

Manhood Demonstrated

Unedited Transcript

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Good morning men. Wow, it is bittersweet to be here today. I won't be able to say much or I won't be able to get through it, but I did want to just express my appreciation to you all publicly. This is the anchor of our ministry is this Friday morning study, and your participation, your friendship, your encouragement over the years. I started this ministry as a 28-year old young man who was beginning to realize he didn't know everything. I still sort of thought I knew everything, and you guys, many of you knew me back then and you were so gracious to me. Those of you who have come in along the way have been just as gracious, just as encouraging.

I think about the blessing it's been to be involved with this ministry, not only from the ministry impact but as an employee. Just to be able to mentored by Pat Morley and all of the lessons I learned from him, what a precious gift that was that the Lord gave to me. Then to have such a wonderful staff to work with over the years, the great friendships and sacrificial people who were so committed to the mission, a best friend in Brett Clemmer. I was able to build a life. My kids grew up and I was at little league games, all of this because of Man in the Mirror. It's a little heavy this morning for me. That's why I'm going to move on the the bible study and not talk about that anymore, but I just want you to know how much I appreciate you all and how much I appreciate my involvement with this ministry. I'm looking forward to being a member of the board and what God is going to continue to do.

This week is going to be a little different. We not going to dive into any particular scripture. I'm going to give you a lot of scriptures as we walk together through the idea of what does manhood actually look like. Last week we talked about manhood defined, and this week we're going to talk about manhood demonstrated. You know, there's almost, to me anyway, I don't know if you're like me, but to me there's almost nothing more frustrating than knowing what to do but not how to do it. I mean, when I don't know what to do about a problem, I mean I don't even have any idea of how to solve it, then in some ways it's not all that personally frustrating, because I don't have any idea what to do. This is something. I had to get an electrical panel replaced at my house. I didn't sit there at night sweating thinking, "Gosh, I can't believe I'm not replacing this electrical." I have no idea how to replace an electrical panel. Wouldn't even know where to start, right? But when I know what to do, but I don't know how to do it, it's frustrating.

I remember last summer my lawnmower stopped working and I suspected it was related to the ethanol in the gas, and the carburetor, and all that stuff. Don't get me started on that. Anyway, I needed it fixed right away, so I had to have a guy come by while I was at work because I had to cut the grass as soon as I got home, all this kind of stuff. I had no idea what to do. It was \$100 or whatever to fix this lawnmower and nothing was really wrong with it. 3 weeks later it won't start. I'm thinking, "This is ridiculous." I know what's wrong with it. I know that I'm supposed to clean the carburetor out and get the little droplets of goo out of there. They're just clogging it up. I have no idea how to do it, so I'm thinking, "Okay, what am I going to do about this?" My wife goes and watches a YouTube video and says, "Look David." She shows me the video. "Look. It's not that complicated. It's like 5 steps."

I watch this video. It's the same type of lawnmower I have. I'm like, "Well, that doesn't look too bad." I take my little iPad, computer, whatever. I'm watching the video and I'm stopping it. I take mine apart. The very first step you take off this piece, and I open it up, and I look at mine. The one on the screen has like 4 pieces inside. Mine's got like 27. I'm like, "No. This is not good." I go find a video of that exact carburetor, and at the crucial moment when the guy says, "Okay." He's filming himself very carefully. He said, "Okay. Now what you're going to do is you're going to remove this." He puts his hand in front of the camera. He goes, "Take this out, move this around, pull this over here, and then put it down." I'm like, "Whoa. What happened? What happened?" I'm going back before and I'm like taking a picture of it before, saving a picture. I'm saving a picture after. I'm going to look at what moved while this hand was ... There's nothing more frustrating than knowing what to do but not how to do it.

Last week we talked about what to do as a man. We defined manhood, and we said that men, manhood was related to being able to move in the areas where you are responsible to make the unfruitful fruitful. We used the example or we used the creation story to talk about how the earth was unfruitful, and so God looked at the earth and said, "I want to make the earth fruitful." Out of the earth He made man so that man could then cultivate the earth, that man could serve the earth, that man could help the earth to become fruitful. Then He looked at man and He said, "Man is unfruitful," s out of man, out of the rib of a man, He makes woman so that the woman can come alongside the man to help the man be fruitful. This is woven into the very story of creation. The big idea from last week was where God has made you responsible, you need to move to make the unfruitful fruitful. We unpacked that a little bit and talked about what that might look like.

What we didn't do is really get into how are we going to make that happen. That's what I want us to focus on this morning is how do we actually make a difference as men. How do we live out this calling that God has given to us? The first thing I want us to note is that we have an example of what this looks like. You know, when we go to the scriptures and we see Jesus, some people are tempted to look at Him primarily as an example. Many of us recoil against that because we know that the most important things about Jesus Christ is not that He is our example, right? The most important thing about Jesus Christ is He did what we could never do for us, that He saved up in our place so that we could be reconciled to God. That is the most important thing about Jesus, but that doesn't mean that He's not an example for us.

He tells us He is Himself in John, just a couple of scriptures in John chapter 13, verse 14 and 15: "If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you." He says He's our example. John 13:34: "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you are to love one another." Jesus says, "Hey, I'm an example." Paul takes this to heart. 1st Corinthians 11:1: "Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ." 1st Peter 2:21, so from Paul's mouth, now from Peter's: "For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in His steps." There is a sense that Jesus is the example for us. He is the epitome of manhood. We see this in Romans chapter 5 when it talks about Christ being the new Adam, the new creation of manhood. What I want to do is I want to take 3 traits of manhood from Jesus' life and I want to show how they demonstrate what true manhood looks like and how we can apply those in our life today.

The first one is to pursue. The first one is to pursue. In Luke 19:10 it says, "For the Son of Man came to seek and save the lost. Philippians chapter 2 it talks about Christ being willing to humble Himself to come and to die, even to the point of death on a cross. Why? Because He was doing this mission that God had given Him. He gave the parables of finding the lost sheep right, and looking for the lost coin.

This is the theme of Jesus that He is going to go out to seek to do the will of His father. What does it mean to pursue then as a man? Well, it means that unfortunately, what it means is that it's always our responsibility to keep moving forward. It's always our responsibility to keep moving forward. That can be very frustrating. It can be very frustrating. Sometimes we just want to sit and wait. We feel like we've done enough. We've extended the olive branch. We've bent over backwards for somebody, or some situation, or in some relationship, and we just, "Look. It's their turn."

You go to Matthew chapter 5:23, it says, "So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift." You see that? It's saying if your brother, not if you have a problem with your problem. Right? That would be one thing. We could understand that. Look, if I've got a problem and I'm harboring something or whatever, then yeah of course I need to deal with that. This is saying if your brother has the problem you still need to go to your brother. It can be very frustrating.

I know in my relationship with Ruthie it feels like ... I could be wrong. I try to put a number on this. I had a higher number. I said, "Maybe I should use a lower number." Then I said, "No, I think it's probably the higher number," so I settled for one in between. I think 80% of the time, I am the one trying to seek reconciliation whenever we have an argument, or a disagreement, or something happens, right? Anybody else you feel like you're in that kind of a boat? Now I'm not saying it's because of my personal holiness, right. I think it's more about my personality and her personality, but sometimes it can get frustrating. It's like, "You know what? I'm tired of doing this. You're the one who got all mad at me for no reason. Why don't you come and say you're sorry?" Right? Anybody ever felt that way? Let's be honest here. Let's get real, right?

Some of you have this with kids that you have reached out to over, and over, and over, and over again, and it's just being rebuffed. Some of you have bosses that no matter what you do it's just never enough in those relationships. There's just criticism that just seems like it's unending. Sometimes in friendships you have a relationship that you think God wants you to maintain, so you reach out and you're the one always calling. "Hey, do you want to watch the game, or do you want to go for a bike ride, or you want to go whatever, fishing?" You're the one always instigating things. You're like, "Why doesn't that guy ever call me? He acts like he likes me. Why doesn't he call me?" The reality is that if we are going to demonstrate true biblical manhood, we have to be proactive not reactive. Proactive, not reactive. This is the model of Jesus. He said, "I'm going to go after. I'm going to seek and save the lost. I'm going to go after them where they are." We need to move toward the people and the situations that God has made us responsible for, not moving away from them.

There may be some things in your life right now that God has placed in front of you. It might be a relationship. It might be a situation. It might be a need in the community. It might be a need in your church. It's tempting for you to sit back and say, "You know, maybe they'll give me a call," or, "I offered to help and they didn't take me up on that offer." I had this situation with somebody that had said they wanted my help and I'd offered several times. I heard they were still doing some things. Frankly my mentality was, "Well, their problem. It's their problem.. they didn't accept my offer." It wasn't me. Other friends said, "You know what? You need to talk to them one more time. You're about to leave town. You have some things that would be helpful to them. You need to talk to them one more time." I reached out one more time and immediately I got a response, "I would love that. I cannot believe we haven't done that. Yeah, let's do that. I want to put it on the calendar today." Go ahead and commit to pursue the things that God has put in front of you. Don't step back and wait and see if they will happen.

The second things that we see in the life of Jesus is protecting. John 10:28: "I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand." "No one will snatch them out of my hand." Matthew 23:37, speaking to Jerusalem He says, "How often I would have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings." Jesus protects. John 15:13: "Greater love has no one than this, that someone lays down his life for his friends." This is the model of Jesus, that He protects the church, the He loves us, that He died for us in our place, that He sacrificed on our behalf.

You know, when I go out and ride my bicycle, one of the things that you'll find in a group is that the strongest riders are always the ones that are up at the front. The reason for that is because it's harder to ride at the front of a group. Frankly, the best group rides are when you have conscientious, stronger riders at the front, because what they will do is they'll recognize the ability of the rest of the group and they will go at a pace where for them is a good amount of exercise, but is appropriate for the rest of the people who are getting the wind broken for them. For example, when you're back in the pack if you're riding with 20 people, you can go about 20, 25% faster than you would be able to if you were at the front. That person can be quite a bit better rider than you and still have a good ride, and you can be in the back and go a lot faster than you would normally be able to go.

Now, if you put one of the slow people up in the front, which sometimes will happen as people drop off and come around. You've seen that happen. All of a sudden the whole group just slows down. The whole group slows down because they can't maintain the same pace in the front as they could have as a part of the group. There are people in your life that God wants you to break the wind for, He wants you to provide shelter for. They are going to be able to do some things that when you are out in front of them and you are carving your way through the obstacles, they're going to be able to do some things faster and better and stronger than they could do it otherwise because you are providing shelter. You're providing that ability to follow behind where you are already breaking through.

Think about this. If you were out in the woods and it was really cold and you had to start a fire, would you rather be in a situation where you're out there all by yourself and nothing around, or would you rather be out there in a situation where about 100 yards away a guy already had a campfire? Which situation's going to be easier to start a fire? It's a lot easier to start a fire when somebody's already built a fire, right? We need to build some fires for people in our lives. It means encouraging people. It means supporting them. It means helping them use their gifts, giving them opportunities to fail, giving them opportunities to take risks where it's not going to be the end of the world if it doesn't work out, right? Because there ought to be people in our life that know that we are protecting them. Having that mindset that others come first.

It means that we're going to be moving in front of people and not hiding behind them. Sometimes it's hard to move in front of people. You know, if you're the first person riding that bicycle, you're working harder than the rest of the people. That's true in leadership. That's true in manhood. Sometimes you're taking arrows from the enemy that were meant for the people behind you. It means that maybe in your company you may have to sacrifice a bonus to reward some other folks in your company that deserve it, and that it would be a blessing to them, and that it would increase the profitability and the success of your company.

It may mean that you have to be a dad to your kids and not their best friend, that sometimes you have to be the bad guy. You have to take a few bullets to say, "No, sorry. We're just not going to do that." "But dad, everybody ..." "Nope. Not going to do that." We have to be willing to suffer to lead. We have to be willing to sacrifice on behalf of others so that they don't end up suffering because we were too

cowardly, and stood behind and just watched things happen, and then we end up with all this devastation and this destruction. We need to be willing to stand out front and protect those that God has put under our responsibility.

Then the third thing that we see in the life of Christ is this, that He produced. That He produced. Pursuing, protecting, and producing. In John 8:28 Jesus says, "I do nothing on my own authority, but speak just as the Father taught me. And I do the will of my Father. Every action I speak only that which the Father gives me." The idea here is that Jesus is saying, "Everything I am doing, I am doing because I'm on a mission from God." That mission was always at the forefront. What did Jesus actually do? Well, He built a people that were the people of God. He saved and reconciled people to God. Romans, I mean Revelation 5:9. Revelation 5:9, speaking to Jesus it says, "For you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation." Jesus did exactly what God had called Him to do, and He succeeded in doing exactly what God had called Him to do. He had a mission. He accomplished that mission.

How does this come to us? Well, Ephesians chapter 2, verse 10: "We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them." Maybe of you probably know that verse. "We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them." God has given us a mission. He has crafted you with personality, with skills, with a story, with relationships, with circumstances and opportunities. Nobody else's is exactly like yours. He's done that because He wants you to get something done. He wants you to actually produce something in that area of responsibility that you have. The reality is that you want this, too.

I remember with my kids when Kyle, my youngest, he liked to do things beyond his years because he had an older brother and an older sister. You know what that's like. One of the things he got into at a young age was Legos. I mean, he was into Legos before he should have been able to hold them basically. He's snapping all these things together. He didn't have any use for the actual instructions. I'm not sure he could have followed the instructions. Too young probably, but he would build the most amazing things out of Legos. When he brought one of his creations to ... He would work on them. It was crazy. He was, I don't know, 3, 4 years old, and he would sit down for an hour and a half, 2 hours, 2 1/2 hours working on a project with Legos. I've never seen anything like that from my other kids. But when he got done and he brought that Lego creation to mom and dad, the smile on his face, the pride that he had in what he had accomplished was unbelievable. You know what? We don't lose that. We don't lose that.

I actually fixed ... I'm here to brag a little bit. I actually fixed that carburetor and the lawnmower worked. Now, I had no confidence. I told my wife, "I just wasted an hour and a half, because I'm going to be in Home Depot in about 30 minutes buying a new lawn mower, but I guess I'll try to crank it anyway." That was my mentality after trying to figure out what the guy did with his hand in front of the video. But it worked. You know what, and there's a sense of pride in that, right? As men, when we accomplish something, when we produce something, there's a sense because we know we were meant to do that. We know we were meant to move, to make, to be able to create. We need to move methodically in our lives. We need to move intentionally in our lives to produce what God wants us to produce.

There's very little that you can do by just throwing some effort at something momentarily and then walking away. Pretty much nothing in your life works that way, right? I mean, you can't maintain a yard like that. You can't maintain a house like that. You probably can't do your job like that. You certainly can't parent like that, or have a marriage relationship like that. In these other areas of our lives, I know

so many men who look at something like church and they'll say, "Well, I'll help out at the fall festival," you know? "I'll show up and I'll volunteer to oversee the dunking booth, or the bounce house, or whatever." What they're thinking is, "I'm a good man. I'm so committed to my church. Look what I'm doing." Seriously? One afternoon? That's what we're going to do is we're going to volunteer one afternoon and say that somehow that makes me a great Christian man, a great stalwart of my church. We need to produce, and to produce is going to take effort. It's going to mean we have to work at it, and the only way that's going to happen is if we are intentional, right? We need to persevere. If it is not hard, if it's not taking effort, you're probably not actually producing. If it's not taking effort, you're probably not actually producing.

Many of us produce at our work because we have to, right? That's the only way you can pay the mortgage, and clothe your children, and all those kinds of things. But a lot of times we may not see this in other aspects of our lives. I get it. I can remember coming home when my kids were little and I'd had one of those days at the office, and Ruthie would be like, "Well, let me ask you about this David. Do you think we should do blah, blah, blah or blah, blah, blah?" I'm like, "I don't care. You know how many decisions I had to make today? It does not matter to me one way or the other. Whatever." Now I didn't say any of this. This was all inside my head, okay. I'm not that stupid. I mean, I may be stupid. I'm not that stupid, okay. But that's how we feel sometimes, right?

It's like, "Can't I just relax here? Do I really have to invest this time, and energy, and effort in these things?" Yes. Yes. We aren't made to just work at work and then lay back the rest of our lives and float down some little lazy river while people feed us grapes and fan us with palm fronds. That's not life. Some of you are like, "Wait a minute. I thought that was what the deal was." No, that's not it. We are meant to invest our time and energy in our marriage relationship, in our children, in our neighborhood, in our church. We need to find those places where God has given us an opportunity to produce, and we need to get the things done that God wants us to get done so that we can produce the things that He has called us to do.

Now, when we think about this though one of the dangers is that we come away from a message like this and we think, "Okay. Well I've just got to pursue more. I've got to figure out who I need to protect. I've got to come up with a strategy. I've got to produce. I've got to make all these things happen." But you know, that's not the testimony of scripture. We cannot live as true men in our own strength. Galatians 2:20 says, "I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me." "The life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God." This is where the power comes from.

If you want to pursue more, if you want to protect more, if you want to produce more, then you need to know the big idea. The big idea is that we can pursue, protect, and produce because Jesus has pursued, protected, and produced for us. That's the big idea. He is going to be the power for my life. When I understand what He has really done for me in pursuing me in my sin, in my rebelliousness, in my laziness, in my lack of recognition of who He is, then I'm going to be willing to pursue the people in my life. When I understand how he has protected me, that I really am in Christ and that I can trust that nothing can separate me from the love of God as Paul says, when I really believe that, then I'm going to be willing to take a risk to protect people around me. When I recognize all that God has produced for me, all the circumstances, all the blessings, my spiritual blessings I have in Christ, the physical blessings, the material things, the relationships, the gift of life itself, He's created all those things for me so that I can be an instrument perfectly designed by Him to produce in the areas of responsibility that He has

given to me. When I see what He's done in my life, it inspires me and energizes me to want to do something in the lives of others.

Many of you work with young men. Let me just encourage you around these 3 ideas. When you work with young men, what I have found is a lot of them are frustrated, discouraged, disappointed because 1 of all of these 3 things is not present in their lives. They're not pursuing anything worth pursuing. They're not protecting anybody or anything because they haven't taken real responsibility for anything in their life. They go to work and they sort of do what their boss says, and it's the boss's job, it's the boss's workplace. They don't really have any real responsibility at their church, or with their friends, or whatever. They're just kind of drifting through life. They don't really produce anything of substance because again they're just figuring things out. Then they wonder why they don't really like their life, and why they're disappointed, and why they're discouraged, and why they wish there was something more to this, and, "I don't understand. How do I be a man?" Well, you're not doing any of the things that men do, so of course you're not going to feel like a man.

Let me encourage you if you're working with some younger men to give them a taste, not talk to them about this. It's okay if you want to talk to them about it, but give them a taste of this in your life. Bring them into a situation where they can see you pursuing something, someone, some responsibility, some reconciliation, some change that God has called you to. Allow them to see you protecting the things that God has made you responsible for. Allow them to see you sacrificing, suffering on behalf of other people and see what that looks like. Allow them to see you producing something. Get them in a meeting when you're meeting with folks and trying to get stuff done. Drag them along on a project in the community, something you're working on at church. Bring them into something that's happening in your workplace where they can see what it looks like to actually get something done. When they get a taste of this, many of them will begin to see, "Hey, I should take some responsibility in my life so that I can pursue, so that I can protect, so that I can produce." Then they begin to realize this is what manhood is all about, but it only comes when we look to Christ to give us the energy and the strength.

Let me give you some thoughts for application this morning. Is there someone or something that God has called you to pursue but where you are being disobedient? Is there something that God has placed in your life? Maybe you've tried. Maybe you've been rebuffed or rejected. It may be in your marriage relationship. You've just kind of given up. It may be with children. It may be a church situation, something in your workplace. Is it too hard? Is it too discouraging? Would you ask God today to give you the courage, the strength, the energy, the perseverance to go ahead and move into that situation, whatever it is? 2, protecting means sacrifice. Are there areas in your life where you are intentionally putting yourself last? where you'd made the decision not to get your own way, not to have it work out in your best interests, but rather to actually suffer for others, to be really inconvenienced for others? If not, you may not be protecting everybody and everything that you should be protecting. Number 3, can you quickly identify the 2 or 3 areas outside of work where you are producing something with your life? Maybe you're mentoring a man in a small group. Maybe you're having an impact with your children's friends, intentionally discipling your own kids. Maybe you're supporting your pastor in tangible ways, some leaders in your church. Where are you investing yourself to make a difference?

God created us. We are His workmanship created for good works. The big idea, we can pursue, protect, and produce because Jesus has pursued, protected, and produced for us. Let's remember, He is our older brother. He is the one who's gone before us, and in His strength we can be the men that He's called us to be. Let's pray.

God, we thank you so much for your Word this morning that shows us what manhood looks like and we can see manhood demonstrated. Father, I pray that you would by your power build into our hearts and minds a love for Jesus. Lord Jesus, we thank you for all that you have done. We thank you for the incredible gifts that you've given to us- the gift of your love, of your grace, of your forgiveness, of your salvation. Lord, we pray that you would energize us by the power of your Spirit that we could pursue, protect, and produce in the ways that you've called us to as men. Lord, we want to do that not only because that's what we're wired to do and what will make us happy, but it also Lord will bring you glory, and so we pray that you would do it. For your name's sake, amen.