

## **Weekly Study of Sunday's Message.**

**Sunday October 31, 2021. "How to be a man who loves Jesus. Taking off the mask."**

### **I Intro.**

Welcome to the weekly devotional that gives you some specific things to work through from the message this Sunday. Whether you were able to participate in this service or not, this devotion is free-standing and you can still use it to help you dig deeper into your own spiritual walk. We're pushing through 2021, and as COVID numbers drop we are even more committed to gathering in person. A growing group of familiar and new faces join us each Sunday. Our children's, youth areas and coffee spot have been fully open also and we're seeing a good response. We're so encouraged by your love and presence when you gather with us. If you're still joining us online, we love and so appreciate your presence also. We are 100% committed to our virtual attenders. We still are your church family, and if there is ANYTHING you need, prayer, ideas or suggestions, please pass them our way. We know the future is still uncertain, but we are committed to making our virtual congregation as central to NCC as our in person group.

### **II Sunday.**

We really dove into it Sunday. This topic is one the church has been running from for...since the church began. Because we get caught up in the goals and purposes of the church, (make disciples), we forget in that passion a major part of making disciples is doing in such a way that makes better disciples. There is so much packed into this topic, I strongly encourage you to watch the service to get things we just couldn't pack into this devotional. This will be a quick skim of the topic.

One of the most dominant issues in our society today is the question; *"What does it mean to be a 'real' man?"* We see so many poor examples, have seen, and continue to see, such boorish abusive behavior by men. And in worst case scenarios have watched so many men crash and burn. This can primarily be traced to awful unrealistic expectations we place on men. And also behavior we turn a blind eye to and allow, because it accomplishes goals that we genuinely care about. So, without going into much more detail let's unpack this first thought.

**What does it mean to be a 'real' man in our culture?**

**What does it mean to not be a 'real' man in our culture?**

**Why do you think these are the beliefs we have about maleness in our society?**

In the super long introduction, we hit several key points.

**One**, women are at the losing end of this issue of unhealthy maleness. They either suffer abuse or awful behavior at the hands of men. To be accepted, they have to adopt some of the same traits, and then are called awful names when they do. And they have to continually form their 'selves' around the men in their lives. Women are always held responsible for the health of relationships with men.

**Two**, men have unrealistic expectations placed on them to be this superhero of success, winning, out hustling, and being powerful placed on them. And these expectations come with an unhealthy allowance or almost embracing, of awful behavior, because that's what successful men are like.

**Three**, the danger of unhealthy maleness in our society is it creates toxic environments in which men either crash and burn from the weight of expectations, or even worse substance abuse, immoral behavior and even suicide. The rate of all of these by men has been steadily increasing.

**Four**, Kal briefly talked about some of the possible root causes of our society embracing these expectations and allowances for men.

**1. Obsession with power.** The use and abuse of personal power or position to take something from someone who doesn't have that same power. Simply it's conquest. Avoidance of appearing weak or ignorant. Unhealthy masculinity rewards punching down, and defines anything that seems feminine as weak, and rewards displays of power at whatever cost.

**2. Oppositionalism.** Maleness isn't always defined as specific things, but it definitely isn't these things. Think about this in our language. *"Quit being so emotional, too sensitive, such a girl."* Or even the curse words we used based on the idea of females. Being a man is often just not being a woman. We see this all through politics and even in some religious settings.

**3. Exceptionalism.** It's okay when I do it because different rules apply to me. *"Boys will be boys."* Or it's on the woman to adjust to the way boys are. Exceptionalism means there's a forced acceptance, superiority of the way something is. Built into maleness is that it's just better to be a man.

**4. An incomplete, poor understanding and application of scripture.** Comes from a flat understanding rather than a Jesus-centered understanding of scripture. We cannot treat all of scripture the same. Jesus didn't treat all of scripture the same. We must place Jesus as the center of our understanding of living a Christian life. Jesus set himself above all of scripture as; 'The Word'. *"You have heard it said, (this is what The Law, scripture, states), but I SAY TO YOU."* If we genuinely believe Jesus is alive, and the power of the Holy Spirit to speak into our lives today, then scripture is a guide to help us grow a personal relationship with Jesus. To have this conversation we have to embrace a Jesus-centered practice of understanding, interpreting, and practicing scripture.

**How did you relate to, understand, feel about each one of these possible roots of unhealthy masculinity?**

The scripture from Sunday is one we will spend two weeks on. So, we'll just skim it this week and then dig deeper next week. Read the story in **Matthew 8:5-13**.

**What jumped out to you about this passage and how Jesus and the Roman Centurion related to each other?**

**Did you see any specific behaviors that helped you understand what it means to be a decent person?**

### **III Challenge.**

The challenge for the first Sunday of this series is to begin to honestly and openly shine light on this issue of unhealthy masculinity, and talk about it in a way to bring health and healing to this. We will wrap up this series next week, so no dramatic conclusion today.

**But, what are ways we can begin to honestly address the issue of unhealthy masculinity in our society today?**