

Reconstructing Manhood

PURPOSE: You Were Made for THIS

Rough Transcript

Brett Clemmer

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Good morning guys. It's great to see you, welcome. Welcome to the **Man In The Mirror Bible Study**. Yeah, it's exciting to see you guys this morning and see everyone that's joining us online. We are in this series called **Reconstructing Manhood**. Why would we do a series called Reconstructing Manhood?

Well, because there's a lot of deconstruction going on, in case you haven't noticed. How many of you are familiar with the term deconstruction, or at least you've heard it? Right, so deconstruction, this is a process by the way, this is one of those words that in and of itself doesn't have... it's not good or bad. It's just a word, and deconstruction can be good and deconstruction can be bad. It's being used right now in our world and the church world, the Christian world, to talk about the idea that people are deconstructing their faith, they're taking it apart.

So can that be a good thing? Yeah, it can be a good thing if you're sort of deconstructing the sort of presuppositions and all of the sort of cultural influences on your faith, and even if you come out of a family that has an unhealthy religious worldview or religious practices, and you're realizing this doesn't really seem good, this doesn't seem consistent with scripture, then you can deconstruct those things. And then you can put your faith back together in a way that's biblical, in a way that's consistent with scripture, in a way that you do with a lot of counsel and a lot of prayer.

And so, just like you need to construct a faith that's biblical and theologically accurate, manhood is the same way, right? We need to think about our manhood in a way that is consistent with scripture, consistent with how God made us, because there are a lot of views of manhood in our culture that are not healthy, that are not accurate, that do not help us be the men that God made us to be. And so, this whole series is really about helping us take our manhood apart, but let's put it back together in a way that really make sense in light of scripture.

We started with a great talk from Jeremy, really oriented towards us older guys. I had a birthday this week, and so I'm getting some new senior discounts. I'm very excited about that. I think I can get a 99 cent drink at Taco Bell or 10 cents, or I don't even know. I'm too old to go to Taco Bell, but really, that talk was really oriented towards a lot of us older guys. And really, I hope the guys that watched it, the guys that experienced it here, that you took it as a challenge in a good way, and a challenge to sort of break apart some of those presuppositions that we even have about each other, about younger guys, and about what they're feeling and what they're going through.

And really recognizing that what we as older guys, our responsibility, what God has called us to, is to really make ourselves available, to give ourselves away to those guys that are behind us on the journey. And you could be a 35-year old, old guy in the faith. If you're a guy that's been a Christian your whole life and you're in your 30s, you could be a person that can reach behind you, sort of spiritually reach behind you a generation and bring guys along.

All right. So last week Pat talked about identity, and this week we're going to talk about purpose. So if identity is who you are, who I am as a man, as a Christian man in our context, purpose then is about

what am I here for? What am I here for? What am I going to do? And so, in scripture, we talk about sometimes when you look at, for instance, the epistles, we talk about the indicative and the imperative.

So a little Bible Study lesson here. The indicative, these are things that are true, right? So you are a child of God. You are a sinner saved by grace. Those are the indicatives. God does love you. God did send His son for you. Those are all the indicatives. These are descriptive about us and that's your identity. Your identity is descriptive, who am I?

The imperative is the therefore, because I am this, because God is this, therefore I want to live my life in this way. Why is that important? Because if you jump to the imperative, you get legalism. If you just jump to what I'm supposed to do and you don't handle the why, then you're going to stray into legalism, and you get into like you should do this and you should do that. And nobody likes being should on, right? Thank you. Thank you very much. The whole preamble was just to get to that joke right there.

No. So the indicative is who we are, in this case is who we are. And then the imperative is the therefore, okay. So I'm going to cover a lot of scripture today. I'm going to cover so much scripture that I made a slide just of scriptures. And I did this just to see a bunch of you grab your pens so that I could do that.

So I'm going to put that slide up again at the end, and I'll just leave that up there when we're done. I know a lot of guys like to grab those notes and I don't want you to feel like, as I'm reading scripture, you've got to keep scribbling. Just stick with me and all the scripture will be up there at the end.

THE WORLD'S PERSPECTIVE

So here's what we're going to start with. We're going to start with the world's perspective, the world's perspective of on what our purpose is. How many of you saw the movie Gladiator? Have you ever seen the movie Gladiator? So in Gladiator, it's like the manly, Roman Centurion war movie, right? Maximus has this statement. He actually says it at the beginning, and he says, "What we do today will echo in eternity," right?

What we do in our lives will echo in eternity. That is a great, empty statement that the world wants you to believe about what your purpose is. Okay. And now, why do I say that? You're like, "No, but what I do today does echo in eternity." No, no, no. Eternity should echo in what we do today. So again, this is the indicative leads to the imperative, right? So if you jump to the imperative, then you're like, "Oh, well, man, what do I do today? It's going to echo in eternity." Well, only if you're doing it for the right reasons, only if you're doing it because you know who you are.

And so, what the world says about our purpose is I would sum it up in this word, acquisition. What the world says that we are about, what our purpose is, is acquisition. So what are we supposed to acquire? Well, happiness, right? Hey, you know what? You just got to do what makes you happy. That's your purpose in life, is to make yourself happy. Or you could be like altruistic and say, "Well, your purpose in life is to make other people happy." And so, but why do you make other people happy? Because honestly, it'll make you happy. Right? That's the ultimate message of that.

Or maybe they're about acquiring wealth, maybe that's your purpose, is to acquire wealth. And you'll tell yourself these stories about what you're going to do with the wealth, how you're going to make other people happy. But really, it's about making yourself happy. It's about your own comfort, your own convenience, right?

And so, these are... what do we call these things? Idols. So the world gives us a view of purpose that's really based in idolatry, but the Bible gives us a different way. The Bible, instead of talking about acquisition, talks about contribution. What can we contribute? How can we serve? Remember in Matthew 26, 63 and 64, it's in the other gospels too, Jesus says, "The son of man came not to be served, but to serve." Right? "The son of man came not to be served, but to serve."

And so, this is a great sort of overarching statement about our purpose. And so, this is then from... Whoops, this is then from the sort of big picture. We're going to look at it, the big picture of our purpose as Christian men. And then we're going to look more at our particular purpose, and we're going to call that your calling.

CALLING: YOUR 'BIG PICTURE' PURPOSE

So what is the big picture purpose that you have? And so, one of the things I want you to think about in your big picture purpose, this doesn't change. Your big picture purpose doesn't change. So what is your big picture purpose? Well, turn to Matthew 22, 37 to 34.

This is a very famous interaction that Jesus has with the teachers, the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and a lawyer. The verse says, "A lawyer asked him a question," so apologies to lawyers watching or present. But whenever a lawyer asks you a question, right? So verse 37, "He said to them, 'You should love the Lord, your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it. 'You should love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments depend all the law and the prophets."

And so, part of your purpose, part of your big picture purpose is to love God and to love others. Now, love is not about making yourself feel better. It's not about making yourself happy. Can you be happy when you love someone? Absolutely. Can you be sad when you love somebody? Absolutely. And so, your big picture purpose is to love God and to love others.

In Genesis, if you go to Genesis one, we're going to see a couple of universal or big picture purposes here. Genesis 1:28. This is right at the very beginning, "God blessed them and said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and the birds of the heavens, and over every little thing that moves on the earth.'"

So big picture purpose is to take care of creation, is to have dominion over the earth, is to be fruitful and multiply. And if you go over to chapter two, verse 15, you see the Lord, God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and keep it. And so, God gives us a big picture purpose. He gives us this wiring for vocation, and we'll talk about that later on in this series, but we were made to work, that's why we like it so much.

Then the fall happens, that desire for work gets corrupted, then you get to the extremes. Corruption always brings extremes. So you get workaholic and sloth, right? That's the unhealthy way of looking at vocation and at work, that's how it's corrupted.

And then if you go over to Matthew 28, I told you we're going to fly around here. Matthew 28, the passage that we probably talk about here more than maybe any other passage, is the Great Commission. "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations." And so, making disciples, this is a big picture purpose that doesn't change. This is what we're called to do.

But interestingly, keep turning, keep going to the right to second Corinthians five, second Corinthians five, and we're going to go to verse 20, because in a way, I think this verse might kind of sum it up for our big picture purpose. Second Corinthians five 20 says, "Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ. We are ambassadors for Christ, God making His appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God."

And so, really, if you wanted to have a word that describes your big picture purpose, you are an ambassador. And if you think about what does an ambassador do? Well, an ambassador speaks on behalf of the one who sent him, with the authority of the one who sent him, but also under the authority of one who sent him, right?

So we are ambassadors for Christ and our King, the person that we're an ambassador for, He has a specific mission that He has sent us to accomplish, and that mission is reconciliation to God. So pre-fall, we got this responsibility of tending the world, tending creation of working for a purpose, right? And then that got corrupted in the fall.

And so, God put in our hands, He's drafted us into the diplomatic core for the kingdom of God, and he has said, "Bring reconciliation. That's your big picture purpose, is to bring reconciliation." So this is our big picture purpose, to be an ambassador. So what we're going to talk about now is our calling. And so, let me go ahead and give you a Big Idea on calling. All right.

My calling is found at the intersection of my skills, interests, opportunities, and gifting. My calling is found at the intersection of my skills, interests, opportunities, and gifting, but the next sentence is key. Don't put a period here, put a comma here, "Under the guidance of the holy spirit." Okay. So let's talk about how do we look at those things?

Now, the one thing... Let's start here, let's go over to Ecclesiastes, which is right after Proverbs, right after Song of Solomon like I said. It's not. It's right before Song Solomon, sorry. Ecclesiastes three verse one. Now, here's the thing I want to say. If your big picture purpose doesn't change, you're an ambassador called to bring reconciliation, your calling can change. Okay.

CALLING: YOUR PERSONAL PURPOSE

Look at Ecclesiastes 3:1, "For everything, there is a season and a time for every matter under heaven." So you could have a purpose. You could be called to do something, but that can change. Okay. Now, now Pat told a great story last week. You guys remember the story about the guy who realized that this child and his family that they had... I don't think it was adopted, but it brought in as a foster child to sort of rescue this child from a horrible situation. That's going to be their mission. That's their purpose.

But at some point, that child may grow up and become independent. And you go, "Well, if that's my mission in life, and now my mission's gone, well, I guess I'm done." No, you're not. Your purpose can change. Your mission in life can change, it can develop. And in fact, the experiences that you have as you fulfill the callings that you have in the moment, those experiences will then build to the next one, and build to the next one. Right?

So don't think that maybe you're in a season right now, where you're not really sure what you're calling is, you thought you knew what your calling is, and you're realizing that, that isn't something you can do anymore. Don't don't despair, right? Don't be sad. God's going to bring a new calling for you, a new purpose for you to execute right now.

So I said, skills, interest, gifting, and opportunities. So Proverbs 20, let's go to Proverbs 20, just turn over one book. Proverbs 20:29. So your skills are what you've learned to do. How do you learn to do things? Well, experience and education are two primary ways that you learn. Proverbs 20:29 says, "The glory of young men is their strength, but the splendor of old men is their gray hair."

Okay. Now you might be like, "Well, this is just about young bucks and old dudes." No, it's not. It's actually about your skills. When you're younger, you've got, trust me, a lot more energy. All right. A 25 year old professional football player is different than a 55 year old former professional football player, unless your name's Tom Brady. But besides that, you're going to be different as you grow older. That's what this verse is pointing to, that in youth there's vigor, there's energy. That's fantastic.

But as you get older, the splendor of old men is their gray hair. Not a feature, right? Not a consequence of being older, but the splendor of old men is their gray hair. What is he talking about when he says gray hair? Well, there's another verse in Proverbs, says, "Gray hair's a crown of splendor." What's he talking about here? He's talking about the... Guys, the experiences that we've had, the education that we've had, formal education, but even more so the sort of along the way, life education that you've had, those

things are splendid. Those are fantastic skills that you've acquired along the way. And so, those skills, those experiences, that education that you have, that is part of your calling.

The next thing I said was your interests. Now, I almost pulled this out. I almost pulled interest out. So your interests are what you like to do, right? What you like to do. I almost pulled this out because honestly, I couldn't find verses about, "Hey, just do what you like to do." There's no Bible verses like that.

So this is a little bit more of an argument sort of from logic. God made you a certain way. He doesn't make you to like certain things and then say, "Oh, you don't get to do those. That's just not consistent with the character of God. So God's going to wire you to like certain things, and sometimes this is called your passion. And this this is the most dangerous thing. This goes back to the world's view of your purpose. What does the world say? "Follow your passion."

Well, the problem is that your passion can be very much a slave to your sinful nature. So if all you're looking for is to follow your passion, do what makes you happy, and in a vacuum, it's not going to lead to good things. It's going to lead right back to selfishness, just trying to make myself happy. It's not contribution, again, it's going to become more acquisition, but those things can be indicative of how God is working in your life.

Let me give you an example. When I was a kid, I played football and I thought soccer was stupid. And our seasons conflicted, so football players and soccer players were in competition with each other. And what's the big deal? You run around and kick a ball. What? We hit each other.

So then I had kids and both my kids play soccer. Guess who started to like soccer? And then as I'm watching my kids and I'm watching the coaching and I'm like, "Well, I don't know what this guy thinks he's doing, but I could certainly coach seven-year olds better than him." So I got into coaching soccer, then I started going to soccer coaching clinics. Okay.

So my in interests grew, not just in soccer, but in coaching and in going to... and then coaching soccer. Then when my daughter came to me one day and said, "I don't want to play soccer anymore." And I said, "You don't understand. I just went to another clinic and got another certification."

I said, "All right, what do you want to do?" And she ended up rock climbing. So now all of a sudden, I'm not interested in soccer anymore. I'm interested in rock climbing. And then God gave me rock climbing. And so through this interest that I grew in rock climbing, then I started hanging out at a rock climbing gym. And at the rock climbing gym, I started hanging around with all these guys that were like the teenagers that I was coaching.

But then also, all these young men in their 20s. And I started having all these amazing conversations with guys. And you know what I found out? A lot of those guys didn't have dads. And just having somebody to say to them, "Dude, don't move in with your girlfriend. That's the dumbest thing you could possibly do. That's not fair to her. You're getting all the benefits and none of the responsibilities. Why should she do that? Why would you do that to a girl that you say you love?"

Nobody had ever said that to him before. Why? Because God used my interest in rock climbing to give me an opportunity to speak into the lives of younger men. So that became part of my calling for a time because that's where God put me. Which leads to opportunities, right? So this is a great example of opportunities. Turn to Ephesians 2:10.

I'm turning with you, so we're doing this together. Ephesians 2:10 "For we are His workmanship created..." We are his workmanship, what's that? Identity, right? "Created in Christ Jesus for good works," listen to this, "Which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them." So God prepared these opportunities for you beforehand. God knew that I was going to learn to coach soccer, learn to

coach rock climbing, hang out in a rock climbing gym, and counsel a young couple. Like before the dawn of time, God knew that, that interaction was going to happen. That's crazy, right?

And on and on, and on with those kinds of... So those are your opportunities. And then turn over to Psalm 138:8, because the fourth thing here is your gifting. Psalm 138:8 says, "The Lord will fulfill His purpose for me. Your steadfast love oh Lord, endures forever. Do not forsake the work of your hands."

The Lord has a purpose for you already, and He's given you gifts. In the New Testament, we see the gifts like the gift of evangelism and teaching, and administration, and mercy, and all those spiritual gifts assessments that you can take. This is all part of your gifting. And the good news is that the Lord will fulfill his purpose for you, right? That those gifts are the works of his hands.

So your skills, your interests, your opportunities, your gifting, all of these things are going to intersect in your life in a way that's going to point at your calling. But let me just give you a piece of advice here. You're not smart enough to figure it out. Okay? You're distracted. You've got all these voices that are going to be talking to you, that are going to be telling you, "Oh, well you should do this. You're really good at this. You should do that. Oh, I want you to come do this."

All these opportunities are going to present themselves. All of these interests are going to compete in your life. I don't just like soccer. I like a lot of things, right? I don't just like coaching. I like a lot of things. There's a lot of things I like that may not really be something that I'm supposed to do. There's always opportunities out there. There's always opportunities.

If you're on LinkedIn, every day, if you're on LinkedIn, they're like, "Hey, you should look at this job. You should look at this job. You should look at this job." There's always opportunities. You go into church, there's a 100 needs all around you. So how do you determine how to bring this intersection of skills, interests, gifting, and opportunities? How do you determine how to bring those things together? You pray, you seek the counsel of the holy spirit. You pay attention for divine moments, and you listen to the counsel of your brothers.

So let's look at some verses on that. So Psalm 57:2, "I cry out to God most high, to God who fulfills His purpose for me." Turn back over to Proverbs 15, sort of take these verses in. If you want to, you don't even have to turn to them. Just let me read them to you. Proverbs 15:22, "Without counsel, plans fail. But with many advisors, they succeed.

Proverbs 20 verse five. "The purpose in a man's heart is like deep water, but a man of understanding will draw it out." So you can see that you have a responsibility to draw it out. You have a responsibility to let the holy spirit. God plans your steps, and so you need to look to the holy spirit to guide you. And then one of the ways that He does that is that He gives you brothers. He gives you a council of advisors. And if you don't have a council of advisors, if you don't have... Guys, if you don't have two or three guys who speak into your life, and guys that are different from you, right?

Don't find three twin brothers who are just going to... who think exactly like you do, are going to say exactly what you think. Don't have an advisor who doesn't know Christ. Your accountant can manage your numbers or your tax preparation, that's fine. But a guy that's speaking into your heart, a guy that's telling you who... reminding you who you are in Christ, and then helping you live out that purpose, that needs to be a man of faith.

And I would really encourage you to find somebody that's a little older than you, find somebody that's a little younger than you. One of the great things that's going on in Man In The Mirror right now is I've got a man of strength and a man whose gray hair is splendid, right? I've got Jeremy on one side that you've now all met, who has a vigor and vibrancy, and perspectives and passion.

And then I've got Pat on the other side, who has wisdom and experience, and knowledge, and passion. And I'm in the catbird seat. I'm just sitting there just drinking it all in. So I would encourage you, find guys like that so that you can figure out your calling.

So what I'm going to encourage you to do, here's your application. I'm going to encourage you, first of all, to read all of Ecclesiastes. If you want a good book on trying to figure out what your purpose in life is, read Ecclesiastes. Now you're going to be like, "Ecclesiastes, everything is vanity, a chasing after the wind. That sounds depressing." It is depressing if you're trying to do it on your own, that's part of the point of Ecclesiastes, is as a man that's trying to just figure all this stuff out on his own, a man who's devoted to acquisition, is just going to lead to vanity.

But Ecclesiastes gives the answer. No, no, no. It's not about doing it on your own. It's about relying on God. It's about listening to the scriptures. It's about following His commands. It's about figuring out who you are, and then living that out. So read Ecclesiastes, and I would encourage you to do that every year. I would encourage you to do an annual review of your life, and

And there's lots of tools that you can get to do that, Christian tools that you can get to do that. But one way is just to sort of review these scriptures. So you read Ecclesiastes, here's all the scriptures we talked about. So you can take a picture of that or do a screen capture of that, if you're watching this on your phone or online. And just take some time every year, take a week or two and go through some scripture. Set some appointments with some guys, that you go to coffee and just talk through some of these things, so that you can get their input into your life. And sort of do an annual review of your purpose, because your purpose can change.

And always remember though, that you've got this big picture purpose, right? As a what? As an ambassador, right? That's your big picture purpose, is you're an ambassador, but then your specific purpose in life, your calling will be the intersection of your skills, interest, gifting, and opportunities. On the back of the handout, if you're watching this online and you haven't gotten the handout yet, download that handout and print it out, or at least open it up so you can look at it.

So on the back of your handout, there's a little chart. Okay. And so, this chart is just a very simple, rudimentary way that you could actually do this. You could think through, "What are the skills that I have? What have I learned to do, especially lately? What are the interests? What do I like doing? What are the passions that I have in my life? What is my gifting? What do people tell me that I'm good at, especially from a spiritual standpoint? What are the opportunities? Where am I in my life right now?"

Think of all the different places that you're connected right now in your life. And then what are some interactions that you've had, that feel like they've been holy spirit inspired, holy spirit guided? Take some time over a week or so. I don't know, there's six boxes and there's six days until next week. Maybe every day for the next week, you just sort of write things in one of those boxes, use these scriptures to help guide you in that.

And then in that final box, you can write down, "This is what I think I'm called to do right now." And then share that, share that with the guys at your table, share that with the guys you're watching the Bible Study with, share that with a small group, another small group that you're in, or a friend, an older brother, a younger brother, and talk through that together. But we have a calling, we have a purpose. An eternity echoes today in what we're called to be.

Let's pray. Father, thank you so much for saving us. Thank you that we do not live lives in our own strength, what we live lives in Christ. Thank you that you have sent the holy spirit to live in our hearts, to guide us, to prompt us, to protect us, to be our conscience.

And Lord, I pray for every guy that's watching this Bible Study, that you would even now be working in their heart to reveal what your calling on their life is right now. Father, so that we can live a life that brings you glory, so that we can live a life that reconciles the world to its creator. And so that we can live

a life Lord, that impacts the people around us in a way that helps them know you better, and deepens our relationship with you. In Jesus name. We pray. Amen.