

Looking for a Few Good Men

Margaret Mead, who is probably the leading anthropologist and sociologist of this century, has said, "The central problem of every society is to define appropriate roles for the men. If the men don't know what they are supposed to be, the culture is in trouble." She's right. And our culture is in trouble because men are confused.

Men are different. They are! They're different from women. Those of us, who believe the Bible, must resist the current societal rage to make androgyny [having the characteristics or nature of both male and female] a viable option. There are those who are trying to play down and ignore the differences between men and women. Gloria Steinem, one of the early leaders of the feminist movement said, "We are human beings first, with minor differences for men, that apply largely to the act of reproduction. The only functional difference," she says between men and women, "is a woman's ability to give birth. A woman needs a man," she concludes, "like a bicycle needs a fish."

Well, she's wrong, she's dead wrong. The Bible says she's wrong, biology says she's wrong, and experience tells all of us she's wrong. The cover article on the front page of the January 1992 issue of Time Magazine stated in bold letters, Why Are Men and Women Different? And then the sub-title stated New Studies Show They're Born That Way. Yeah, yeah, Genesis 1:27, "God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them." Did he ever!

In the ninth week of pregnancy when the little child is still in the womb and so tiny, God begins the secretion of testosterone in the male brain. And that testosterone coats that little bitty tiny male mind, and from that time forward, that baby, that child, that man, never is the same. He thinks dominantly with the left half of his brain and women think with both halves of their brain.

What about that left half? That left half is given to task orientation, competition, and work. Because of this phenomenon, that's as natural as water running downhill, men are less verbal, men are less sensitive, men are more decisive and they are less grudge-holding. Other lessons will address how God made men for certain roles and certain functions. The Bible says, "Maleness and femaleness were designed by the Creator to each uniquely reflect his image." Maleness is God's gift to men, not something to be ashamed of.

Now admittedly, like most of God's gifts, there have been some who perverted maleness, some of them have turned it into a thing called, "macho." Macho is sick, macho is a gross perversion of masculinity. But just because some guys have perverted the gift, doesn't mean we do away with it. We should withstand all attempts to remake men into the image of women as if maleness were a disease. God's ideal is masculinity and femininity living together in unity. That's the plan.

Men are vital. I don't know many Christians who believe the radical, feminist claim that men are no longer necessary. But quite frankly, their influence has rubbed off on us, no question about it. In the church today, we spend a lot more time talking about the role of women than we do teaching young boys about the role of being men.

The Bible affirms the importance of men, of male leadership in the home, in the church, and in the community. Now, I know that is not politically correct, but I also know the Bible has never been too concerned about political correctness. The role of man is vital. His influence will extend to the third and the fourth generations and beyond. That influence can be a blessing.

I've always been impressed when I've read about the heritage and the history of Jonathan Edwards. Do you remember Jonathan Edwards, the Puritan preacher of the 16th and 17th centuries? He later became the president of Princeton University, and among his descendants, 300 of them became preachers and missionaries. One hundred and twenty became college professors. Sixty became authors. One hundred and ten became attorneys, 30 became judges, 14 of his descendants became presidents of colleges and universities, three took seats in Congress, and one became the vice president of the United States. Jonathan Edwards studied the Bible 11 to 12 hours every single day of his life, but he always came home and devoted one hour a day, uninterrupted with his children, without exception. He blessed them for generations.

The flip side of that is also true. The influence of men can also be negative. The Bible says, "The sins of the fathers are punishing on the sons even to the third and to the fourth generation." Some of you today, are struggling with the sins of your fathers and your grandfathers, the consequences of which you're still wrestling with today, particularly those of you who are children and grandchildren of alcoholics.

Most of us know how vital men really are. We tend to forget that there is a great spiritual war going on all around us. To remind you of that Paul states in Ephesians 6:11 "Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore, put on the whole armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand."

There is a colossal, spiritual battle going on, and strategy number one on Satan's part is to neutralize men. See, Satan's strategy has always been to scatter the sheep by taking out the shepherd. That's what he tried to do to Jesus, take out the shepherd, and scatter the sheep. The family is the fundamental unit of civilization, and God has made man to be the shepherd of the family. Satan's strategy is simple, it's just, "Divide and conquer." Alienate and sever a husband's relationship with his wife. Alienate and then sever a father's relationship with his children. Satan is no fool. The reason he does it is because it works. And it's working like crazy.

This is simplistic, but the problem with society is good men are missing. Some are missing because they're tired and confused, others because they bailed out or because of a girlfriend. Some are missing on the golf course, on a boat, under the car, or in their lazy boy, channel surfing, but too many good men are missing.

Dr. James Dobson, leader of Focus on the Family and one of the leading family therapists of our day, stated, "The Western world stands at a great crossroads in its history. It's my opinion that our very survival as a people depends upon the presence or absence of masculine leadership in homes."

Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, from the state of New York, said: "From the wild Irish slums of the 19th century eastern seaboard to the riot-torn suburbs of Los Angeles, there is one unmistakable lesson of American history. The community that allows a large number of young men and women to grow up in families dominated by women, never acquiring any stable relationship to male authority, asks for and gets chaos."

William Raspberry, the African-American columnist, wrote this in the Washington Post not long ago. "If I could offer a single prescription for the survival of America, particularly black America, it would be to restore the family. If you ask me how to do it, my answer obviously over-simplified would be, 'Save the boys.'"

We live now in a culture where boys are not being taught to be family shepherds, where they're not being trained in masculine leadership, where they don't know what it means to be in God's image as the shepherd of that home.

There is a great need in our country, for men to rise up as spiritual warriors. It's easy to get caught up in paying the bills, keeping the car running, and making sure the grass is mowed. It's easy to be lulled to sleep by the nearsighted images of life. We forget we're in the middle of a great cosmic battle.

Just imagine it is late one night and you're sleeping at home, there's a noise, you hear a glass break and somebody has come inside. You grab something to defend yourself from the intruder, you tell your wife to "lock the door and dial 911. I'm going to go stop him before he gets to the kids." Well, folks, there is a prowler trying to get into your home, it's the evil one. Who's standing at the door right now saying, "You can't have my home." I don't believe the answer for men is to go off in the woods and beat drums and find your primeval selves. But some of us men just need to beat our chest in repentance and reclaim our God-intended roles as spiritual warriors.

Saul has just died, and Israel is in a morally dismal state, David is in the wilderness, and the Bible says, "Mighty men of God came out to David." ... "Men of Issachar, understood the times and knew what Israel should do---" (I Chronicles 11:3; 12:32) I love that. They understood the times, and they knew what Israel should do. We need some men of Issachar today.

We're at war. The critical shortage of any war has always been good men. E. M. Bounds wrote "Men are always looking for better methods. God is looking for better men."

The Holy Spirit guided Paul to write in Romans 13:11-12: "And do this, understanding the present time. The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of the light."

There is absolutely no difference in the value between a man and a woman. There is no difference in the value of a preacher and anybody else in the whole world. There is no difference between a child and a parent in terms of the value of the soul. God says, however, there are certain roles I want you to fill. I will give some of you certain gifts, certain talents, use them to my glory. He said, "I will make you men to be the shepherds of the home." *Amazing Grace #1206 - Steve Flatt - April 23, 1995*