

THE ROOTED WAY • EPISODE 10

MADE TO BE MEN

What Does Biblical Manhood Actually Mean?

“Biblical manhood is courageous responsibility exercised in sacrificial love.”

EPISODE STUDY & SHOW NOTES

Designed for listening, personal study, small-group discussion, and use inside Rooted Word.

Episode Overview

KEY QUESTION	What makes a man a godly man according to Scripture?
BIG IDEA	Biblical masculinity is not about personality, hobbies, toughness, or authority. It is about faithfully bearing God-given responsibility with courage, self-control, sacrifice, and love.
PRIMARY PASSAGES	Genesis 1:26-28; Genesis 2:15-25; 1 Corinthians 16:13-14; Ephesians 5:23-25
SUPPORTING PASSAGES	Romans 5:12-19; 1 Timothy 2:12-14; Proverbs 25:28; Mark 10:42-45

Why This Matters

Culture often defines masculinity by personality, appearance, status, toughness, income, or dominance. Scripture asks a different question: Is a man becoming the kind of man God calls him to be? Biblical manhood begins with God's design, not with cultural stereotypes.

SERIES THESIS

Biblical masculinity is not about how much authority a man can obtain. It is about how much God-given responsibility he is willing to carry.

1. Made Male and Female

READ

Genesis 1:26-28; Genesis 2:15-25

UNDERSTAND

Genesis begins by affirming equal dignity: male and female both bear the image of God, receive the creation mandate, are accountable to Him, and stand in equal need of grace. Difference does not imply lesser worth.

Genesis 2 then gives additional detail. Adam is created and receives God's command concerning the tree before the woman is formed. Eve is created as an ezer kenegdo - a corresponding helper, suitable partner, and counterpart.

עֶזֶר כְּנֶגְדּוֹ — ezer kenegdo

Ezer does not mean a subordinate assistant; the Old Testament can use the word of God as helper. Kenegdo carries the idea of corresponding to, matching, or standing opposite. Eve is not Adam's employee. She is his corresponding partner.

KEY DISTINCTION

Equal dignity does not require identical roles.

ASK

1. Which cultural stereotypes about masculinity have shaped your idea of what a man should be?
2. Why is it important to affirm both equality and real male-female distinction?

3. What changes when we begin defining manhood from creation rather than from culture?

2. Complementarianism and Egalitarianism

DEFINE

Complementarianism teaches that men and women possess equal dignity and worth before God while also having meaningful, complementary distinctions in some roles. In the home, this includes a particular headship responsibility for the husband; in the church, complementarians commonly understand the elder/pastor office to be entrusted to qualified men.

Egalitarianism also affirms equal dignity, but generally argues that sex itself does not establish continuing differences in authority or leadership in marriage or church.

THE QUESTION

The issue is not whether women are as valuable as men. Scripture settles that in Genesis 1. The question is whether equality of worth requires interchangeability of role.

FOLLOW THE BIBLICAL PATTERN

- Creation: Adam is formed first, receives the command, and Eve is created as his corresponding helper.
- Paul later appeals to the creation order in 1 Timothy 2 rather than grounding his reasoning only in first-century Ephesian culture.
- Fall: Eve eats first, yet Romans 5 repeatedly associates humanity's fall with Adam, pointing to representative responsibility.
- Marriage: Ephesians 5 calls the husband the head of the wife and immediately defines that headship through Christ's sacrificial love for the church.

DISCUSSION QUESTION

If Paul's reasoning were only correcting a local cultural problem in Ephesus, why does he appeal back to the creation order in Genesis?

3. Headship Means Responsibility, Not Superiority

READ

Ephesians 5:23-25

"For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body. ... Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her,"

UNDERSTAND

The episode approaches marriage from a complementarian reading: the husband bears a particular responsibility to lead, but that responsibility is never a declaration of superior value. Paul points husbands to Christ, whose authority is expressed through self-giving love.

KEY LINE

Paul does not abolish headship. He crucifies our sinful definition of it.

The husband's model is not a dictator demanding service. It is Christ giving Himself for His bride. Episode 3 of this series develops servant headship more fully.

ASK

1. Why is responsibility a better lens for headship than privilege?
2. What happens when a man hears "headship" but ignores the Christ-and-the-church model?
3. How should sacrificial love reshape the way authority is exercised in a Christian home?

4. Courage, Responsibility, and Self-Control

READ

1 Corinthians 16:13-14

"Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong. All that you do must be done in love."

WORD WORTH KNOWING

ἀνδρίζομαι — andrizomai

The expression can carry the sense "act like men," "be courageous," or "show yourselves courageous." In context, strength is surrounded by alertness, firmness in the faith, and love.

Biblical courage is not aggression. A man can be loud because he is insecure. Courage does what is right when obedience costs something.

RESPONSIBILITY

A boy asks, "What do I want?" A mature man increasingly asks, "What has God entrusted to me?"

- faith
- body
- work
- money
- sexuality
- family
- commitments
- church
- neighbors

Self-control belongs in the same picture. Biblical strength includes the ability to tell yourself no. Proverbs 25:28 compares a person without self-control to a city broken into and without walls.

- pornography and sexual behavior
- temper and speech
- spending
- alcohol and food
- laziness
- phone and gaming

KEY LINE

If you cannot govern yourself, talking about governing a household is premature.

5. Jesus and Masculinity

LOOK AT CHRIST

Jesus confronts hypocrisy, speaks hard truth, endures suffering, protects the vulnerable, and acts with unquestioned authority. He also weeps, embraces children, touches lepers, washes feet, shows compassion, loves His friends, suffers willingly, and gives Himself sacrificially.

KEY LINE

Jesus destroys both caricatures: the passive man who will not stand for anything and the macho man who thinks strength means dominating everybody.

Jesus has absolute authority and uses it sacrificially. Biblical masculinity should therefore hold together conviction and tenderness, strength and love, courage and service.

REFLECT

1. Which side of Jesus' character do you tend to emphasize - strength or tenderness?
2. Where have you confused gentleness with weakness or aggression with courage?
3. How would your relationships change if your strength were consistently used for the good of others?

6. What Biblical Manhood Is Not

Biblical masculinity is not a checklist of stereotypically masculine traits. It is not defined by emotional repression, never asking for help, violence, sexual conquest, dominance, career obsession, earning more than your wife, always having the answer, or liking particular hobbies.

- Can a man cry and still be masculine? Jesus did.
- Can a man be gentle? Gentleness is a fruit of the Spirit.
- Can a man admit he was wrong? That often requires more strength than defending pride.

Apply

1. Name one God-given responsibility you have been tempted to avoid. What would faithful action look like this week?
2. Identify one appetite or habit that needs greater self-control under Christ.
3. Choose one person who should experience your strength as service rather than as pressure or control.
4. If you are married, ask your wife where she most needs your presence, initiative, or sacrificial care.

Reflection

CLOSING TAKEAWAY

Biblical manhood is courageous responsibility exercised in sacrificial love.

A godly man is not measured by how intimidating he is. He is measured by whether the people God has entrusted to him are served by his strength.

Pray

Father, form in me the character of Christ. Give me courage without aggression, strength without pride, self-control over my appetites, and a willingness to carry the responsibilities You have entrusted to me. Teach me to use whatever authority, ability, and influence You give me for the good of others and for Your glory. Amen.

Further Scripture

- Genesis 1:26-28
- Genesis 2:15-25
- Romans 5:12-19
- 1 Corinthians 16:13-14
- Ephesians 5:21-33
- 1 Timothy 2:8-15
- Proverbs 25:28
- Mark 10:42-45

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Podcast: The Rooted Way - Made to Be Men: What Does Biblical Manhood Actually Mean?

Episode resources: rootedtruthministries.org/podcasts

Rooted Word Bible study app: rootedtruthministries.org/rooted-word

Study collection: Biblical Manhood

NEXT IN THE SERIES

Episode 11 - When Men Refuse to Be Men: Passivity, Domination & Counterfeit Masculinity

Rooted in Scripture. Growing in truth. Living faithfully.