



“Be a Man”

-1 Kings 2-

by Pastor Tim Dodson
at JF Believers Church
in Menomonie, Wisc
on April 10, 2019

“...*be strong, therefore, and prove yourself a man.*” The NLT renders such as “...take courage and be a man.” No doubt we would have to

wonder today if such a directive can actually be followed, as I am not sure that as a culture...a society, that we even know what that means any more. And further, are we sure that such a concept is even important to God? Well, it sounds very much like the directive Moses made to Joshua in Deut 31:1-8, and then God himself made to Joshua at the beginning of his ministry...twice in Joshua chapter 1 (1:6-7): “*Be strong and courageous...*” The New Testament continues the call in 1 Corinthians 16:13 saying, “Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong.” (NASB)

Certainly if we are to be able to look back upon our lives with any sense of satisfaction and completion, it is crucial that we do indeed understand just what we are being asked to do and be herein. After all, what does it mean to “Be a Man?”

God did not leave this issue ambiguous. In fact we can go all the way back to the beginning to see much of how and for what man was created. When God created life, he reached down to create...to actually mold man from the earth. With care and intimacy, he created man in a very distinct way. Ultimately as well travel through the scriptural account, we find that God has embedded his own image into man.

The Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature. In the surrounding verses of Genesis 2, we watch as God defines the purpose of this sole man prior to the creation of woman: the purpose of his work, expanse of his authority, parameters of his obedience, and even the swelling of desire for a wife. Masculinity finds its definition in God alone — not the world, not culture, not the workplace. Ultimately and completely, masculinity is defined by the God who makes men.

In our journey through the grand story of God in the Bible, we could search its pages for the ideal representations of men among its kings, priests, prophets, warriors, and leaders. Yet in doing so it is easy to get a sense that something is never quite right. Sin, it seems, has damaged the reflection of ideal masculinity. One biblical hero after another is shown to be wounded, broken, flawed, prone to disobedience and even to outright wickedness. And yet occasionally...just occasionally, we see small glimpses of righteous masculinity, *just enough to keep us going and from giving up on the idea altogether.* Flashes of undeterred faith, unwavering conviction, humble service and sacrifice. But again, they seem to be only passing shadows.

Ultimately God himself breaks into time and space to give us the model of the perfect man in His Son, Jesus. While Jesus was indeed deity, He was also fully man. Let us not forget that fact or we lose so very much of the

impact of His coming and the purpose of His dying. He was and is the perfect divine depiction of manhood. He defines true masculinity.

Read the following traits of Christ and consider if such are manifest from your life or the male lives around you.

1. A man commits to following a greater authority.

[Jesus] said, "Follow me." But [the man] said, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father." And Jesus said to him, "Leave the dead to bury their own dead. But as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God." Yet another said, "I will follow you, Lord, but let me first say farewell to those at my home." Jesus said to him, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God." (Luke 9:59–62)

2. He commits to sacrifice all else in the shadow of discipleship.

"If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple." (Luke 14:26)

3. He commits to determined, joyful obedience.

After this many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him. So Jesus said to the twelve, "Do you want to go away as well?" Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God." (John 6:66–69)

4. He commits to spiritual discipline.

Rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, [Jesus] departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed. (Mark 1:35)

5. He commits to abide in the word of truth.

Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." (John 8:31–32)

6. He commits to growth and production, especially spiritual fruit.

"By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples." (John 15:8)

7. He commits to carry out God's mission.

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:19–20)

8. He commits to love others faithfully.

"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." (John 13:34–35)

9. He commits to brotherhood and community.

Let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near. (Hebrews 10:24–25)

(BY Vince Miller, founder the men's discipleship and leadership ministry Resolute.)

And what do all these things have in common? *Commitment*. Ahhh...such a rare trait in anyone these days, yet so important ...crucial even, to a man's success in this life. Whether it is God, church, job, wife and kids, friends, etc...without it, quickly one's street cred will proceed you and life gets difficult from every angle.

That word "commitment" means to "give trust or charge," (as in consigning and trusting oneself to another in some way). It means I am "obligated" and that the time to consider loyalty has come and gone! It means I have "pledged" myself...my trust, my defense, my priorities...*my life*.

Why the offensive move by Solomon here toward his half-brother Adonijah? For it seems on the surface that what this Adonijah was asking was benign and lacked any nefarious intent. But it's likely that Solomon saw that His brother was up to much more than just acquiring a wife. For it was understood that possession of a king's wife or concubine was evidence of possession of the kingdom. This, *after all*, was why Absalom had publicly taken David's concubines (2 Sam. 16:20–23). It was an announcement to the people that *he* was now king.

Much of this chapter is record of how Solomon moved independent of his father to shore up the safety and integrity of the kingdom, or moved at the behest of David to settle some old scores. We can only wonder if this record really has anything to do with "being a man" as David has sought Solomon to be?

We need to understand that Solomon was a very different man and a different kind of leader than his father David. Solomon was a scholar, not a soldier, a man more interested in erecting buildings than fighting battles. David enjoyed the simple life of a shepherd, but Solomon chose to live in luxury. David was a warrior who changed his world through weapons and battle, while Solomon was a politician who fought with weapons of governmental authority, treaties, and political deal-making.

And yet here in this chapter's account, we see Solomon moving rather viciously. Was this vengeance or anger? Or was Solomon wise enough to know that these situations and these people...however quiet and benign they had been over the past few years, threatened the stability of the kingdom and therefore the people in it? One could say that both David and Solomon were perceptive to the things around them. They led well because they were attentive to what was dangerous not just to them, but to the people that they were responsible for. They did not shirk their responsibilities even when they were hard.

I mention that because it certainly IS a problem amongst today's males, and is conspicuously absent from those who have yet to step up to actually being a man. I know a young guy that fancies himself as being rather mature for his age, when in reality the men around him see him for what he is: *yet a boy*. Because of his actions and priorities, his history of not telling the truth, his pursuit of the things of this world instead of the things of Christ, he is seen as yet a child...immature even for his age. Because a job and a pickup doesn't make one a man.

Doing the hard thing is a trait of real men. The magnitude of that fact and that statement is a long and multi-faceted issue, too much to get into in this message. But let us at least wrap our minds around its premise, because the alternative to such is to remain a "boy" right on into marriage, parenting, career, and chronological adulthood. All because I avoid dealing with uncomfortable situations and sidestep doing hard things and difficult spheres.

Small Group Discussion Questions:

- 1) How does SOCIETY define a “man?”
- 2) How do you define such? *What do you think it means to “be a man?”* (teacher: push beyond the parameters of the Tim’s teaching content!)
- 3) What are some of the biggest challenges facing godly men in today’s society?
- 4) King David made two charges to Solomon. First, was to be committed to God. Second, was concerning his kingdom. In today’s world we can view this as God, job, home. ***What happens when priorities get out of order?***
- 5) Why is the statement “show yourself a man” (1 Kings 2:2) significant in this context? How would that be translated in today’s terms?
- 6) What does verse 15 tell us about Adonijah? (Note his life had been spared by Solomon, but over time he had forgotten this fact and had begun to again to assert his greed and self-interest.)
- 7) If Solomon was God’s choice for the throne, and Adonijah knew it, why did he still attempt a coup?
- 8) What did this say about his character? What was Solomon’s answer to Adonijah’s attempt to claim the throne?
- 9) Note 1 Kings 2:1-4. Being charged to follow God is great, being shown how to follow God is better. ***How can a man be an example to those around him of what it means to follow God?***
- 10) 1 Corinthians 16:13-14 NASB reads: “*Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong. Let all that you do be done in love.*” There is a balance between toughness and being loving. Paul mentions being alert, firm, acting like a man (brave), and being strong all under the umbrella of love. ***Why does the Apostle Paul emphasize everything be done in love?***