

**05/02/21 The Meaning of Manhood
1 Corinthians 16:13-14**

Welcome...

Today we are continuing our 10-week series on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood. Today we will look at The Meaning of Manhood in the Home. Next week Adrian will preach on the Meaning of Womanhood in the Home. Then on May 16 we will have our parent child dedication and I will preach on The Meaning of Manhood in the Church. On May 23 Jesse will preach on The Meaning of Womanhood in the Church.

Last week we looked at What God Says About Gender. And we saw from Genesis 1 and 2 that gender is given to us by God. It is not a “social construct” as defined by the world, but instead a divine construct designed by our Creator. Gender and sexuality is not a burden that God has given us that we do everything we can to downplay or seek to change. Manhood and womanhood are God-designed for His glory and our ultimate joy.

However, there remains a lot of confusion in regards to what biblical manhood and womanhood looks like. If you could package up todays definition of “manhood” it would the three B’s: billfold, ball-field and bedroom. For some, being a man in today’s standards is about how much money you make, what do you do (focus on athletes) and how you are with the ladies.

No wonder in the academic classroom and in the media we hear much of the concept of “toxic masculinity” and the need to eliminate the traditional roles of men.

But what we truly need is a clear picture of biblical manhood, because a husband and father plays a crucial role in the health of the family and the health of the church. Where there is a lack of biblical manhood the church and home will suffer. This morning, as we look at The Meaning of Manhood, we will answer three questions as part of our outline.

We will begin by looking at a case study from the Corinthian church and answer the question: What was the problem in Corinth?

Second, we will then return to Genesis and answer the question: What is God’s design for biblical manhood?

Third, What does biblical manhood look like today in the home?

My prayer is that you will see the grand design God has for manhood, In the same way that the Grand Canyon was created to show God’s power, and the skies reveal His handiwork, you will see that God created you to display the splendor of His design. You and I are the special creation of God.

Whether single or married, whether young or old, we have been given our manhood or womanhood as a blessing. Our bodies, with their distinctive designs, tell us that there is an amazing Creator, and a grander story, behind our frame, form and function.

I. What was the problem in Corinth?

When you read the book of 1 Corinthians you discover that the church in Corinth was mired in a host of sins, including sexual immorality, dissension, doctrinal error, charismatic confusion, and internal litigation, all of which were exasperated by a lack of biblical leadership.

Men within the church were engaged in effeminacy, fornication, perversion, passivity, and - to borrow a modern phrase - protracted adolescence. In other words, they were adults living like children – they were “Kidults.” Kidult is a term for an adult who acts immaturely like a kid.

Time and time again, Paul chastised these believers, especially their men for their immaturity. In 1 Corinthians 3:1-2 he wrote, “And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to infants in Christ. I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able to receive it. Indeed, even now you are not yet able.”

1 Corinthians 4:21 he wrote, “What do you desire? Shall I come to you with a rod, or with love and a spirit of gentleness?”

In 1 Corinthians 13:11 he wrote, “When I was a child, I used to speak like a child, think like a child, reason like a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things.”

1 Corinthians 14:20. “Brethren, do not be children in your thinking; yet in evil be infants, but in your thinking be mature.”

So, as Paul wrapped up his first letter to the Corinthians, he directly calls them in 1 Corinthians 16:13 to, “act like men.”

“Act like men” means to be mature and sober-minded. It means to reject passivity and demonstrate spiritual maturity, courage, biblical strength and spiritual confidence.

The problem in the Corinthian church was not that they had no males. No, there were plenty of males in the church. The problem was the males did not act like men. And it was ruining the church and the home.

There is a defined role of leadership, authority, responsibility, provision and protection men must fulfill. When men are absent from the call of duty, disaster follows. That is why it is imperative that we understand biblical manhood and womanhood, live out God’s design, and model and teach it to our children.

II. What is God’s design for biblical manhood?

Look with me at Genesis 1:27 tells us, “God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.”

To be created in the image of God is an incredible privilege. It means that human beings are like God and represent God. No other creatures in all of creation, not even the powerful angels, are said to be created in the image of God. It is a privilege given only to us men and women.

Nowhere does the Bible say that men are created more in God’s image than women, or vice versa. Men and women share equally in the tremendous privilege of being made in the image of God.

Therefore, wherever men are thought to be better than women; wherever women are treated as inferior; and wherever there is abuse or violence against women, the biblical truth of equality in the image of God is being denied. From the first pages of the Bible, God’s Word bears a fundamental and irrefutable witness against these sins of aggression and mistreatment.

But does equality in the image of God mean no distinction between the roles of men and women? Today we are looking at manhood in the home. A definition will help.

Definition: Biblical manhood for the husband is the divine calling to take primary responsibility for Christlike leadership, protection and provision in the home.

For us to understand this definition, we need to go all the way back to the creation account in Genesis and consider five ways that God created the man to take primary responsibility for Christlike leadership, protection and provision in the home. How do we know that man is created by God to be the primary leader, protector and provider in the home? How do we know that the man is designated as the head of the home?

A. First, the order of creation.

In Genesis 2:7...

Note, Adam was created first, then Eve. We may not think of this as very important today, but it was important to the original readers of this text. The apostle Paul also sees it as important: he bases his argument for different roles in the New Testament church on the fact that Adam was created prior to Eve. He says in 1 Timothy 2:12-13, “I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man.... For Adam was created (formed) first, and then Eve”

According to Scripture itself, the fact that Adam was created first and then Eve had implications not just for Adam and Eve, but also for the relationships between men and women throughout all of human history.

B. Second, the purpose of creation.

Look at Genesis 2:18, “Then the LORD God said, ‘It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.’” Then note in 2:23 that the man is the one who names his wife, calling her “Woman.” She too is divinely created, in no way inferior to the man, yet she is distinct, made to be his “helper.” His authority is subtly apparent in his naming her. But her value and significance is evident in the fact that in Genesis 2 verse 24 it’s a man who leaves his parents and clings to his wife. She is the relational center of the family unit.

C. Third, the conflict in creation.

Look at Genesis 3:1, “Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, ‘Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden’?’”

Why did the serpent, Satan, first come to Eve? It wasn’t because she was inferior or suffered from some inherent moral weakness. No! He tempted Eve because it was a direct threat to Adam’s authority! Satan aimed right at the very heart of what it meant for God to make Adam the leader of the marriage, and Eve his helper.

So instead of man submitting himself to God, the woman accepting the man’s leadership, and both having authority over creation, here the “woman listens to the serpent, the man listens to the woman, and neither of them listens to God.” Satan sought to deceive Eve because he knew in undermining Adam’s leadership, he would undo the good that God intended for them. So we see men’s designation of headship – authority and responsibility in marriage in the order, the purpose and the conflict in creation.

D. Fourth, the accountability in creation.

Look at what happens in Genesis 3:8-9, after they’ve sinned and hidden themselves from God: “And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves

from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. 9 But the Lord God called to the man and said to him, “Where are you?””

Note that God calls out the man first, even though it was the woman who first ate from the fruit. Why? Because Adam holds unique responsibility for their mutual wellbeing! Adam had abandoned his post as leader in their marriage. So, when God called Adam to account, God was “reasserting the original created order.”

And note the death sentence in Genesis 3:17...

Adam functions as the head of all humanity. Eve will give an account, but Adam bears the final responsibility because he represents the human race. Paul teaches in Romans 5:19 that because of Adam’s sin, all of us are accounted as guilty. Romans 5:19 says, For as through the one man’s (Adam’s) disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One (Jesus) the many will be made righteous.”

It is through the first man, Adam, that our sinful nature comes. And it is Jesus, the second Adam, who brings our salvation

E. Fifth, the reconciliation of creation in Christ.

When we come to the New Testament and the apostle Paul discusses marriage and wishes to speak of the relationship between a husband and wife, he does not look back to any sections of the Old Testament telling about the situation AFTER sin came into the world in Genesis 3. No, he goes back to Genesis 2, prior to the fall into sin, and uses that creation order to speak of marriage. Salvation in Christ reaffirms the creation order.

Colossians 3:18-19 says, “Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them.”

Ephesians 5:22-23, “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.”

In Ephesians 5:31–32 he quotes Genesis 2:24, “FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND SHALL BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH.” Then Paul gives this explanation in Ephesians 5:32, “This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church.”

A “mystery” in Paul’s writings is something that was understood only faintly if at all in the Old Testament, but that is made clearer in the New Testament. Although Adam and Eve did not know it, their relationship represented the relationship between Christ and the church. They were created to represent that relationship, and that is what all marriages are supposed to do. In that relationship, Adam represents Christ, while Eve represents the church, because Paul says in Ephesians 5:23, “The husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church.”

The relationship between Christ and the church does not change with culture. It is the same for all generations. And it is not reversible. There is a leadership or headship role that belongs to Jesus Christ, a role that the church does not have. Likewise, in marriage as God created it to be, there is a leadership role for the husband that the wife does not have. This headship and submission were there from the very beginning, in the beautiful marriage between Adam and Eve in the garden. Sin distorted it and made it harder, but Christ redeems not only us but the beautiful definition of biblical manhood and womanhood in the home.

III. What does biblical manhood look like in the home?

Let's return to our definition: Biblical manhood for the husband is the divine calling to take primary responsibility for Christlike leadership, protection and provision in the home.

Let's look at each of these in more detail.

A. First, Christlike leadership.

In Luke 22:26 Jesus says, "Let the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as one who serves." Jesus is not dismantling leadership; he is defining it. The very word he uses for "leader" in Luke 22:26 is used in Hebrews 13:17, which says to members of the church, "Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account."

Leaders in the church are to be servants in sacrificially caring for the souls of the people. But this does not make them less than leaders, as we see in the words obey and submit in Hebrews 13. Jesus was no less a leader of the disciples when He was on his knees washing their feet than when He was giving them the Great Commission.

Ephesians 5:23 says, "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."

So, the clear biblical message is this: To be a man is to welcome (not run from!) the responsibility of leadership.

Immediately after saying that "the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church" in Ephesians 5, Paul says, "Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her, so that He might sanctify her." Ephesians 5:25.

And to men Paul writes in Ephesians 6:4 says, "Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord."

So, the man as the husband and father is to be the head of the home. His aim is the glory of God and the spiritual good of his wife and children.

Unfortunately, because of sin, there can be distortion to God's design. The husband can become selfish, harsh, and domineering, acting like a "tyrant." This is not biblical leadership, but a tragic misrepresentation of it.

Likewise, a wife can also demonstrate errors of aggressiveness when she resists her husband's leadership, not supporting it but fighting against it and creating conflict every step of the way. She can become a "usurper," a tragic distortion of the biblical pattern of equality in the image of God.

The opposite side is just as bad and that is being too passive. A husband can abdicate his leadership in the home and neglect his responsibilities. He fails to shepherd, instruct, correct and discipline his children and the wife handles all the correction and discipline of the children. The family is not going to church regularly, but he is passive and does nothing about it. The family keeps going further into debt, but he continues to put money into his hobbies and does nothing to correct the situation. Some relative or friend is verbally harassing his wife, but he does nothing to stop it. He has become a "wimp."

A wife can also commit errors of passivity. Rather than being a helper and actively participating in family decisions, rather than contributing her wisdom and insight that is so much needed, her only response to every question is, "Yes, dear, whatever you say." She knows her husband and her children are doing wrong, but she says nothing. Her husband becomes verbally or physically abusive, but she never objects and never tells the elders

of the church or informs the police to bring about an end to the abuse. She never expresses her preferences about friendships or family vacations, or her opinions about people or events. Her silence is also a tragic distortion of biblical patterns.

You and I can fall into sins of aggressiveness or passivity in our homes. In order to maintain a healthy, biblical balance, we need to keep reading God's Word each day, continue praying for God's help to obey his Word as best we can, and stay in fellowship with Christians who are good examples of seeking to live out biblical manhood and womanhood.

Men must lead, but we do so with the character of Christ in mind. It's the image of a shepherd. We look to Christ, the good shepherd who came to lay His life down for the sheep. A leader who rejects passivity, accepts responsibility, leads courageously in obedience to His heavenly Father. Like the Lord in Psalm 23, a shepherd who leads others to green pastures and still waters for the restoration of their souls and their overall welfare. So first biblical manhood is Christlike leadership.

B. Second, protection in the home.

In Genesis 2:15, before the fall of man into sin, we read the man was commanded by God cultivate and "to keep" the garden, which is a word used elsewhere in Scripture in reference to the role of soldiers, shepherds, priests, and even God Himself. It denotes a "watching over", a "guarding" and "protecting" role for those in their care.

So for example, when God condemned the "shepherds" or leaders of Israel in Ezekiel 34, He rebuked them for not protecting his sheep. He said in Ezekiel 34:4-6, "The weak you have not strengthened, the sick you have not healed, the injured you have not bound up, the strayed you have not brought back, the lost you have not sought, and with force and harshness you have ruled them. So they were scattered, because there was no shepherd, and they became food for all the wild beasts... my sheep were scattered over all the face of the earth with none to search or seek for them."

So when it comes to protection let me ask you a simple question, if there is noise in the house at 2 a.m. and it sounds like someone has broken into your home, do you lean over to your wife and say, "Honey, you need to go check that out and I will be right here praying for you. Oh, and take this baseball bat with you in case you hit the intruder." I hope not.

The point I'm trying to make is that biblical manhood senses a natural, God-given responsibility to step forward and protect. Why? Not because women are inherently weaker physically, or moral cowards. It's because men are designed to sacrificially protect others.

Single guys protect another sister in Christ by walking her home or to her car when it is dark outside.

And this protection isn't just limited to physical danger. Men in the home should seek to protect their family's spiritual well-being first and foremost. Just as men who are leaders in the church guard the congregation's doctrine by equipping the membership to know the truth.

So, there is spiritual leadership, protection and third:

C. Provision in the home.

Paul writes in 1 Timothy 5:8, "If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever."

A husband's responsibility to provide doesn't mean a wife shouldn't assist in earning income. Proverbs 31 pictures a wife with ample abilities that extend both within the sphere of the home and also in business outside the home.

But when there is no bread on the table, it's the husband who should feel the main pressure to get it there. I totally understand every home will have unique differences: no children in the home; physical disability or illness; unemployment; financial debt). We'll address this much more in future weeks.

Outside of marriage, applying this verse might mean a son or brother or uncle or grandfather stepping up and providing financially for relatives who need help. It might mean providing financially, or mowing the grass, or cleaning the gutter of an elderly widow within the church.

On a very practical level for single men, it strongly suggests that you should take responsibility to pay for a date when pursuing a woman. Where a man can be helpful materially in an appropriate way, he should be sensitive to those opportunities and take the initiative to act on them.

So, how exactly does biblical manhood and womanhood play out in marriage, specifically how does male headship work out in actual practice. The situation I know best is my own marriage, so I will speak about it briefly.

In our marriage, Paula and I talk and pray about many decisions. Sometimes these are large decisions (such as buying a house or a car), and sometimes they are small decisions (such as where we should go for a walk together). We go on walks to talk and pray together. I often defer to her wishes, and she often defers to mine, because we love each other.

In almost every case, each of us has some wisdom and insight that the other does not have, and we have learned to listen to each other, to pray together, and to place much trust in each other's judgment. Usually we reach agreement on the decision.

But in every decision, whether large or small, and whether we have reached agreement or not, the responsibility to make the decision still rests with me. And even though there will often be much discussion, and there should be much mutual respect and consideration of each other, yet ultimately I will give an account to God for how I led my wife and children. The responsibility to make the wisest decisions rests with the husband. I will often seek counsel from other Christian men.

And so in our marriage, the responsibility to make the decision rests with me. This is not because I am wiser or a more gifted leader. It is because I am the husband, and God has given me that responsibility. In the face of cultural pressures to the contrary, I will not forsake this male headship; I will not deny it; and I will not be embarrassed by it.

This biblical pattern of Christlike leadership, protection and provision in the home is God-given. It is very good. It brings peace and joy to our marriage, and both Paula and I are thankful for it.

Let's pray...