

Four Pillars of a Man's Heart – A Biblical View of True Manhood

Lou Whitworth summarizes the key points of Stu Weber's book on this subject. He explains that biblical masculinity is lived out in four aspects of a man's life, king, warrior, mentor, and friend. Understanding these aspects can aid us in living a Christian life that fully emulates the life of Christ sharing Him with the world around us.

Introduction

Stu Weber, in his book, *Four Pillars of a Man's Heart: Bringing Strength into Balance*,⁽¹⁾ states that biblical masculinity rests on four pillars. The four pillars represent the four major facets of a man's life; these aspects of masculinity are: king, warrior, mentor, and friend. Weber believes that when all four "pillars" are balanced, peace and tranquility will prevail in our marriages, our families, our churches, and in the community and the nation. These institutions rest on the balanced pillars of biblical manhood, and they all collapse when the pillars lean out of balance. The major problems our society faces, for example, are the result of many men having one or more of their personal pillars out of balance—leaning one way or the other. For some men, the pillars have fallen down.

As we look at our society, it is clear that we are in trouble. Some of the pillars are leaning, and others have fallen down. It takes four sturdy, balanced pillars to hold up a building. "It takes four pillars to make a man. . . . who will bear the weight, stand against the elements, and hold one small civilization [a home] intact in a world that would like nothing better than to tear it down."⁽²⁾

Why is our civilization falling down around us? Because there is a war going on. The war of political correctness is part of it; sexual politics is part of it too, but it is larger than these. It is a war against the image of God. Listen as Weber draws a bead on the issue:

Gender is primarily an issue of theology. And theology is the most foundational of all the sciences. Gender is at the heart of creation. Gender is tied to the image of God. Gender is central to the glory of God. And that is precisely why the armies of hell are throwing themselves into this particular battle with such concentrated frenzy.(3)

Remember that God created mankind as male and female to be His image in the world. Thus, there is no better way to attack God and His creation or to destroy His relationship with mankind than to deface the image of God.(4) "Satan's effectiveness in destroying God's image through male-female alienation, by whatever means, has been incalculably costly to the human race."(5) This is where the current battle rages.

The first pillars started to wobble a long time ago. In the Garden of Eden, Adam began as a four-pillared man. But he disobeyed God and blamed Eve. Then the first pillar fell, and the remaining ones were weakened or compromised. For the first time enmity and tension came into his relationship with Eve. Since then there has always been the potential of strife between the sexes. In recent years there has been a concerted effort to blur gender distinctives. But blurring gender differences results in disintegration, disorientation, destruction, and death. No society that persists at it will survive. The answer is to return to the instruction book, the Bible.

The purpose of Weber's book is to point the way for men to become all they should be biblically so that they and their wives and children can flourish in an often hostile world.

Weber writes:

What kind of man builds a civilization, a small civilization that outlives him? What kind of man has shoulders broad enough to build upon? A four-pillared man:

A man of vision and character . . . a King.
A man of strength and power . . . a Warrior.
A man of faith and wisdom . . . a Mentor.
A man of heart and love . . . a Friend.(6)

Man as Shepherd-King

In Stu Weber's new book, *Four Pillars of a Man's Heart*, the "first pillar" represents the kingly aspect of man's nature.

The king, as pictured by Weber, is a Shepherd-king. This figure is modeled after Jesus Christ, the Lord of Lords and the King of Kings, who sometimes spoke of himself as the Good Shepherd. The first pillar in Weber's book, therefore, is the pillar of the Shepherd-King who combines the position of a king with the heart of a shepherd.

Weber's key thought about the king or shepherd-king is that he is a provider, though it is a very broad conception of provision. If we say, "He is a good provider," we mean, "He makes a good living," or meets the *physical* needs of the family. The meaning here, however, is that the shepherd-king looks out for *all* the needs of his flock—emotional, physical, social, spiritual. The kingly man is looking ahead and planning for ways to meet tomorrow's needs as well as today's. His has a *vision to provide* the resources for the needs of his family.

Among the minimum requirements of the Shepherd-king is work to

do that provides for the family. He works hard at whatever it is and stays with it. The work may not be exciting or glamorous, but he shoulders the load and provides for the little flock God has entrusted to him. His wife may work for paycheck; she may even make more than he does, but no matter what she does, the *obligation and the burden of provision* is his, to see that it is done.

Another major duty of the shepherd-king is to provide direction for the family. "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."(7) A shepherd-king points the way for his flock, followers, and his family. To lead or set the pace, one doesn't need to be a master of every skill or field of knowledge. For example, Lee Iacocca doesn't need to be a great mechanic; he can hire the best. What he does best is set the policies, give the company direction, and make sure the infrastructure is in place to make the automobiles. In the same way, the man with a king's heart doesn't have to know everything, but he is expected to set the tone, the boundaries, and point the way for the flock.

The king in a man cares deeply about every aspect of his family. He models by actions and words biblical standards of behavior. He is gracious and just. He shows justice, mercy, and honor to everyone he meets.

A shepherd-king never abandons his flock. To do so is to violate the most basic ingredient of his calling—to protect. To abandon one's flock is cowardice, the equivalent of desertion in time of war.

The shepherd-king figure could also be called the servant-king. This is based on Christ's service to his disciples.

If the king pillar is not in balance, it leans to one extreme or another. He becomes either a tyrant who uses his strength to force people to do his bidding, or an abdicator who is weak, passive, or absent (whether in fact or in effect). Such

a man's kingdom is filled with disorder, chaos, family dysfunction, or oppression. When the king pillar is in balance in a man's life, harmony and tranquility are possible in the home and the community.

Next, we will discuss the second pillar which represents the warrior aspect of man's makeup.

Man as Warrior

The primary duty of the warrior is to defend and guard his flock. Though he is primarily a protector of his family, he is also the protector of his church, the wider community or nation, and the weak and powerless.

The author's models for the warrior are Christ and David. Weber reminds us of the passage in Revelation 19 in which Christ, as a knight riding a white horse, leads the armies of heaven into battle. David was a bold and courageous fighter, but was also a man after God's own heart.

The warrior in a godly man doesn't love war. But, because he is a man of high moral standards and principles, he is willing to *live by* those principles and moral standards, spend himself for them, and, if necessary, *die for* them.

The warrior is not a popular figure in today's society. This attitude is understandable, particularly from those who have experienced life around men whose warrior pillar has leaned toward the brute. Women and children need to be protected from such men by faithful warriors whose lives are in balance.

Though the concern many have about the strong side of man's nature (king, warrior) is understandable to a degree, it can't be wished away. Someone once remarked that when most men are soft, a few hard men will rule. The reality is that the warrior is here to stay. So, the answer is not to deny the fact, but to channel the warrior energy to constructive ends.

The warrior in a man can be a great asset, but if the pillar of the warrior is out of balance, the situation can become disastrous. Consequently, the warrior must be under the authority of God because his energy needs to be focused, and the Holy Spirit must be allowed full control over his mind, soul, and body.

There is no such thing as a soldier or warrior without a line of authority. Even if no specific orders are in effect, every soldier is under the authority of what is called "general orders," such as: "walk your post," "be alert," "remain on station until relieved," etc. In a similar manner all Christian men are under general orders from the Lord of Hosts. We are "to spend time with the Lord," "to love our wives at all costs," "to bring up our children to know and honor God," and "to be involved in the local church." God's warrior is not a mercenary; he is under God's authority. God's warrior remains on call. Oh, sure, he takes some needed rest and recreation, but at the first sign of need or danger, he reports for duty. He never becomes passive or careless during on his watch. On or off duty, he is alert for any threat to his flock.

A warrior's life is full of sacrifice; he is called to sacrifice himself for his wife, his children, his church, the spiritually lost, and the weak and helpless. He sometimes finds it necessary to sacrifice his popularity by saying and doing the hard things that others won't say. On the other hand, the godly warrior has a heart of mercy for the weak and the helpless. The price of being a warrior is high, but the rewards are great.

The third pillar represents the mentoring role inherent in a balanced man's nature.

Man as Mentor

The primary function of the mentor is to teach. Weber's key

concept is that the mentor has something valuable (i.e., life wisdom) that is important to pass on to others. That process can be as formal and conscious as a Bible scholar instructing a seminary class of eager young men. Or, it can be as informal and unconscious as the ongoing presence of an older, more experienced man working beside a boy or a younger man. Said another way, mentoring can take the form of modeling over time (even a lifetime), instinctive coaching (at appropriate times), or systematic teaching (at scheduled times). Jesus, for example, used all three methods of mentoring.

The mentor's core characteristic is the fact that he communicates transparently with the person he is mentoring. He imparts himself and his knowledge without undue self-consciousness. In other words, he is transparent enough to share his successes, and even his failures, if these experiences will edify his students. If a mentor fails to pass on the baton of knowledge or wisdom, then he has not succeeded in his role.

Weber emphatically believes that there is a mentor in every man's heart; that is, the potential for mentoring is inherent within us. Many men, however, are nervous about this and feel unqualified. But, in reality, we are all involved in mentoring already in one way or another, whether we realize it or not.

Mentoring is basically passing on the secrets of life: lessons from our life experiences. The purpose of mentoring is straightforward: mentoring builds men who understand life and pass their knowledge on to others. The attitude and posture of a good mentor is quite transferable to others because mentoring has its own built in process of duplication. In other words, when it is done well it is very duplicatable because it has already been modeled by the mentor. The expression, "It's easier caught than taught," can apply here. The goal of mentoring is to advance an ever increasing network of mentored mentors who will keep passing on their life wisdom to others. It helps us understand why Jesus spent so much time

with 12 men, doesn't it? He apparently thought that mentoring a group of men was the most productive way of leaving a lasting and ongoing legacy. The fact that His message has spread to most areas of the globe and has persisted for 2000 years illustrates that He was correct.

It should be an encouragement to comprehend that God can use both the good and the bad experiences from our lives to help others. And, we all have a measure of wisdom and experience to share. However, just because we are capable of mentoring at some level just as we are, we should not conclude that we can't or shouldn't try to improve as mentors. One of the primary ways for us to improve as mentors is to grow in our knowledge of the Bible. When our life experiences are filtered through a deep knowledge of the Bible and a life lived for Christ, then our mentoring potential is greatly enhanced. The consequence of vast networks of men mentoring others who will in turn mentor others can change the world.

Finally, we will look at man's role as friend to other men. This is the fourth pillar.

Man as Friend

The primary function of a friend is "to connect," that is, to link hearts. Someone is a true friend if that person loves to connect, or to link one heart, with another. A true friend is one who, in spite of his own needs at the time, connects deliberately with another who has a need or a burden. He doesn't just connect when it's convenient and he feels like it. If a man is unable or unwilling to connect, he has failed in his primary duty as a friend.

To truly connect in deep friendship or to minister to hurting people, we must not be afraid of a rich variety of emotions—whether they be the emotions of others or our own. It is just here that many men have difficulty. We can usually express anger, but other emotions are tougher. Weber believes

that *allowing* (notice the word) himself to weep (in appropriate situations) was a milestone in his life. He suggests that many men need to be able to weep and to express other emotions as well. In fact, it appears that for many men, allowing themselves to weep breaks up the emotional logjam in their lives and gives them a new sense of freedom. Follow the author's thoughts as he explains how he felt after witnessing the birth of his youngest son:

For the first time in my memory, I wept uncontrollably. . . . Me? Crying in front of people? Stu Weber, the football captain. The Airborne Ranger. The Green Beret trooper. The man. Bawling like a kid? Oh, I had cried before somewhere along the line. . . . But this was different. New. There was no shame, and there was lots of connection.(8)

He goes on to add:

And I have to admit something else. . . . Emotions are such a great gift from God. And after a lifetime of stuffing them for athletic, military, and "manly" purposes, I love them.(9)

He sides against what he calls *emotionalism*, but calls for men to learn to express and enjoy real emotions. As an older soldier, with nothing left to prove, he could finally face his humanity and embrace the honest, clean emotions that earlier he had always stifled. If we do so, our ability to connect as a true friend will be greatly enhanced.

Man's Best Friend

Men need friends, but many American men have only acquaintances and no close friends. Thankfully, there is already a Friend out there looking for us, the Ultimate Friend, Jesus Christ. No discussion of friendship, then, would be complete without referring to Him. Our Ultimate Friend has been trying to connect with us, because He wants a

relationship with us. Even the best human friend will disappoint us and let us down, but once connected with us, the Lord will never leave us or forsake us.

If our relationship with the Lord were dependent on our own steadfastness, then we'd have a reason to fear. Fortunately, the Lord who sought us can keep us safe because nothing can steal us from the Lord's hand (John 10:29).

There is, my friend, somewhere down inside you, the power to connect. There is in every man's chest a friend, and emotionally connecting friend. Find yours. Unchain him. And find life on a richer level than you'd ever dreamed possible.(10)

Notes

1. Stu Weber, *Four Pillars of A Man's Heart: Bringing Strength into Balance* (Sisters, Ore.:Multnomah, 1997), 13.
2. Ibid., 13.
3. Ibid., 39.
4. Ibid., (Halverson, cited in *Four Pillars*, p. 39)
5. Ibid, Halverson, 40.
6. Weber, 13
7. Joshua 24:15
8. Weber, 229.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid., 237.

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Ten Lies of Feminism: A Christian Perspective

Sue Bohlin examines how this prevalent view of women measures up from a biblical perspective.

This essay examines the ten lies of feminism that Dr. Toni Grant suggests in her book *Being a Woman*.[{1}](#)

At its inception, the feminist movement, accompanied by the sexual revolution, made a series of enticing, exciting promises to women. These promises sounded good, so good that many women deserted their men and their children or rejected the entire notion of marriage and family, in pursuit of “themselves” and a career. These pursuits, which emphasized self-sufficiency and individualism, were supposed to enhance a woman’s quality of life and improve her options, as well as her relations with men. Now, a decade or so later, women have had to face the fact that, in many ways, feminism and liberation made promises that could not be delivered.[{2}](#)

Lie #1: Women Can Have It All

The first lie is that women can have it all. We were fed an illusion that women, being the superior sex, have an inexhaustible supply of physical and emotional energy that enable us to juggle a career, family, friendships and volunteer service. Proponents of feminism declared that not only *can* women do what men do, but we *ought* to do what men do. Since men can’t do what women can do—have babies—this put a double burden on women. It wasn’t enough that women were already exhausted from the never-ending tasks of child-rearing and homemaking; we were told that women needed to be in the

work force as well, contributing to the family financially.

Scripture presents a different picture for men and women. The Bible appears to make a distinction between each gender's primary energies. The commands to women are generally in the realm of our relationships, which is consistent with the way God made women to be primarily relational, being naturally sensitive to others and usually valuing people above things. Scripture never forbids women to be gainfully employed; in fact, the virtuous woman of Proverbs 31 is engaged in several part-time business ventures, in real estate and manufacturing. Nonetheless, it is the excellent care of her husband, her children, her home and her community that inspires the praise she is due. Titus 2 instructs older women to mentor younger women, and teach them to care for their husbands and children and homemaking responsibilities. The God-given strengths of a woman were given to bring glory to God through her womanly differences

Lie #2: Men and Women are Fundamentally the Same

Apart from some minor biological differences, feminism strongly suggested that males and females are fundamentally the same. Culture, it announced, was responsible for turning human blank slates into truck-wielding boys and doll-toting girls. This lie has been very effective at changing the culture. My husband Ray and I offer a seminar at Probe's *Mind Games* conferences called "Guys Are From Mars, Girls Are From Venus," where we go over the major differences between the sexes. Men, for instance, tend to be more goal-oriented and competitive, where women are more relational and cooperative. Men are active; women are verbal. This is intuitively obvious to the adults in our audience, but it is often new news to high school and college students. We find adults nodding with smiles of recognition, some of them nudging each other in the ribs. In the younger members of the audience, though, we see

“the lights come on” in their eyes as they are exposed to something that is obvious and they probably already knew was true, but feminism’s worldview had been feeding them a lie. They have been so immersed in this cultural myth that they had accepted it without question. One young man came up to me after a session and said he totally disagreed with me, that there are no real differences between males and females. I asked him if he treated his guy friends the same way he treated his girl friends, and he said, “Of course!” I asked, “And this doesn’t cause you any problems?” He said no. With a smile, I suggested he come talk to me in ten years after he’d had a chance to experience real life!

The truth is that God created significant differences between males and females. We can see evidence of this in the fact that Scripture gives different commands for husbands and wives, which are rooted in the differing needs and divinely-appointed roles of men and women.

Lie #3: Desirability is Enhanced by Achievement

The third lie of feminism is that the more a woman achieves, the more attractive and desirable she becomes to men. The importance of achievement to a man’s sense of self—an element of masculinity that is, we believe, God-given—was projected onto women. Feminism declared that achieving something, making a mark in the world, was the only measure of success that merited the respect of others. Women who believed this myth found themselves competing with men. Now, competition is appropriate in the business and professional world, but it’s disastrous in relationships.

Men do respect and admire accomplished women, just as they do men, but personal relationships operate under a different set of standards. Men most appreciate a woman’s unique feminine attributes: love, sensitivity, her abilities to relate. Women

have been shocked to discover that their hard-won accomplishments haven't resulted in great relationships with men. Sometimes, being overeducated hampers a woman's ability to relate to men. Men's egos are notoriously fragile, and they are by nature competitive. It's threatening to many men when a woman achieves more, or accomplishes more, or knows more than they do. Feminism didn't warn women of the double standard in relationships: that achievement can and does reap benefits in our careers, but be a stumbling block in our relationships.

The question naturally arises, then, Is it bad for a woman to have a higher degree of education than the man in a relationship? Is it troublesome when a woman is smarter than the man? Should a woman "dumb down" in order to get or keep her man? In the words of the apostle Paul, "May it never be!" A woman living up to the potential of her God-given gifts brings glory to God; it would be an insult to our gracious God to pretend those gifts aren't there. The answer is for women to understand that many men feel threatened and insecure about this area of potential competition, and maintain an attitude of humility and sensitivity about one's strengths; as Romans exhorts us, "Honor[ing] one another above yourselves" (12:10).

Not surprisingly, God already knew about the disparity between the sexes on the issue of achievement. Throughout the Bible, men are called to trust God as they achieve whatever God has called them to do. It's important for men to experience personal significance by making a mark on the world. But God calls women to trust Him in a different area: in our relationships. A woman's value is usually not in providing history-changing leadership and making great, bold moves, but in loving and supporting those around us, changing the world by touching hearts. Once in a while, a woman does make her mark on a national or global scale: consider the biblical judge Deborah, Golda Meir, Margaret Thatcher, and Indira Gandhi. But women like these are the exception, not the rule. And we don't have to feel guilty for not being "exceptional."

Lie #4: The Myth of One's "Unrealized Potential"

Lie number four says that all of us—but especially women—have tremendous potential that simply *must* be realized. To feminism's way of thinking, just being average isn't acceptable: you must be *great*.

This causes two problems. First, women are deceived into thinking they are one of the elite, the few, the special. Reality, though, is that most women are ordinary, one of the many. All of us are uniquely gifted by God, but few women are given visible, high-profile leadership roles, which tend to be the only ones that feminism deems valuable. We run into trouble when we're operating under a set of beliefs that don't coincide with reality!

Consequently, many women are operating under unrealistically high expectations of themselves. When life doesn't deliver on their hopes, whether they be making class valedictorian, beauty pageant winner, company president, or neurosurgeon, women are set up for major disappointment. Just being a cog in the wheel of your own small world isn't enough.

This brings us to the second problem. A lot of women beat themselves up for not accomplishing greatness. Instead of investing their life's energies in doing well those things they *can* do, they grieve what and who they are *not*. Just being good, or being good at what they do, isn't enough if they're not the *best*.

Romans 12:3 tells us, "Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought." Rather than worrying about our unrealized potential for some sort of nebulous greatness, we ought to be concerned about being faithful and obedient in the things God has given us to do, trusting Him for the ultimate results. And we ought to not worry about being ordinary as if there were some stigma to it. Scripture says that God is pleased to use

ordinary people, because that's how He gets the most glory. (See 1 Corinthians 1:26-31.) There is honor in being an ordinary person in the hand of an extraordinary God.

Lie #5: Sexual Sameness

The fifth lie of feminism is that men and women are the same sexually. This lie comes to us courtesy of the same evil source that brought us the lies of the sexual revolution.

The truth is that women can't separate sex from love as easily as men can. For women, sex needs to be an expression of love and commitment. Without these qualities, sex is demeaning, nothing more than hormones going crazy.

The cost of sex is far greater for women than for men. Sex outside of a committed, loving relationship—I'm talking about marriage here—often results in unplanned pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, and profound heartbreak. Every time a woman gives her body away to a man, she gives a part of her heart as well. Sexual "freedom" has brought new degrees of heartache to millions of women. The lie of sexual equality has produced widespread promiscuity and epidemic disease. No wonder so many women are struggling with self-esteem!

God's commands concerning sex take into account the fact that men and women are not the same sexually or any other way. He tells us to exercise self-control before marriage, saving all sexual expression for the constraints of a marriage relationship, and then to keep the marriage bed pure once we are married. When we follow these guidelines, we discover that God's laws provide protection for women: the security of a committed relationship, freedom from sexual health worries, and a stable environment for any children produced in the union. This high standard also protects men by providing a safe channel for their sexual energies. Both chaste single men, and faithful husbands, are kept safe from sexual diseases, unwanted pregnancies with women other than their

wives, and the guilt of sexual sin.

Lie #6: The Denial of Maternity

Many women postponed marriage and childbearing to pursue their own personal development and career goals. This perspective denies the reality of a woman's reproductive system and the limitations of time. Childbearing is easier in a woman's 20s and 30s than in her 40s. Plus, there is a physical cost; science has borne out the liabilities that older women incur for themselves and their babies. Midlife women are more prone to have problems getting pregnant, staying pregnant, and then experiencing difficult deliveries. The risk of conceiving a child with Down's Syndrome is considerably higher in older mothers.^{3} Fertility treatment doesn't work as well for women over 40.^{4}

There is also a spiritual dimension to denying maternity. When women refuse their God-ordained roles and responsibilities, they open themselves to spiritual deception and temptations. 1 Timothy 2:15 is an intriguing verse: "But women will be saved through childbearing." One compelling translation for this verse is, "Women will be *kept safe* through childbearing," where Paul uses the word for *childbearing* as a sort of shorthand for the woman's involvement in the domestic sphere—having her "focus on the family," so to speak.⁽⁵⁾ When a married woman's priorities are marriage, family and the home, she is kept safe—protected—from the consequences of delaying motherhood and the temptations that beleaguer a woman trying to fill a man's role. For example, I know one married woman who chose to pursue a full-time career in commercial real estate, to the detriment of her family. She confessed that she found herself constantly battling the temptation to lust on two fronts: sexual lust for the men in her office and her clients, and lust for the recognition and material things that marked success in that field. Another friend chose her career over having any children at all, and discovered that

like the men in her field, she could not separate her sense of self from her job, and it ultimately cost her her marriage and her life as she knew it. The problem isn't having a career: the problem is when a woman gets her priorities out of balance.

Lie #7: To Be Feminine Is To Be Weak

In the attempt to blur gender distinctions, feminists declared war on the concept of gender-related characteristics. The qualities that marked feminine women—softness, sweetness, kindness, the ability to relate well—were judged as silly, stupid and weak. Only what characterized men—characteristics like firmness, aggressiveness, competitiveness—were deemed valuable.

But when women try to take on male qualities, the end result is a distortion that is neither feminine nor masculine. A woman is perceived as shrill, not spirited. What is expected and acceptable aggression in a man is perceived as unwelcome brashness in a woman. When women try to be tough, it is often taken as unpleasantness. Unfortunately, there really is a strong stereotype about “what women should be like” that merits being torn down. A lot of men are threatened by strong women with opinions and agendas of their own, and treat them with undeserved disrespect. But it is not true that traditionally masculine characteristics are the only ones that count.

There really is a double standard operating, because the characteristics that constitute masculinity and femininity are separate and different, and they are not interchangeable. To be feminine is a special kind of strength. It's a different, appealing kind of power that allows a woman to influence her world in a way quite distinct from the way a man influences the world. It pleased the Lord to create woman to complement man, not to compete with him or be a more rounded copy of him. 1 Corinthians 11:7 says that man is the image and glory of

God, but woman is the glory of man. Femininity isn't weakness; it's the glorious, splendid crown on humanity.

Lie #8: Doing is Better Than Being

In his book *Men Are From Mars, Women Are From Venus*[{6}](#), John Gray pointed out that men get their sense of self from achievement, and women get their sense of self from relationships. Feminism declared that the male orientation of *what you do* was the only one that mattered; *who you are*, and how important you are to the people in your world, didn't count for as much.

This lie said that active is good, passive is bad. Traditional feminine behaviors of being passive and receptive were denounced as demeaning to women and ineffective in the world. Only being the initiator counted, not being the responder. "To listen, to be there, to receive the other with an open heart and mind—this has always been one of the most vital roles of woman. Most women do this quite naturally, but many have come to feel uneasy in this role. Instead, they work frantically on assertiveness, aggression, personal expression, and power, madly suppressing their feminine instincts of love and relatedness."[{7}](#)

Women's roles in the family, the church, and the world are a combination of being a responder and an initiator. As a responder, a wife honors her husband through loving submission, and a woman serves the church through the exercise of her spiritual gifts. As an initiator and leader, a woman teaches her children and uses her abilities in the world, such as the woman of Proverbs 31. God's plan is for us to live a balanced life—sometimes active, sometimes passive; sometimes the initiator, sometimes the responder; at all times, submitting both who we are and what we do to the Lordship of Christ.

Lie #9: The Myth of Self-Sufficiency

The ninth lie is the myth of self-sufficiency. Remember the famous feminist slogan that appeared on everything from bumper stickers to t-shirts to notepads? “A woman without a man is like a fish without a bicycle.” The message was clear: women don’t need men, who are inferior anyway. The world would be a better place if women ran it: no wars, no greed, no power plays, just glorious cooperation and peace.

The next step after “women don’t need men” was logical: women don’t need anybody. We can take care of ourselves. Helen Reddy’s hit song “I Am Woman” became feminism’s theme song, with the memorable chorus, “If I have to, I can do anything / I am strong / I am invincible / I am woman!”

Of course, if women don’t need anybody except themselves, they certainly don’t need God. Particularly a masculine, patriarchal God who makes rules they don’t like and insists that He alone is God. But the need to worship is deeply ingrained in us, so feminist thought gave rise to goddess worship. The goddess was just a female image to focus on; in actuality, goddess worship is worship of oneself.[\[8\]](#)

The lie of self-sufficiency is the same lie that Satan has been deceiving us with since the Garden of Eden: What do you need God for? We grieve the Lord’s heart when we believe this lie. Jeremiah 2:13 says, “My people have committed two sins: they have forsaken Me, the spring of living water, and have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water.” God made us for Himself; believing the lie of self-sufficiency isn’t only futile, it’s a slap in God’s face.

Lie #10: Women Would Enjoy the Feminization of Men

The tenth lie of feminism is that women would enjoy the feminization of men. Feminists believed that the only way to

achieve equality of the sexes was to do away with *role* distinctions. Then they decided that that wasn't enough: society had to do away with *gender* distinctions, or at the very least blur the lines. Women embraced more masculine values, and men were encouraged to embrace more feminine characteristics. That was supposed to fix the problem. It didn't.

As men tried to be "good guys" and accommodate feminists' demands, the culture saw a new type of man emerge: sensitive, nurturing, warmly compassionate, yielding. The only problem was that this "soft man" wasn't what women wanted. Women pushed men to be like women, and when they complied, nobody respected them. Women, it turns out, want to be the soft ones—and we want men to be strong and firm and courageous; we want a manly man. When men start taking on feminine characteristics, they're just wimpy and unmasculine, not pleasing themselves or the women who demanded the change. There is a good reason that books and movies with strong, masculine heroes continue to appeal to such a large audience. Both men and women respond to men who fulfill God's design for male leadership, protection, and strength.

Underlying the women's liberation movement is an angry, unsubmitive attitude that is fueled by the lies of deception. It's good to know what the lies are, but it's also important to know what God's word says, so we can combat the lies with the power of His truth.

Notes

1. Toni Grant, *Being a Woman: Fulfilling Your Femininity and Finding Love*. New York: Random House, 1988.

2. Ibid, 3.

3. March of Dimes, "Pregnancy After 35," www.marchofdimes.com/professionals/14332_1155.asp.

4. Jodi Panayotov, "IVF & Older Women – How Successful is IVF After 40?" ezinearticles.com/?IVF-and-Older-Women-How-Successful-is-IVF-After-40?&id=636335.

5. Andreas Kostenberger, "Saved Through Childbearing?" (*CBMW [The Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood] News*, Sept. 1997), p. 3.

6. John Gray, *Men Are From Mars, Women Are From Venus*. New York: HarperCollins, 1992.

7. Grant, 9.

8. Mary Kassian, *The Feminist Gospel* (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 1992), p. 159.

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Knighthood and Biblical Manhood – A Christian Perspective on True Manliness

Lou Whitworth summarizes an inspiring book which lays out the characteristics of a godly man. The ceremonies and the code of conduct of knights are compared to a biblical perspective on Christian manhood. This model encourages us to live in Christ as examples of godly men.

A Vision for Manhood

In this essay we will be looking at an inspiring book, *Raising a Modern-Day Knight*, in an effort to learn how we can motivate

our sons to live lives of honor and nobility. This book, written by Robert Lewis, grew out his own experiences as he and some close friends struggled to lead their sons into balanced, biblical masculinity.

C. S. Lewis wrote that the disparate strands of manhood—fierceness and gentleness—can find healthy synthesis in the person of the knight and in the code of chivalry. Here these competing impulses—normally found in different individuals—find their union.(1)

Were one of these two bents given full rein, the balance required for authentic Christian manhood would be lost. Strength and power, without tenderness, for example, give us the brute. Tenderness and compassion without masculine firmness and aggressiveness produce a male without the fire to lead or inspire others.

Biblical examples of these two elements resident in one man are numerous. Jesus Christ, our Lord, revealed both tough and tender aspects in His humanity. Once Jesus expressed a desire to gather the citizens of Jerusalem together as a hen gathers her young under her wings.(2) We know that Christ wept at least twice: once at the tomb of Lazarus(3) and again as He looked out over the city of Jerusalem and reflected on the fate of those who rejected His witness.(4) However, Jesus could also be very stern. Once He made a whip, ran off the money changers in the temple area, and turned over their tables.(5) And, in the Garden of Gethsemane, His mere glance knocked grown men to the ground.(6)

In Paul, we see the same blend of firmness and gentleness. He poured himself out tenderly nurturing his spiritual children,(7) but he endured more hardship than most soldiers(8) and didn't hesitate to castigate false teachers.(9)

In the Old Testament, we see David, who was a poet and singer,

but also a warrior and king. He had the fierceness to kill Goliath, the giant, and the tenderness to provide for the needs of Jonathan's descendants after Jonathan was killed.

Keeping the right balance between our impulses toward power and aggression and the need to be gentle and tender is a challenge most men face. In his book, *Raising a Modern-Day Knight*, author Robert Lewis says that Christian fathers can use knighthood as a symbol, an ideal, and a metaphor for guiding their sons into authentic manhood. In this way opposing drives can be harnessed and balanced.

Now, of course, everyone experiences difficulty balancing competing impulses, but it is specifically the violence by young males that is bringing our society to the verge of breakdown. Our young men need a vision for masculinity that challenges and inspires if our society is to be stable and healthy. In an age of great social, spiritual, and gender confusion, such as ours, there is a desperate need for clear guidelines and models that can inspire young men and harness their aggression for constructive ends.

This is where the image of the knight comes in. Since the Middle Ages these men in iron have fired the imaginations of young men. Knighthood is attractive because of its code and its call to courage and honor. Young men are intrigued by testing themselves against various standards, and the code is inspiring because of its rigor and strictness.

The Need for Modern-Day Knights

In his enthusiastic foreword to Robert Lewis's book, *Raising a Modern-Day Knight*, Stu Weber writes:

Our culture is in deep trouble, and at the heart of its trouble is its loss of a vision for manhood. If it's difficult for you and me as adult males to maintain our masculine balance in this gender-neutral' culture, imagine

what it must be like for our sons, who are growing up in an increasingly feminized world.(10)

We must supply our young men with healthy, noble visions of manhood, and the figure of the knight, in this regard, is without equal. In the knight we find a conception of manhood that can lift, inspire, and challenge our young men to new heights of achievement and nobility. One authority asserted: "Not all knights were great men, but all great men were knights."(11) According to Will Durant, chivalry and knighthood gave to the world one of the "major achievements of the human spirit."(12)

C. S. Lewis, in his essay, "The Necessity of Chivalry," agreed.(13) He wrote that the genius of the medieval ideal of the chivalrous knight was that it was a paradox. That is, it brought together two things which have no natural tendency to gravitate towards one another. It brought them together for that very reason. It taught humility and forbearance to the great warrior because everyone knew by experience how much he usually needed that lesson. It demanded valour of the urbane and modest man because everyone knew that he was likely as not to be a milksop.(14)

In Malory's *Morte Darthur* a fellow knight salutes the deceased Lancelot saying: "Thou wert the meekest man that ever ate in hall among ladies; and thou wert the sternest knight to thy mortal foe that ever put spear in the rest." This expresses the double requirement made on knights: sternness and meekness, not a compromise or blend of the two. Part of the attraction of the knight is this combination of valor and humility.

Someone once said history teaches us that, "When most men are soft, a few hard men will rule." For that reason we must do everything we can to build into our boys the virtues of strength and tenderness so they can be strong, solid family

men and so society will be stable.

The lack of connection between fathers and sons in our culture, made worse by broken homes and the busyness of our lives, has left many young men with a masculine identity crisis. That's why the ideas in this book are so timely and important. Our sons are looking to their fathers for direction. Fathers are searching for real answers in their attempts to guide their sons into godly manhood. This book provides answers and guidelines for this search.

First, from the example of the knight, fathers have a way to point their sons to manhood with clear ideals: a vision for manhood, a code of conduct, and a transcendent cause. Second, the pattern of advancement from page to knight provides fathers with a coherent process for guiding their sons to manhood. Third, numerous suggestions for ceremonies equip dads with a variety of means to celebrate and validate their sons' achievements.

The Knight and His Ideals

Now we will turn our attention to the knight and his ideals. In *Raising a Modern-Day Knight*, author Robert Lewis suggests three major ideals for modern-day knights: a vision for manhood, a code of conduct, and a transcendent cause.

A Vision for Manhood – The author states four manhood principles: Real men (1) reject passivity, (2) accept responsibility, (3) lead courageously, and (4) expect the greater reward. He suggests that though men have a natural inborn aggressiveness, they tend to become passive at home and avoid social responsibility. These principles, if followed, prevent passivity from becoming a significant problem.

A Code of Conduct – The code for modern-day knights comes from the pages of the Bible. Lewis lists 10 ideal characteristics appropriate for modern-day knights taken from the Scriptures:

loyalty, kindness, humility, purity, servant- leadership, honesty, self-discipline, excellence, integrity, and perseverance. Modern-day knights must be trained in three important areas. First, the modern-day knight needs to understand that there must be a will to obey (God's will) if there is to be spiritual maturity. The young man must come to know that life is inherently moral and that there is a God who knows everything and who rewards good and punishes evil. He must know that absolute values exist and that the commandments of God are liberating, not confining. Lewis states "True satisfaction in life is directly proportionate to one's obedience to God. In this context, moral boundaries take on a whole new perspective: they become benefits, not burdens."

Second, the modern-day knight needs to understand that he has a work to do that is in keeping with his inner design. This work is not just his profession or trade, but refers to work in his home, church, and community. Life is certainly more than a job, and your son should hear this from you lest he get the mistaken perception that manhood is just one duty and obligation after another.

A third realm of responsibility for the modern-day knight is a woman to love. The code of chivalry requires that all women be treated with respect and honor. Sons need to see and hear from their fathers the importance of caring for women in general and loving, leading, and honoring their wives in particular.

The knight in training should be taught the value of work, have summer jobs, do chores around the house, and study hard on his school work. The goal here is to establish patterns of industry and avoid sloth so that a solid work ethic is in place as he gets older.

A Transcendent Cause – Life is ultimately unsatisfying if it is lived solely for self. Jesus said if you give up your life you will find it, so if you live for a cause greater than yourself, you'll be happy and fulfilled. A transcendent cause

is a cause that a person believes is truly heroic (a noble endeavor calling for bravery and sacrifice), timeless (has significance beyond the moment), and is supremely meaningful (not futile).

The only antidote to the futility of life is a transcendent cause and a vision for life that “integrates the end of life with the beginning,” and connects time and eternity. Obviously becoming a Christian, developing a personal relationship with Christ, and living for Him are basic, irreplaceable elements for having a meaningful life.

A Knight and His Ceremonies

At this point, we turn to focus on the importance of ceremonies in the life of a young man. It is said that a knight remembers the occasion of his dubbing (i.e., his installment as a knight) as the finest day of his life. Such is the power of ceremony that it makes celebrated events unforgettable. Ceremonies are also invaluable markers that state emphatically: “Something important has happened here!”

In much of the world, older men have instinctively seen the wisdom of providing for their sons markers of their journey to manhood. These markers have been in the form of periodic ceremonies or a significant, final ceremony. Following such events there is no doubt in the young man’s mind that he has reached the stage in his development celebrated in the ceremony. Later he can always look back on the ceremony and remember what it meant.

After the elaborate physical, mental, and religious disciplines endured and passed in relation to his dubbing ceremony, no medieval knight ever wondered, “Am I a knight?” Such matters had been settled forever by the power of ceremony in the presence of other men. This is what our sons need.

Our sons do not normally have such experiences. As Lewis

writes, "One of the great tragedies of Western culture today is the absence of this type of ceremony. . . . I cannot even begin to describe the impact on a son's soul when a key manhood moment in his life is forever enshrined and memorialized by a ceremony with other men."(15)

The author suggests that there are natural stages in a young man's life that lend themselves to celebration. Each stage has a parallel in the orderly steps toward knighthood.

Puberty: The Page Ceremony – The first step for a young boy on the path to knighthood was to become a page. He was like an apprentice, and he learned about horses, weapons, and falconry and performed menial tasks for his guardians. Since puberty occurs in a young boy's life around 13 and is an important point in a young man's journey toward adulthood, it is an excellent time for a simple ceremony involving the boy and his father celebrating this stage of the young man's life.

High School Graduation: The Squire Ceremony – The next stage on the path to knighthood was the squire; he was attached to a knight, served him in many ways, and continued to perfect his fighting skills. This stage is roughly parallel to the time of high school graduation. It should be marked by a more involved ceremony led by the boy's father but involving other men.

Adulthood: The Knight Ceremony – This is the stage in which the squire, after a period of testing and preparation, is dubbed a knight in an elaborate ceremony. This marks the end of youth and the arrival of adulthood for the knight. For the modern-day knight this stage of life is characterized by the completion of college or entering the world of work or military service. The author suggests this stage as a perfect time to have a celebration marking a son's arrival at manhood and full adulthood. This ceremony should be very special; it should involve the young man, his father, his family, and other men.

Some Final Thoughts on Knighthood

In this discussion we have been looking at Robert Lewis's book, *Raising a Modern-Day Knight*, and discussing knights and chivalry in an attempt to promote the knight as a worthy ideal, symbol, and metaphor for young men to emulate. A question left unasked is why young men might need a stirring, vivid image or concept like the knight as a model. After a lifetime of studying cultures and civilizations, both ancient and modern, the eminent anthropologist Margaret Mead made the following observation:

The central problem of every society is to define appropriate roles for the men.(16)

Though Margaret Mead was a controversial figure, and I have sometimes disagreed with her myself, in this statement, I believe she is right on target. Author George Gilder adds a similar insight when he states: "Wise societies provide ample means for young men to affirm themselves without afflicting others."(17)

Men need appropriate roles, and they need the desire to live and perform those roles. They need to be inspired to do so. Men need roles that are considered valuable and held to be worthwhile. This is true because men are psychologically more fragile than women and suffer with their identity more than women do, though feminists would have us think otherwise. Why is this so? It is true because "Men, more than women, are culture-made."(18) This is why it is so important to have a culture-wide vision of manhood.

In modern Western society boys make the journey to manhood without a clear vision for what healthy manhood is. If they get out of control, the whole society suffers. Proverbs 29:18 states: "Where there is no vision, the people perish" [or, "are unrestrained"]. Knights and chivalry can supply a

stirring vision of manhood that has been lacking. Yet some may think that the figure of the knight is an inappropriate image to use to inspire Christian young men. Such people need to take a close look at Scripture. The teachings of Jesus and the letters of Paul use the image of the hard working farmer, the athlete, and the soldier to illustrate the points they are trying to make.

Furthermore, there are numerous biblical passages that picture knight-like images, some of whom are angelic beings and others are Christ Himself. Specifically, Revelation is replete with images of courtly life familiar to medieval knights: kings, thrones, crowns, swords, censers, bows, armies, eagles, dragons, chariots, precious stones, incense, etc.

Actually, we are more indebted to the knightly virtue of chivalry than we realize. Many of the concepts and words have become part of our familiar vocabulary. It is from chivalry, for example, that we acquired the concept of the gentleman (notice the dual stress here—gentle-man) and our concepts of sportsmanship and fair play. It is perhaps no accident that the decline in chivalry parallels the rise of taunting and the “win at any price” attitude among our sports figures.

There is one more aspect to all of this that needs to be emphasized. If we are successful in inspiring our young men to seek to become modern-day knights, we need to remind them and ourselves that one can't become a knight on his own. Our young knights need the company of godly men to be all that they can be; they need the Roundtable. As Robert Lewis states so well: “Boys become men in the community of men. There is no substitute for this vital component. . . . if your boy is to become a man, you must enlist the community.”(19) Why? “First, if a father's presence is weighty, the presence of other men is weightier still. . . . Second, enlisting the community of men results in a depth of friendship that the lonely never experience. . . . And third, the community of men expands a son's spiritual and moral resources.”(20)

Notes

1. C. S. Lewis, "The Necessity of Chivalry," *Present Concerns* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1986), pp. 11-16.
2. Matthew 23:37.
3. John 11.
4. Luke 19:41.
5. John 2:13-16.
6. John 18:6.
7. Thessalonians 2: 5-9.
8. 1 Corinthians 11:23-27.
9. Galatians 5:12.
10. Stu Weber cited in Robert Lewis, *Raising A Modern-Day Knight: A Father's Role in Guiding His Son to authentic Manhood* (Colorado Springs, Colo.: Focus on the Family, 1997), vii.
11. Matthew Bennett, "The Knight Unmasked," *The Quarterly Journal of Military History*, vol. 7, no. 4(Summer 1995): 10, cited in Robert Lewis, *Raising a Modern-Day Knight*, 18.
12. Will and Ariel Durant, *The Story of Civilization—The Age of Faith 4* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1950), 578, cited in Robert Lewis, *Raising a Modern-Day Knight*, 18.
13. C. S. Lewis, "The Necessity of Chivalry," 13-26.
14. Ibid.
15. Robert Lewis, *Raising a Modern-Day Knight*, 99.
16. Margaret Mead, *Male and Female: A Study of the Sexes in a Changing World* (New York: Dell, 1968), 168, cited in Lewis, 46.

17. George Gilder, *Men and Marriage* (Gretna, La.: Pelican, 1992), 34, cited in Lewis, 46.

18. David Blankenhorn, *Fatherless America* (New York: Basic, 1995), 17, cited in Lewis, 46.

19. Lewis, 150.

20. *Ibid.*, 150-51.

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Men Are From Mars, Women Are From Venus

How Men and Women Differ

[Sue] Counselor John Gray made a ton of money—and found a ton of grateful fans—in writing his best-selling book *Men Are From Mars, Women Are From Venus*[\[1\]](#). This book explored the intrinsic differences between men and women in a way that has helped millions of people understand why relationships between the two sexes can be so frustrating!

[Ray] In this essay we'll be examining some of the insights from this book, then looking at what the Bible says about how God wants men and women to relate to each other. It's no surprise that since God created us to be different, He knew all about those differences thousands of years ago when He gave very specific instructions for each gender!

[Sue] The whimsical premise of *Men Are From Mars* is that many years ago, all men lived on Mars, and all women lived on Venus. Once they got together, they respected and enjoyed their differences—until one day when everybody woke up completely forgetting that they had once come from different planets. And ever since, men mistakenly expect women to think and communicate and react the way men do, and women expect men to think and communicate and react the way women do. These unrealistic expectations cause frustration. But when we understand the God-given differences between male and female, we have more realistic expectations of the other sex, and our frustration level drops.

[Ray] Speaking of which, we do realize that it can be very frustrating for some people when gender differences are painted in such broad strokes, since there's such a large spectrum of what women are like and what men are like. Both men and women come in different shapes and sizes but by and large, we feel that most will identify with these characteristics.

[Sue] With that said, let's look at some of the differences between men and women.

[Ray] Men get our sense of self from achievement. We tend to be task-oriented, and being self-reliant is very important to us. You put those two together, and you get people who hate to ask for directions or for help. I'll wander in a store for 15 minutes trying to find something on my own because accomplishing the task of getting a certain item isn't going to be satisfying unless I can do it on my own. For us, asking for help is an admission of failure; we see it as a weakness.

[Sue] Women get our sense of self from relationships. Where men are task-oriented, we are relational-oriented. Our connections to other people are the most important thing to us. Instead of prizing self-reliance, we tend to be interdependent, enjoying the connectedness to other people,

especially other women. For us, both asking for help and offering it is a compliment; we're saying, "Let me build a bridge between us. I value you, and it'll bind us."

[Ray] Men usually focus on a goal. We want to get to the bottom line, to the end of something.

[Sue] But women tend to enjoy the process. Not that reaching a goal isn't important, but we like getting there too. That's why driving vacations are so very different for men and women; the guys want to get to their destinations and beat their best time with the fewest stops, and we sort of treasure the time to talk and look and maybe stop at the outlet malls along the way!

Gender Differences, Continued

[Sue] We believe these admittedly broad-brushed differences are rooted in God-created traits. In fact, some Christian authors like Gary Smalley and Stu Weber have addressed them in their books as well. [2](#) Ray, why don't you continue with the next point about men—something that's bound to be real surprising?

[Ray] Well, yes, men are competitive. Big shock, huh? Whether we're on the basketball court or on the highway, we just naturally want to win, to be out front. Many of us are driven to prove ourselves, to prove that we're competent, and it comes out in a competitive spirit.

[Sue] And it's not that girls aren't competitive, because of course we are; it's just that we tend to be more cooperative than competitive. When girls are playing and one gets hurt, the game will often stop and even be forgotten while everyone gathers around and comforts the one who went down. It's that relational part of us coming out.

[Ray] Men are often more logical and analytical than women.

[Sue] And we tend to be more intuitive than men. This isn't some sort of mystic claim; there was a study at Stanford University that discovered women catch subliminal messages faster and more accurately than men.[{3}](#) Voila—intuition.

[Ray] This difference is evident in brain activity. Men's brains tend to show activity in one hemisphere at a time . . .

[Sue] . . .Where women's brains will show the two hemispheres communicating with each other, back and forth, constantly. That means that often, men and women can arrive at the exact same conclusion, using completely different means to get there. Our thinking has been accused of being convoluted, but it works!

[Ray] Men are linear. We can usually focus on just one thing at a time. That's why you've learned not to try to talk to me while I'm reading the paper. I really struggle to read and listen at the same time.

[Sue] Yes, I've learned to get your attention and ask if I can talk to you so it'll be an actual conversation and not a monologue! God made us women to be multi-taskers, able to juggle many things at once. It's a requirement for mothering, I've discovered. Many times I'd be cooking dinner and helping the kids with homework and answering the phone and keeping an ear on the radio, all at the same time.

[Ray] Men tend to be compartmentalized, like a chest of drawers: work in one drawer, relationships in another drawer, sports in a third drawer, and so on. All the various parts of our lives can be split off from each other.

[Sue] Whereas women are more like a ball of yarn where everything's connected to everything else. That's why a woman can't get romantic when there's some unresolved anger or frustration with her husband, and he doesn't see what the two things have to do with each other.

[Ray] One more; men are action-oriented. When we feel hostile, our first instinct is to release it physically. And when we're upset, the way for us to feel better is to actively solve the problem.

[Sue] Women are verbal. (Another big surprise, huh?) Our hostility is released with words rather than fists. And when we're upset, the way for us to feel better is by talking about our problem with other people.

More Gender Differences

[Ray] When men are under stress, we generally distract ourselves with various activities to relax. That's why you see so many men head for the nearest basketball hoop or bury themselves in the paper or TV. But there's another aspect of the way we handle severe stress that can be particularly frustrating to women who don't understand the way we are: a man withdraws into his "cave." We need to be apart from everybody else while we figure out our problems alone. Remember, a man is very self-reliant and competitive, and to ask for help is weakness, so he will first want to solve the problem by himself.

[Sue] We women handle stress in the exact opposite way, which of course is going to pose major problems until we understand this difference! When we're stressed, we get more involved with other people. We want to talk about what's upsetting us, because we process information and feelings by putting them into words. But merely talking is only half of it; we talk in order to be heard and understood. Having a good listener on the other end is extremely important. No wonder there is such misunderstanding when people are under stress: as a friend of ours put it, "Men head for their cave, and women head for the back door!"

[Ray] John Gray gave some great advice when he said that when a man's going into his cave, he can give powerful assurance to

the woman in his life by telling her, "I'll be back."

[Sue] Works for me! What's next?

[Ray] A man's primary need is for respect. There are a lot of elements involved in respect, which he needs both from his peers and from the significant women in his life: trust, acceptance, appreciation, admiration, approval, and encouragement. A man needs to know he's respected. He also needs to be needed. That's why it's so devastating to a man when he loses his job. He gets his sense of self from achievement, and he needs to be needed, so when the means to achieve and provide for his family is taken away, it's emotionally catastrophic.

[Sue] It's good for us women to know that, so we can be grace-givers in a time of awful trauma. I think that just as a man is devastated by the loss of his job, a woman is devastated by the loss of a close relationship; both losses reflect the God-given differences between us. Just as a man needs to be respected, we primarily need to be cherished. Cherishing means giving tender care, understanding, respect, devotion, validation, and reassurance. We need to know others think we're special. And just as a man needs to be needed, we need to be protected. That's why security is so important to us. A man needs to be able to provide, and a woman needs to feel provided for.

[Ray] One final difference. For men, words are simply for conveying facts and information.

[Sue] But for women, words mean much more. Not just to convey information, but to explore and discover our thoughts and feelings, to help us feel better when we're upset, and it's the only way we have to create intimacy. To a woman, words are like breathing!

Women's Needs and Issues

[Ray] We have been examining how God created men and women to be different. So it's not surprising to find how many of our uniquenesses and needs are addressed by God's commands and precepts in the Bible.

[Sue] In this section we'll consider women's needs and issues, and look at how God's commands fit perfectly with the observations we've made. In the next section, we'll look at men's needs.

As I said above, our primary need as women is to be cherished—to be shown TLC, understanding, respect, devotion, validation, and reassurance.

[Ray] And in Ephesians 5:25, we read God's command that addresses this need: "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her." When we think about the way Christ loves the church, we see a sacrificial love, a tender love, and a love that is committed to acting in the church's best interests at our Savior's own expense. God doesn't just want men to love their wives like they love sports—He wants us to love our wives in a way that makes them feel cherished and very special. He wants us to love our wives with a sacrificial love that puts her needs and desires above our own.

1 Peter 3:7 gives further instruction along this line: "You husbands likewise, live with your wives in an understanding way." The Greek literally reads, "Dwell with them according to knowledge." The only way to live with your wife in an understanding way is to seek to know her. And when a husband listens and responds to what his wife shares—remembering that women are created to be verbal—she will feel cherished and understood and loved.

The last part of 1 Peter 3:7 continues, "live with your wives

in an understanding way, as with a weaker vessel, since she is a woman." This isn't a slam on women. When we read this verse, we ought to think along the lines of a fine china cup. It's definitely weaker than a tin cup, but that's because it's so fragile, delicate, and far more valuable. When we serve dinner on our china, we're very careful in handling it, and extremely protective of washing and drying it. We treat our china with tenderness and gentleness because of its fragility and value. That's how we cherish it. And that's how a man is to treat his wife—not roughly or carelessly, but with tenderness and gentleness, because God made women to be treated with special care.

[Sue] The flip side of needing to be cherished is our need for security. We need to be protected and provided for. Even when a wife works, she wants to know that her husband is the main provider, or at least truly wants to be and is working to that end. The burden of being forced to provide for our families is bigger than we should have to bear.

[Ray] God created that need for security within women. That's why He puts such a high value on the provisional aspect of a man's character. 1 Timothy 5:8 says, "If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever." God wants us men to be diligent workers and providers. He created us to bear the burden of providing; women are to be protected from that burden whenever possible.

Men's Needs and Issues

[Ray] Men's primary need is for respect and support—to receive trust, acceptance, appreciation, admiration, approval and encouragement.

[Sue] I think God intends for wives to meet that need by submitting to our husbands, as we are commanded to do in Ephesians 5:22 and 1 Peter 3:1. Submission doesn't mean giving

in or being an overworked doormat; it's a gift of our will. It means submitting to God first, then demonstrating that submission by choosing to serve and respect and be our husband's Number One supporter. Even when a man is more of a jerk than a Superman, he needs the respect of his wife, even if she has to ask the Lord for His perspective on what areas of his life are worthy of respect!

It's interesting to me that in Ephesians 5, at the beginning of the passage on marriage, Paul exhorts women to submit to their husbands as unto the Lord, and then closes this section by saying, "And let the wife see to it that she respect her husband." (v. 33) Submission and respect aren't the same thing, but they're both necessary to meet a man's God-given needs. In the middle of this "marriage sandwich," so to speak, is the awesome command to men to love their wives sacrificially and tenderly, as Christ loves the church. What I see is that submission and respect is a natural response to that kind of love.

[Ray] Another aspect of men's constitution is that we're action-oriented, whereas women are verbal.

[Sue] Yes, and that's why I'm very intrigued by the wisdom of Peter's admonishment to women, where he says,

You wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives, as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior. (1 Peter 3:1-2)

To men, words are cheap—and if they're coming from a woman, all too plentiful! What impresses a man is what a person does, not what they say. So here the Holy Spirit inspired Peter to basically tell us to shut up and live holy lives, which is the only language that's going to have a true impact on a man.

[Ray] Another characteristic of men is that we tend to be

self-oriented, as opposed to women who are more relational.

[Sue] It's interesting to me that Paul exhorts men to love their wives as they love themselves and their own bodies (Ephesians 5:28,33). And he does this without condemning them for that self-orientation; he just uses it as a point of reference to demonstrate how powerfully men are to love their wives. From what I've observed at the health club about the way some men love their bodies, God wants men to indulge their wives with some major pampering!

[Ray] One last comment. While men and women may be constitutionally different by design, we do share one important and serious flaw: our sin nature. Both genders are prideful and selfish. And that is one reason we find commands to both men and women to serve the other sex. But in the midst of our service, we can certainly enjoy the differences God planted!

Notes

1. Gray, John. *Men Are From Mars, Women Are From Venus*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1992.
2. Smalley, Gary. *Hidden Keys to a Loving Lasting Marriage*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 1984. Weber, Stu. *Tender Warrior*. Sisters, Ore.:Multnomah Books, 1993.
3. Smalley, *Hidden Keys*, p. 17.

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