS PROTECTORS OF THE WEAK. (Eph 6:4) "Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord."

We looked at the second part of the verse, now let's look at the first part. Father, do not exasperate, or embitter or provoke your children. Why is that there? Because men, have the tendency to abuse their authority, to let their masculinity get away from them, and in doing so, damage, rather than protect their children.

Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers. (1 Peter 3:7)

No one wants to raise boys to be bullies. You want to raise boys to be bully 'killers.' Men are called to protect the home front by protecting their wives and children. Men are to protect their church and their country.

3. I WANT MY SONS TO GLADLY SUBMIT TO LAWFUL AUTHORITY. We don't want to raise up rebels with a kind of hyper individualism. But we want men who will submit to lawful authority, at school, work, church, society. It's a call to a life of accountability.
4. I WANT MY SONS TO PRACTICE SELF-CONTROL FOR THE JOY IN IT. anger, passions, lusts,  
How can a young man keep his way pure? By keeping *it* according to Your word. (**Psalm 119:9 NAS95**)
5. I WANT MY SONS TO CELEBRATE THE WONDERS OF FEMININITY. To be male is not to be anti-female. But rather to celebrate and support women. We can ask ourselves, can we measure the quality of our manhood by the flourishing of the women in your life? A godly husband creates an environment where his family can thrive.
6. I WANT MY SONS TO PUT TO DEATH ANY VESTIGE OF FALSE MASCULINITY. There are a tone of false images of masculinity that's we've learned from bad models in society, in culture, and even in the families we grew up in. Things like passivity. Idolatry. Immaturity. Aggression. Being non-communicative.
7. I WANT MY SONS TO SEE JESUS CHRIST AS THE GROUND AND GOAL OF THEIR MASCULINITY. At the end of the day, we want to see all men, our boys, to become like Jesus in the expression of their masculinity. We want your masculinity to look like that of Jesus. We want your masculinity to have as its goal, the honor and glory of God. We want your masculinity to serve and even sacrifice for the sake of those around you.

Men we have a hard and difficult calling. Without the help of God, in Christ Jesus, we can never achieve this goal. The first thing to do is to admit your own inability to be this kind of man. Surrender your heart and your life to Jesus. Let him work in and through you. Though Jesus was a man, he is to both men and women, the goal of our masculinity and femininity. He is also the only means by which we can become the men and women we were meant to be. He gives us the new heart, the new desire, as well, he gives us the right identity as men, as women, as was originally planned and designed by God. Surrender your masculinity to him, surrender your femininity to him.

Let's pray.