

A MANLY REVOLUTION

HOW GENDER ROLES TRANSFORM A SOCIETY

1 CORINTHIANS 11:7-10

For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man. For man is not from woman, but woman from man. Nor was man created for the woman, but woman for man.

For this reason the woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels...

I like Top Ten lists, and this morning I brought one with me. Here are the **Top Ten Fatal Statements A Man Might Speak To His Pregnant Wife...**

10) "Sorry Honey, I just finished the Oreos." 9) "Not to imply anything, but I don't think the baby weighs 40 pounds." 8) "Are your thighs going to stay that flabby forever?" 7) "Well, can't they induce labor? The 7th is Super Bowl Sunday." 6) "You're awfully puffy-looking today." 5) "Fred passed a stone the size of a pea. Wow that had to hurt!" 4) "Sweetheart, are your ankles supposed to look like that?" 3) "Got milk?" 2) "Man, that rose tattoo on your hip is the size of Montana!"

And here's the number one fatal statement to make to a wife who is pregnant, especially if she's overdue...

1) "You don't have the guts to pull that trigger."

When Adam and Eve sinned against God one of sin's effects was pain in childbirth. *Not the pain I've just described... a husband's insensitive comments to his wife*, but the physical agony of labor and delivery.

Before sin entered the world birthing a child was a cakewalk. A mom's make-up and hair stayed perfect for the pictures. Just a push or two, and presto...

I've witnessed four births, and **that's not how it works now. It's called "labor" for a reason. Most women get drugged up for the ordeal and it still hurts terribly.**

But it wasn't just pain in childbirth, everything changed when Adam and Eve sinned. Theologians call it **"the fall of man."** All of life started to hiccup.

Suddenly, Adam and Eve realized their nakedness. Sin made them self-conscious. Their innocence was shattered. They now have to cover their shame.

God ends up slaughtering an animal. They eat the wrong fruit and there's blood on the ground. A sacrifice is needed to cover the humans' sin and shame.

The next time your wife takes your credit card, and goes shopping at the mall, remember **"the wages of sin is death (and clothes)..."** It's been said, **"Eve is the only woman in history to say to her husband, 'Honey, I don't have a thing to wear' - and it actually was true."**

Eve was cursed with *labor pains*. Adam's *labor became a pain*. Before sin all Adam had to do to eat was pick fruit off a tree. Work was no sweat. Now he has to plow, plant, weed, water, and harvest his food.

He works by the sweat of his brow. And worse, when he goes to work the ground, he finds out there're now thorns and thistles – obstacles to his success.

Men like to take charge and build, but whatever they tackle ends up hard work. Everything in this life has been affected by the curse. All life is now a fixer-upper.

A job, a business, a marriage, kids, a church - there will be thistles and obstacles. It won't be easy. And a true man doesn't lie down and roll over when the going gets tough. He'll rise to the challenge and **man up!** Eve faces *contractions*. Adam faces *obstructions*.

And as if that weren't enough, God throws a wrench into the gears of the relationship between the man and woman. In Genesis 3:16, He says to Eve, "**Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.**"

From the beginning Eve was submissive to Adam, but after sin entered the world it became more difficult.

Adam had failed to protect his wife, and take on leadership. It resulted in their sin. **The woman will continue to have a desire for her husband to lead, but now she has to follow a flawed leader.**

Life changed dramatically after sin entered the world, *but some things didn't change...* The roles God designed for men and women remain the same.

In 1 Timothy 2 and 1 Corinthians 11 when Paul sets out the structure and order of the Church he goes back to Genesis. *Gender matters to God*. The distinctions God created between male and female transcend culture, time, and even our sin. When God created man He created us specifically male and female.

And even today, **God wants men to be men and women to be women**. Society shouldn't alter gender roles. Gender roles should transform the society.

There is a fad I hope has hit its peak. We don't want this to catch on... *men's hosiery - pantyhose for men*.

Here come the *men in tights!*

There's actually a website, legwear4men.com. It advertises a whole assortment of male hosiery - *control top tights*, and *footless tights*, and *opaque tights*, and *sheer tights*, and *support tights*, and *winter tights*. Their internet ad reads, "**Because men have legs too!**"

Management explains their company's mission, "**It has nothing to do with gender-confusion. The bulk of our wearers are straight men... Men have worn tights for centuries. The ancient Romans gave their soldiers leggings to wear some 2000 years ago.**"

Well, if really old Romans want to wear pantyhose it's up to them, *but not me!* I believe there are *masculine garments* and *feminine garments*.

Here's the big thought behind 1 Corinthians 11... *Men need to dress like men, and women should dress like women.* As we've noted, **gender matters to God.**

Some of you might remember when football player, Joe Namath, posed in a pair of pantyhose. After Joe won Super Bowl III he did a commercial...

Namath had undergone multiple surgeries on his notoriously feeble knees. He was a most unlikely candidate to pose for pantyhose. In fact, here was the ad's punch line, "I don't wear pantyhose, but if Sheer Pantyhose makes my legs look good, think of what they'll do for yours..." The idea behind Broadway Joe's commercial was **men don't wear pantyhose.**

Obviously, society, and fashion, and styles, and culture somewhat dictate what constitutes a *masculine article of clothing*, and a *feminine article of clothing*...

In Scotland, a kilt is a *traditional male garment*. But on the streets in Stone Mountain, GA it's a *frilly skirt*.

If I lived in Scotland I might wear a kilt, but I stay in GA, and there, a kilt or pantyhose just ain't manly. **At least this guy is carrying a shotgun...**

This is why I say, *fight the tights*. Say *no-sir-ree to hosiery*. If we can label anything "feminine" it ought to be pantyhose. If you're a male who wears pantyhose I'm not condemning you... *just don't tell anybody*.

When God created mankind, He did so male and female. He created us along specific lines. He designed us with distinctions.

And as a result, men should look, and act, and think, and dress, and talk like men. While women should look, and act, and think, and dress and talk like women. This is the idea behind our text.

In the first century, Gentile women wore head coverings. This was nothing like the Muslim Burka. A burka conceals a woman's beauty. The scarf worn in Corinth was a symbol of submission. It was usually a light scarf that draped over the crown of her head.

In first century Corinth a head scarf was a symbol that the woman wearing it was under authority. She had a husband, or a father. Of course today in western culture, a woman's relationship to her husband is not what you think of when you see a head scarf.

Today, a head scarf can be a fashion statement... Or it can mean the woman didn't have time to style her hair... In the roaring 20s, the head scarf was the rage.

But there are symbols in modern, American culture that do make a statement about a woman's

relationships and attitude toward authority... A young lady who *requires her finance' to ask her parents for her hand in marriage* is observing a custom that acknowledges submission... When a woman *takes her husband's last name...* and *wears a wedding ring...* and *exchanges traditional vows* she's making the same statement. She is adopting the **symbols of submission** observed by her culture.

The Corinthian Christians felt they had liberty to ignore these symbols. In Christ they'd experienced a new parity. Christian women were equal with Christian men in their acceptance, significance, and giftedness.

But equal doesn't mean same. Gender roles still mattered to God. *Male headship* and *female companionship* were still God's will.

The Christian women of Corinth needed to be submissive to their dads and husbands. This didn't change at the fall. Nowhere did God alter His original distinctions of male and female. This was still God's plan - so Paul suggests the Corinthian women keep the scarf on their head. If not their heart and attitude would be misunderstood by the culture.

If Paul were writing to Christian women today he'd talk about *taking your husband's last name*, or *wearing his wedding ring*, or *putting his name first on the checks*, or *moving into his house* - or whatever the

culture might recognize as expressions of authority and submission between the sexes.

Headship and submission are **creation principles**. Whereas, head scarves, and last names, and wedding rings are **cultural symbols**.

But God wants His people to affirm and teach His timeless principles through cultural expressions. In fact, our willingness to conform our *cultural liberties* to *Scriptural priorities* reveals an obedient heart.

It's God's desire to use gender to transform a society. And in this session I want to discuss three ways gender roles shape society. Gender provides a culture with **symbols**, and **security**, and **significance**.

Here's a way gender transforms a society... It embeds into the fabric of culture inescapable **symbols** that guide all its citizens, believers or unbelievers - *whether they realize it or not* - into God's big truths.

Understand God is into symbols that picture His overarching truths. Even before sin entered the world God packed His creation with signs and symbols.

Genesis 1:14 tells us God created the stars "for signs." Some Bible scholars believe the original Zodiac taught the Gospel in the stars. It began with a virgin. It ended with a lion. Here're also the bookends of the Gospel. Jesus was born of a virgin, and He returns like

a lion. The ancient Zodiac has been corrupted, but other signs abound.

Think of the sex act itself - it's laced with spiritual truth. A man woos a woman. He penetrates her with his seed. He plants life within her womb. **She nurtures that seed and bears fruit. Then she presents the child, the fruit of her womb, back to the man.**

This is the Gospel. God loves us and woos us. When we invite Him into our lives His Holy Spirit penetrates our spirit with the seed of God's Word. We nurture His Word through repentance and faith. It bears fruit in our lives - the fruits of the Spirit and of good works - that we in turn give back to Jesus.

This is really cool. Sex teaches the Gospel. Heterosexual intercourse points people to God - *even if they're not looking for Him, He's still seen.*

And here's why sexual perversion is so serious. It's not only harmful, but it distorts the sanctity of sex. Pornography is a mockery of God's sacred symbols.

In today's culture sexuality is almost never portrayed as a loving, gentle, committed means of seed-bearing and birth. It's tied to violence, dominance, gratification.

Sex in the world of porn is a perversion of the glorious picture and sacred symbols God has ordained.

And this is why the definition of marriage is so vital to a society. Throughout history, civilizations like the Greeks and Romans flirted with homosexuality, and it was one of the factors that led to their downfall.

Yet even in the cultures that tolerated homosexuality as an individual preference, never did anyone think to elevate it to the status of marriage.

The roles of husband and wife depict the relationship between Christ and His Church. A same-sex marriage mars that picture and makes a mockery of all that's sacred about marriage. *America is as blind as a bat!*

Marriage derives its highest significance not just because it makes two people happy, or orders society, or promotes the raising of kids. **Marriage is special because it conveys spiritual truths important to God.**

God took a rib from Adam's side. He used it to create a bride... On the cross a spear was thrust through Jesus' side. Out flowed blood and water - *the same blood that washes away our sin.* God took from Jesus' side, what He'd use to create His bride, the Church.

Everything about God's marital blueprint conveys spiritual truth. Husbands should love and lead their wives as Jesus loves the Church. Wives should submit to their husbands as the Church loves and submits to Christ. *This is reason enough to fight for your marriage.*

I'm sure there are some marriages in this room that are in jeopardy. Some of you came this weekend, on the verge of bailing out on your marriage. *Listen to me, you cannot give up! Much too much is at stake...*

Read again our text, Chapter 11:10, "For this reason the woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels..." This blows my mind.

The gender roles we're called on to maintain in the home and in the church are lessons not only to society and family - but to the "angels." The angels of God are glued to gender. They learn of God's love, and the Gospel, and redemption - by how we treat our spouse.

Don't ever say, "My marriage doesn't matter. It's a trivial pursuit." You might just end up with a burly, beefy, battle-hardened angel in your face telling you just the opposite. Gender roles speak to angels.

In the darkest days of World War 2 Winston Churchill said to the battle-wearied British people, "Wars are not won by evacuation." And neither are good marriages.

We get myopic. We think marriage is primarily about me - *it's not!* You are way down on the priority list.

Marriage is about health and stability for future generations. It's about a strong fabric for society - and safety in the streets - and most vitally, spiritual truth.

I was told, "The best thing I can do for my kids is to love their mom." That's good, but it's too narrow. Loving my wife is the best contribution I can make to the culture, and my community, and God's kingdom.

On the other hand, divorce is not only a sin against your spouse and kids. It's a sin against God, and the Church, and the Christian way of life, and your fellow man, and future generations, *and even angels.*

Divorce is not a sniper's rifle aimed precisely at one person. It's a pipe bomb blast that sprays a wide radius, and damages stuff you never meant to target.

Divorce distorts the big picture God wants painted.

Here's a second way gender transforms a society. The role of true, God-ordained masculinity and male assertiveness provides a society with the **security** and protection it needs to survive against the forces of evil.

Let me start here with an observation... *Just because a blind contestant wins a skeet shooting competition, it doesn't mean everybody with a gun should close their eyes before they shoot.* As the old saying goes, "An exception doesn't make the rule."

And the same is true when it comes to the strength of men and women. I'm sure you can find *some woman - somewhere - who can beat me up. In fact, when this gets on the internet she might show up soon.*

But just because *one gal* proves to be a stronger and a better fighter than *one guy*, it doesn't mean the same is true for all women and for all men.

The truth is that most men are more aggressive, and competitive, and even combative than most women

And I for one am glad! I want my wife, and mother, and daughter to represent *the fairer sex*. Sons should be rougher. This is the way God made the sexes.

Rather than deny the obvious, we should accept and appreciate the distinctions in gender... We need mighty men. Our security requires their toughness.

In his book "*Manliness*," Harvard Professor, Harvey Mansfield, writes of the need for men to fight wars and stop terrorism. He observes, "*Women on their own are not ruthless enough...*" *And we should be glad...*

Mansfield goes on to write what some have tried to ignore, "*The disaster of September 11, 2001, sharply reminded Americans that it is sometimes necessary to fight, and that in the business of government, fighting comes before caring. On 9/11 women were reminded that men can come in handy. The heroes of that day were exclusively male; as were the villains.*"

There are evil men in the world - and in light of their aggression there comes a time when good men have to resist. Strong men are needed to protect society.

In peacetime, feminism tends to flourish. Pretty boys take center stage. Manly men are frowned upon. They're considered uncouth, out-dated. But in times of war society flip-flops - masculinity is back in vogue.

When it comes to defending a society manly traits are a must. *Strength, and courage, and risk-taking, and the will-to-fight* - are valued and respected.

The same tendencies that'll get a boy *in trouble at school* will win him *a medal of honor on the battlefield*.

We need to shape our sons to love and care for other people. But we shouldn't strip them of their resolve to fight injustice - and to defend themselves, along with the innocent folks who live around them.

I don't suppose the Swedish National Army has ever been known for its fierceness in battle. But I hope they don't get tested anytime soon.

Recently, feminist troops petitioned to make a change to the Nordic Battlegroup's Coat of Arms.

Traditionally the Swedes have marched to battle under the banner of a lion. But the female troops had the lion neutered. Today, the Swedes go into battle under the banner a castrated lion. *I'm sure their new symbol inspires real fear in the hearts of their enemies.*

This is NOT what we need to do to our sons. Tame the lion. Give it food to satisfy its appetite. Channel the lion in the right direction. But whatever you do, don't neuter the lion. You're going to need him one day!

Let soldiers fight, and let *men be men*.

We need strong, brave, aggressive, lion-hearted men to fight for our country - and we also need *manly men* who will fight for their church... *Men, who'll protect and cover the ladies... Men, who'll stand up to abusive men who push around their family... Men, who'll be role models and a mentor to our youth... Men who'll help the widows and fatherless... Men who'll work hard, tithe their money, be a witness for Jesus... Men who'll be bold enough to stand up for God's truths...*

We need men who see a brother taking a short-cut: *cheating on his wife, or shirking responsibilities, or blowing his paycheck, or neglecting his kids* - and care enough to go to that brother and draw him back...

In the home and church God wants Christian men to rise up and accept the responsibilities of headship...

Yet this is not what I see happening in most churches... It's sad, but if you walk into an Orthodox Jewish Synagogue, or a Muslim mosque, you'll find a preponderance of men. But, not so in a church... Statistics show 60% of church members are women.

And tragically, most churches are led by women. Usually the pastor is a man, but after that there's a train of women who rule the roost. And this has catastrophic effects on the society at large...

Only *women, boys, and weak, sissified men* receive spiritual truth from a woman. Young men are only going to listen to strong, masculine men that they respect. This is why Paul writes to Titus and tells *HIM* - not the old men or women - but Titus himself - "*to exhort the young men...*" *And why?* Because young men will only respect and listen to another man!

There's another reason why the church needs its men to rise up and lead. When the devil and his demons see a woman at the helm of the church they scoff. They refuse to take us seriously. We're a joke.

Remember, 1 Corinthians 11:10 tells us the angels pay attention to gender. *And demons are fallen angels.*

So, tell me, what demon will respect a female pastor or elder? Demons know that gender matters. A demon just laughs at our blatant disregard for God's will.

Much is being illustrated and communicated through gender that's vital to God. It should not be taken lightly.

And there's a third way that gender forms a society... Male approval is craved by both boys and girls.

Young men - *want-to-be men* - desire affirmation of their masculinity. But it comes only through other men. It takes another man to bestow on a boy the title of "*manhood*." It rings true only if it comes from a man.

And girls also need a fatherly, protective kind of love that also can only come from a man... All kids derive psychological **significance** from male influence.

Several years ago I took my single, college-age daughter with me to Germany. I spoke at a Bible College and she did the tourist sites. At night we shared adjoining rooms at the house near the college.

The night before we came home I asked her if she had enjoyed herself. Natalie said, "Oh yes daddy, but I'm a little tired of all the *man smells and man noises*."

Natalie has now been married to a good man for ten years. And I'm sure she's become quite the expert on *man smells and man noises... but I prepared her...*

Here's what I've seen, "Girls who grow up around a man, gravitate toward a man." They like the stability of true masculinity. A man anchors a woman. Girls flourish within the safety, love, and strength of a true man. *And they get use to the smells and noises.*

As for boys, one author writes a profound truth, "A woman simply is, but a man must become. Masculinity

is risky and elusive. It's achieved by a revolt from woman - and it's confirmed only by other men."

This is why a father's absence means there's a boy who is lost. In his mind becoming a man involves breaking away from mom. *Mama's boy* and *real man* are at polar opposites in his mind. But as he makes his break, he needs a strong father to define manhood for him - and then bestow on him the title once it's earned.

And if his manhood isn't affirmed by his dad - or a coach - or a positive peer group - the boy will run with the pack and do what's needed to gain affirmation from other young men who are as lost and confused as him.

Today's rise of single moms and absentee fathers is crippling a whole generation of boys - who may or may not turn into men. Right now there are 22 million American males between the ages of 16 and 26 - who are stuck somewhere between *boyhood* and *manhood*.

In his book "*Guyland*" Michael Kimmel writes of these young men. "They suffer from a chronic inability to make a decision. They cannot commit - to girlfriends, or jobs, even a purposeful life. Nor do they seem especially ambitious. They drift from job to job; some are fired, some quit." And men with little or no ambition get into trouble. Most of today's social problems - *our exploding prison population, the drug culture, teen pregnancies* - are caused by young men.

When my son, Zach, started 7th Grade, Kathy and I attended his school's orientation. And I'll never forget Mrs. Corbin's speech. She thanked the moms for their mothering - then told them to chill for the next 10 years.

Mrs. Corbin said it was now up to the fathers to shape his kids and steer them in the right direction. *"Mom you've done your job. Now dad it's your turn."*

And Mrs. Corbin was right. When a boy reaches puberty he needs a strong man to take charge of his development. Boys become men not by hanging out with mom, but by interacting with other men... And if there's not a godly man in a boy's life, he'll find rowdy, evil males with whom he can hang.

A mom can tell her son he's a *man* until she's blue in the face, but he won't believe it, and take it to heart, until he hears it from another man. This is why sons *derive* great significance through male leadership.

And while we're on the subject of a dad's significance in his son's life, let me offer crucial advice. **A father needs to be his son's primary Bible teacher. Dad needs to lead the way in his son's spiritual growth.**

A father **fails** his son, when he abdicates to mom the boy's spiritual training. *And here's why...* if your son only sees *mom read the Bible, and mom pray, and*

mom talking about God, and mom going to church - he'll assume the things of God are feminine - for girls.

And a boy doesn't want to be feminine. A young man is eager to do what his dad does! And if your son mimics you, dad, what will he do? Watch football all day? Play video games? Work all the time? Play online poker? Sit around and drink? Think about it, dad! You want a son to view Bible Study as a manly activity.

Let me tell you a funny story... the story I told at my dad's funeral. We lost him last year. He was a good and godly man. His life pointed my brother and I to Jesus.

While growing up, every night my mom would come into our room and read my brother and I a different chapter of The Bible. *Except on Wednesday nights...*

Mom was at church choir practice, so that night it was Dad's job to put us to bed and read us our Bible chapter. But every Wednesday night Dad would read the same chapter. Duty-bound Dad would come in with his Bible, open it to Psalm 117, remind us it was the Bible's shortest chapter; then quickly read, *"O praise the Lord, all ye nations. Praise Him, all ye people. For His merciful kindness is great toward us; and the truth of the Lord endureth forever. Praise ye the Lord. Goodnight boys."*

Then he would order us to sleep, shut the door, and go back to what he was doing. I think I was 30 years old before I realized, *"Goodnight boys"* wasn't in the text.

Yet fast forward many decades. A few years ago Dad and I were driving in my car, when I asked him, “Dad, every Wednesday night you came into our room, and read, “*O praise the Lord, all ye nations. Praise Him, all ye people. For His merciful kindness is great toward us; and the truth of the Lord endureth forever. Praise ye the Lord. Goodnight boys.*” Mom read us different chapters in the Bible, but you just wanted to get it over with - you read us the shortest chapter every Wednesday night.”

That’s when my Dad replied, “*How many of those chapters your mother read you, have you memorized?* Touche’! He made his point. And God had blessed his effort. And dad, God will bless your efforts too..

Let me conclude, 1 Corinthians 11:7, “**A man indeed ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man.**” As a man is the glory of God, a woman is the glory of that man.

As a man, I stand between God and my wife.

My life should reflect God’s glory to her. And **my love** should cultivate glory and beauty in my wife.

Men, your wife and daughters are your glory. They’re the by-product of your cultivation. Headship means you’re responsible for your wife’s health and beauty.

And if she’s not healthier and more beautiful today than when you married her, *why not?* What have you been doing? It upsets me to hear a husband, who’s been married a decade, say he doesn’t love his wife...

After ten years of marriage, a man indicts himself to say he doesn’t love his wife. *Hey, she’s been in your care! What have you done to make her lovable?*

Realize, a joyous, beautiful, godly wife is a testimony to her husband’s love. A depressed, brawling, and nagging wife is proof of a husband’s negligence.

Gender roles - what goes on between the sexes - matters to God. Gender forms and shapes a society, especially men and masculinity. Hey, dudes matter!

Maleness contributes to our world in vital ways... through symbols... for security... with significance...