

Glorifying God in Biblical Manhood

“Be strong, therefore, and prove yourself a man.” (1 Kings 2:2)

“Give unto the LORD the glory due to His name” (Psalm 29:2)

There has been an ongoing battle for the last twenty to thirty years in regards to the definition of manhood. Society, media, and news outlets are continuing to try and redefine manhood or masculinity. Many have tried to redefine it as follows:

“something more sensitive, safe, manageable and feminine, it now berates men for being men. The result is gender confusion never experienced at such a wide level in the history of the world. God doesn’t make generic people, he makes something very distinctive-man or women.” (Eldredge, John. *Wild at Heart*. Nashville; Thomas Nelson, Inc. 1977)

What is biblical manhood? A man after God’s own heart, King David, gave his son Solomon sound instruction as he nears the end of his life. He charges Solomon to prove himself a man, or show the characteristics of a man (1 Kings 2:2). Through God’s infinite wisdom, his created beings are able to demonstrate these characteristics because God has given man an identity, He has given man a role to fulfill, and He has given man direction to prove his manhood.

GOD-GIVEN IDENTITY

Our identities are important. Identity is defined as “the set of characteristics by which a person or thing is definitively recognizable or known” (thefreedictionary.com). From the very beginning of our life here on earth, we are given means of identity. At birth, our parents give us a name to identify us. Later we are assigned a number, our social security number, which will stay with us for our entire life and identify us to many different institutions. Later we obtain a card that bears our physical appearance that will be used to verify our identity. We hear many times about how someone’s identity is stolen, and others take advantage of people by posing to be someone they aren’t. Businesses have been created to protect our identity, and we are reminded constantly of how important it is to protect our identity.

Personal identity from a spiritual concept is not a number or a picture on a card. Your spiritual identity is the concept you develop about yourself that evolves over the course of your life. And the most important aspect of our spiritual identity is that we are made in the image of God (Gen.

1:26). Scripture tells us that God “*created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them*” (Gen. 1:27). Note that the scripture mentions that God created male and female in His image. It is not in a physical nature that we are in the image of God, because it is very evident that male and females look entirely different.

Therefore, the image of God that is created in man (male & female) has to be the spiritual characteristic(s) of God. As God formed man from the dust of the ground, the Bible states that God “*breathed into his (man’s) nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being*” (Gen. 2:7). With this breath of life, we are able to understand and comprehend (Job 32:8) and have the ability to make our thoughts known (Job 32:18). Man is literally a God-breathed creation, and this distinguishes man from all other creatures.

God has given man an identity. Those of God’s creation who truly recognize His existence and authority, and obey His word, have the right to be identified as His children. In regards to the Son of God and His relationship with mankind, John states that “*as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name*” (John 1:12). When we choose to walk together with God in agreement with what He says, when we exemplify those traits of God that were created within us from the beginning, then we have received the Spirit of adoption by whom we can cry out, “Abba, Father” (ref. Rom. 8:15). We are children of the Most High God and must not be afraid to identify ourselves as such.

God has given man an identity. Those of God’s creation who truly recognize His existence and authority, and obey His word, have the right to be identified as sons of light. As God’s children, made in His image, and identified as sons of light (1 Thess. 5:5), we must ensure that our actions are light-bearing actions. James reminds us that every good and perfect gift is from above and “*comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning*” (James 1:17). Knowing that God is light and there is no darkness at all in Him (1 John 1:5), we as His children must ensure that our walk is not in darkness. John states that if we say we have fellowship with the Father but continue to walk in darkness that we are liars and we are not practicing the truth. But if our walk in life involves walking in the light as He is in the light, “*we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin*” (1 John 1:7). We were all once in darkness but now because of the blood of Christ and its

regenerating power, we are lights in the Lord and should walk as children of light (Eph. 5:8). We are sons of the Father of lights and must not be afraid to identify ourselves as such.

God has given man an identity. Those of God's creation who truly recognize His existence and authority, and obey His word, have the right to be identified as men of God. Paul identifies Timothy as a "man of God" (1 Tim. 6:11), and Paul's counsel to Timothy throughout his letter is sound instruction for all men. We, as men of God, should ensure that we are exhibiting personal holiness. Peter, in his encouraging letter to the pilgrims of the Dispersion, states that Christians should emulate the Father: *"but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, 'Be holy, for I am holy'"* (1 Peter 1:15-16). This title, "man of God," has been given to Moses (Deut. 33:1), David (Neh. 12:24), Elijah (1 Kings 17:18) and Elisha (2 Kings 4:7) as these men were striving to be obedient to God's laws. God has given us His word, His God-breathed word, to help us as men of God to be *"complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work"* (2 Tim. 3:16-17). We are men of God and must not be afraid to identify ourselves as such.

As God's children, sons of light, and men of God, we have been provided instruction for the roles that we should fulfill as we live our lives to glorify God. As children and men of God, we have made an obligation to our Father to perform these roles to the best of our ability.

GOD-GIVEN ROLES

God has expectations for His creation and especially for the creatures that were made in His image. As we progress in our spiritual relationship with the Father, we will fall into the various roles He has defined for "men of God." As we grow physically, these roles will typically fall into place sometime in our life: son, husband, father, leader in the church.

Son:

As a child to a physical father and mother, a man has certain responsibilities that will enable him to fulfill that role as God has envisioned. Children must be obedient to their parents. Paul, in his letter to the Ephesians, clearly states for children to *"obey your parents in the Lord, for this is*

right” (Eph. 6:1). Paul adds in his letter to the Christians in Colossae that obedience to parents is well-pleasing to the Lord (Col. 3:20). A child learns to be obedient to their physical parents in hopes of becoming obedient to his spiritual Father. The Proverbial writer adds that sons are to hear *“the instruction of your father, and do not forsake the law of your mother”* (Prov. 1:8). The child must also honor his parents. Paul follows his statement about obedience to parents with this instruction: *“Honor your father and mother, which is the first commandment with promise: that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth”* (Eph. 6:2-3). A child must show the respect that his parents deserve.

Husband:

The husband’s relationship with his wife is clearly defined in Paul’s letter to the Christians in Ephesus. Paul states that husbands are to love their wives *“just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her”* (Eph. 5:25). In our roles as husbands, we are to nourish and cherish our wife in our actions, words, and conduct. This beautiful relationship between a man and woman was first established at creation, and the role of the man and woman has not changed. The husband/wife relationship: the husband is to work for her support, provide for her wants, attend to her in sickness, go before her in danger, and be ready to die to save her. Husbands are to dwell with their wives with understanding, giving honor to the wife...and being heirs together of the grace of life (1 Peter 3:7).

Father:

Fathers are to be the head of the family and provide the leadership to help their family get to heaven. The father’s role is to bring his children up *“in the training and admonition of the Lord”* (Eph. 6:4). A father is not to provoke his children to wrath. He is to provide for his family as Paul tells Timothy: *“if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever”* (1 Tim. 5:8). A father is the spiritual leader of his family and should understand his wife and children and guide them in their difficulties. *“The father of the righteous will greatly rejoice, and he who begets a wise child will delight in him”* (Proverbs 23:24).

Leaders in the church:

Although our society is bent on changing God's word, God clearly gives instructions about who should be leading the public and organizational work of the church. Paul's instruction to Timothy in regards to church leadership is clear as to who has this responsibility: "*if a man desires the position of a bishop (elder), he desires a good work*" (1 Tim. 3:1). Other characteristics of this leader are also clear on the gender of the leader: "husband of one wife, one who rules his own house well...for if a man does not know how to handle his own house, how will he take care of the church of God" (1 Tim. 3:2-5)? The qualification of deacons also notes that it is a position held by a male: "*let deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well*" (1 Tim. 3:12). Perhaps the reason so many women have been tempted to take the role of men in the church is because there are not enough men fulfilling their roles. Men must embrace their God-given roles and become the leaders of the church.

GOD-GIVEN DIRECTION: NOW PREPARE YOURSELF LIKE A MAN!

God has given man an identity and defined the roles He has established for man. God also provides direction for those willing to be obedient to His word. Preparation is key to being successful in our relationship with God. As God approaches Job to reveal His omnipotence after Job challenges God (Job 38-40), and He describes His awesome power and might, God commands Job to "*prepare yourself like a man*" (Job 38:3; 40:7). The key to preparation in becoming a godly man, or a better man, and thus glorifying God through our actions, is knowing and understanding the directions provided by God. As King David, a man after God's own heart, is nearing the end of his life, he charges Solomon to prove himself a man. David provides some key essentials for Solomon, or any man, to prepare and prove himself a man of God (1 Kings 2:1-3; 1 Chron. 28:9)

Know God:

"*As for you, my son Solomon, know the God of your father*" (1 Chron. 28:9). For a man to become a godly man, he must know God. The only way one can know what God desires for his created image is to read and understand His word. Paul instructs Timothy to be diligent (study-KJV) to present himself "*approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly*

dividing the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15). Our study of God’s word must be diligent – a steady, earnest, and energetic effort at learning what God wants and realizing that in our lives. To know God is to recognize His omnipotence (power), omnipresence (presence), and omniscience (knowledge) and dedicate our lives to drawing closer to Him (James 4:8). The Psalmist states that we should *“know that the LORD, He is God”* (Psalm 100:3), and our delight should be in the law of the Lord (Psalm 1:2).

“Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, Let not the mighty man glory in his might, Nor let the rich man glory in his riches; But let him who glories glory in this, That he understands and knows Me, That I am the LORD, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight,” says the LORD. (Jer. 9:23-24)

Serve God:

“Serve Him (God) with a loyal heart and a willing mind” (1 Chron. 28:9). Servitude is a true characteristic of a godly man as clearly seen in the example of Jesus. Jesus’ entire time on earth was devoted to serving and glorifying His Father, and this included being of service to others (John 13:1-17). Because of what Christ has done for us, should we not strive to be obedient to His word with a faithful heart? Paul tells the Roman brethren that our behavior as Christians should be *“not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord”* (Rom. 12:11). Our spirit should be boiling (fervent) to serve God. *“Serve the LORD with gladness; come before His presence with singing”* (Psalm 100:2).

“Zeal in religion is a burning desire to please God, to do His will, and to advance His glory in the world in every possible way”. (J. C. Ryle)

The godly man’s mind should be set on things above and not on things of this earth (Col. 3:2). Men of God should have a desire in our minds to serve God with all our heart and soul (2 Chron. 29:31). Our actions should be done *“heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ”* (Col. 3:23-24).

David also directs Solomon to “*keep the charge of the LORD your God*” (1 Kings 2:3a). So what does it mean to “keep the charge”? This statement in the original language is constructed from the verbal form and the noun form of the same word. Another method of writing this statement could be, “guard the guard” or “watch the watch” of the Lord. It means to have a mind set on watching carefully and being attentive to the Lord’s command on every matter. David then goes into more definition of what he meant with this statement; walk in the ways of God to keep His statutes, to keep His commandments, to keep His judgements, and to keep His testimonies (2 Kings 2:3b). In essence, do what God expects you to do. A man of God willingly accepts the instructions of the Lord and follows them without hesitation. A man is to trust in the Lord, and to do good knowing that those who wait on the Lord will inherit the earth (Psalm 37:2-9).

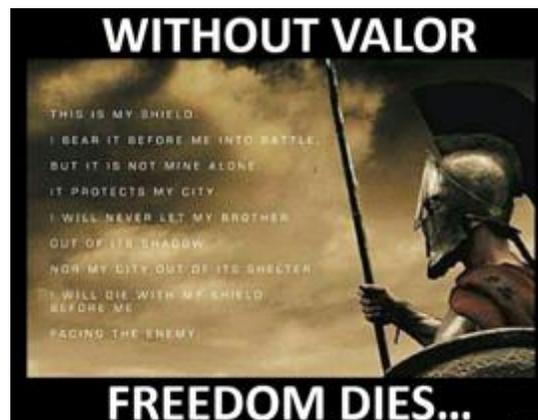
Be strong

“*Be strong, therefore, and prove yourself a man*” (1 Kings 2:2). David was not instructing Solomon to build up his physical muscles, but to increase his strength of character and integrity. Character can be defined as “moral strength” (thefreedictionary.com). Men should know what they stand for and have strength to defend their actions based on the biblical standard found in God’s word. Many in our society don’t believe that character counts. But as God’s children, sons of light, and men of God, one must understand whose image we bear. Our character must be a reflection of God’s characteristics. Man must rely on God’s grace to strengthen his resolve to do the right things. God will help to make us strong, firm, and steadfast (1 Peter 5:10). Character counts; don’t ever forget it.

Integrity is a “steadfast adherence to a strict moral or ethical code; soundness; the quality or condition of being whole or undivided; completeness” (thefreedictionary.com). Job maintained his integrity although his possessions and children are taken away from him (Job 2:3). Men are faced with many trials and temptations, and we must ensure that our thoughts and actions are defined by our integrity. David states that he will walk in his integrity (Psalm 26:11) meaning that in every aspect of his life, he will maintain his faithfulness to God and His words. Men should pray for guidance in their lives by the completeness of God’s words and direction (ref: Proverbs 11:3a). Integrity includes doing what is just, having a love for mercy, and walking humbly with God (Micah 6:8).

CONCLUSION: MADE IN THE IMAGE OF GOD

A man bears the image of God in his strength, not physically, but soulfully. *“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 by the Spirit of the Lord”* (1 Cor. 3:18). Man was created in the image of God (Gen. 1:27) and continues his transformation into the same image as he grows closer to God. Men are at war with Satan and must embody the characteristic of the Lord as a warrior: *“The LORD is a warrior; The LORD is His name”* (Ex. 15:3). A man must prepare as a warrior in his fight against the devil (Eph. 6:10-18). Christ Himself is characterized as a warrior as He is seen in triumph over evil in John’s vision as Christ reveals Himself from heaven. He is called *“Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war”* (Rev. 19:11). A warrior is courageous and bold in the fight against the evil one. Satan is determined to undermine the masculinity of man in our society. The child of God, son of light, and man of God must have the courage to stand up to the fight and have the boldness to proclaim God’s word in the face of danger. Courage and boldness is valor. Without valor, freedom dies.



“If we would endeavor, like men of courage, to stand in the battle, surely we would feel the favorable assistance of God from Heaven. For he who giveth us occasion to fight, to the end we may get the victory, is ready to succor those that fight manfully, and do trust in his grace.”

- Thomas A Kempis