Two Genders, Two Spectrums

Sue Bohlin suggests a biblical view of masculinity and femininity that encompasses the variety within two genders as God creates us.

How do you see the variations of gender in people? Many people automatically think of a single spectrum with masculinity on one end and femininity on the other.

I don't think that's the way it works.



Consider the very first thing we encounter about gender in the creation account of Genesis 1:27—

> So God created mankind in his own image,
> in the image of God he created them;
> male and female he created them.

Just two genders. No matter how many choices of made-up genders that Facebook used to offer.

We can look at the issue of gender spiritually by reading about how God created us male and female. We can also see the binary nature of gender by looking at biology. Male bodies produce small reproductive sex cells called gametes—sperm—and female bodies produce large gametes, eggs. There are no other options.

In this article we'll be walking through a way of looking at gender that I believe faithfully reflects what God has revealed in His word about His design for us as human beings. Instead of a single spectrum with male and masculinity on one end and female and femininity on the other, I suggest there are two separate spectrums{1}: a masculinity spectrum and a

femininity spectrum. God makes delightful variations in girls and women, and equally delightful variations in boys and men, all of us made in His image and created for His glory.

I suggest that God chooses where on each gender spectrum a baby comes into the world. It's our starting point, but as we mature we can embrace and grow in the other characteristics of masculinity or femininity. We can take up more "bandwidth" and become a more fully-rounded man or woman.

One end of the masculinity spectrum, I suggest, are the rough-and-tumble boys who are constantly moving, playing sports, making noise, getting dirty, and can easily be emotionally clueless. On the other end of the spectrum are the sensitive, artistic, creative boys. And there's everything in between.

On the femininity spectrum, we see girly-girls on one end, who love frilly clothes, playing with their doll babies, and in American culture are drawn to pink and purple and sparkly. On the other end are the tomboy jockettes who are often gifted athletes and natural leaders, and hate girly clothes. And, as with their brothers, there is everything in between.

Let's explore these different gender spectrums and hopefully gain a fuller understanding of the goodness of God's creation just the way He makes each one of us.

Masculinity Spectrum 1

I really like the idea that every child, created in his or her own individuality in the image of God, is a gift box that we as parents and care-givers get to open and discover what's inside. Every child is fearfully and wonderful made, as we read in Psalm 139, and that includes the kind of boy and the kind of girl God chose for them to be. Whoever came up with the philosophy that children are blank slates that we write on, so they become whoever and however the surrounding culture instructs them to be, must have never been around actual

children. Real babies come out of the womb and start revealing how God made them.

God shapes some baby boys as rough-and-tumble. They are often considered classically “all boy.” They’re constantly moving. Ask boys to walk from point A to point B and they may well zig-zag their way across the room. They often have an affinity for fighting and weapons. One mama who said no toy guns in her home because she hated violence, found her young son nibbling his toast into the shape of a pistol, which he pointed at his brother and made shooting sound effects. Her other son would treat the longest French fry from his Happy Meal like a miniature rifle to pretend-shoot his brother.

These rough-and-tumble boys are often emotionally clueless. They don’t *mean* to be insensitive, they just don’t pay much attention to non-verbal cues from other people. They tend to enjoy rough-housing with their daddies and with other boys. They will chest-bump and jostle each other in their male way of expressing friendship and affection. And these boys are drawn to contact sports, especially anything with balls.

God delights to make other boys, though far fewer of them, as sensitive, artistic, and creative. They are often gifted in the performing and visual arts, music, dance, drama, and design. They tend to experience life through a magnifying lens attached to their soul; everything is bigger, louder, and more vibrant. They can experience negative communications as more critical than they actually are. A parent’s frown may feel as devastating as a spanking.

They constantly scan their environment, sensing when others around them are upset. My husband can spot these sensitive boys at age two in the church nursery. He has seen boys drop whatever toy they had and go over to another toddler asking, “You okay? It’s okay.”

Many of them don’t care for sports, especially contact sports.

Often they lack the eye-hand coordination needed for sports that utilize balls, rackets, clubs and other game equipment. They can do better at sports that scratch their competitive itch where they're racing against the clock, like cross-country running.

And of course, there are boys (and men) everywhere in between as well. One of my sons was so sensitive and artistic he graduated with an art degree; the other puts himself square in the middle of the masculinity spectrum.

Masculinity Spectrum 2

We see the two kinds of boys and men in the account of Jacob and Esau in Genesis 25. Esau, the rough-and-tumble man, was a hunter, an outdoorsman. His twin brother Jacob was a mama's boy, more interested in hanging back in the tents with his mother, in all probability the sensitive, artistic, creative type.

Since sensitive boys are in the minority, they often get bullied by the rough-and-tumbles or boys in the middle of the spectrum, and they can easily feel like they don't fit, they don't belong. They feel different from an early age.

These are the ones who are vulnerable to spiritual attacks of being labeled gay and other ugly words. In recent years, as sensitive, artistic and creative boys feel the pain of not fitting in, they are now being encouraged to label themselves as transgender. It used to be they would think, "I don't fit in the world of boys. There's something wrong with me." Now they are being encouraged to think, "I don't fit in the world of boys because I'm really a girl. Or life would be better and easier if I became a girl." (Which, of course, is impossible.) Then if they accept these false labels and they practice seeing themselves that way, they can literally think themselves into a gay or trans identity. But it doesn't have to be that way. Scripture tells us to "take every thought

captive to the obedience of Christ” (2 Corinthians 10:5). All of us need to derive our identity from who God says we are.

Thinking of the masculinity spectrum, I like to ask, where would you put Jesus?

I think He embodies the entire spectrum. He was the best of rough-and-tumble men, strong and physically active; He started out as a carpenter or handyman, and men were drawn to Him. Was He artistic? Have you ever seen a sunrise or a sunset? Jesus paints the sky with glorious colors! Was He creative? Scripture tells us He was the Creator of the universe!

I have observed over years that as boys and men grow spiritually, they start taking up more bandwidth on the masculinity spectrum as they become more well-rounded. Rough-and-tumbles learn to listen and show compassion, and sensitives stretch out their comfort zone to take more initiative and reject passivity.

Rough-and-tumbles can become great leaders and servants as they use their strength to love and serve others. Sensitives can become great husbands, dads, pastors, counselors, and teachers as *they* use their gifts to love and serve others.

Femininity Spectrum 1

On the one end of the femininity spectrum are the girly-girls who come into the world wanting a pink receiving blanket and one of those headbands with a big puffy flower on their little bald head. They can’t wait till their fingernails and toenails are big enough for Mommy to paint. In American culture they often gravitate toward pink and purple and silver glitter. They cuddle baby dolls and stuffed animals.

One progressive-minded mother didn’t want to support gender stereotypes for her daughter, so instead of buying her stuffed animals and dolls, she gave her cars and trucks. One afternoon she saw her little girl lining up the cars and trucks,

covering them with a blanket, and tenderly kissing them “night-night” as she put them down for a nap. Just as she would have with dolls and stuffed toys, if she’d been allowed to have them.

It’s easy to define feminine as girly-girls, but God loves and creates another kind of femininity.

He delights to make some girls tomboy jockettes. They have no interest in frilly clothes or makeup. They don’t care for skirts or dresses and in fact will often push back when required to wear “girl clothes.” For them, comfort is everything. You can find them outside climbing trees, shooting hoops, and perfecting their spirals. Some mechanically-inclined girls want to help their dads work on cars and lawnmowers. They tend to have no patience for girly-girl activities; girl drama drives them crazy. Barbie is stupid, and who wants to play house—nobody wins!

Many times they are gifted athletes, and often natural leaders.

Like sensitive boys, tomboys are outnumbered by girly-girls and those in the middle of the femininity spectrum. Being the minority, they are often bullied. They are judged and ostracized for not being like the other girls.

Sensitive boys and tomboy girls can get the message loud and clear that they don’t have what it takes to be a good boy or girl. They can conclude, wrongly, that they don’t belong in the world of boys, of girls. They burn with the shame of being “other than.” Different.

But God makes every person male or female on purpose, for His glory. They DO belong in the world of boys or girls, of men and women!

Femininity Spectrum 2

As girls grow spiritually, becoming more like Jesus, they can take up more bandwidth on the spectrum and become a more well-rounded expression of femininity.

Girly girls can put down their mirrors and selfies, and become prayer warriors and first responders. They can walk into emotional crises and hard conversations to point people to Jesus. They can become shepherds, more concerned about other people than themselves.

Tomboys can embrace the softer, more nurturing side of femininity. These girls often want to fight and defend those needing protection. They need to be introduced to spiritual warfare! Whether as a princess warrior or a warrior princess, the kingdom needs all girls and women to be fully engaged in fighting evil!

Many of the gender issues today are about stereotypes. People want to stick everybody in either a blue box or a pink box. They make sweeping generalizations like

- "Boys wear blue and brown and play with trucks and guns."
- "Girls wear pink and purple and play with Barbies and jewelry making kits."

But what if a boy thinks blue and brown are boring, and he loves pink and purple? Does it mean he's gay? No! Jesus loves pink and purple! Have you ever seen a sunrise?

What if he doesn't want to play tackle football? What if he'd rather sit and try to draw out another kid's thoughts and feelings? Does it mean he's gay? No! It may be a junior counselor in the making, who's also going to be a fantastic daddy!

What if a girl thinks it's just WRONG that she has to stay inside and learn to make gravy because Grandma says that's

what girls do, when there's a broken carburetor outside she's itching to get her hands on? What if she's an amazing softball player? Does it mean she's a lesbian? No! It means she's a gifted mechanic or athlete!

Let's forget the blue and pink boxes and just open the gift box that is each child and find out how God packed the gifts and interests inside. Let's celebrate God's good design of each child IN HIS IMAGE and affirm them as the child they are, even if they don't conform to stereotypes.

Can you imagine how freeing it would be to celebrate the full spectrum of masculinity and femininity, and teach kids to appreciate and celebrate it in each other?

Notes

1. I do realize that the plural of spectrum is *spectra*, but most people don't take five years of Latin like I did. For those who wince at my coining a word, my apologies.

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"How Does the Bible Support Your View That God Intends for Males to Grow into Masculinity and Females to Grow into Femininity?"

Your article "What is a Biblical View of Transgendered People and Hermaphrodites?" makes this statement: "The biblical view

is that God's intent for every male is to grow into masculinity, and for every female to grow into femininity." What Bible passages support that contention?

I would define masculinity as the characteristics of being male, and femininity as the characteristics of being female, per God's intention. I would also suggest that as a culture, we have a too-narrow idea of what it means to be male and to be female. I think that masculinity is a spectrum from the rough-and-tumble, athletic-loving male to the sensitive, artistic, musical, aesthetic-loving male, and everything in between. I think that femininity is a spectrum from the girly-girl to the tomboy/jockette, and everything in between, and it pleased God to make both male and female, masculine and feminine, in His image. That's a VERY wide range!

But there is a difference between male and female, between masculinity and femininity. When people of one gender long to be the other other, and indulge the fantasy of being or becoming the other, there is a hatred and contempt for the gender that they are—and that means something is wrong. God chose their gender, which means it is good; to hate what God has made means someone's thinking is skewed and needs to be adjusted, to come into alignment with God's.

I say this to lay a foundation for the scriptures that answer your question: I believe that "male and female" and "masculine and feminine" mean the same thing. When they don't, I believe, it's because we have adopted a too-narrow understanding of masculinity and femininity.

From the beginning, the binary nature of "male and female" has been God's design and God's intent:

> Genesis 1:27: "God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them."
>
> Genesis 5:2 "He created them male and female, and He blessed

> them and named them Man in the day when they were created."
>
> Genesis 6:19 "And of every living thing of all flesh, you shall bring two of every kind into the ark, to keep them alive with you; they shall be male and female."

Then, in the New Testament, the Lord Jesus reiterated this truth:

> Matthew 19:4 "Have you not read that He who created them from the beginning made them male and female. . ."
>
> Mark 10:6 "But from the beginning of creation, God made them male and female."

Then there's this:

> Deuteronomy 22:5 "A woman shall not wear man's clothing, nor shall a man put on a woman's clothing; for whoever does these things is an abomination to the Lord your God."

The point of this law, like that of many other OT laws, is to underscore the importance of not blurring distinctions, of maintaining boundaries between separate things. One of the reasons for this importance is so that God's people would think clearly about reality. The differences between male and female are God-designed and good, because He reveals His glory differently through men and through women. (Note throughout the Psalms the way God reveals Himself to be a God of strength and protection, masculine glories, as well as a God of nurture and caring, feminine glories. Our masculinity and femininity both come from the heart of God.)

Scripture also teaches that God's plan and design is for things and people to grow to the mature forms of what they are (references to animal husbandry; parables of crops growing; God's intention for us to grow to maturity [Ephesians 4:13]). Apples do not grow up to be corn, and lambs do not grow up to be bulls. Boys grow up to be men, girls grow up to be women.

My husband the scientist points out from Psalm 139 that we are "fearfully and wonderfully made," as God knits us together in our mother's womb. Part of that is genetics, which is that God determines if we are male or female. These days, some people are unhappy with their gender as if it were a mistake or a joke, but God has made that determination for His glory and our good.

Thanks for asking.

Sue Bohlin

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Swords of Blessing

This Father's Day weekend, my to-do list included personalizing almost three dozen wooden swords. A dear friend has a wonderful boys' summer camp called "Warrior Week" where men sow love and truth (along with a fair share of messy fun) into the souls of boys. I am privileged to use my calligraphy experience to letter each boy's name and a prayed-over character trait that is a blessing for each boy concluding his last year of Warrior Week. So I lettered blessings like "Justin the Magnanimous" and "David the Faithful" and "Cooper the Strong," under which was lettered "Dangerous for Good."



The camp leaders asked each boy's father to write a letter affirming his son, in his own handwriting, and walked them through what to say. Affirmation is a mystery for many dads, who never received it from their own fathers. "You can say whatever encouraging words you'd like to in your letter," the dads were told, "but we would like for you to at least include these four points:

1. I love you.
2. I am pleased with you.
3. I am for you/in your corner no matter what.
4. God has a plan for your life."

Wow. This is powerful stuff! I rejoice in the power of a father's words of affirmation because I have seen firsthand what a difference it makes in the lives of our sons. For all our gifts and strengths, women cannot imprint masculinity on the souls of boys and men. We can confirm what we see, but we can't put it there. And a father's voice, whether spoken or verbal, can have a "weight of glory," to use C.S. Lewis' term, that lasts for an eternity.

While I'm thrilled for the boys who will be receiving this amazing blessing, I am also reveling in the truth that my heavenly Father delights to affirm each of us. He says, "I love you, I delight in you, I am for you, and I know the plans I have for your life!"

Even if we don't get a sword. . . at least we get the letter. It's bound in a Book.

This blog post originally appeared at blogs.bible.org/engage/sue_bohlin/swords_of_blessing on June 23, 2009

“How Do I Encourage My Gender Role-Reversed Kids?”

Thank you so much for your commentary on encouraging our children to feel blessed in their own unique gender. I have a boy (6) and a girl (7) (and a child of unknown gender on the way). I was really nervous about raising a little boy, because I am one of two girls in my family, and had an absentee father for most of my life.

My little boy is the love of my life. He is so loving and sensitive. His dad has trouble dealing with this side of him. He also has many male qualities, but my girl child is rather rough and teases him unmercifully. How can I encourage them despite their apparent role reversals?

You brought up SUCH a great question, and I wanted to provide as powerful an answer as I could, so I asked a good friend for whom same-sex attraction is part of his story. God has done a huge work of grace in his life to bring him to the point where he can truly enjoy being a man, and has been healed from some of the woundings that came from not being supported in his masculinity when he was a boy. This was his answer for you, and I couldn’t be more pleased with what he wrote:

> It’s OK to be nervous about raising a boy. I think that’s natural. However, there are many very helpful resources out right now that will help you in guiding your little man in the right way (i.e., Dr. James Dobson’s *Raising Boys* etc.). Dad is perhaps the most important factor in guiding the young man into gender security. Even though Dad might have difficulty dealing with sensitivity and other “less masculine” traits, I urge Dad to look at Jesus, study our Savior, see what godly masculinity is. Come to grips with the fact that what our society deems masculine is often brutal cruelty. The ultimate guidebook for healthy gender

security is none other than the Bible and Jesus is the ultimate example of the godly MAN.

That having been said, in the early years, I believe that it is very important to make sure your children are taught good manners and how to be accepting of people that aren't like themselves—even if they are siblings. If your little girl picks on or teases your little boy, I would encourage you to stop that behavior—through discipline, through reasoning or any other effective method. Your little boy must have an advocate in this early stage of life that is present and visible. It really is best if it is Dad but certainly someone he loves and trusts. And little girl must be taught to respect not only other people but the other gender as well.

On a more scientific note, there is a theory called the neuro-endocrine theory. This theory states that anywhere from the 8th to the 12th week of gestation, there is a hormone wash that is released in the womb that kind of kick-starts the development of gender depending on the chromosome makeup (xx being female and xy being male). Sometimes the hormone wash is not as strong as at others and the process by which the masculine moves into the left brain and the feminine moves into the right brain is not fully completed. This is not to say that any child is less male or female or more so. But it does apparently make some male children more sensitive and creative (right brain) and some female children more aggressive and decisive (left brain). It's not a bad thing or a good thing. Simply a scientific explanation of why some male children might be a bit more sensitive etc.

Hope this helps!

Sue Bohlin
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The Wonderful Rise of Masculinity

October 2001

Recently, I was sitting at an airport terminal waiting to board a plane when a man dropped into the seat next to mine. He nodded to me and said, “How’re you doing?” I looked at him and said, “Well, that depends on whether you’re a bad guy or a hero. Those are your two choices.” He smiled; he understood. As we boarded, everybody on that plane was looking at everybody else, scanning their faces, wondering the same thing—are you a bad guy or a hero?

One of the best things to come out of the Sept. 11 attack on America is that masculinity has been restored to its rightful place of honor. After a generation of merciless male-bashing in the wake of feminism’s contempt of men, it’s a good and fine thing to be a man again, and I for one love it. It seems that men are walking taller and more proudly, more confident in themselves. Young men flooded to the armed forces, ready to defend their country and grateful to be able to DO SOMETHING about such a heinous attack on America.

We have been reminded what true heroes look like: not sports figures, not entertainers, but the men of Flight 93 who controlled their fear to overtake terrorists and crash a plane into a field instead of a building. True heroes look like the firefighters who ran up the stairwells of doomed, burning buildings to rescue people going down. True heroes look like the police officers who helped people get away from the World Trade Center as they deliberately put themselves in harm’s way. And now that we remember what a true hero is, we’re seeing long overdue displays of gratitude for the public

servants who risk their lives so the rest of us can be safe. Recently a local elementary school invited firemen to a school assembly where they had festooned the auditorium with banners, balloons and posters thanking them for their service. When the group of men entered the room, the kids went absolutely wild with cheers and applause. You'd have thought it was an N'Sync concert!

I'm thankful for the perspective my husband provided on this: he observed that men are able to be men because women are letting them. It seems that unless we women show men the respect and honor due them in their masculinity, they won't fight for it and many will retreat into a most unmanly passivity. But in the attacks on our country, many women have lost our sense of security and we're more in touch with how much we need to be protected. Thank the Lord for His plan that men be strong and self-sacrificing as they rise to the occasion in protecting us! Masculinity is a beautiful strength. God knew what He was doing when He made men men. It's one more way He's bringing glory to Himself in the aftermath of 9/11.

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 explalins 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.

 *This article is also available in Spanish.*

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 be 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 emotional*ism*, 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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