

Dating, Sex, Marriage  
RUF, Fall 2012

## What Makes a Man?

Deuteronomy 17:14-20

"When David's time to die drew near, he commanded Solomon his son, saying, 'I am about to go the way of all the earth. Be strong and show yourself a man....'"  
(1 Kings 2:1-2)

### Scripture Introduction

Tonight is the fourth part in our study on dating, sex, and romance. Tonight and next week we are going to consider what the bible has to say on the subjects of masculinity and femininity: What makes a man? What defines a woman?

I won't be drawing any pictures. It's safe to assume you already understand the biology. We'll concentrate on the social and moral questions instead.

Why is this important? Why should we care tonight about understanding masculinity?

#### From a guy's perspective:

It's important, because sociologists tell us we are driven by scripts – the narratives around us that define what it means to be normal. For guys, that means the story of what it means to be a man. Our vision of masculinity drives how we treat women, how we make and keep friends, how pursue work, and how we relax and party.

We didn't create this script all on our own. Visions of manhood have been handed down to us by our fathers and brothers, by teammates and bullies, by girl friends and girl rejections, by Dos Equis and Old Spice, by Tony Soprano and Don Draper and the casts of Animal House and Entourage.

It would be wise for us to step back for a moment and evaluate the social expectations that so heavily ratify that we are no longer boys, and to do so from a different perspective, an ancient perspective like the bible's.

#### From a girl's perspective:

It's important for you, because you have to live with us. (I feel like I need to apologize for that.) Unless you hand yourself over to a convent, I don't know of many ways to get around having men in your lives. You are daughters, sisters, friends, and girlfriends. And one day perhaps, you will be also be wives and even mothers. My wife would have never imagined being the mother of three little boys. She's a boy-mom. But here she is now, constantly thinking about what it looks like to shape our little ones into men, into good husbands and good fathers.

Ladies, God has give you the power to shape us as you relate to us. We need you to do that, and to do it well. And so, tonight is for you too.

So, where in the bible do we turn to understand what it means to be a man? There are many places, but I've chosen a passage in the Old Testament about the kingship of Israel.

Here's why. The king of Israel was supposed to be the model of a man, not only for God's people, but for all the nations. He was supposed to be a prototype, much like Adam, except even better. He was supposed to be a hero who would courageously stand up against evil instead of cowardly surrendering to it.

And so, in 1 Kings, when King David, Israel's greatest king, is on his deathbed, he gives instructions to his son Solomon. He's handing over the kingdom to him, and in this final father-son "man-moment," this is what David says to his Solomon:

"I am about to go the way of all the earth. You, be strong and show yourself a man...."

That was the calling of the king:

**"Be strong and show yourself a man."**

Now listen to what that means from Deuteronomy 17:14-20:

### **Scripture Reading**

"When you come to the land that the Lord your God is giving you, and you possess it and dwell in it and then say, 'I will set a king over me, like all the nations that are around me,' you may indeed set a king over you whom the Lord your God will choose. One from among your brothers you shall set as king over you. You may not put a foreigner over you, who is not your brother. Only he must not acquire many horses for himself or cause the people to return to Egypt in order to acquire many horses, since the Lord has said to you, 'You shall never return that way again.' And he shall not acquire many wives for himself, lest his heart turn away, nor shall he acquire for himself excessive silver and gold.

"And when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, he shall write for himself in a book a copy of this law, approved by the Levitical priests. And it shall be with him, and he shall read in it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the Lord his God by keeping all the words of this law and these statutes, and doing them, that his heart may not be lifted up above his brothers, and that he may not turn aside from the commandment, either to the right hand or to the left, so that he may continue long in his kingdom, he and his children, in Israel."

### **Prayer**

### **Introduction**

The very first thing I want you to see is that from the bible's perspective, mature masculinity is NOT culturally obvious. In fact, we are often plainly wrong about what it means to be a man!

Look at verses 14-15. The passage tells us that Israel is going to want a king that fits the mold of what all the other nations around them have. And God says, "Okay. You can have a king. But I'm going to choose him. You can't be trusted to choose the right kind of man." The implication here is that the kind of man that the nations have elevated as IDEAL, is not the same kind of man that God considers IDEAL.

**In other words, we cannot trust our own social norms, our own eyes and hearts, when it comes masculinity. We have to trust God to write the script for us instead.**

What is the script that God writes defining manhood? I think we can boil it down to three basic statements from our passage.

### **1. A mature man lives under the authority of God.**

This is the rationale for not allowing a foreigner to become the king of Israel. It wasn't a matter of ethnic purity – any ethnicity was eligible for inclusion in Israel. This was a matter of worship. It was a matter of publicly belonging to God.

But it is more than just a public statement. Look at verses 18-20. Listen to what is expected of a king.

“And when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, he shall write for himself in a book a copy of this law, approved by the Levitical priests. And it shall be with him, and he shall read in it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the Lord his God by keeping all the words of this law and these statutes, and doing them...”

In other words, a good king was someone who belonged to God not just publicly, but privately as well. The book of the Law was to be with him ALL THE TIME, all the days of his life. God's Law was intended to inform every aspect of his life.

What does that mean for us?

It means that maturity in a man is not measured by his independence. It's not measured by his ability to ride off into the sunset all alone, free from anyone telling him what to do, free from burden or obligation. Maturity in a man is measured by his dependence, by his willingness to submit to God in every aspect of his life.

Ladies, as you think about dating, here is a high standard that I would urge you to consider. Look for a guy who will say no to his friends. Look for a guy who will say no to himself. Look for a man who will even say no to you, if it comes to that, in order to live under the rule of God in every area of his life... not just the areas that are convenient. Now, I realize that narrows the pool a little bit on campus, but if you are going to compromise on what you're looking for in a man, do it on height or complexion or smell or his ability to read. Don't compromise on his willingness to submit to God. Can he say no to his friends? Can he say no to himself? Can he live under God's authority?

Guys, I realize we hate authority. We're competitive. We don't like submission or to be told what to do or anything else that appears like weakness. But as the great Kenny Rogers said and said often, “You gotta know when to fold em.” You gotta' know when to bow down, when to yield. And that time is now. God's authority in your life is a good thing. It is what C. S. Lewis called, “a blessed defeat.”

Here's what I mean. My 3 year-old Charlie is a physical boy. That's how he interacts with the world around him – physically, usually standing on his head. One day I go into Charlie's room because I hear loud pounding, and that's not good. As I enter his room, I see Charlie banging his head into the wall. Hard. Repeatedly. And laughing. I don't know why he's doing it, but that's not the point – he thinks banging his head into the wall in this

moment is AWESOME. That's all you need to know. But, I know it's not awesome. I love Charlie. I am concerned about Charlie's future, his prospects, his overall quality of life, and so I make Charlie stop banging his head into the wall. I don't ask. I demand. I make it a rule. And Charlie stops. He submits to me, and moves on to something else.

That was a blessed defeat for him. A blessed defeat is when submission is good for you, when you gain life and dignity and freedom not by winning, but by losing.

According to the bible, a mature man knows that he gains life and dignity and freedom, even nobility and power, by losing his own independence to live under God's authority.

This is our first calling as men.

## **2. A mature man uses his power for the good of others.**

Look at verses 16-17.

Only he must not acquire many horses for himself or cause the people to return to Egypt in order to acquire many horses, since the Lord has said to you, 'You shall never return that way again.' And he shall not acquire many wives for himself, lest his heart turn away, nor shall he acquire for himself excessive silver and gold.

Horses, Women, and Wealth – all of these were royal signs of power in those days. Now, I need to be clear: *power in and of itself was not a bad thing*. In fact, power is a good thing. In Genesis 1, the bible teaches that we were made to have power. We were made to rule over the earth, to be kings and queens of God's creation.

The problem of power is not that we have it. The problem of power is how we use it.

The clue in our passage about how our power is to be exercised is found in the command, "Don't go back to Egypt." Why not? What's so bad about Egypt? Israel had a history with Egypt. Egypt was the place where Israel had been enslaved for hundreds of years. It was the place of bondage.

A good king would never use his power to lead his people back into bondage.

He would never use his power to rob those around him of their freedom and dignity.

He would never use his power to diminish his brothers, or to dominate women by collecting for himself a harem of wives to show off or to please him whenever he's in the mood.

**Winning is not what makes a good man. What makes a good man is the lengths he will go to in order to nurture and protect those around him.**

### **Pornography**

I want to pause here and say something about pornography. This may feel like a strange interruption, but I think our passage leads us here.

The porn industry in our country is thriving. That's probably not a surprise. "(We) are a part of a culture that spends more money each year on pornography than country music, rock music, jazz music, classical music, Broadway plays, and ballet combined."<sup>1</sup> It pulls in almost \$3 billion a year in the U.S.

Recent statistics tell us that 86% of guys ages 18-23 have interacted with pornography just in the last month.<sup>2</sup>

***Pornography is a return to Egypt.*** Pornography is slavery. It is bondage, not only for yourself, but for the women and men in the industry as well.

A pastor in Seattle tells a story about a radio show he was invited to host. A man called in and confessed his addiction to pornography, but said that he didn't feel too badly about it because the women were getting paid and probably having fun in the process. During the commercial break a young woman from his church was sitting next to him in the booth and she started weeping. They started talking, and she explained that she had been sexually abused by her uncle as a young girl. She came to see herself as dirty, a girl who couldn't get clean, and so she started sleeping with older men who gave her attention. When she was old enough she began stripping, and then she started being solicited as a prostitute. She obliged because the money was good. Eventually, she was offered a job as a star in an adult film. But the entire industry was so sickening, so degrading, and animalistic that she had to get high and wasted before each movie shoot just to endure the violations. She said that none of this stopped until she became a Christian. Here's what the pastor wrote, "As she spoke I couldn't help but wonder if there were men from my church out renting her videos to take home without knowing she would be sitting in church next to them and singing songs to Jesus the following Sunday."<sup>3</sup>

Guys (and girls), pornography is selling you a lie. It lies to you about sexual norms. It lies to you about masculine power and feminine beauty. It even lies to you about pleasure.

It doesn't look like a lie. It doesn't look like slavery. I get that. But don't trust your eyes. Trust the girl who said she had to get high and blitzed in order to make you believe that this was what she really wanted.

Guys, we have an obligation to nurture and protect the women around us, and that includes treating all of them, even the ones that we don't know, with the dignity and respect they deserve as human beings, and not as objects to be used for our own sexual agendas.

Stop consuming pornography.

Some of you may feel powerless to do that tonight. You are burdened by the shame of repeated failure, and feel stuck in your own sexual brokenness and slavery.

I want you to hear the good news of the gospel from Galatians 5:1:

"It is for freedom Christ has set you free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery."

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<sup>1</sup> Mark Driscoll, *Reforming Male Sexuality*.

<sup>2</sup> Mark Regnerus and Jeremy Uecker, *Premarital Sex in America*.

<sup>3</sup> Driscoll, *Reforming Male Sexuality*.

Jesus can bring you out of Egypt. And Jesus can empower you to stay out of Egypt.

But you can't do it alone. Talk to someone. Talk to one of the guys on our staff. We would love to help you practically along your journey.

A mature man is defined not by his commitment to nurture and protect those around him.

### **Dating**

I want to say one more thing on this and then we'll move on.

Guys, if you are in a relationship or hope to be in one at some point, what does it mean to nurture and protect the woman beside you? Here's where you have to start:

You need to start by protected her from yourself, from the sins of the very man to whom she is offering her heart. The enemy you need to stand up to first and foremost is the one who lives within you: the one who is selfish, insensitive, and uncommitted."<sup>4</sup>

### **3. A mature man lives for something that will last.**

Look at how our passage ends in verse 20. All of the warnings and instructions in the passage that we've looked at so far, they all culminate with this description of the king's motive:

"... so that he may continue long in his kingdom, he and his children, in Israel."

Now, on the surface, it seems entirely selfish. He's building a legacy to himself like a typical chauvinist... it's *his kingdom*. Well, not exactly. The king calls Israel his kingdom in the same way that you call SMU your school. You don't own SMU, but it really is your school. You have a share in it. When you say that SMU is your school, you're not saying that SMU belongs to you, what you're really saying is that you belong to SMU.

The same was true for Israel's king. It is his kingdom, not because the kingdom belongs to him, but because he belongs to the kingdom. He has a share in its future. The kingdom of God has become the investment of his life.

Guys, what will you invest your life in? In some ways, this defines who you are as a man. What will you give yourself away to? What will you live for that is bigger than yourself?

I remember getting a taste of this when I was pledging about 15 years ago. One of the greatest things about pledgship (and this is a very, very short list) was that it gave me a sense of being a part of something bigger than myself. I was a part of a pledge class, which was part of an active, local fraternity, which was part of an alumni network that spanned generations. I was part of something that grown men were still giving a lot of money to support.

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<sup>4</sup> Richard and Sharon Phillips, *Holding Hands, Holding Hearts*.

And then I graduated and moved on, and this summer our local alumni board pulled our charter at TN and rented out our house, including the room I lived in for 2 years, on the bottom floor (affectionately known as the Ghetto), to an upstart sorority on campus. No hard feelings. I had a great fraternity experience, but it was always clear to us that there was something bigger worth investing our lives in.

What is that something? Is it a career? Is it a family one day? Is it your country?

Those are all noble choices, but consider the words of a Harvard professor:

“The average Fortune 500 company lasts (only) several decades; a family dynasty several generations; nation-states several hundred years.”

She goes on to say: “The only organizations in human history that have survived more than a thousand years are religious organizations.”<sup>5</sup>

Now, let me be clear, that is not a good reason for becoming a Christian. But it does put things in perspective. The things that we live for are often very fragile. They are temporary. Like water, they slip through our fingers no matter how tightly we clench our fists around them.

But what if you could live for something right now that was permanent? What if you could live for something right now that was not only bigger than you, but that was big enough to include all that is good around you: your friendships, your career, your country... all of creation... even one day, your wife and your children?

You might say, “It’s too good to be true.” But this is the kingdom that Israel’s king gave himself for. This is the gospel of Jesus Christ, the one true king, who died and rose again, so that he could say this to you tonight in all seriousness:

“If you seek first the kingdom of God, then all these things will be added to you as well.” (Matt. 6:33)

Jesus invites you to live for a kingdom that will last. He offers you a share in his kingdom that you can call your own. As men, you were made to dream big. But what could be bigger than the restoration of all things? Don’t give your life away for small, personal diversions when you were made for a throne.

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<sup>5</sup> Olds and Schwartz, *The Lonely American*.