

# What Does it Mean to Be a Man?

Father's Day

June 15, 2014

(Note: We take a week off from our 2 Roads, 8 Sign Posts series in anticipation of Father's Day this Sunday. This week's devotions will center on what it means to be a man).

## **DAY 1: Manhood is embedded in our nature at conception.**

*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 is that He is personal and relational).

2. 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,

As we relate, we are to reflect something of the wonder of how each of the persons of the trinity relate to one another.

3. 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.*

4. The Old Testament word for "male" is the Hebrew word "zakar," It means "*to leave an impact.*" "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.

5. What strikes you about God's design for manhood? What does He intend to see in a "zakar" (man)?

## DAY 2: A man hears, remembers, looks, and acts

1. Yesterday we looked at the origins of what manhood means in the Old Testament. Today, we'll look at 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.

2. This adds another nuance of meaning to manhood. What strikes you from the idea of "to lift or carry?"

3. Think about the meanings of "zakar" (from yesterday) and "arsen." Combine these ideas along with what you read in Genesis 1:26-27. Summarize them into one or two statements.

4. As men, our top priority is to relate to God and people in the same way God relates. 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. <sup>24</sup> God heard their groaning and he remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob. <sup>25</sup> 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, <sup>17</sup> 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." '*

5. Four actions of God are underlined, above. :Next to each action, fill in the details of that action:

\* Heard - What did God hear? \_\_\_\_\_

\* Remembered - What did God remember? \_\_\_\_\_

\* Looked - What did God see? \_\_\_\_\_

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

6. Which of these strikes you the most? Why?

### **DAY 3: Counterfeit manhood, part I**

1. A man moves with masculine/godly love when he:

- (a) Hears what others are saying,
- (b) Remembers what kind of man he's promised to be
- (c) Looks to see what he could do, and
- (d) Acts! (or speaks, if that is what's needed).

2. Which of these are your strongest point as you relate to others?

3. Which of these is your weakest?

4. Instead of moving strongly in each of these four areas, we tend to move in counterfeit ways, being more concerned with protecting ourselves from criticism or looking good, instead of being a blessing to someone else.

Instead of loving we may revert to some of the following. Check the ones you do:

- Offer a quick fix
- Give advice
- Explain
- Defend yourself
- Answer too quickly
- Minimize someone's feelings
- Procrastinate
- Do nothing (frozen)
- Remain confused; give up
- Be harsh; snap in anger

5. What is your reaction to today's study? What do you see in how you tend to relate to others?

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

## DAY 4: Masculine: other-centered relating

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 to be 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 resort to self-centered displaying. In 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. 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!

## DAY 5

1. If you are 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. Thankfully, we don't have to stay guilty!

*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. <sup>9</sup> 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." 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?

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