

## *Praise God for Men*

I Timothy 3:1-4

June 23, 2024

We return today to our work of reclaiming June for Jesus. We talked the first week about reclaiming God's rainbow and using it as a witnessing tool to lead others to salvation. The next week we talked about godly womanhood and today we're going to talk about godly manhood, as promised. We missed father's day by a week but, my thought is we make every day father's day? Please open your Bibles today to I Timothy 3. Pew Bible. Just like we took some shots at women, I have to give them equal time with us. What's the difference between government bonds and men? Bonds mature. Why don't we men often show our true feelings? Because we don't have any. And in honor of the heat wave, how is a man like the weather? Nothing can be done to change either of them.

There are differences between men and women and anyone who can't see that is blind, deaf, dumb, and stupid. But does every man have to be the same? Absolutely not. Does every godly man have to like football? No. Obviously not, but there is a team called the Saints, just saying. Or hunting, or outdoors, or cars, or etc. God made us all different! Just because a man may seem more feminine than other men doesn't mean God made a mistake, that he's really a woman on the inside, or anything else. We're all different. Each man has something to teach us about God's image. For too long we've belittled, picked on, made fun of such men and boys. That was and is sinful. Confess those sins, even from grade school and repent of it. Encourage each to be the man God made THEM to be. Not who we think they ought to be. But also not to be a woman for God didn't make them one. As we learned a couple weeks ago, no amount of surgery, make up, or clothing will ever change that. What does it mean to be masculine? To be manly? Instead of looking to our culture, peers, or even to our parents, let's look to God.

When we looked at godly womanhood, we turned to Proverbs 31 which describes the virtuous woman. We actually don't have a parallel passage for a virtuous man, perhaps because there isn't such a thing. But as we did for godly womanhood, we will look at several Biblical examples of godly men. If you are able, please stand as we read from I Tim 3:1 Here is a trustworthy saying: If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task. 2 Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, 3 not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. 4 He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect.

These are guidelines for godly male leaders, but would they not also by extension be guidelines for all godly men? Let's look at some of them and as we do, we'll find godly examples to illustrate them. Say above reproach. The KJV says blameless. A

godly man should live a life that is not open to accusation of blatant sin. While none are sinless, and praise God for the blood of Jesus, that doesn't give us permission to indulge in it or even flirt with it. A godly man is to be exactly that-like God as much as possible. If we are found frequenting bars and nightclubs, we may not be sinning but it sure opens the door to accusations.

In our day, accusations can obviously come without justification. Just because a person is charged or even found guilty doesn't mean he's either one. Just look at Jesus. But godly men should live in such ways as to make it pretty doubtful that they would be involved in any sin. Some men seem to like living on the edge, floating the idea that they are mischievous or risqué. You can do that if you want, just know that if you do, you're sinning. Godly men are to be above reproach, not on its edge, and as it says a little later in this passage, respectable.

Say Respectable. Worthy of respect. That involves the way we conduct ourselves. The KJV says good behavior. Going out and partying and getting smashed may be popular with our peers, but it doesn't fit the model for godly manhood. That doesn't mean we can't laugh, can't have fun, Christian men should be the most fun of all. But it does mean we behave ourselves. We respect others that we might be respected. While we can't live to please others and we mustn't, we must be aware that how we live reflects what we believe about God.

One way to ensure that is by being the husband of but one wife. The literal translation means a one-woman man. Someone who doesn't have sister wives. Or as is more common among non-Mormons, have a girl on the side. A mistress or an escort. NO! That's called adultery, and there's a commandment about that. This also involves pornography. When we look at porn, we're no longer one-women men. We are ogling many women and using them in sinful ways. I Tim 5:2 tells men to treat older women as mothers and younger women as sisters with absolute purity. Say absolute. Men, do you want some guy to look at your sister, mother, or daughter the way you look at that girl? The only time our dog, Tippy, ever got out, he was chasing a female. And he chased her across Back Road and got killed by a truck. I've got several bucks on my wall that I would never have if they weren't chasing does.

The husband of but one wife. Does this mean a godly man has to be a husband? Has to be married? By no means. Look at Paul who wrote this who wasn't married and actually advised against it. Or look at Jesus Himself. Neither were married and both were very godly men, Jesus most of all. It just means that if a man does have a romantic relationship, it needs to be one of faithfulness and fidelity to one wife, not lose morality. A godly man is faithful. Praise God for the many godly men at Antioch who are faithful to their wives!

Paul also mentions temperate. Say temperate. The KJV says circumspect. To be aware of what's going on around us and not overreact. It means moderation and self-restraint. Not going overboard or being carried away by our emotions or easily incited. Along with that he says self-controlled. Say self-control. Not exactly the same thing, but close. To control the self along with all our urges. The Amplified Bible says "to lead an orderly (disciplined) life." And while that's important for **every** believer, male and female, we men are especially advised to control ourselves. Not just leaders, for this too, Paul tells Titus to teach to all men. The self is a cruel taskmaster. It will drive us to destruction to try to please the self. It may mean controlling our anger which we men sometimes struggle to do. It may mean controlling our sexual urges which we've already discussed. It may mean controlling those substances like tobacco or other drugs that seek to control us. We may be strong enough to control large equipment, other people, or livestock, but when we fail to control ourselves, we fall short of being the godly men He created us to be.

Paul also includes hospitable. Say hospitable. This has to do with hospitality. I heard once about a restaurant in Korea that wasn't good with English but wanted to serve Americans. They put a sign in the window, "Come in, let us hospitalize you." Not hospitalize but hospitality. Friendliness. The Greek literally means fond of guests. The Amplified Bible says, "...showing love for and being a friend to the believers, especially strangers or foreigners..." Jesus is our best friend. If we will be godly men, should we not also be friendly? Godly men take care of each other. They stand with each other especially when life is tough. Or when death has knocked. Or when other troubles come.

Some men think it becomes them to be gruff and rough and be in a perpetual bad mood. Like they had burnt toast for breakfast every day. And for lunch and dinner. Once again, you can, but that's not godly. Men, we often set the tone around us, in our homes, at our jobs, and in the community. Are we friendly and hospitable or short and crotchety? "Well, that's just the way I am." Yes. We were all born in sin. The work of the Holy Spirit is to sanctify us. To make us like Jesus. But we have to allow Him to that. This doesn't mean we have to agree with everyone and go along with everything. Be a wishy washy doormat. By no means. But it also doesn't mean we're unapproachable and disagreeable by nature. Later in this passage, it says we aren't supposed to be quarrelsome. With our wives or anyone else. Sometimes we men get slammed at work and by the time we get home, we're just spoiling for a good fight. Better not. Go by the altar of the Lord on your way home and unload your cares, frustrations and anxieties. It doesn't mean you can't share them with your spouse, but don't take it out on them.

Paul says Christian leaders should be able to teach. Say teach. While that certainly applies to pastors and church leaders, it also applies to all dads. We often think of moms as being chiefly responsible for childrearing, but Paul tells us in Ephesians 6:4,

“**Fathers**, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.” So all dads should be able to at least teach their own children about Jesus, about God, about God’s will. Research indicates that if the mother in the home is the first one to come to Jesus, there is a 17% chance the rest of family will come to Him. But if the father is the first to get saved, there is a 93% chance the rest of family comes! Dads, lead your kids to Jesus! The recent meme on Facebook, if church becomes optional to you, it will become unnecessary to your children.

As I shared more fully in my news article last week, Paul Vitz in his book, *Faith of the Fatherless*, lists many examples of children who had no fathers or abusive ones, who grew up later to become well-known atheists. On the contrary he also outlines many of the greatest Christian pastors, thinkers, and authors whose fathers directly influenced their faith. While moms are vitally important, it’s obvious from research that dads play a critical role in shaping the faith of their children. Is it any wonder society is pushing dads out of their homes? The US now leads the world in fatherlessness with 18 million growing up without a dad. Godly men seek to raise godly kids. Praise God for the godly men at Antioch who are raising their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord! Keep up the good and godly work!

Verse 3 of our passage tells us that godly men must not be given to drunkenness. Say drunk. Seems like a no-brainer right? But just to be clear, being self-controlled and disciplined means not allowing alcohol to control us. And while we can defend causal drinking, let’s remember that no one ever plans to become an alcoholic. First the man takes a drink, then the drink takes a drink, then the drink takes the man. Be vigilant; be careful, lest alcohol become your master. Many individuals, including some in this room today, can give testimony of the damage done by alcohol in a parent’s life or in your own.

Paul also says that godly men aren’t to be violent but gentle. Say gentle. Gentle men. Strength under control. Like a massive workhorse that could easily run through the fence, the field and the barn, but awaits direction from his owner. Will we? Gentle. Gentle enough to cradle a newborn baby and firm enough to stand against Satan and all his hosts. Gentle enough to sing a child to sleep but courageous enough to defend that child from all evil and harm, physical and spiritual. Some men **are** more gentle by nature. Many think of gentleness as a feminine quality. And while it is, it is not exclusively such. Godly men are gentle men. In Titus, Paul says men are to be sound in love. That’s a feminine quality, yes. But masculine too! Part of our problem in mixing up men and women today is a failure to examine the Scripture to see what God has to say instead of going on what we think or what Oprah says or some other shaper of culture. Jesus, Scripture, the Holy Spirit. These are to be our influencers as Christians. Not social media, entertainers, peers, TV, or athletes.

And a godly man is not a lover of money. Say greedy. That's all some men seem to care about. More and more money or things money can buy. We need money to live, but when we fall in love with money or things, we never get enough. It controls our schedules and our attitudes. It undermines our relationships and rots our hearts. We men are programmed to provide for our families and do what we can to bless them, and that's good, but when money becomes our lover, all manner of evil follows. It's also in this letter of I Timothy where Paul reminds us in 6:10 that the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. We men, especially, are often tempted to find our identity and value in our work and our net worth. The more successful we are, the more valuable and important we are. NO! God's Word assures us that the more **faithful** you are, the more **obedient** you are, the more like Jesus you are is what's important! Our value and our identity are in Him, not dollar bills!

So what does it mean to be a godly man? Let's look to God Himself. God in the flesh, Jesus Christ. We see Him demonstrating these qualities perfectly in every way. Self-controlled, loving, gentle, and firm. Never drunk or disrespectful, always hospitable and able to teach. I'd also highlight some more of Jesus' characteristics that demonstrate godly manhood. Say prayer. Time and again, we see Jesus praying. Praying all night up on the hillside, praying in the Garden, praying on the cross. Godly men pray. We pray for ourselves and for our wives, children, and grandchildren. We pray for our churches and our fellow church members. We pray for our leaders and for our culture. We spend time with God Himself that we might be godly ourselves. Godly men are men of prayer.

Godly men are honest men. When they asked Jesus who He was, He said I am. He didn't lie about it to save His own hide. He told the truth to save ours. From cover to cover, godly men tell the truth even when the consequences are deadly.

Jesus was also a man of courage. Say courage. When He marched into the Temple and overturned those tables, it took bravery and valor. Throughout the Bible, we find godly men like David, Joshua, Daniel and others who bravely stood in the face of unbeatable odds. Godly men are not cowards. Cowardice is actually listed not as a weakness but as a sin in Revelation 21. Ultimately Jesus Himself was most courageous going to the cross carrying our sin and facing the hosts of hell, defeating them and giving us victory over sin, death and the grave. Godly men are courageous men.

Finally, Godly men are sacrificial. There's still a sermon coming, God willing, on godly marriage which is the union of a godly man and a godly woman. But godly men put others before themselves. If married, their wives, their children, their brothers and sisters in Christ. Jesus demonstrated this sacrifice in going to the cross because of His love for us and putting us before Himself. Praise God for many godly men at Antioch who sacrifice for their wives and families and church and their Lord.

But this last point illustrates that no man or woman is all that God created us to be. We have all fallen short. But praise God, through Jesus, we can be forgiven and start again. Because of His sacrifice. We can't be godly men without God. If you never have accepted His sacrifice your sin, do that right now as we pray.