

Christ, The Ultimate Man

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How would you answer this question from your son or a young man: “What does it mean to be a man?”

Today in our culture, there seems to be some confusion that is permeating this generation as to what it means to be a man. In fact our culture seems to be minimizing the distinctions between manhood and woman.

Because of the confusion and uncertainty, it is important that we take time to identify what manhood really is through the lens of the scripture.

First, as we seek to define what “Biblical Manhood” is, we must first examine how we currently define manhood.

ASK: What is your definition of a real man?

Real Manhood is:

- Real men work hard
- Real men are macho
- Real men do not cry
- Real men fish, hunt, and drink
- Real men watch football

Second, what has influenced our definition of manhood?

- Culture
- Entertainment (movies, music, etc.)
- Our dads, or lack thereof

What we want to do today is construct a definition of manhood biblically by looking at one person. That being Christ, the perfect picture of authentic biblical masculinity. Christlikeness equals manhood.

- Who was Christ the man?
- How did Christ live his life here on this earth?
- What makes him different from other men?

Point #1 - Christlikeness is Walking in the Example that God has Given Us

Scripture: "Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God."

Ephesians 5:1-2

Scripture: "Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. 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. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself."

Ephesians 5:21-28

This is probably one of the most misunderstood passages of scripture. We cannot accurately interpret this with the world's understanding of submission.

This passage speaks to our identity as men and our example of what manhood looks like: Male headship/authority (not domineering). Our example is Christ and his bride:

- Speaks about our position with Christ
- Protector
- Sacrificial - laying down our lives for the good and growth of others
- Selfless
- Constant giving
- Service

Point #2 - Christlikeness is Living for Something Greater Than Yourself

In the movie "Pearl Harbor," Colonel Doolittle, a famous pilot, inspires a group of young men to accept a secret mission. They leap at the chance. Only after they sign up does one young pilot acknowledge, "We might die for this. We at least want to know what it's for."

Jesus Christ came into the world to do the will of His Father. He said, "For I came down from heaven,

not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me" **John 6:38**. Christ came to this earth for a mission

Men love having a mission—they love to conquer!

Examples:

- Men and competition
- Boys and video games (want to defeat and conquer)

We (men and women) were meant to live for something greater than ourselves.

If we choose not to live for something greater than ourselves—our default is to live for ourselves:

- Live to accumulate more stuff (“He who dies with the most toys wins.”)
- Living to build up your bank account
- Living to build up your status/position
 - “What does it profit a man to gain the whole world yet lose his very soul?” Matthew 16:26

Example: King Solomon - If any one man had it all it would have been King Solomon.

We are called to continue the mission that Christ started:

Scripture: “Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” **Matthew 28:18-20**

As men, we are not only called to participate in this great mission—but to lead

- Called to lead in the advancement of the gospel
- Living for this Mission brings about our purpose
- Living for the glory of God

Don't waste your life living for your glory and gain!

Two little lines I heard one day,
Traveling along life's busy way;
Bringing conviction to my heart,
And from my mind would not depart;
Only one life, 'twill soon be past,
Only what's done for Christ will last.

Only one life, yes only one,
Soon will its fleeting hours be done;
Then, in 'that day' my Lord to meet,
And stand before His Judgment seat;
Only one life, 'twill soon be past,
Only what's done for Christ will last."

– C.T. Studd

Point #3 - Christlikeness is Embracing Responsibility

Scripture: Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled. Then he said to them, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me."

Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will."

Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. "Couldn't you men keep watch with me for one hour?" he asked Peter. "Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."

He went away a second time and prayed, "My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done." **Matthew 26:36-42**

What do you see here?

- Jesus is in a garden and is at the weightiest moment before his crucifixion.
- He has the responsibility of bearing the sins of the entire world
- At this moment it would have been easy to succumb to the temptation of running away.
 - Jesus does not give up
 - He knows no one else can complete the mission but him

However, in Genesis 3, we see an entirely different picture:

Scripture: "When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it." **Genesis 3:6**

What do you notice about Adam?

- Was he on the other side of the garden?

- No—He was standing right beside Eve and did absolutely nothing to stop her from eating the fruit.
 - Passive

Let's keep reading:

Scripture: “And he said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?”

The man said, “The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it.” **Genesis 3:11-12**

What do you notice about Adam here?

- Does not take responsibility for his role as a protector and blames Eve for the whole mess.

What are the responsibilities that have been placed in your life?

- Children
- Wife
- Job
- Home
- Church, etc.

Like Christ in the garden, when the task seems impossible, God grants the grace to keep going.

Point #4 - Christlikeness is Deep Dependency Upon the Father

Today in our culture, to be a “real” man you don’t need to depend on anything or anyone else. Growing out of our dependency is a concept we have all learned in our life.

- **Illustration:** As children grow up, they grow out of their dependency upon their parents. As a son matures he is eager to show what he can do without his father’s help. The father delights in the fact that his son is becoming more independent.

The kingdom of God is the opposite: As we mature in our faith, our dependency upon the Father deepens and we realize what little we can actually do without the Father’s help.

In Christ we find an example of an ongoing dependence upon the Father:

Scripture: “Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does. **20** For the Father loves the Son and shows him all he does. Yes, and he will show him even greater works than these, so that you will be amazed.” **John 15:19-20**

What do you see here?

- “...the Son can do nothing by himself...” (how many would like to say that about their 30 year old son?)
- The son can only do what he sees his Father doing. You begin to see this picture of complete and utter dependence

A dependence based on a relationship—a relationship that is based on:

- Love
- Trust
- Awareness

As you read through the gospels you begin to see this continual dependency upon the Father as Jesus continues to retreat to the Father for times of prayer.

As you seek to become a better man, it is not found by just trying harder.

- Becoming a better man starts by realizing that apart from the Father, you can do nothing.
- We foster that dependency continually retreating to the Father through prayer.
- We need to come to the point of acknowledging that we are weak
 - Avoid the mistake of carrying the world upon your shoulders

We can be weak because He is strong