

What Does it Mean to Be a Man?

Father's Day

June 16, 2013

(Note: We take a week off from MULTIPLY in anticipation of Father's Day this Sunday. This week's devotions will center on what it means to be a man).

DAY 1

Genesis 1:26-27 Then God said, "Let us make human beings in our image, to be like us" ... So God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

1. These are the opening biblical verses on what it means to be *human*. It reveals who we are as people, down to our very core.

(If you are new to the bible, you may be confused by the pronoun, "us," at the beginning of these verses. The bible reveals God as a triune God--One being, three persons, revealed as God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. The essence of God includes that He is personal and relational).

What do we learn about human nature in these verses? Put a check next to all the ones you think that apply.

We were made in the image of God

We are personal creatures

We are relational creatures

We have the capacity to relate to God

At the core of who we are, we *are* male or female. Gender is *embedded* into who we are. (We are more than just *physically* male or female).

We were made to live in community, that reflects something of the wonder of how each of the persons of the trinity relate to one another.

2. I hoped you checked all of the items above. These verses help us see what it means to be human down at the core. But God also gives us indication of what it means to be "male" and "female."

Genesis 1:27 ... male and female he created them.

a. In the Old Testament, "zakar," is the Hebrew word for "male." It means "to leave an impact." In ancient writings, "zakar" was used to refer to the king's assistant, the one who *remembers* the important things, and *moves* the king to do something *important*.

b. In the New Testament, "arsen." is the Greek word for "male," It means, "to lift, to carry." The idea is a kind of strength that can move something from one place to another.

c. Think about the meanings of "zakar" and "arsen." In your own words, combine these ideas along with what you read in Genesis 1:26-27 into one or two statements below.

3. Combining what we learn from Genesis 1:26-27, including "zakar" and "arsen"...

Men were made to mirror God's penetrating and powerful love by moving deeply into another's soul with life-changing impact.

DAY 2

We get a picture of what manhood looks like in Jesus Christ. In the next verse, the specific application of the principle is being a husband, but the principle is loving like Christ.

Ephesians 5:25 Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for it.

1. To understand something of the love of Christ, we must understand whom He was loving.

Titus 3:3 At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another.

a. How many of these sins do you relate to?

b. If we were, really, doing all of these, what would Christ have to do in order to jolt us out of this way of life?

2. The problem of unrequited love! He loved us; we didn't love Him. What did He do?

a. He moved out of heaven and onto earth.

b. He weathered every storm and persecution that came His way.

c. He remained focused on the ultimate objective--reconciling us with God.

d. Nothing deterred Him, including the cost of His own life!

3. What strikes you most about what it meant to love us?

4. What does this say to us about the *kind* of love a fully alive man gives/offers/initiates to those around him?

5. Christ's coming to earth is what we call the Incarnation. Incarnational love is Christ coming to love us in ways that should "make sense to us," and to what we most really need. In other words, His love for us is not motivated by what He will get out of this, or how it will make Him feel. It is driven by what we really need!

How does your love stack up? Identify which characteristic of His love needs to more of your love:

___ Sacrificial

___ Intentional

___ Relational

___ Determined

___ "Not about me."

___ More initiative

DAY 3

1. As men, our top priority is to reflect God's character into our relationships. We have God's example...

Exodus 2:23 During that long period, the king of Egypt died. The Israelites groaned in their slavery and cried out, and their cry for help because of their slavery went up to God. ²⁴ God heard their groaning and he remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob. ²⁵ So God looked on the Israelites and was concerned about them.

Exodus 3:16 Go and gather the elders of Israel together and say to them, 'The Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, has appeared to me, saying, "I have observed you and what has been done to you in Egypt, ¹⁷ and I promise that I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt to the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, a land flowing with milk and honey." '

2. Go back and circle what God did.

a. What are three actions in 2:23?

b. What is added to the previous list in 3:17?

What does God's love look like?

* Heard - What did God hear? _____

* Remembered - What did God remember? _____

* Looked - What did God see? _____

* Promise to act (action followed) - How did God act? _____

3. Instead of loving like that we typically do some of the following. Check the ones you do:

___ Offer a quick fix

___ Give advice

___ Explain

___ Defend yourself

___ Answer too quickly

3. A man moves with masculine/godly love when he (1) Hears what others are saying, (2) Remembers what kind of man he's promised to be, (3) Looks to see what he could do, and (4) Acts! (or speaks, if that is what's needed).

4. What's your biggest takeaway from today's study?

DAY 4

1 Corinthians 13 "...love is not self-seeking."

1. What we call "love" is usually equated with a feeling. God's love is not equated with a feeling but with an *other-centered commitment* to bless His people. That is our pattern, as men. On a scale of 1-10, how's your "other-centeredness" doing?

2. If you are brave enough, ask your wife.

3. Masculinity has nothing to do with muscles or stunning looks. A man *moves* toward his responsibilities and relationships, like God does. And he moves even farther than just toward relationships. He moves into people's hearts, to establish deep connections with people. How are you doing in these three:

Moving toward responsibilities

Moving toward relationships

Moving into some people's hearts

4. Instead of moving toward people in an other-centered way like God does, all too-often we substitute other-centered moving with self-centered displaying. In us men, it takes many forms. Put a check next to the ones you see yourself doing:

Strut an accomplishment

Display adequacy

Posturing, that keeps someone at a safe distance

Stay shallow in relationships

Exhibit your strength

Hide your weakness

Impress with some tidbit of knowledge

Tell others how to do something

5. As you look back over this list, what strikes you?

6. When we assume we're "loving" while we're doing some of the things you checked, we're not experienced by others as masculine or loving!

7. Is there a "re-direct" you need in one of your important relationships?

DAY 5

1. If you have stayed with me this far, and if you have been honest with yourself (God being your helper!), you've likely felt some of the following: guilty, selfish, bad, like a jerk, etc. Welcome to the club!!! Before we become real men, we must become aware of the many roads we pursue in search of *counterfeit* manhood. There is no becoming a real man without brokenness!!!!

2. Has God been breaking self-centeredness in you, or, are you just feeling bad but still feel entitled to better treatment by some people?

3. There is NO hope of becoming genuine, real men without repentance and turning to God to overcome the fear and self-centeredness that drives us.

Jeremiah 33:8 I will cleanse them from all the guilt of their sin against me, and I will forgive all the guilt of their sin and rebellion against me. ⁹ And this city shall be to me a name of joy, a praise and a glory before all the nations of the earth who shall hear of all the good that I do for them. They shall fear and tremble because of all the good and all the prosperity I provide for it.

4. What does God promise to do with our guilt? (Look for two things!)

5. God's forgiveness doesn't end with a "clean slate," only. His purpose is to restore the blessings of relationship, with Him and others. What pictures come to mind from Jer. 33:9?

6. What do you think God means when He uses the words:

a. "Prosperity?"

b. "Good?" (mentioned twice)

7. Below, is King David's last words to young Solomon, spoken on David's death bed...

1 Kings 2:2 "...Be strong, and show yourself a man."

What would this kind of strength look like in your current:

a. Responsibilities?

b. Relationships?

c. Entering someone else's heart with the objective to *explore* and *enjoy* what you find?