

Series: **Aliens 3.0**

Today's Title: **"Godly Manhood"**

February 18, 2024 – Genesis 1:26-31, 2:20-25; Ephesians 5:22-30

Objective: To help people know the Bible's teaching and truth about men and masculinity.

- Intro Plant Pastor Search Update Video – Wendy Free
- After the video... remind congregation to financially support plant

Opening prayer

For some people, it's within their nature to live their lives and to simply ignore the culture.

For some Christians, it seems easier to take a step back – to ditch the culture – just retreat to your own existence and your own family – and just live your life.

The problem with that is Jesus said we ***are*** "salt and light" (Matt. 5:13-16).

According to the Apostle Paul, followers of Jesus are "ambassadors" for Christ, to call the culture we live in to "...be reconciled to God." (2 Corinthians 5:20)

We can't be "salt and light" or "ambassadors" for Christ if we remove ourselves from the culture.

In our God-given role, we can't be ignorant of the culture's values and beliefs or isolate ourselves from the culture.

We must be culturally literate – culturally aware and engaged.

I think a generation or two ago – this was much easier.

But our culture has gone through dramatic changes / shifts – in such a short time, and in recent years the changes and pace of those changes are dramatic.

So, one of the challenges we have as Christians is to understand and know the culture we are called to reach with the gospel.

1 Chronicles 12:32

“Of Issachar, men who had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do, 200 chiefs, and all their kinsmen under their command.”

From the tribe of Issachar, there were 200 leaders (“chiefs”). All these men understood the signs of the times and knew the best course for Israel to take.

Do you have an “understanding of the times” we live in?

Today, I’m beginning a series - 13-sermons – which I call “Aliens” – based on what the Apostle Peter told us.

1 Peter 2:11-12 (NASB)

“Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul.”

In this series, we will see what Jesus said / the Bible says – in regard to some of the hot-button topics / issues which are causing great confusion and division in our culture / nation in 2024.

These issues are confusing for many Christians.

- How are we to think about these things?

- How are we to treat those who are caught up in them?
- How are we to live and act when the values of our culture have shifted so dramatically?

Today, I'm beginning the series by looking at what the Bible says about men – and masculinity.

“Godly Manhood”

In our current culture, men are under attack.

Men are being diminished – and in some instances, canceled. Masculinity is viewed to be harmful – some believe it is ‘Toxic’.

The movie director James Cameron, of ‘The Terminator’ franchise and Avatar, made headlines when he referred to testosterone as *“poison...a toxin that you have to slowly work out of your system.”* (The War on Men, by Owen Strachan, p. xxv)

In 2019 the APA (American Psychological Association) – in discussing “traditional masculinity”, they said:

It has a “...negative influence (on) mental health and physical health.”

“...traditional masculinity marked by stoicism, competitiveness, dominance and aggression - is, on the whole, harmful.”

(<https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2023/07/10/christine-emba-masculinity-new-model/>)

As a result of this rejection of masculinity, we are seeing a rise in the number of masculine women, and feminine men. What's in is androgyny – appearing to be neither male nor female.

The late musician Prince promoted an androgynous appearance.

This anti-male tone has actually been present for decades, and it has led to confusion and problems for men in our society – especially young men.

“...by 1958, Arthur Schlesinger Jr. warned that “the male role has plainly lost its rugged clarity of outline.” Writing in Esquire magazine, he added, “The ways by which American men affirm their masculinity are uncertain and obscure. There are multiplying signs, indeed, that something has gone badly wrong with the American male’s conception of himself.”

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2023/07/10/christine-emba-masculinity-new-model/>

He saw – 65 years ago – what is becoming obvious today.

We’ve seen men pull back from work and education – and an increasing number of men simply being absent.

Some have ‘unplugged’ from a productive lifestyle and have prioritized personal recreation and entertainment.

This manifests in men struggling in many areas of life.

Work

Men are dropping out of the workforce in large numbers.

Labor force participation rates...

1960 – 93% of men (25-34) were in the labor force.

2012 – 68%

Education

College enrollment for men has steadily declined.

Just 41% of students enrolled in college in fall 2020 were men.

In the 8th grade – nationally – boys account for 70% of all the D's and F's given out at school.

This is a global problem – not just a USA problem.

In some European countries, girls are scoring higher on assessment tests – they are essentially 1 year – 1.5 years ahead of boys in school.

Spiritually

Both men and women sin – and have great spiritual needs, but women tend to be more spiritually interested than men.

Men are struggling spiritually, especially with lust, fueled by accessible pornography.

About 70% of men 18-24 view porn on a monthly basis.

The problems this causes are wide-sweeping and destroying marriages and families.

Physically

Many men are struggling physically.

In recent years...men as a group have declined physically.

One of the ways this has been measured is a sharp decline in grip strength.

In a Washington Post study, among college age men, grip strength had declined significantly from 1985 to 2016.

Today, the sample of college men tested had no more hand strength than a 30-year-old mom.

Today, men have dramatically lower testosterone and sperm counts than men in the previous 2 generations. Like education, this is a global issue, not just an American issue.

(The War on Men, by Owen Strachan, p. 11-13)

Socially

Men are also struggling socially.

In 2012 – 73.8% of all arrestees were males.

Men account for 80.1% of people arrested for violent crime.

Men – 88.7% of murder arrests.

Men – 79.7% of drug arrests.

90% of all federal inmates are men.

Missing Fathers – Men MIA

80% of single parent households are headed by mothers.

75% of public-school teachers are female.

In many neighborhoods, there are no adult men!

There are no male role models for boys to imitate.

- 6 decades ago – 88% of kids had a home with a mom and dad.

- In 2012 – 68%.

- Recent census data: 55.1% of black kids / 31.1% of Hispanic kids / 20.7% of white kids live in single parent homes.

- Children in father-absent homes are almost 4x more likely to be poor.
- Children without 2 parents in the home are significantly more likely to be sexually assaulted, mistreated, and victimized.
- Children of single-parent homes are 2x more likely to commit suicide.

So, how do we remedy this manhood shortage (crisis)?

In our culture, the remedy we often see falls into 4 deficient forms of manhood.

1. The soft man – a timid and effeminate approach – yields leadership to others – no aggressive or assertive behavior.

2. The exaggerated man – a cartoonish caricature of manhood with overstated machismo (ma-keez-mo), physical strength, wealth, and sexual exploits.

3 “Bs” – Billfold – Ballfield - Bedroom

3. The lost man – disappears into the shadows – avoiding life and responsibility – abandons friends and family.

4. The angry man – Like the lost man he abandons society, but he is full of anger and wrath. He is driven by vengeance, and he hurts people who get near him. He uses strength for evil purposes.

These are not Biblical forms of manhood.

These compound the problem; they don't solve it.

These are not Godly expressions of masculinity.
They are deficient – sinful – hurtful – unfulfilling.

The Bible speaks to every area of life – and the topic of manhood and masculinity is no exception.

The Bible gives us the answer we're looking for.
It's gives us a clear picture of manhood – Godly Manhood.
For the remaining time, I want to look at a few passages that give us some foundational truths about Godly Manhood.

God created men sinless and perfect.

Unlike some of the popular beliefs that we find in our culture, being male is not a bad thing.

Men / manhood / masculinity is not inherently 'poisonous' – harmful – dangerous – or toxic.

Genesis 1 & 2 records the creation account and in this account we see important, foundational truths about Godly Manhood / masculinity.

Read Genesis 1:26-27

Then God said, "Let us make man in Our image, after Our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

27 So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

We, both male and female, are created in the image of God.

Sin has not entered the human realm in **Genesis 1 or 2**, so what is being described is a perfect world – a perfect creation – with perfect, holy, sinless people.

Being male is not inherently flawed.

Being female is not inherently better – or some improved form of humanity.

Being male is part of the original, sinless, perfect creation, which means masculinity and manhood are also present in this perfect, sinless state of creation.

Now, this doesn't mean men can't or don't ever use their manhood / masculinity in evil or sinful ways.

This means that there is nothing wrong with being a man / masculinity.

God created men to work.

As the creation account continues, we see more details about our original, sinless human condition – and what God expected / commissioned the man and woman to do.

Read Genesis 1:28, 31

28 And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion...”

31 “And God saw everything that He had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.”

This is not a full exposition of this account, but I want to highlight 3 things here.

1. Sex in marriage is a good thing.

In the perfect, sinless world, God commands Adam and Eve to “Be fruitful and multiply”.

In our culture, there are some voices that claim the male sex drive is harmful – abusive – enslaving to women.

Men can use sex in harmful and evil ways, but the sexual drive is not inherently wrong or evil.

God blesses the sexual union in marriage.

2. We are expected to work.

Work is a good thing. Work is given by God before sin enters humanity.

3. Humanity is superior to the animal world.

In **vs. 26** – and here in **vs. 28-31** we see the work of “dominion” over creation – which also reveals the superior nature of people over the rest of creation and the animal world.

God created men to lead.

As the creation account continues in **chapter 2**, we see additional details.

In **chapter 1** we see the superior nature of humanity over the animals.

In **chapter 2**, this is seen by God giving Adam the work of naming all the animals.

This reveals the authority of Adam over the animals.

It also shows Adam – that he is missing something.

This will become clear to Adam when he is done naming the animals.

And since God declares this “is not good”, it reveals the necessity, value, and partnership of women with men.

Read 2:18-25

Genesis 2:18-25

Then the LORD God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.”

Now out of the ground the LORD God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name.

The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him.

21 So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh.

22 And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man He made into a woman and brought her to the man.

23 Then the man said, “This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.”

24 Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

25 And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

Adam's naming of the animals – places him above the animal world.

The woman (Eve) being made from Adam's rib – places the man in a position to care for her.

She is part of him.

Women and men are different, but united in a way that no animals are united.

All the animals were made from the ground (vs. 19).

But humanity is different.

Adam was made from the ground – but Eve was made from Adam.

Paul makes clear in **1 Timothy 2:13** that due to creation order men have the responsibility to lead.

We are to lead in the home and in the church – according to the example of Christ (Ephesians 5).

Men - our manhood / masculinity – is a unique part of how God created us to fulfill the leadership role He has given to men.

The leadership abilities of men and women are different – because men and women are inherently different in our physical make-up – and we each have different strengths due to our biological and spiritual composition.

God created men to physically protect and to lead spiritually.

We see this all throughout Scripture.

In **Genesis 3**, when sin enters humanity, we see Adam's failure to lead spiritually as he is passive in the moment when he should have been actively leading and protecting his wife.

There are numerous passages in the Bible that call men to spiritual leadership.

Many of these passages give spiritual direction to both men and women, but through creation order and the distinctive way God created men, He has given men the role and responsibility to give physical protection and spiritual leadership.

For instance, all of us are told by the Apostle Paul...

Ephesians 5:11

“Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them.”

This is a command for men and women.

A few verses later in the chapter, Paul gives very specific commands to husbands and wives.

Ephesians 5:23, 25-27

23 “For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, His body, and is Himself its Savior.”

25 “Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her, that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that He might present the church to Himself in splendor, without spot or

wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.

The man's leadership of his wife is for her spiritual good / advancement.

She should be closer to the Lord because of his sacrificial leadership.

His leadership is not for his advantage or pleasure, it is for hers.

The Bible commands men to submit all they have—their strength, intellect, sexuality, and roles in the family—to the lordship of Jesus Christ – to worship Him – and to bless and protect others.

God calls men to act like men.

Men and women are different.

One is not better than the other...just different.

As we saw in **Genesis 1**, both are created in the image of God, so any idea of sexism, misogyny, or chauvinism is sinful.

But God created men... well... to be men!

We are called to be strong – determined – to be leaders – protectors – guardians – Jesus followers – steady and stable, among other things.

1 Kings 2:1-3

When David's time to die drew near, he commanded Solomon his son, saying, "I am about to go the way of all the earth. Be strong,

and show yourself a man, and keep the charge of the LORD your God, walking in His ways and keeping His statutes, His commandments, His rules, and His testimonies, as it is written in the Law of Moses, that you may prosper in all that you do and wherever you turn...”

It's clear here that to “Be strong and show yourself a man...” is about obeying God and following His commands.

Paul has a very similar message to the Corinthians.

1 Corinthians 16:13-14

“Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong. Let all that you do be done in love.”

The world's version of “act like men, be strong” is vastly different than God's version.

Worldly Manhood is about advancing a man's cause or interest – it's all about the man.

Godly Manhood is about protecting, leading, helping advance the cause of others.

Apply it...

1. Look to Jesus as the ideal man.

Jesus is our role model.

He is the God-Man.

John 1:14

“...full of grace and truth.”

This is a great picture of Godly Manhood.

Grace and Truth.

Tenderness and strength.

We follow His example.

“Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her...”

Let the Bible define what it means to be a man.

Don't be discipled by social media / cultural icons.

Andrew Tate is a figure most high school and college men with a social media account are familiar with. He's known for posting videos of fast cars and fitness advice – they have been viewed 12 billion times.

He teaches that being a man is all about cars, guns, and squat racks and they drip with bravado and confidence.

He's known for misogynistic rants.

He talks about being rough with women, and says he only dates women aged 18 or 19 so that he can “*make an imprint*” on them.

But Tate's version of masculinity is a twisted, evil version that runs counter to the biblical picture.

A cultural voice much better than Andrew Tate is Jordan Peterson – a Canadian psychology professor who has preached against “woke” ideologies.

He has been an outspoken supporter of men and gives very practical advice for men to embrace their masculinity and use their manhood for good.

But Jordan Peterson – even though he seems to be moving toward Christ – he’s still using worldly wisdom – for what is at its core a spiritual understanding and truth.

Embrace what God’s Word says about manhood – the truth that is sourced in God Himself – who created men!

Men...Prioritize Christ in your life and lead your family spiritually.

This is the greatest way to become the man God intends. When men commit to Christ and to a local church, the impact on the family is amazing.

- When a mother comes to faith in Christ, her family will join her at church only 17% of the time.

- However, when a father comes to Christ, the family joins him 93% of the time. (The War on Men, by Owen Strachan, p. 9)

Leaning into your maleness is chasing after the wind – unless you are following Christ.

Prioritize Christ.

Lead your family in Christ.

He will transform you into the man of God you were created to be.

Closing prayer