

Biblical Masculinity

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 19 June 2011

Preacher: Nathan Raynor

[0 : 00] I got to be home. Wes and I got off the airplane and we could finally control what was going on. And so we walked so quickly. And I think we were about to break into a run trying to get to baggage claim in time.

Because we could finally control the pace at which things were happening. We saw people who rode the tram beat us to the baggage claim. But at least we felt like we were in control of making it happen. And I told Wes on the way home, we're not going to get home if I wreck.

So I got to slow down. So I'm so eager to be back with my family. As a husband and a father. So I kind of foolishly took on the task of preaching this morning.

Being on this trip and being busy, busy and going, going. And I decided at the beginning of the trip that I was going to preach a Father's Day sermon this morning. But the scope of what I want to talk about today is larger than that.

Certainly includes being a father, but is bigger than that. What I want to talk about this morning is masculinity. What does it mean to be a man? Now ladies, I know that the temptation now will be to check out.

[1 : 03] There's lots of things going on in your life. You can begin to work through some of those things now. But if you are single, you should pay attention this morning. Because this is what you want to look for in a man. If you're not, you need to know how to pray for your men.

Because the task that's been given to us, the special role that we've been given as men in this world is a huge one. And we need your prayers. So what does it mean to be masculine?

What does that look like? Culture gives us some definition of that. We look around at fallen men. Culture gives us some idea of what that might look like.

The car you drive. How muscly you are. How well groomed you are. The clothes you wear. The power job that you have. But ultimately, all these things are a shadow of what once was.

Before the fall, Adam, the first man, was masculine in completion. He was a planetary king. He was given the world to rule.

[2 : 11] And then he sinned. And sin totally corrupted that nature. And in all of us men, there is this desire to get back to that place. We all carry the burden of sin.

Which says to us, you are a failure. We all know that if we were set on the scale of masculinity, we would be found wanting. So all the things we do, the things that culture defines as masculine, are an attempt to get back to that place.

That's why we love competition. Right? Because we want to be kings. We want to rule. We want to dominate over others. That's why we get so into sports. Because we want to even just relate to a team that's winning.

Very few diehard fans stick with a team when they're losing. Right? We want to flip-flop to the team that's winning. Because we want to be in charge. We want jobs where we call the shots. We want to drive cars that make it look like we're in charge.

And it's all trying to get back to that Adamic nature. We're all trying to get back to that place where we are planetary kings once again. Invincible ruling the world.

[3 : 17] Since corrupted it, hasn't it? Unfortunately, we have a way back to that place, which we'll get to soon. But for us to really understand what masculinity looks like, we have to go back pre-corruption.

We have to go back before the fall and look at the creation of Adam and Eve and the way they were meant to operate together. So turn with me to Genesis chapter 1.

Moses wrote the book of Genesis under the inspiration of the Spirit. In chapter 1, he gives us an account of the creation.

And then he repeats that account in chapter 2 with varying detail. In chapter 1, verse 27, he kind of zooms in a bit on what's going on on the sixth day. He says, So God created man in his own image. In the image of God, he created him. Male and female, he created them. So he zooms in to say something very important to us about man and woman.

[4 : 18] And that is that they are equal. They're both created in the image of God. Both with the same rights, the same responsibilities, the same things we must answer to God for.

In chapter 2, he gives us another account of the creation. Not that it happened again, but he's re-explaining some things for us. And once again, he zooms in. He zooms in tight.

He gives us some details, which I believe that he was inspired to do for some specific reasons.

Look at Genesis chapter 2, verse 7. Then the Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life.

And the man became a living creature. And then verse 15. The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and to keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat.

For in the day you eat of it you shall surely die. Then the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone. I will make a helper fit for him. Verse 20. But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him.

[5 : 25] 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. And the ribs of the Lord God had taken from the man he made into woman and brought her to man.

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. So this account has purpose.

The reason it was recorded for us, once again, we've seen that they were created as equals. But now we're seeing something else. We're seeing that man was created first and then woman. Why is that?

Man was created first and then woman. It's to show that men are to be the leaders in our relationships. Paul certainly understood that as he wrote his letter to Timothy.

His first letter to Timothy, under the inspiration of the Spirit. So let me give you a definition of mature masculinity to help us wrap our minds around what we're going to talk about.

[6 : 28] And this is stolen from John Piper. I'll give him credit where credit is due. At the heart of mature masculinity. I catch that. Mature masculinity. The heart of mature masculinity is a sense of a benevolent responsibility to lead, provide for, and protect women in ways appropriate to a man's varying relationships.

I'll repeat that for you again. You don't have to write it down. Just kind of wrap your mind around it.

At the heart of mature masculinity is a sense of a benevolent responsibility to lead, provide for, and protect women in ways appropriate to a man's varying relationships.

So catch what Piper is saying. And I think it's entirely biblically founded. Our masculinity is measured by how we relate to women. Who we are as men is measured by how we relate to the opposite sex.

The control group. The fixed thing. The comparison thereof is what makes us masculine.

Otherwise, we're a closed group of men, right? What makes us men?

Our bodies. The way we were created. That makes us men. What makes us masculine is how we relate to women. And the first way that we relate to women that's so key is that we are to lead.

[7 : 53] Ladies, this in no way takes away what Genesis 127 says. It's just a different role. And a man who leads properly is a man you will gladly follow.

So mature masculinity leads spiritually. Now we saw up in 2.16. God gives Adam a command.

You may surely eat of every tree of the garden. Verse 17. But of the tree of knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat. From the day you eat of it, you shall surely die. So God gives Adam the moral code of the garden.

And he's told Adam, work the garden, live in the garden, be fed by the garden. There's just one thing you're not supposed to do. He gives that command to Adam. Once we see Eve created, God doesn't repeat that command.

He gives the command to Adam. And the assumption there is that Adam was responsible to pass the command on to his bride. We get some further evidencing of that in Genesis 3, 9 and 11.

[8 : 57] After the fall. Who does God go to first? Not to Eve, the originator of the sin, but to Adam. He holds Adam accountable.

He says, But the Lord God called to the man and said to him, where are you? And in verse 11, he said, who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree which I commanded you not to eat?

So here Adam is given a command and he's held fully accountable for it, even though Eve was the one that sinned first. And why do you think Satan tempted Eve first?

Why do you think that he went after Eve instead of Adam? Some have said it's because she was weaker. She was the weaker of the sexes. I don't believe that to be true at all. I think that Satan went after it that way because he was intending to corrupt the order that God had set aside.

He was intending to go after the very thing that God had already ordered in the world. That man came first and then woman. He flipped it on its head and he stood back and laughed and said, boy, now they're never going to be able to sort this mess out.

[10 : 04] Man's going to constantly try to lord over women and then blame them for everything. And isn't that what happens? Isn't that exactly what happens? Adam says, the woman told me to do it.

In all that moment, we see the whole thing reversed. Rather than leading as he ought to, he just listened to her and did what she said. So Satan knew exactly what he was doing.

So mature masculinity leads spiritually. Do we do that, men? Do we lead our wives? The other women around us, that definition I read, spoke of varying relationships.

Single men, do you lead those around you? Are you an example for the women around you in spiritual matters? I'm afraid that we're not. I'm so thankful that I get to preach from the word of God and I don't have to stand up here and show you my life.

Except myself as the example. Because I failed in so many of these things. Do you lead your family spiritually? Are you on the front edge of leading?

[11 : 15] I doubt it. Mature masculinity also leads selflessly. Our definition says that man has a sense of a benevolent responsibility.

Jesus says in Luke chapter 22, verse 26. Let the greatest among you become as the youngest and the leader as one who serves.

So mature masculinity does not assume authority, but advocates it through love. Mature masculinity does not assume authority, but advocates it through love.

Ephesians chapter 5, verse 23 and 25. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church. His body and himself its savior.

Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her. Do we follow Christ because he's commanded it so? That ought to be enough, shouldn't it?

[12 : 18] That should be it. Rule of the universe said to do it. We should do it. But we follow Christ because he loves us so much. The way he laid his life down for us. The sacrifices he gives.

The provision he gives in our lives. That's why we follow Christ. And men, we should be the same way. Benevolent. Encouraging and leading the women around us to follow us.

They will gladly follow the man that leads in this way. Mature masculinity also leads to Christ. Now, the man does not stand in the position of Christ in the church quite the way Christ does.

Because he's not Christ, is he? We're kind of a caretaker. Christ has put us in a position to lead our wives and the women around us.

Not to ourselves, lest we set ourselves up as Christ, but to Christ himself. So the relationship isn't exactly the same because we're not the supreme ruler.

[13 : 17] Our job is to lead the women around us to Christ. Mature masculinity leads in discipline.

Fathers, do you leave the responsibility of disciplining your children to your wives? Do you stand by while they whine and complain, waiting for your wife to do something about it?

Are you first in that? Do you lead in that? Do your children look at you and say, Hey, my dad's in charge around here. My dad is setting the moral code around here.

I better not transgress the law of this household or else I'll receive the wrath of my father. That's a hard job, man. I've got one that just turned one.

And we're getting to that constant discipline stage. And it is hard. And I don't want to do it sometimes. He breaks my heart. Pokes that little bottom lip out. But it is my responsibility.

[14 : 20] And I pray that I'm not sure of that responsibility at all. Mature masculinity not only provides, which we'll get to in a second, but it also leads financially.

Men, are we an example to the women around us on how we ought to deal with our finances? I think a lot of Christian households, there's a strain. Men trying to be Adamic, trying to gain for themselves the stuff that makes them men amass things for their hobbies.

And the wives who say, but honey, we can't afford that. The opposite should be true. James Dobson wrote in a book called Straight Talk to Men and Their Wives.

A Christian man is obligated to lead his family to the best of his ability. If his family has purchased too many items on credit, then the financial crunch is ultimately his fault.

If the family never reads the Bible or seldom goes to church on Sunday, God holds the man to blame. If the children are disrespectful and disobedient, the primary responsibility lies with the father, not his wife.

[15 : 33] In my view, says Dobson, America's greatest need is for husbands to begin guiding their families rather than pouring every physical and emotional resource into the mere acquisition of money.

And then it's our responsibility to provide. It's our responsibility. We ought to be providing for our households. But it's not the only responsibility. In our provision, we must be good stewards with what we're given.

Mature masculinity is sensitive to cultural expressions of masculinity. Mature masculinity is sensitive to cultural expressions of masculinity.

This applies to all of us, married or not. In any relationship we take on with any woman. I have co-workers that are female. What is appropriate?

What is the appropriate way for a man to act? Men, do you know which side of a female you're supposed to walk on down the road? Are you aware of where you're supposed to be when you're walking down the street?

[16 : 41] Which side of her do you walk on? It changes. Should you open the door? Yes, you should. Our culture may change. That may become an offensive thing someday. At which time you should stop.

But are the things you do appropriately communicating to women, I'm a man and I would like to relate to you as a woman. So, my masculinity and your femininity are going to relate on a healthy level.

How we dress matters. Dressing overly aggressive communicates something. I would suggest that none of you wear your tight clubbing shirts. Just not appropriate for that.

I don't know if you have this. But it communicates an aggressive thing. On the flip side of that, you might not want to wear skinny jeans, guys. Because what does that communicate?

Do you want to relate to women as a woman? You're saying, I want to dress like you. I want to relate like you. Swoopy bang hairdos?

[17 : 40] Probably not appropriate for a mature masculine male. Think about what you're trying to communicate. All of those things that we're seeing now, you know where that all comes from?

The emo rock movement. You know where that comes from? Japan. You know what they're trying to do in Japan right now, young people? They're trying to de-gender society. There's an actual overt attempt to de-gender society.

And that's where that is birthed out of. Think about those actions. What you do communicate to the women around you. I am a male. And therefore, we can interact that way.

Or does it do the opposite? It's important. It matters. Mature masculinity is sensitive to cultural expressions of masculinity. All right.

Secondly, mature masculine men provide. In Genesis chapter 3, we see post-fall that Adam is going to work the ground.

[18 : 42] That wasn't something given to him as a result of sin. Right? He was told prior to the fall that he was going to work the garden. Wasn't he? That was his task to do, was to work the garden and to pick fruit from the trees and provide food.

It was just going to be really easy then. He was never going to grow tired. He was going to live forever. He was just going to be a gardener and he was going to love it. After the fall, what we see in chapter 3 is that it's going to become hard.

It's going to become a toil. It's going to become so difficult to do. So that charge is still here for us as men. Now, I think that Piper's definition is really appropriate.

He says that the man has a sense of his benevolent responsibility to provide. Because we can't always do that.

Am I right? Some of us are not particularly gifted and therefore don't hold jobs that are very high paying. But we still should know that it's our responsibility. We should do everything we can to climb the ladder and make the money to provide for our families.

[19 : 49] I'm in a situation like that now. I don't quite make the ends meet. Fortunately, my wife is gifted and can do graphic art from home and be home with Cade. But the burden of providing lies with me.

And I'm working on it. I'm finding ways to advance myself, my job, so that I can provide fully for my family. So there's a sense that that responsibility is yours. Not that you necessarily do.

Or how about a man who's disabled, who can't? Just it's impossible for him to go to work. Not that he's required to, but that he should have this sense of the responsibility to do so.

A mature masculine man also protects in the same way when he can, when he's able to do so.

I think the unfortunate picture often of marriage is this 50-50 relationship. And that seems to apply to all things. So I'll get out of bed and check the strange noise 50% of the time.

[20 : 49] You get out the other 50% of the time. A mature masculine man gets up every time.

Right? In Genesis chapter 34, a super cool story of Hamor, the Hivite, and he sees Dinah, the sister of Simeon and Levi, and he rapes her.

And Simeon and Levi exact revenge by pretending that he's going to allow this tribe of men, these non-Jewish men, to marry with the Jewish women.

But the thing they must do in order to do that is to all be circumcised. So they're all circumcised and they wait until they're incredibly sore and they go to the town and they kill all the men.

They just wipe them all out. And that's the revenge that they exact for the serious crime of offending their sister. I'm not advocating that we go kill people.

But we ought to have that sense of protection. Not just with our wives, but with women in general around us. Do we protect women?

[22 : 01] And we should. On this trip that we were just on, Wes and I were getting ready to fly out yesterday, actually. And we were sitting in the little lobby of the hotel getting breakfast.

And I had already sat down because I had nothing gluten-free, so I was drinking orange juice. And all of a sudden I saw Wes just grab this old lady's arm. She's like over here and just grabbed her arm. It was the weirdest kind of out of the corner of my eye bizarre thing to see him do.

And then I realized that what she was about to do was hit the hot water spout on the coffee thing with her cup under where the coffee comes out. So the spout's up here. She's going to hit the tab with the spout right here.

It didn't make any sense at all. But she had her arm up under here and Wes saved her from scalding her arm with hot water. He didn't even think twice about it. He just smashed her arm out of the way. And she was so appreciative.

Thank you so much. Thank you so much. I mean, he like manhandled her. But she was very thankful for what he had done. I don't like to toot my own horn. I don't have many examples of mature masculinity, so I'm going to give you this one.

[23 : 01] I shared the story with you guys of being in Gainesville a number of months ago and a woman was being kind of assaulted by a guy that she knew and she said, stop, you're hurting me.

And I didn't even hesitate. I was talking with John Overton. We're walking down one side of the sidewalk and it was like something clicked in me and I beelined across the street to intervene in that situation.

That's mature masculinity. We ought to have a sense about us to protect women. There you go. My examples. Let's wait.

Me and Wes. Manly men. So ultimately, masculinity is living like Christ in relation to women.

We're all called to be Christian. Masculinity is living like Christ in relation to women. Begin to filter everything you do through that.

[24 : 02] The things that you even do when you're not around women. Wes and I were on a backpacking trip together this trip. Thursday and Friday we were off in the woods. No women around.

Me and Wes off in the woods. But we could have emasculated ourselves by talking coarsely about our lives. Right?

But we didn't. When we spoke with our wives we spoke with them respectfully. Which is masculine. You see how that works? Begin to filter the things you do men through this lens of my masculinity hinges on how I relate to women.

And if we're not masculine what are we? I'd say we're boys. some of us need to do some growing up. So if we're to be Christ in relation to women then we probably ought to look at Christ the ultimate expression of masculinity and in his life the culmination of his masculinity which was his death on the cross which is so offensive to the world's idea of masculinity.

Right? We all as I talked before we all want to get back to this Adamic nature. We all want to be this planetary king and we seek that by trying to rule over other men which isn't at all what Christ who was God himself did.

[25 : 30] He humbled himself to death on a cross. Jay Wetger writes the cross is an offense because of its abject weakness. For in the spectacle of the cross we see a victim perishing in weakness shame ignominy and dereliction.

It's an offense to what we think masculinity should look like. Right? Our Savior should have come on a big giant horse and he should have been the most muscly guy around and wielded large weapons and he should have obliterated the Roman guard and he should have rescued his church. But the picture we're given is quite the opposite of that. Silent like a lamb led to slaughter. Christ flips all that around for us doesn't it?

Turn to 1 Corinthians chapter 1. I'm going to read to you verses 18 through 25 of chapter 1. For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

[26 : 55] For it is written I will destroy the wisdom of the wise and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart. The philosophies of this world who seek to conquer to get back to that nature that endemic nature.

I'm going to make that seem crazy. Verse 20 Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?

For since in the wisdom of God the world did not know God through wisdom it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom but we preach Christ crucified a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles.

But to those who are called both Jews and Greeks Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than men and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

Isn't that awesome? That says to me that when I'm willing to humble myself to the point of death to give myself in my masculinity to serve the women in my life power of God.

[28 : 12] What a task, right? What an overwhelming task that's been given to us. Fortunately, we have Christ.

He is our way back. We can rule. We can be that planetary king. It just looks differently than the world thinks. 2 Corinthians 5.16.

Paul says, Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away. Behold, the new has come. We've been restored. Our masculinity has been restored in Christ.

We've not been given the ability to be appropriate, to be mature, masculine men. But it's hard. Ladies, it's a challenge. Guys, I know how hard it is.

Jesus says in Matthew chapter 11, Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

[29 : 21] For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. So how do we live as mature, masculine men? We abide in Christ.

We tarry with Him. We look to Him for the power we need in order to do so. And humility is required to see that happen.

In the book, We're covering biblical manhood and womanhood. Piper gives a challenge and shares his prayer for the men of Bethlehem Baptist Church.

And I think that we should echo this here at Christ Family Church. And there's 15 points, and I want to read them carefully for you, and I want you to bear with me. And we're going to close with this.

Number one, that all your life, in whatever calling, be devoted to the glory of God.

Number two, that the promises of Christ be trusted so fully that peace and joy and strength fill your soul to overflowing. number three, that this fullness of God overflow in daily acts of love so that people might see your good deeds and give glory to your Father in heaven.

[30 : 37] Number four, that you be men of the book who love and study and obey the Bible in every area of its teaching, that meditation on biblical truth be the source of hope and faith, that you continue to grow in understanding through all the chapters of your life, never thinking that study and growth are only for others.

Number five, that you be men of prayer so that the word of God will be open to you, so the power of faith and holiness will descend upon you, that your spiritual influence may increase at home and at church and in the world.

Number six, that you be men who have a deep grasp of the sovereign grace of God, which undergirds all these spiritual processes, that you be deep thinkers about the doctrines of grace and even deeper lovers of these things.

Number seven, that you be totally committed to ministry, whatever your specific calling, that you not fritter away your time on excessive sports and recreation or unimportant hobbies or aimless diddling in the garage, but that you redeem the time for Christ and his kingdom.

Number eight, that if you are single, you exploit your singleness to the fullness in devotion to God and not be paralyzed by the desire to be married. Number nine, that if you are married, you love your life the way Christ loved the church and gave himself for her, that you be a humble, self-denying, up-building, happy spiritual leader, that you consistently grow in grace and knowledge so as never to quench the aspirations of your wife for spiritual advancement, that you cultivate tenderness and strength, a pattern of initiative and a listening ear, that you accept the responsibility of provision and protection in the family, however you and your wife share the labor.

[32 : 27] Number ten, that if you have children, you accept primary responsibility in partnership with your wife to raise up children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord, children who hope in the triumph of God that you establish a pattern of teaching and discipline that is not solely dependent on the church or school to impart Bible knowledge and spiritual values to the children, that you give your children the time and attention and affection that communicates the true nature of our father in heaven.

Number eleven, that you not assume advancement and pure approval in your gainful employment are the highest values in life, but that you ponder the eternal significance of faithful fatherhood and time spent with your wife, that you repeatedly consider the new possibilities each age of your life for maximizing your energies for the glory of God in ministry, that you pose the question often.

Is our family molded by the culture or do we embody the values of the kingdom of God, that you lead the family in making choices not on the basis of secular trends or upward lifestyle expectations, but on the basis of what will strengthen the faith of the family and advance the cause of Christ.

Number twelve, that you step back, plan the various form of your life's ministry in chapters. Chapters are divided by various things, age, strength, singleness, marriage, employment, children at home, children in college, grandchildren, retirement, et cetera.

No chapter has all the joys. Finite life is a series of trade-offs. Finding God's will and living for the glory of Christ to the full in every chapter is what makes it a success, not whether it reads like somebody else's chapter, whether it has in it what only another chapter will bring.

[34 : 21] Number thirteen, that you develop a wartime mentality and lifestyle, that you never forget that life is short, that billions of people hang in the balance of heaven and hell every day, that the love of money is spiritual suicide, that the goals of upper mobility, nicer clothes, cars, houses, vacations, food, hobbies are a poor and a dangerous substitute for the goals of living for Christ with all your might and maximizing your joy and ministry to people's needs.

Number fourteen, that in all your relationships with women, not just in marriage, you seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit in applying the biblical vision of manhood and womanhood, that you develop a lifestyle and demeanor that expresses your God given responsibility for humble strength and leadership and for self-sacrificing provision and protection, that you think creatively and with cultural sensitivity, sensitivity, just as she must do, and shaping the style and setting, the tone of your interactions with women.

Number fifteen, that you see the biblical guidelines for what is appropriate and inappropriate for men and women, not as licensed for domination or bossive passivity, but as a call to servant

leadership that thinks in terms of responsibilities, not rights, that you see these principles as wise and gracious prescriptions for how to discover the true freedom of God's ideal of complementarity, that you encourage the fruitful encouragement of women in the countless ministry roles that are biblically appropriate and deeply needed.

Guys, I think it's time that we stop being boys and start being mature, masculine men. Let's pray together.