



## **Father's Day 2019 What is a Godly Man?**

Summary: How do we know what it means to be a man? By turning to God's Word and shutting out other voices.

Today is Father's Day. It's not a religious holiday, it's a cultural holiday like Mother's Day, an invention of society to celebrate and honor our parents, but that's something God supports – He's the one who made Fathers and Mothers in the first place.

I planned to begin a study of Proverbs this morning, and specifically, to look at what it says to fathers. Proverbs is, after all, a book written by a father, to his son, to teach him wisdom.

But as I prepared and studied, I sensed God leading me in a different direction, taking me back to a message I prepared several years ago on something more foundational - not just what does Proverbs say about fathers, but what does the Bible have to say about being a man in the first place?

Men hear a lot of different voices telling them what they should and shouldn't be and what it means to be a man.

If you listen to the media, movies, television, commercials and advertising, you see some men portrayed as athletic superheroes, not exactly intellectual, but well built physically and skilled in some form of the martial arts, brawling, or shooting. They are our heroes, or our misunderstood anti-heroes who just want to live life their way and be left alone.

Many, many more men though are portrayed as overweight, out of shape, beer drinking, buffoons who can never seem to get things right even if they have a good heart, especially on the sitcoms. Their children, their wives, and the rest of the world walk all over them and they stand there with a dopey, "why won't anyone ever listen to me" look on their face as the laugh track rolls on. If you want to find the butt of a joke, look for the middle-aged male.

Meanwhile, in the real world, most men are tired. Tired of working hard everyday, battling a commute of one, two, or three hours, and coming home to a house that doesn't look like the ones they see on TV or online. Their car isn't that great, their job isn't that great and half the time their relationship with their kids and their wife isn't that great either.

I spoke with a couple recently and the wife told me, "he comes home around 6 o'clock every night, and he's a zombie." And this is a guy with a 'good' job, good position, great pay and benefits, but it's sucking the life right out of him.

So what's going on? Is this real life? Is this what it being a man is all about?

No. It's not. Open up God's Word with me. Let's take a look at why God created man, and why and how things started falling apart.

Open to the very first pages and turn with me to Genesis chapter 1.

**Genesis 1:26** Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, 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. 28 Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

29 And God said, "See, I have given you every herb *that* yields seed which *is* on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed; to you it shall be for food. 30 Also, to every beast of the earth, to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, in which *there is* life, *I have given* every green herb for food"; and it was so. 31 Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed *it was* very good. So the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

I don't know if you caught this, but there was work to do before sin entered the picture. Man was made to do work – to fill the earth and subdue it, to have dominion. God created man to manage creation and enjoy the literal fruits of his labor. God created everything that was and then handed things over to Adam and said, here, now you take care of it all for Me, and enjoy all the cool stuff it produces.

And remember, this was paradise! Think of Hawaii or someplace in the tropics. Everything is beautiful: brilliant flowers, magnificent sunsets, lush gardens, and the fruit is some of the best you have ever tasted. Pineapples from the ground, mangoes and bananas right off the tree... And things just grow, the seeds fall from the tree or are carried somewhere by the wind or a bird and a few weeks or months later, you've got a plant. The work isn't full of set backs and frustrations, there's actually a lot to enjoy about it. Adam's got a pretty good thing going here!



But God gave Adam some very clear, very concise instructions during his onboarding process, during his new employee orientation; look with me at chapter 2:

**Genesis 2:16** And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; 17 but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."

Pretty simple right? God says, “Adam, you’ve got the whole garden, just don’t eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Here’s a long list of things you can do, and just one little thing you can’t. OK, Adam?” “OK, Lord.” It sounds like we’re off to a good start.

As you read through Chapter 2 we’re introduced to Eve. But then, in Chapter 3 we find her tempted by the serpent, giving in to temptation and Adam going right down the path to destruction with her. She does the one thing God said not to do, and instead of leading, he follows.

And then, of course, God confronts the young couple about what they’ve done. Let’s skip ahead to that now because I want you to notice what God has to say about the very first sin. In vs 14-15 He places a curse upon the serpent for dragging them into this whole mess.

**Genesis 3:14** So the LORD God said to the serpent:

“Because you have done this,  
You *are* cursed more than all cattle,  
And more than every beast of the field;  
On your belly you shall go,  
And you shall eat dust  
All the days of your life.  
15 And I will put enmity  
Between you and the woman,  
And between your seed and her Seed;  
He shall bruise your head,  
And you shall bruise His heel.”

Then He gives this small little one sentence repercussion to the woman in vs 16.

**16** To the woman He said:

“I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception;  
In pain you shall bring forth children;  
Your desire *shall be* for your husband,  
And he shall rule over you.”

But, check this out: **Adam** gets the longest rebuke out of the three that were involved in this mess. Starting in vs 17, what reason does God give for the repercussions that Adam and therefore all of mankind will suffer until Jesus comes and redeems the Earth?

**17** Then to Adam He said, “**Because you have heeded the voice of your wife**, and have eaten from the tree of which **I commanded you**, saying, ‘You shall not eat of it’:

“Cursed *is* the ground for your sake;  
In toil you shall eat *of* it  
All the days of your life.  
18 Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you,  
And you shall eat the herb of the field.  
19 In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread  
Till you return to the ground,  
For out of it you were taken;  
For dust you *are*,  
And to dust you shall return.”

God says “Adam, from here on out there will be separation between you and Me. Your days of managing this garden resort have to end. Now you’ll have to work hard until you return to the earth from which I made you, **because** you chose to listen to someone else instead of Me.”

Now, let me nip this in the bud before it starts to grow, **I am not saying** the problem is Adam listened *to a woman*. I AM saying Adam blew it by listening *to anyone* who contradicted *God’s clear instruction*. Remember, Adam should have been passing on the instructions he received from God, but instead he went off and decided to do his own thing. He should have **led** Eve closer to God, but instead he **followed** her farther away from Him.

So, let’s keep this clear and review it once more:

- God created man and allowed him to manage all of creation and enjoy its benefits.
- God also gave Adam explicit instructions on what was permissible and what was not.
- Adam should have passed those instructions on to Eve.

But instead of Eve listening to Adam, Adam listened to her. Instead of pointing her to God, he allowed her to lead him away from God. And now, thousands of years later, the world is falling apart at the seams *because men still listen to other people instead of listening to God*.

And what do men hear? Well, a while back I took a trip over to Barnes and Noble and scanned the magazine section titled “Men’s Interests” to see the messages they were aiming at men that month.

The covers of FHM, Maxim, GQ, Esquire, and Stuff all featured pictures of women. Two blondes, two brunettes, and one Beyonce. There was a “special edition” of Esquire that supposedly was about political issues but it’s cover featured a picture of actress Megan Fox and her cleavage with a clever “You’re welcome” in parenthesis, since they know they’re doing you a favor by showing you what you want to see.

Men’s Journal boasted stories including:

- The no-weights workout
- The feisty blondes of Fox News

- And a Gear lab including reviews of home theater components, workout clothes, and HD cameras

On the end-cap, marketed as Customer Favorites, was a Men's Health special publication: *The Busy Man's Guide to Achieving Total Definition*, which includes cover stories on how to:

- Quickly shed 8kg of fat from your entire body
- Build solid muscle in your chest, back, and abs
- Fuel your training with 37 new muscle meals

But probably the most intriguing thing of all for me was that they had TWELVE different magazines on watches: International Watch, Watch Time, About Time, Wrist Watch, Watch Journal, Chrono, Chronos, The Watches Magazine, Plaza Watch, and more.

This is what the world is trying to get men to stuff their heads and their hearts with. This is what they say you need to know to be a man. And while there's nothing wrong with having a nice car, being in good shape, or owning a watch, we have to ask ourselves: how much time are we giving over to the pursuit and maintenance of such things?

Remember, men were created to have fellowship with God, to worship Him, to manage His creation, to have an impact on their surroundings, and to pass on what we have learned about Him to those around us.

But... we live in the midst of a nearly invisible spiritual war and men are High Value Targets constantly sought by the enemy.



In the military, snipers are highly specialized soldiers; very few actually go through designated sniper courses. Their job is to use all their skill, training, courage, and abilities to take out High Value Targets like enemy commanders.

And why do they do that? Snipers attack commanders because they know that if you take out the one in control, the chances are pretty good that you will also cause panic, fear, and confusion among everyone else. According to most basic tenets of biology – if you cut the head off an animal, the rest of its body will die. The same principle applies in most organizations.

Now, here's why that is important to you: as Christian men, each of us is called to be a leader. **Every** Christian man is called to be a leader in his home, some are also called to be leaders in the workplace, and some are called to be leaders in the church, but EVERY Christian man who is in a position to influence people around or under him is called to be a leader, and that means in the eyes of Satan's snipers, each of us has a big bull's-eye painted over our heart and right between our eyes. You are the critical link – if he can take you out, other things will fall apart too.

So, Satan tempts you. He distracts you. He gets you so caught up with other things that you have no time to spend with God. We're all so busy (maybe that's why we need nice watches), but we have to ask, "Busy doing what?" Does any of it have eternal value? Are you sure it's all necessary?

If we don't spend time with God, we don't hear from Him. That means we're not refreshed by Him, and we probably don't tell others about Him. You find yourself hunched over spiritually like the walking dead because a spiritual sniper keeps putting a round through your chest, taking you out of the fight, and leaving the people around you without an effective servant leader in their life.

So how do we change? How do we keep from being taken out of the fight? And how do we make sure we have the right ideas about what it means to be a man? Let me give you three action items. Look to Jesus. Read your Bible. And pray. Every day.

Here's what God says in the book of Hebrews after listing the great accomplishments of a bunch of other men:

**Hebrews 12:1** Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Men, this is critically important. We need to look to Jesus. Everything begins with Him. He is our example, He is our strength, He is our rescue, our hope, and our Redeemer. He is the one who picks us up when we fail, guides us when we're confused, and rescues us when we're lost.

We are not in this alone. He has given us our own life, and He has given us the privilege of touching the lives of others. He calls us brothers, friends, and ambassadors.

If you lack anything in this life, turn to Him and declare your need and remember, the world, and our lives, started to fall apart when we drifted away from God and His commands. To reverse the trend, reverse your course: **lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 looking unto Jesus**

And if you want to know what weights you need to set aside, what's entangling you, what's tripping you up as you run the race of life, or if you need strength, direction, or encouragement to keep going – turn to God's Word and spend time in prayer.

God has things He wants you to know about life and your place in it, and He has collected all that information in this book we call the Bible. We need to read it, for our own good, and for the good others. It will tell you how to think about yourself. It will tell you how to love

your wife. It will tell you how to love your kids. It will tell you how to handle work. It will tell you how to be involved in your church and community. God's Word will tell you what you need to know to be a godly man and show you where to find the power and persistence you need for the job, serving God is not meant to wear you out.

People in our lives have questions, and they want to be able to turn to a man in their life and find answers. Are you ready to be that man? You can become that man if you will look to Jesus, read your Bible and pray – let God make you into the man He wants you to be.

It is a powerful example when our wives and our children, or our roommates know that if they get up early enough, or stay up late enough, they are going to find their husband, or their daddy, or their friend sitting with an open Bible, seeking the face of God, asking for the wisdom and knowledge he'll need to face the day, and begging for guidance on how to love his family and his neighbor as himself.

And men, when you pray, take time to listen quietly for the Lord's voice regarding the application of what you read in Scripture or hear taught from Scripture. If this is a battle, and the Bible is very clear that it is, you need to check for communication from higher headquarters every now and then. Don't just send out status reports and requests for supplies, stop and consider, ask God – am I on the right track? Is there a new direction you want us to take? What should we do about... What if....

Far too often we pray and pray and pray without taking the time to allow God to speak back to us. Try it some time, but don't be surprised if it takes you a few minutes to slow your self and your mind down enough to relax in the presence of God.

Of course, it's not enough just to take good stuff in; you also need to keep bad stuff out.

When engineers build a lunar landing module, or a satellite, or when they design something like an iPhone, they don't include unnecessary parts – everything that is part of the final design is absolutely essential. If anything can be cut to save weight or space or add performance, it is. Think of Olympic sprinters: they shed every conceivable gram of weight so that nothing hinders them from running the race.

I'm not saying you need to be a fanatic, but we all benefit from occasionally scrutinizing our lives and asking: is there anything here that needs to go, SO THAT I can serve my God, my family and friends, my church, more effectively? You'll get the answers as you look to Jesus, spend time in God's Word and offer up prayer.

And as you become disentangled from the thoughts of this world, its definitions, opinions, values and ideals of manhood, you'll become increasingly useful in the hands of a glorious God who wants to use you to have an impact on others, just like He has done with men throughout the ages. Remember,



God used a man named Abraham and his 318 servants to launch a counterattack on the combined army of four kings rescuing Lot's family members in the process.

God used a man named Moses to oppose Pharaoh, the most powerful man alive, to part the Red Sea and lead a nation of 3 million people out of slavery.

God used Joshua to lead the conquest of the Promised Land, conquering 6 nations and 31 kings when he was 85 years old.

The Spirit of the Lord came upon Samson and he killed a thousand men with the jawbone of a donkey.

God used a young man named David to kill Goliath, a giant of a man, with a stone, and then raised him up to lead a nation.

Through faith in God Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego survived a fiery furnace so hot that it killed the men who threw them in.

God gave Solomon so much wisdom *when he asked for it* that men and women traveled from all over the world to hear him speak.

God used Mordechai to counsel Esther so that the entire Jewish nation was saved from annihilation.

God used Paul to spread the gospel across the entire Mediterranean Basin and to give his testimony before governors, kings, and the Roman Emperor. And Paul was no superstar athlete or action movie hero. Eusebius, a second century historian records an interesting description of Paul: he was "a man of small stature, with a bald head and crooked legs, in a good state of body, with eyebrows meeting and nose somewhat hooked but full of friendliness."

This is the man that withstood numerous beatings, traveled throughout the known world, and wrote 2/3 of the books of the New Testament – all for the love of God and his neighbor.

God used Martin Luther to spark a Reformation that changed the course of history for the world.

God used Billy Graham, who never went to seminary or pastored a church, to preach the Gospel to over 1 Million people at one time in S. Korea.

And God has used countless other men to do far less spectacular things, to work the equivalent of the night shift in God's kingdom, faithfully but quietly laboring with a long obedience outside the spotlight, loving their wives, loving their kids, working hard in a job that's unrecognized and unappreciated, but still done in a way that honors God and helps others.



These men were no bumbling sitcom idiots, they were no egotistic fools, they were no womanizing playboys, cut-throat or conniving deal makers, they were no frat-house bros, or sweaty gamers streaming content online. They were men listening to God, men who made the lives of others better.

Brothers, remember these stories! Tell them to the young men, your sons, those you minister to, remind your wife about them, talk to your neighbor about them.

The enemy is searching for you, he doesn't want you to lead, he doesn't want you to influence. You must resist him and he will flee from you.

Put on the armor *of* God,

Receive your identity and instructions *from* God,

and go around each day pointing yourself and others *to* God.

It's not enough to be genetically male; you must be spiritually male as well and you learn how to do that as you look to Jesus, read God's Word, and pray every single day.

Let's Pray...