



Manhood Definition

SESSION THREE | Transcript

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In the last session we looked at God's original design for mankind. From the original blueprints in Genesis we learned that God designed men to follow his example and to lead, specifically by creating and cultivating. You see we are created in his image. From the very beginning God intended for us to be like him – to create and to cultivate.

But most importantly we learned in the last session that the type of manhood that God created us to live cannot be done with our own self-effort. We can't fix ourselves. Only a real, vibrant relationship with Jesus Christ can provide us with the fuel we need to live out authentic manhood. That's why we encouraged you after the last session to watch the online video that was designed to help you understand fully how Jesus Christ can become not only your Savior, but also your source of strength for living the life we were designed to live.

But there's something else that we need to see from those original blueprints. In Genesis, God has clearly given men a mandate to lead in three specific areas. God gave him three specific leadership responsibilities as he creates and cultivates.

First of all, GOD GAVE MAN A WILL TO OBEY. Adam was not just tossed in the garden and left to figure out what was right and wrong on his own. In the early chapters of Genesis, God dictates what is right and wrong to man. He said to Adam and Eve, "Enjoy this garden, but from that tree, don't eat." So, God has spoken. There was a will greater than his own for Adam to obey.

You know, it's the same with us today. We're not left to figure out what is right and wrong based on what makes sense to us, or what our gut tells us, or what our culture accepts. God has spoken. There is a will that is greater than our own for us to obey.

We also see that GOD GAVE MAN A WORK TO DO. He's naming the animals; he's working the ground; he's busy "subduing" the earth and using the gifts that God had given him. Work was not, and is not, a curse. It allows man to follow God's example – to create and cultivate.

Here's the third leadership responsibility: GOD GAVE MAN A WOMAN TO LOVE. In Genesis 2:18 God said, "It's not good that the man should be alone" (ESV). So he created Eve – a companion with whom Adam could have deep intimacy and fellowship as they follow God together.

Now today, we want to look at how Jesus lived the mandate to create and cultivate and how he lead in those three specific areas of responsibility. We want to build a definition of manhood, from the thirty-three years that he lived here on earth—a definition that you can apply to every area of your life, and through every season of your life. This definition of manhood will serve as a compass to guide you on your journey.

And when we've completed this session, hopefully, you will never hesitate again, when somebody asks you the question: "What does it mean to be a man?" If your son, or someone you are mentoring, or your daughter starts asking that question, you'll be able to offer them a concise and

compelling vision of biblical masculinity.

Last session we looked at Genesis, but you can't get a complete picture of biblical manhood by looking at Genesis alone. We also need to look at the life of our model, Jesus. So today, we're going to compare and contrast the two primary captains of humanity – Adam from Genesis and Jesus from the New Testament.

There's an interesting description of Jesus that really doesn't make sense unless you compare and contrast him with Adam. It's found in the New Testament where Jesus is basically called the "second Adam." The Apostle Paul put it this way in Romans chapter five. Beginning in Romans 5:17, it says: "For if, because of one man's trespass [now that's Adam in the book of the Genesis. Remember in the last session, he chose the way of the fruit or he chose his own will], death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ ... For as by the one man's disobedience [that's referring back to Adam again] the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience [now that's referring to Jesus] the many will be made righteous" (ESV; Rom 5:17, 19)

Did you get that? That's one of the great statements in all of Scripture to a lost world. Through one man, Adam, sin entered into the world. But through another man, Jesus, righteousness entered the world. One man's example is worth rejecting. Another man's example, Jesus, is worth following.

Jesus came to Earth to redeem all things including masculinity. Jesus also came to perfectly fulfill those specific responsibilities given to the first Adam who just blew them off and failed miserably. By the third chapter of Genesis, Adam had failed in all three areas: he hadn't obeyed God's will, he hadn't pursued the work God had for him, and he hadn't protected the woman God gave him.

But what did Jesus do while he was here on earth in his thirty-three years that he lived? Well, he perfectly fulfilled the will God that gave to him in all three areas of responsibility. He followed God's will, not His own, even when he was tempted by Satan just like Adam was. He completely accomplished the work God had for him by offering his own life for the sake of others. And Jesus loved his bride, the church, even to the point of death.

Scripture paints a clear contrast between the first Adam of Genesis and the second Adam, Jesus Christ. First Corinthians 15 beginning in verse 45 explains it this way. It says: "Thus it is written, 'the first man, Adam became a living being'; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit . . . the first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven" (ESV; 1 Cor 15:45, 47). Comparing and contrasting the first Adam with the second Adam is very helpful in figuring out authentic biblical manhood.

[Video Documentary: Matt Chandler]

Very few things in life can be synthesized as simply as this following truth: every man in this room will walk in the shadow of one of these two men. Your life will either be marked by the darkness of the first Adam or the light of the second Adam, Jesus.

In the last session we introduced you to what it means to live like the first Adam. We learned that guys who follow Adam become childish consumers or they become cowards and critics. Guys who follow the way of the fruit are just trying to satisfy their senses; they're looking for temporary pleasure. They define themselves by what they consume rather than what they produce. They're takers, not givers. The way of the fig leaves, that's marked by self-righteousness and legalistic rules. These guys often define themselves by what they don't do. They're always criticizing others but they never get in the game themselves.

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LET'S CALL WHAT THE FIRST ADAM CHOSE "CONVENTIONAL MANHOOD." It's a manhood that has a selfish perspective. Conventional manhood takes life out of others. It represents a manhood that has no transcendent meaning. It's a guy not living for eternity. He's only living for himself.

IT'S A MANHOOD THAT IS BASED ON PERSONAL INSTINCT, HUMAN REASON, OR HUMAN REACTION. When he disobeyed God by eating the fruit and then he tried to provide for himself with fig leaves, Adam thought he'd it figured out. Conventional manhood shouts in all situations, "I got this! I'm a smart guy. I've got it figured out!" Adam set his course based on his own human reason. His manhood was self-made; it was self-willed and self-centered in the end.

But thankfully, we don't have to follow the first Adam's example. God has given us the model of authentic manhood in Jesus. And it's in his life that we find the answer to the question: "What does it mean to be a man?"

GUYS, WE NEED A CLEAR AND COMPELLING DEFINITION OF AUTHENTIC MANHOOD. Every man needs a "benchmark" to hit or a trajectory to follow. And we want to offer you a vision of manhood that you can pursue from this day forward. It's also a path that you can call other men to follow. We can tell our daughters what to specifically look for in a man. We can offer our sons or the boys we mentor a vision worth pursuing. And to get to that vision, and to extract our definition, we need to look a little closer at the contrasts between Adam and Jesus. And when you press them together, four defining components emerge. These components will make up our definition of manhood. Here is the first component:

REJECT PASSIVITY. The first Adam fell into passivity. But the second Adam, Jesus, rejected passivity. The first Adam, in the moment of his fall just fell reeked of cowardice. In Genesis 3 – in the moment when the serpent tempted Eve – you might find yourself asking the question, well "where's Adam?" In your head you probably have put Adam somewhere else in the garden. Maybe he's building something or hunting for animals or preparing the grill. We want to believe that if Adam had been there he wouldn't have allowed the snake to tempt his wife. He would have leaped out of the bushes and chopped off its head. But take a look at what happened.

In Genesis chapter 3 verse 6 it says this: "So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate" (ESV).

Now, did you guys catch that? So, where was Adam? He was "with her." In other words, Adam is standing there silently while his wife is tempted. He just went flat. He does nothing. He was passive. In a moment when he could have stepped into noble masculinity, he's just standing there. And you know what? Men have been living in Adam's shadow ever since. We see it happening all across the globe. Rather than being involved the way they should be with their children, men are just standing there. There's injustice, racism, and poverty. And what are we doing? We're just standing there.

We have churches longing to fulfill their redemptive purpose, but you know what the men are doing? They're just standing there.

Why is it that so many men are so decisive and focused and so effective in areas of life that don't really matter, but they are tentative, uninspiring, they're lazy and passive in the areas that matter the most? It's because they are living in the shadow of the first Adam. But we must follow the example of the second Adam.

Jesus rejected passivity. You see more real manhood in Jesus in the manger than you do in Adam in the Garden. In the garden, Adam looks like a man but he responds like a little boy. Yet, in that manger, Jesus looks like a little boy but he is in fact demonstrating the essence of noble masculinity. By becoming human, Jesus took the initiative for the benefit others. He embraced humility and self-sacrifice to deal with the problem of our sin.

I want you to listen to how Jesus is described in Philippians chapter 2. Beginning in verse 5 it says this: "Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross" (Phil 2:5-8; ESV).

You see, the first Adam was just standing there, but the second Adam, Jesus, he did something. He acted. He initiated. He rejected passivity. Authentic manhood rejects passivity. Now that's the first component of our manhood definition.

The second one is this: ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY. We saw in the garden how the first man fell short in the three specific responsibilities that he was given, but the second Adam, Jesus Christ, fully accepted those same responsibilities. Do you guys remember what they were? The first one was a will to obey. Adam passed on the will of God. He believed that God must have been holding out on them so he went in search of something better for himself and his wife—the fruit. But the second Adam obeyed the will of God. Here is just one example: in John 4:34 (ESV), Jesus says: "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work." In other words, he's saying "that's the desire of my heart. I delight to do God's will. That is food for my soul." Authentic manhood accepts the responsibility to obey the will greater than itself.

Jesus also accepted a work to do. In John 17:4 (ESV), he says this: (and he's speaking to God here) "I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do." What an awesome thing to be able to say: "God, I have done what it is you intended and created me to do."

And, finally, Jesus—just like Adam—had a woman to love. Now, you're probably saying, "I didn't know Jesus was married." Well, there hasn't been some new discovery. He wasn't! But then again, he was because, you see, his bride was the church. And that's why in Ephesians 5:25 (ESV) it says this: "Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her." So, how did Jesus love his bride? Well, he sacrificed his own life for her sake.

An authentic man understands that he is called to love and care for his wife – not to use or abuse her. He's called to lay down his life for her, if necessary. But not just physically, but to die to himself and his own needs for the sake of hers. An authentic man gives himself willingly to that responsibility. And in so doing, well, he moves out of the shadow of the first Adam toward the light of the second Adam, Jesus Christ.

Now, here's what we've said so far: the first Adam gave into passivity, he stood beside Eve with his manhood pants down when he could have stepped up and led both of them to follow God's will, not their own. The second Adam—

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Jesus—rejected passivity by following God’s will even when it meant giving up his life on earth. The first Adam shunned his responsibilities. The second Adam accepted responsibility. Those first two components make up half of our definition of authentic manhood.

Now, here’s the third defining component: **LEAD COURAGEOUSLY**. The first Adam abandoned his post of leadership while the second Adam chose to lead courageously. You see, men were created to lead. And Jesus led where Adam didn’t. Jesus led in many different ways. Let me just give you a few examples.

First, **JESUS PROVIDED DIRECTION FOR OTHERS**. Jesus told his disciples “follow me” (Matt. 4:19). His example was clear and compelling. It was something they wanted to follow. We need to be able to tell others “follow me as I follow Jesus.” Now, men, that’s not arrogance. That’s confidence. We need to lead by example so our wives, our children, and those around us can see a clear path to follow. That’s leading courageously.

JESUS ALSO LED BY PROVIDING PROTECTION FOR OTHERS. He said, “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep” (John 10:11; ESV). Jesus is a protector actively seeking to keep others from harm and guiding them towards noble pursuits.

JESUS ALSO LED BY PROVIDING LIFE FOR OTHERS. As we saw in 1 Corinthians 15:45, Jesus is described as a life-giving spirit. I want to read that verse again. It says “Adam became a living being”; the last Adam [Jesus] became a life-giving spirit” (ESV).

The consistent picture we get of Jesus Christ in the New Testament is that there is always a life-giving energy flowing out of him. He was always others-centered. In John 10:10, he says “I came that they may have life and have it abundantly” (ESV). The life he came to give is evident in us when we follow his example and we lead courageously.

There’s one more glaring difference between Adam and Jesus that we want you to see. It gives us the final component of our definition of authentic manhood. Here it is: Authentic men **INVEST ETERNALLY**.

The first Adam invested in the temporary, choosing what would satisfy him in the moment. He chose the fruit. But the second Adam, Jesus, chose to invest eternally. Jesus was in the moment, but he was always looking beyond the moment. He had an eternal perspective.

He lived it and he taught it. In Matthew 6:19, listen to what he says; he says, “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal” (ESV; Matt 6:19-20) While on this earth, Jesus was not focused on building earthly riches or climbing the corporate ladder. He was busy serving others, sharing truth and leading other men to change the world.

When our days on earth are over and we stand before God it won't matter how successful we were in the world's eyes, how famous we became, or how many people we've impressed. All that will matter is the degree to which you have followed Jesus and his example by investing in things of eternal significance; things like loving your wife, raising your children well, serving and loving others, and standing up for those who are weak and oppressed. That's what it means to invest eternally.

Now, look back over the four components, a real man is one who rejects passivity. He stops "just standing there." He's one who accepts responsibility for God's will, for God's work, and for the family God has entrusted to him. He's one who leads courageously. He becomes a life-giver who takes the initiative and he embraces self-sacrifice for the benefit of others. And the whole time he's doing these things, he does them with his eye on eternity – he's storing up real treasure where moths, rust, and thieves can't touch them.

So men, here's our definition for authentic manhood: REJECT PASSIVITY. ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY. LEAD COURAGEOUSLY. INVEST ETERNALLY. That is a manhood worth living for – a manhood worth fighting for. And any man who embraces this vision has taken a quantum leap towards authentic manhood. He has a clear vision that will help shape his journey as a man.

Now don't forget what we learned last session. It's hopeless to try and live this out without the life-giving spirit of Jesus fueling your journey. You cannot do this apart from him.

But starting today, we want you to view life through this grid. Is your masculine "operating system" that of the first Adam and living in his shadow, or that of the second Adam and following his light? Where do you need to reject passivity? In what areas do you need to accept responsibility? Are you leading courageously? Are you investing eternally? Let's go to war against passivity. And let's declare the areas of life that are worth fighting for.