

Special Men's Breakfast Series Wild at Heart: Becoming Men of God

Part Three: Wrestling With the Question of Manhood

My Identity as a Man

Garrison Keillor wrote a funny essay on the identity of manhood in his *The Book of Guys*. One day he realized he was not being honest with himself about his identity as a man so he sat down to make a list of his strengths and weaknesses:

Useful Things I Can Do

Be Nice Sing alto or bass
Make a Bed Read a map
Dig a Hole Drive a car
Write Books

Useful Things I Can't Do

Chop down big trees and cut them into firewood
Handle a horse, train a dog, or tend a herd of animals
Handle a boat without panicking the others
Throw a fastball, curve, or slider
Load, shoot, and clean a gun or bow and arrow or
Use a spear, net, snare, boomerang, or blowgun to obtain meat.
Defend myself with my bare hands

Maybe this is an O.K. report card for a person but I don't know any persons... For a guy, it's not good. A woman could go down the list and say, "What does it matter if a guy can handle a boat? Throw a curve ball, bag a deer, or throw a left hook? This is 1993. But that's a womanly view of manhood! (Eldridge, p. 46-47)

Every man that I have met throughout my life has been on a journey that they never knew they had even started. The journey takes them through the deepest valleys in their lives, up to the highest peaks, into the depths of the fierce war that is waging all around them and within them, and it takes them to the darkest corner of their own lives.

The journey that every man embarks on begins at his coming of age, somewhere in his teenage years for most men. It is during these crucial years that they begin looking for PURPOSE in life, something to LIVE for, to DIE for, and something to INVEST their lives into.

Reflection Moment

- *What was your sole purpose in life when you were a teenager? In your college years? Explain why this was your purpose?*
- Reflect on your present day goals and the way you are living your life.
 - *What is your sole purpose for living, today? Explain why?*

For many men, it is during the teenage years that a void develops in their heart and they try to fill that void with everything and anything. Sadly for most men that void only becomes filled with ANGER. Today, we have Christian and Secular men walking around this world filled with rage and anger and they don't know why.

- *Do you suffer from moments of uncontrollable anger or rage?*

- *Do you lash out every once in awhile at your spouse or children and can't explain why?*

We read verses in Scripture about anger and we are told that to control our anger.

Proverbs 29:11 – A fool gives full vent to his anger, but a wise man keeps himself under control.

Ephesians 4:31-32 – Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

- *Did God make man to be one of anger and uncontrollable rage?*
- *Is this what it means to be made in the image of God?*
- *John Eldridge asks the simple question: How come when men look into their hearts they don't discover something valiant, dangerous, but instead find anger, lust, and fear? (Wild at Heart, p. 41)*

We know and understand that God has not made us to be men of anger or of uncontrollable rage but yet we don't know where all the rage comes from. Simply put in the form of a question: How do we control that which we do not understand? For many men they do not find the answer to this question right away and so they give up and simply quit seeking to be a man of God.

TALKING STRAIGHT

If we understand that we are made in the image of God and we know that God did not make us to be men of uncontrollable anger then we are posed with a very important question:

WHAT IS MAN FOR?

When it comes down to the brass tacks of the situation then we can trace much of our rage to the confusion of our identity. We long for purpose, we desire purpose, and we want to live as a man, be a man, and be seen as a man.

The truth is that most of us desire to be "Men of God" yet we fill ill equipped such men. Many times we don't think we are up to the challenge that lies before us. We have been so beat down by family, friends, and the world that we doubt very much that we have any real strength to offer and the little that we have we don't believe it is enough. (Eldridge, p. 48)

- *Do you believe you have the strength to be a man of God? Why or why not?*
- *Why would you even want to be a man of God in a world that is totally against you accomplishing this task?*

You must understand that it is not about what strength you have inside of you, it is not how much you can bench press, or how much you can endure that will enable you to accomplish being a "Man of God." Read this verse and respond:

Matthew 19:26 – Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

- *Where does your true strength for success as a man of God come from?*
- *Whose image are you made in?*

A man's deepest fear is: to be exposed, to be found out, to be discovered as an impostor, and not really a man.

ALWAYS REMEMBER: Success as a "Man of God" is not about how large or small a person maybe but it is all about **OBEDIENCE!** Those who are successful in the Lord and for the Lord are those who are Obedient to the Lord.

THE GREAT BATTLE

As every man pursues his identity as "Man of God", he is looking for great accomplishments in the three specific areas in which God has made him to pursue. He is always looking for a battle to fight, an adventure to live, and a beauty to love and rescue. But in pursuing your identity as "Man of God" understand that Satan is going to attack you from every angle that he possibly can because he does not want you to be successful. When you start pursuing the "Man of God" lifestyle then you enter into **The Greatest Battle of Your Life.**

- *How does Satan attack "Men of God" in our modern day culture?*
- *How do we prepare ourselves with the proper **Defense?***

1 Peter 5:8-9 – Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. ⁹ Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings.

Satan attacks us on many different fronts and we must continually remind ourselves that we are in the Battle of our lives and for our lives. This battle is so important that the outcome will effect future generations down the line of family members. It is not a matter of IF Satan will attack but WHEN he will attack. Mark this down: Man is born into a world at war.

Ephesians 6:10-13 (The Message) – And that about wraps it up. God is strong, and he wants you strong. So take everything the Master has set out for you, well-made weapons of the best materials. And put them to use so you will be able to stand up to everything the Devil throws your way. This is no afternoon athletic contest that we'll walk away from and forget about in a couple of hours. This is for keeps, a life-or-death fight to the finish against the Devil and all his angels. Be prepared. You're up against far more than you can handle on your own. Take all the help you can get, every weapon God has issued, so that when it's all over but the shouting you'll still be on your feet.

- *What do we learn as "Men of God" from this passage in Ephesians? What challenge does it pose before us?*

WHAT IS MAN FOR?

The question that we are pursuing is still left unanswered for many men therefore let us answer this question in a simple but direct way. What purpose does a man have in his life or what has man been made for?

- *How would you answer this question?*

God has created man for four specific reasons. These four reasons give a man direction and purpose which has been uniquely given by the divine Creator. These four reasons give us the Biblical definition of manhood which is shared with us by Robert Lewis in *The Quest for Authentic Manhood*.

Reason #1 – Godly Men Reject Passivity

- **Philippians 2:5-8** – Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death— even death on a cross!
 - *What does this passage say about the passivity of Christ? How does this relate to us “Men of God?”*

It is a fact, when men choose to embrace social and spiritual passivity the result is the chaotic decline of morality in our homes, churches, and culture. Our society and faith eventually crumble and we are only left with despair.

When the “Man of God” rejects passivity then he takes part in the **Great Battle** and wages war from the front lines to reclaim his family and community.

Reason #2 – Godly Men Accept Responsibility

- *What is your responsibility as a “Man of God?”*

THE WILL – You have a responsibility to follow the will of God over your own. It is about service not selfishness. Yielding to God’s will is not a weakness but a strength. It is here where true knowledge begins.

- **John 4:34** – “My food,” said Jesus, “is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work.

THE WORK – You have the great calling of working for your heavenly Father in all that you do from the smallest task to the largest, it must all be done out of respect and honor for your Creator. You also have the great calling of serving others out of the Love of Christ.

- **Ephesians 2:10** – For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

THE WOMAN – You have the responsibility to love and respect your wife and family.

- **Ephesians 5:25** – Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.

Reason #3 – Godly Men Lead Courageously

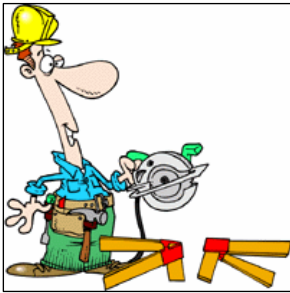
- Every “Man of God” has been called to lead his family with a servant heart as Christ served the church. This takes courage as you set the direction, provide protection, and provide for your families needs.
- **Ephesians 5**

Reason #4 – Godly Men Live for God's Reward

- **Hebrews 11:13-16** – All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance. And they admitted that they were aliens and strangers on earth. People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own. If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. Instead, they were longing for a better country—a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.
- You are called to be “Men of God” who live by faith and serve your heavenly Father in the great anticipation of God’s Reward of eternal life that he has prepared for you.

“Men of God” created in the image of God focused on serving God in our families, churches, and communities:

- THIS IS YOUR IDENTITY
- THIS IS YOUR PURPOSE
- THIS IS YOUR CALLING



SOLID ROCK CONSTRUCTION TEAM

!!COMING SOON!! = Cicero Christian Church is starting a new “Man’s Ministry!” The **Solid Rock Construction Team** is a ministry focused on building relationships through working on actual building projects for people in our congregation. Look in future bulletins for more information!

Scheduled Lessons to Come for the Series

July 28 – Winning the Battle for a Man’s Heart

August 04 – The Adventure to Live

Bibliography

Eldridge, John. Wild at Heart. Nashville, TN. Nelson Books, 2001.

Lewis, Robert. The Quest for Authentic Manhood. Nashville, TN. LifeWay Press, 2006.



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like a river

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