

MAN IN THE MIRROR BIBLE STUDY  
BIBLICAL MANHOOD  
A MAN'S WIRING DIAGRAM  
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We are going to begin a new series this morning on Biblical Manhood. I don't know exactly how long it will last. We'll see how long I have something to talk to you about that's meaningful. This morning I am going to talk to you a little bit about why we need to have a study on Biblical Manhood, how we will flush out what it means to be a man from a Biblical standpoint, and then we'll take a look at our starting point.

First, why do we need to study Biblical Manhood? Hackers – that's why we need to study Biblical Manhood. Yesterday, I received an e-mail from a trusted friend that said, "I've been thinking about you. The attachment is v e r y funny." Very was spelled out really long. It just ran through my mind, you know this is a trusted friend, but I don't really think he talks like that, but I never gave it another thought. I double clicked on the attachment and Bill's caricature opened up, which was the dumbest cartoon I've ever seen anyway, and what follows is hardly worth it. Then suddenly a big, giant green monster leaped out of my computer and grabbed hold of my e-mail and began selecting my entire e-mail list and sending this e-mail to all of them. It's going ..... just like a cash register. I'm watching this thing, and I'm in a state of panic. I'm not a computer person, and I didn't know what to do. Finally, I thought if I unplug this thing at least it will stop sending it, so I unscrewed the Road Runner cable and stopped it at 72 – it had already gone out. I looked in my out basket, and there were 119 of you who fortunately did not get the e-mail. Then I began to process and think what in the world was even going on here. My son called me immediately because he was one of the guys who got it and said, "Dad, did you send this e-mail?" I said, "No, I didn't, it just took over my machine. Now he's around the back and hiding somewhere." He said, "Dad, you are so stupid." I said, "Great, tell me something I don't know." He said, "I knew not to open it because it says right on there "Cathy has found no virus on this or something – virus free. That's right on the e-mail. Dad, that's a dead giveaway when somebody puts that on a virus e-mail." I said, "Thanks for calling." Ha-ha-ha – he just thought it was really funny. Well, it didn't just grab my e-mail system, it also then wiped out every one of my files that have .exe – all my program start files got eliminated except the ones that were working. Of course, we did not know this until we shut the computer off and closed all those files and started it again at which time it eliminated all the rest of the programs that had been open. Ken is in the back there – stand up so everyone can see who you are – Ken Brashear is our computer tech (not Ken Moar). Ken Moar is a computer geek. Ken Brashear is our computer tech at Man in the Mirror. So Ken Brashear, not Ken Moar, (that was pretty funny) came over yesterday and was there until 4 o'clock re-installing Windows and everything else that goes along with it, and has to come back this morning to finish up. So that's one good reason why we need to study Biblical Manhood so that I don't commit murder.

What was really interesting is that my virus software did not detect it as it was kind a brand new virus. With some of the other people, though, it got blocked at the system level as they had some software that was already detecting it. Of the 72 that went out, probably half of them didn't even get delivered so that was good. It was kind of a sappy message, "I've been thinking about you, and this is really v e r y funny." A couple of guys got this message ostensibly from me, right, but they couldn't open the attachment. They sent a message back saying, "Pat, it was really good to hear from you, and I really want to see this, but I couldn't get it to open, would you please send it again?" Yeh, okay.

Obviously there are those kinds of things going on out there. There are other things going on, too. There's a very familiar list that was produced in 1987 based upon a study. I used it here many years ago, and you, no doubt, have heard this before. We could go through a long list of society's ills and everybody here would be very depressed at the end. This sort of summarizes a little bit of where we are in society and why, from a society standpoint, we need to study Biblical Manhood.

This was a study that was repeated in 1940 and then in 1980. In 1940, the seven major problems that were reported by schools were talking out of turn, chewing gum, making noise, running in the halls, cutting in line, violating the dress code and, of course, littering. Those are the seven major problems schools reported in 1940. Forty years later, in 1980, the seven major problems reported were drug abuse, alcohol abuse, pregnancy, suicide, rape, robbery and assault. Now, twenty years later, if we were to make up a new list, no doubt we would include weapons, mass murder, violence against teachers and perhaps a few other things. What's interesting about this study and other studies, this study really doesn't make note of it, is that most of these crimes are committed by men. Ninety percent of all major crime is committed by men. Ninety-three percent of all people who are incarcerated are men. Eighty-five percent of all those men have no father figure. Much of the problem that we've had with society can really be brought back to and laid at the feet of men.

That's at the level of society. At the level of the family, it has been well noted, as Dr. Dobson recently said, "What's the number one problem that we face?" Was he on Nightline or Dateline – one of those programs? He said that the greatest problem we face in our county is the disintegration of the family. We won't build a case for that, but I think you could build a strong case that that is the leading problem that we face. Again, when you look at the disintegration of the family and you keep going back up stream on that problem, you ultimately end up at the foot of men. This is a problem with a lack of effective male leadership – men not acting out their role as the head of the household.

Then, society, family and men themselves - we talked about the Battle for Men's Souls here before. There are 98 million men 18 years of age and older in the United States. Sixty-three million of these men have made no profession of faith in Jesus Christ, and only eight million men are involved in any kind of active discipleship for spiritual growth or spiritual formation like we are doing here today. Only eight million out of 98 million men – that's one in twelve men. So the analogy is, what would it be like to put a football team on the field and only one of those men understood the play book – 11 of the 12 have no idea how to play the game – what kind of chaos would result?

I was at a meeting with David Delk, our COO from Man in the Mirror, on Wednesday. We were talking to a small group of business leaders. When we were in the car and on the way back to the office, I said, "David, am I crazy here or is it not true that every problem that we have in our society can be traced back to the failure of a man?" We talked about that for a few minutes and, at the end of the day, if you keep going back upstream to find out why are things the way they are, I realize this probably is oversimplifying it, please somebody correct me. I don't want to be wrong on this. If I am oversimplifying it, I apologize, but it looks to me like every problem we have is a result of the failure of a man somehow to be a Godly man. That's why we need to do a study on Biblical Manhood.

I told you once about one of our donors. I was on the phone with him and he said, "Pat, I'm not going to be able to support your ministry anymore." I said, "I'm sorry to hear that. What's up?" He said, "Well, my heart is for prison ministry and crisis pregnancy centers." I said, "That's great, don't stop doing that. Think about what you're saying? Why do you think people are in prison? Why do you think a man's daughter hops into bed with another man's child?" At the core of every failure that we see in our society and culture somehow you can trace those back to the failure of a man. That's why we want to do the series.

A man is a good thing. A man is capable of heroism, and man has been created for a purpose. The problem is that when you cross-reference that to the beer ads and to the sitcoms and to the music, somehow this message has become confused. What we want to do for our own families and our own community is talk this through.

What is Biblical Manhood? How are we going to conduct this study? I've been thinking about this for a week, and this is like trying to take a bucket out of the ocean and use the contents of the bucket to describe the ocean. It is really a very big subject. I have learned a secret. The secret is that the most difficult part of communication is coming up with the right question. What I usually work on most of the week is trying to figure out the mega question that needs to be asked because if you can get the question right, that has a

way of focusing the message. So, I've been trying to come up with the right question that we should ask and I think this is it.

Who are the most admired men in Scripture, and why, and what do they have in common? Think about this. We could, for this series, come up with a list of characteristics or qualities that you should be brave, courageous and all these things, kind of external qualities that you would benefit from having. And at the end of the day, what you'll have is a long list of things that you already know and can't do, at least can't do as well as you'd like to do. Or we can get behind that and ask the question, what is taking place inside a man that produces bravery? What is that takes place transformationally in a man's heart that gives him courage in the face of adversity? What I want us to do is look at a number of Biblical characters. We're talking about Biblical Manhood, right? And we'll look at some men from culture, too. Look at some of the men in the Bible who are admired and ask the question, why do we admire them? Then try to find out the things they have in common and then we're going to build a definition of Biblical Manhood in the weeks to come.

Late breaking news here! I don't have a definition for you of Biblical Manhood. You're going to help me build this definition. We're going to build it together over the next few weeks. Series always have these long preliminaries, and by the time you're done, you say, "What does the Bible have to say? I thought this was a Bible study." So, let's do the starting point this morning for Biblical Manhood.

Turn to Genesis: Chapter 1, Verse 26. We're going to be looking at Adam who certainly would not be on most people's list of admired people. He's the guy who blew it, right? So Adam is not going to make the list. But we're going to have to look at him because he is the starting point for this deal. What is the unique contribution that the story of Adam makes for our understanding of Biblical Manhood? Verse 26: "Then God said, 'Let us make man...'" Adam, by the way, is the Hebrew word. " 'In our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea...'" Notice it's them so it's all of us. "...And the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.' So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created Him; male and female He created them." So you have male men and female men. Do you understand? "God blessed them and said to them, 'Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it...'" and do this ruling stuff. So the overarching idea, the wiring diagram, if you will, for a man at the very center of this diagram, the starting point, is that we are images of God. We are images of God.

As images, I've said here, it's kind of my new theme, that men want three things. They want something they can give themselves to, someone to share it with and assist them. That gives a reasonable explanation why those two things are too difficult, and that fits very well with the text here because, you see, as images of God, God gives us fellowship. At least Adam had fellowship with God. I think that's why we don't like him very much because he fowled that up. We have fellowship with God then we have mission or the idea of something we would give our lives to, and what's the mission according to the text? To rule over and subdue the earth that's often called the cultural mandate. That is the idea that Christians are not totally about the Kingdom. They engage the world and go out into the world and serve God by making the world a better place. What else do you see in the text? You see procreation, part of the hard wiring, if you will, of a man and sexual drive or instinct.

Chapter 2, Verse 15 is like the continuation of the passage we just read. "The Lord God took man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. And the Lord God commanded the man, 'You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die.'" It's not "if you eat of it, it's when you eat of it." "The Lord God said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.'" Then down to Verse 22, God took a rib out of Adam and said, "Then the Lord made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. The man said, 'This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman, for she was taken out of man.'" Part of the thing that's going on here is something to live for and someone to share it with. Part of our wiring diagram, if you will, is that we are made for companionship.

There are other things you can hang on this wiring diagram, but this is the main element of the wiring diagram. This is like the first page, then you look at other pages that show you the wires that go off of that. The problem with this diagram is that that was at a point in time. Then in Chapter 3, which we will look at, the fall took place so these images of God are now fallen images of God. What does that mean? That basically means that we are now subject to the influence of the world, the flesh and the devil. I am sure in the weeks to come we will talk a little bit about these things – the world, the flesh and the devil. This took place at a point in your life where you were created as an image of God, you fell, and if you are a Christian the next thing that happened was redemption. You were redeemed. This carries with us a lot of implications, too, which I'm not going to start getting into. I'm going to skip that for now, but the basic wiring diagram for the Christian is that you are, and this is the big idea, a redeemed, fallen image of God. You are a redeemed, fallen image of God. That's the basic wiring diagram for a man.

Let me tell you what happens when a guy gets redeemed. I have a picture on my wall, a drawing of Blaise Pascal. This picture is about 250 years old so it has some historical significance. I found it in a little print shop in England. Pascal is one of my heroes. He is the person who basically invented the calculator, he is a great philosopher, and he is also a Christian writer. Upon his death in 1654, they found a parchment sown into the lining of his clothing that defined, I believe, the essence of his own manhood. It is something that has really fired me and I pray it will fire you. This is what the parchment that was with him at all times said, "The year of Grace 1654, Monday, 23 November, until about half past ten in the evening until half past midnight, fire. God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob not a philosopher . Certainty, certainty, heartfelt, joy, peace, God of Jesus Christ, God of Jesus Christ, my God and your God, thy God shall be my God, the world forgotten and everything except God, he can only be found by the way he's taught in the Gospels, greatness of the human soul. Oh, righteous Father, the world hath not known me, but I have known thee. Joy, joy, joy tears of joy. I have cut myself off from Him. They have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters. My God, will thou forsake me? Let me not be cut off from Him forever and this is life eternal that they might know thee, the only true God in Jesus Christ whom Thou hath sent - Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ. I have cut myself off from Him, shunt Him, denied Him, and crucified Him. Let me never be cut off from Him. He can only be kept by the ways taught in the Gospel sweet and total renunciation, total submission to Jesus Christ and my director, everlasting joy in return for one day's effort on earth. I will not forget Thy word. Amen."

Let's pray:

Father when we look at the passivity of Adam and know that we are genetically related and that we have also had passivity in our lives, we pray, Lord, that you would continue to build a vision of Biblical Manhood, a vision that brings fire. We ask this in the name of Jesus. Amen.

/cjb 4/14/02