

## #131 “Biblical Manhood: How the Bible Defines Masculinity”

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In 1 Kings 2:1-3, we have David’s final words to his son Solomon. It says, “As David’s time to die drew near, he charged Solomon his son, saying, I am going the way of all the earth. Be strong, therefore, and show yourself a man. Keep the charge of the LORD your God, to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes, His commandments, His ordinances, and His testimonies, according to what is written in the Law of Moses, that you may succeed in all that you do and wherever you turn.” If we want to know what true masculinity is about, this passage provides us with a great foundation and abundant insight.

David commands Solomon to “show yourself a man.” “Show yourself” could also be translated “appear,” “come to pass,” “be established,” or “continue.” The word translated “man” does indeed imply male as opposed to female. Solomon is to demonstrate characteristics foundational to God’s design for masculinity as he takes the throne and succeeds David as king of Israel. It is not that he was not a man before coming to the throne; rather, David’s exhortation to his son is to show himself to be what he really is on the inside. He is to live out manhood and Biblical masculinity as he takes on the role of king. Surely, he could have shown himself to be a man before he had ascended to the throne, and it is David’s charge to him that he acts as a man of God while on the throne. Being in power does not make a person a man, but it, like many other times and roles in life, requires that men live as godly men.

What is of critical importance in this passage is how David defines a man. *Solomon will show himself a man if he is, first, strong.* This doesn’t mean predominantly physically strong, but the meaning is that of an internal strength and fortitude. He is to be resolute in his beliefs, character, and integrity. He is to be firm as to what he stands for and in carrying out justice. He is to do his part to see that God’s will prevails in the kingdom. He is to courageously stand tall in battle, and he is to be courageous when it comes to standing for truth and the laws of God. Part of being a man is to be strong in Christ, recognizing as Paul did, that we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us (Philippians 4:13). David, who conquered Goliath, was not a man of fear but of great strength. He was not the biggest or strongest of men physically, but he had great faith. It was his faith and trust in God that anything was possible which made him strong. His great physical feats were wrought in internal fortitude based on strength which God could alone provide. David wanted Solomon to be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might (Ephesians 6:10). Sadly, it was Solomon’s moral decline that made him a weak leader, man, and king. Strength is always found in trusting Christ and in obeying His commands. *This brings us to the second mark of a man, which, according to David, is obedience to the revealed Word of God.* This is foundational to Biblical manhood, and it truly is the very essence of it. If a man obeys God’s Word in terms of how he lives and treats others, he has shown himself to be a man indeed. **All Solomon had to do was have faith enough to be strong enough to be obedient enough. Then it would prove that he was man enough.**

There is no rite of initiation or strange set of circumstances that a boy must pass through before becoming a man. There are many young boys and teens who are far more manly than grown adult men. This is because they stand for righteousness, they act in strength, and they obey God's Word. This is manhood to the max. They treat women with honor, they respect their parents, and they are willing to share the gospel, among many other things which require faith and strength. David was young when he conquered Goliath, and the message is that the transition from boyhood to manhood has little to do with age as compared to commitment to the Word of God. Granted, there are physical, mental, and emotional changes that take place as a boy transitions through adolescence and into adulthood, but the main criteria for true manhood is who a person is on the inside in respect to fearing the Lord and trembling at His Word. **There are men who live as boys, and there are boys who live as men. The issue isn't so much age as it is heart.**

Marriage doesn't make a man, getting a job doesn't make a man, and having children doesn't make a man, though each of these opportunities gives a man a chance to show himself a man. A man is a man because God has made him male as opposed to female (Genesis 1:27), and a man is all that a man should be if He fears God. A moral single man is no less of a man than a moral married man, and certainly he is no less of a man than an immoral married man. A man who loves his wife as Christ loved the church (Ephesians 5:25), who trains his children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4), who does all that he can to provide for his family (1 Timothy 5:8), and who is himself a man of godliness and character (2 Timothy 2:21-22) may not be considered a "man's man," but he is God's man, being like David, a man after God's own heart (Acts 13:22). It doesn't matter whether our parents, friends, or anyone else considers us a man in that ultimately manhood is defined by God. God creates men to be men, and His men honor His Word.

If a man doubts his manliness, he needs only to believe what is already true. God created him to be a man and to live as a man by being strong and keeping His Word. Even a man that the world would consider weak, feeble, and the least "manly" can be stronger than many in the world if he believes God and keeps His commandments. He does not need to take a trip to the wilderness and wait for a voice from heaven to declare to his soul that he is a man. He does not have to wait for his father or some father figure to somehow bestow "manness" upon him. He doesn't have to prove to himself or to others that he has what it takes to do whatever the world or he himself deems is important and manly. Masculinity is given by God to men, and men must live it out Biblically rather than perverting it and redefining it in worldly, carnal, and selfish terms.

When those under his care are in danger, a real man moves to protect them, even being willing to give his own life (John 15:13). When he is courting a woman or in a marriage relationship, he honors that woman and treats her in an understanding way, being kind, gentle, and protective of her (1 Peter 3:7). He lovingly leads his wife, taking initiative and responsibility for the course and direction of the home, yet all the while listening to her and always seeking to do what is in her best interests (Ephesians 5:25, 28, Colossians 3:19). He does his best to understand her and to be to her and for her what she needs. He

treats her not as someone lesser but as an equal and fellow heir of eternal life in Jesus Christ (1 Peter 3:7). When he is raising children, he trains them in God's Word and does not provoke them to anger (Ephesians 6:4). When he is in the workplace, he does his best and works with all of his heart (Colossians 3:23). He does his best to provide for the home, and he takes measures to be sure his family would be provided for if the event of his death (1 Timothy 5:8). When he is in the church, he is willing to use his gifts to serve others. When he is in a position of leadership, he is confident in Christ to stand for truth and make the right decisions. When he is in a position of temptation, he resists the devil and stands firm against the flesh (James 4:7). When a person is in need, he is generous and merciful to them (2 Corinthians 9:7, Matthew 5:7). When others fail him, he is willing to forgive (Ephesians 4:32) and does not take revenge (Romans 12:19), for he is gentle and tender-hearted (Galatians 5:22-23). He studies the Word (2 Timothy 2:15), and teaches it when he has opportunity (2 Timothy 2:2). He is a man devoted to prayer (1 Thessalonians 5:17), and he is a man who loves God with all of his heart, soul, and strength (Luke 10:27).

The world needs men to be men by showing themselves to be men, not by the world's standards but by God's. Biblical manhood is a matter of the heart, and it is manifested and matured by a commitment and obedience to the Word of God. Real men are men of integrity, internal strength in Christ, and courage, willing to do what is right and to stand for truth at all times and in all circumstances.