

- ***READ II Timothy 3:16-4:5*** As time marches on, I am astounded by how the most given principles and truths of life are continually being challenged as if they are not so. One such truth is that relating to gender. As of December of 2019, healthline.com claims that there are at least 64 terms relating to gender identity and expression. I have been under the impression for the last 30 years of my life that the simple truths of **Genesis 1:26,27** were sufficient to describe the gender identity and expression of mankind. In that text, it is written concerning the beginning, "Then God said, *"Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness. They will rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the livestock, the whole earth, and the creatures that crawl on the earth."* So God created man in His own image; He created him in the image of God; He created them male and female."
- However, we are so far removed from seeing the world through the eyes of God that we, as a society and culture, believe it is necessary to have at least 64 terms to help us understand something that in the beginning was described with two simple terms: man and woman. Yet, we are not surprised with the foolishness of such because the wisdom of the text we just read together has been ignored and the warning of the Apostle Paul has been realized. People no longer want to hear simple truths and sound teaching. Instead, they want to devise their own wisdom which nearly always ends up being pure foolishness.
- This reality is seen in a number of areas of our lives, but one area that has had a traumatic impact on our society has been that of what it means to be a man. To speak of masculinity is almost to speak of something that is inherently negative in our society. It was not that long ago before the current issues of COVID-19 and Black Lives Matter that the issues of the day were that of the #MeToo Movement & Toxic Masculinity. What it meant to be a man was under attack and there was a call for traditionally understood masculinity to be redefined.
- Simply being a man could implicate you as part of the problems that were plaguing society. While I have no doubt that we do have issues in our society when it comes to manhood and masculinity, let me suggest that a look at and adherence to the Bible's understanding masculinity would go a long way in helping to fix the problems that are present around us.
- With it being Father's Day, I spoke a bit to my fellow dads in the bulletin, but I want this Sunday's lesson to look more broadly at the issue of masculinity and how we can embrace it from a truly Biblical perspective. I invite all of you, men and women, younger and older to consider a few thoughts as we open this morning and then let's look together at seven characteristics that can be found in the Bible that ought to be true of the man who is seeking to embrace Biblical masculinity.

I. Opening Considerations:

A. Worldview affects our understanding of masculinity.

1. The whole reason we are having this discussion is because the idea of masculinity is up in the air as not being truly defined or at least objectively defined. The reason it is not be objectively defined is because it is often left open to interpretation through each individual's worldview. Academically speaking, our worldview is defined as *"a particular philosophy of life or conception of the world."* To put that in language that makes more sense to me, I might rephrase and define worldview simply as *"the lenses through which we perceive the world, and its operation."* It all comes down to origins and why we believe this world is here. If we believe it is here by chance then there is no driving force and we are free to see and define things as we wish.
2. This is true even of something such as masculinity and even femininity. If this world happened by chance and there is no driving force then these concepts are completely subjective because they are simply byproducts of culture. There is no objective construct and therefore they can be changed subjectively when people see fit.

- B. Progressive ideologies are seeking to eradicate “traditional masculinity” from our society.**
1. By “traditional masculinity” I am speaking of the tradition understanding that men are to be leaders, providers, and protectors. While I can’t see anything at all wrong with this traditional view of masculinity, we need to recognize that these positive facets of the traditional understanding of what it means to be a man have been spoiled by bad behavior of men, and it has caused this positive view to be tainted.
 2. Instead of recognizing that the traditional values of masculinity are good and positive in and of themselves, many want to lump all prior traditional thoughts of masculinity together and classify it all as something I referred to earlier on as “toxic masculinity.” This term can be defined as *“a social science term that describes narrow repressive type of ideas about the male gender role that defines masculinity as exaggerated masculine traits like being violent, unemotional, sexually aggressive, and so forth. Also suggests that men who act too emotional or maybe aren’t violent enough or don’t do all the things that ‘real men’ do, can get their ‘man card’ taken away.”* Yes, this type of behavior is not appropriate, but we can’t throw the baby out with the bathwater and lump this type of bad behavior in with what has been traditionally understood as manhood and masculinity.
- C. While the “meathead” man ought not be desired, neither should feminizing men be the goal.**
1. This type of behavior is not becoming of a true gentleman, but what the progressives really want to do is move men and women closer together to the point that you won’t be able to differentiate between who is a man and who is a woman. I should add that it isn’t just the feminizing of men that is the issue, but there is also a masculinizing of women that is taken place all around us in society. If you don’t see this already then simply go look up some stories about transgender homosexual couples having a baby and the “man”, who was born as a women, speaking about being all excited about being a dad.
 2. This all goes back to the desire for gender roles to be subjective social constructs that are malleable instead of them being seen as concepts that have been objectively determined outside and above mankind. This is why firmly establishing our worldview is so incredibly important. What are we going to allow to shape the way that we see the world and how it operates? Will we allow subjective ideologies to be our lenses or will we allow something outside of ourselves determine what is and isn’t?
- D. As Christians, we should live with a worldview that embraces the gender roles that are prescribed by God in His inspired Word.**
1. As someone who professes faith and allegiance to Jesus Christ, the Son of God, I must embrace a worldview that sees the world through the lenses of God. The fact that I believe this book, the Bible, is God’s revealed will to mankind and that it is profitable for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training to the end that I can be complete and capable of doing every good work He desires for me to do **MUST** lead me to allow the way I see and approach the world to be the way He sees the world and designed for it to operate.
 2. The reality is...that divinely given worldview is going to come into direct conflict with the worldview that is propagated by the secular world at large. People are not going to want to hear and be reminded that in the beginning God created them simply as male and female. They’re not going to want to hear that the gender roles we espouse are divinely determined gender roles. The reality is that what I am saying this morning about men needing to stand up as men will be understood by some as hate speech in different parts of this country and world. However, that can’t stop me from speaking the truth as God has designed it even if people will plug up their ears and not listen or even seek to accuse me of hatred.

3. The saddest part of all of this is this...these characteristics that God gives for Biblical masculinity, if embraced by every man, would make this world such a better place. And I would suspect that the majority of the world would agree that these characteristics are good and beneficial, but they would never go so far as to say that these are good because God has shown them to be good. They would rather argue that man's wisdom has determined them to be good. However, what if men determined that these are no longer good and they ought to no longer be positive characteristics of men? That, you see, is where we run into difficulties and get in trouble. We get in trouble if we fail to see these as being objectively good and determined by something greater and higher than ourselves. So what are these characteristics? Please consider the following:

II. 7 Characteristics Of The Biblical Man

A. Respects Women

1. I wholeheartedly agree that sexual violence (any violence) done towards women is wrong, and I would go even further to say that it is an affront to the God who blessed the first man with his woman, made from his own body, in the very beginning. As I read the words of Adam in **Genesis 2:23**, *"This one, at last, is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh; this one will be called "woman," for she was taken from man."*, I see a man who recognized the tremendous gift that his wife was to him and that generally speaking women are to men in this life. I see a man who understand that this incredible creation before him had intrinsic value as having been made from himself who was an image bearer of God.
2. Let me suggest that such an understanding of women in the minds of men would go a long way in helping men everywhere to respect women as souls and not just pieces of meat meant for their own pleasure. I am always so impressed with Job's words in **Job 31:1-4** as he continues to plead his innocence regarding the horrible situation that has fallen upon him. He speaks of his purity and says of himself, *"I have made a covenant with my eyes. How then could I look at a young woman? For what portion would I have from God above, or what inheritance from the Almighty on high? Doesn't disaster come to the unjust and misfortune to evildoers? Does he not see my ways and number all my steps?"* Notice this one thing...Job ties in his respect for women with his desire to please God. If God is not in the picture and we are only seeking to please ourselves, then what is to stop a man from seeing women as existing for nothing more than his simple pleasure? We, as men, are to respect women because they are image bearers as we are, and our God will judge us according to how we treat them in this life.

B. Controls Strength

1. One of the reasons sexual violence is so prevalent from men towards women is for the simple fact that men are generally speaking biologically stronger than women. Of course, there are exceptions to this rule...I can think of a few women that I have known in the past and continue to know that I would not like to get in a fight with, but generally speaking...men simply are stronger than women. However, as Uncle Ben would say...*"with great power comes great responsibility"*, and that is especially true when it comes to how we use our strength as men.
2. One of the issues identified within the idea of toxic masculinity is that men simply want to exhibit their superiority over others through showings of brute strength, and I'm sure many of us have seen that guy who thinks he is big time simply because he has big muscles and can throw around a lot of weight, especially when compared to others. However, let me suggest that the true showing of masculinity isn't see in how much weight one can lift, but instead it is seen in how he uses whatever amount of strength that he does have. For us men, do we use the strength we have to do harm towards others? Do we use that strength to promote ourselves as being special? Or do we recognize that any and all physical strength we have

must be used with great wisdom? Think of the great Samson. That man had supernatural strength, and yet he wasn't wise and allowed it to get him into trouble. His negative example should impress upon us the need to wield whatever strength we have with great wisdom and lean upon the Lord to help us to use it wisely. True masculinity isn't seen in how much strength we have, but it is seen in how we allow for God to help us control whatever strength we do have.

C. Embraces Emotions

1. Men are often charged with not allowing themselves to truly embrace their emotions and allow them to be seen as they could be. If ever there was a shortcoming of the previous generations then this would certainly be it. I'm sure we have all either heard or even experienced the chides of older men towards younger men that boy shouldn't cry or let their emotions be seen at all. However, this type of thinking has simply led to a generation or more of men who don't know how to deal with their emotions because they have been repressed for so long. We need to recognize that we are emotional beings by God's design, and even the Son of God Himself allowed His emotions to flow freely.
2. In the well-known story of Lazarus's death and resurrection (**John 11**), the text tells us that Jesus comes to the place where Lazarus has died and is about to go to where he has been buried. Mary meets Jesus on the way and she is apparently upset with Him that He did not get there sooner. *"Lord, if you had been here, my brother wouldn't have died!" When Jesus saw her crying, and the Jews who had come with her crying, he was deeply moved in his spirit and troubled. "Where have you put him?" he asked. "Lord," they told him, "come and see." Jesus wept. So the Jews said, "See how he loved him!" (John 11:32-36)*
3. Mary's emotion is obvious from the beginning, but then we see our Lord's emotions also come to the surface. Even with His knowledge of what was about to happen...He still felt love for His friends and He wasn't afraid of allowing those feelings to be expressed through crying. I'm not saying that we should allow our feelings and emotions to control us, but if Jesus was willing to embrace and express His emotions, then we would do well to do the same.

D. Enjoys Relationships

1. My original thoughts for this lesson were first developed some months ago as I was reading the narrative of David and his relationship with Jonathan. Following the victory of David over Goliath, the text says, *"When David had finished speaking with Saul, Jonathan was bound to David in close friendship, and loved him as much as he loved himself." (I Samuel 18:1)* In addition, we read of David's feelings towards Jonathan following his death, *"I grieve for you, Jonathan, my brother. You were such a friend to me. Your love for me was more wondrous than the love of women." (II Samuel 1:26)*
2. Some have suggested, and sound incredibly familiar to some men today who will make fun of and ridicule other men for having strong relationships with other men, that David and Jonathan experienced a homosexual type of love. However, we must recognize that it is completely possible for men to have loving relationships with one another without romantic or sexual feelings ever coming into play. These two men were close in friendship because they had shared so many experiences together with one another and even established a covenant with one another. (**I Samuel 18:1-5**)
3. What I'm trying to say is that we should not shy away from having strong relationships with our fellow men. We should establish and nurture strong friendships especially with our fellow believers because it is those relationships that will have the greatest impact upon us in this life. A man trying to go through this life without strong male friends who he can lean upon and share his true feelings with will have a difficult time. Two or three are truly better than one and this applies just the same to men embracing good relationships with others. (**Ecclesiastes 4:9-12**)

E. Lovingly Provides

1. To say that men are to be providers is to acknowledge one of the earliest designations given by God. *"The Lord God took the man and placed him in the garden of Eden to work it and watch over it."* (**Genesis 2:15**) Even following the fall, this expectation from God remained though the work would become more difficult. (**Genesis 3:17-19**) Yet, does this apply only to those who have families to provide for? This is an area that would demand its own lesson, but one must not be considered masculine simply because he has a wife and kids, and one must not be considered un-masculine simply because he does not have a wife and/or kids. If this were the case then Jesus and Paul would have to be considered un-masculine.
2. Therefore, men can embrace their masculinity by being providers, servants, and showing compassion for any and all people around them, obviously including one's own family. Of course, this especially applies to men who are husbands and fathers. This was an issue in the first century when some were failing in this regard. Paul writes very plainly in **I Timothy 5:8**, *"But if anyone does not provide for his own family, especially for his own household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever."* As men, we are to provide and care for those around us because we love our neighbor as ourselves and simply want what is best for them.

F. Wisely Leads

1. Another plainly stated designation found within Scripture is that of men being assigned as leaders in a number of arenas. Husbands are the head of their wives (**Ephesians 5:22-33**), dads lead the way for their children (**Ephesians 6:4**), and Christian men have been set up as leaders within the Lord's churches. (**I Timothy 3**) Again, with this great power of leading comes great responsibility, and we must be sure that we are leading well in these positions.
2. Part of that leading well is to recognize the good that comes when we are willing to listen to others as we seek to lead them. Yes, we are the leaders in our marriages, but we need to give a continual ear to our wives. Yes, we are to lead our children, but we would do well to listen to what they need from us. Yes, we are the leaders in the church, but we need to be willing to listen to those whom we are working alongside with. Moses stands out as a good example of a man who was willing to listen even though he was in that position of leadership. (**Exodus 18**) We are not only to lead through teaching and example, but we can also wisely lead through listening to those whom we are seeking to lead. In doing so, we are showing humility.

G. Humbly Repents

1. Lastly, further humility can be seen (which helps to break down toxic masculinity stereotypes) when we are willing to admit faults and mistakes. One of the quickest ways for men to lose credibility in virtually any realm is for them to refuse to admit when they have made obvious mistakes. Many men are not willing to "lose face" by admitting mistakes, but the reality is that much worse damage is done to our image when we aren't willing to be honest and admit that we have messed up in some form or fashion.
2. We might be fooling ourselves into thinking that refusing to admit faults shows some sort of strength, but it only shows foolishness and actually will hurt us in the long run. *"Pride comes before destruction, and an arrogant spirit before a fall."* (**Proverbs 16:18**) As men who are striving to live up to the call of Biblical masculinity, we must show our godly character through the humility to be able to admit fault and do better moving forward. Our credibility depends on it.

Brothers, we are living in a day and age when true masculinity is needed more than ever. Our world needs strong, wise, loving, and humble leaders who will provide for the needs of those around us. May we reject the progressive calls for masculinity and only fully embrace what God has prepared for us to be as Godly men in an ungodly age. May Paul's words resonate strongly with us as we move forward this week and beyond. *"Be alert, stand firm in the faith, be courageous (literally "act like men"), be strong. Do everything in love."* (**I Corinthians 16:13,14**)