

Men in the Image of God

Guided Growth with Pastor Keith @ CBC Father's Day 2017

Gen 1:26 *"Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion.."* (Rādâ': to conquer or subjugate.) Vs 27 *"So God created man in his own image, Male and Female created He them."*

That means that there will be qualities in both men and women that express different dimensions of God's "image". Too often we focus on the gentler aspects of God's qualities, such as Grace, mercy, love, etc. Even many of the pictures of Jesus reflect this image. While these are accurate, they are not inclusive. There is a distinctly "rough" side to God's image.

There's been a deliberate "feminization" of Men in our culture for decades! This devaluing of masculinity leaves men uncertain or even ashamed of how God made them! This cultural confusion has subtly found its way into the culture of the church!

1. According to Biola research *"The feminization of the church"* (Holly Pivec)

A. Women greatly outnumber men in churches.

1) They're Generally more "faithful" & committed. *23% of women attend without husbands.*

B. Most church ministries are geared for women or children.

C. Women tend to respond to security, comfort, peace, nurturing, healing, relationships, etc.

1) Since these are legitimate needs, Churches "naturally" seek to meet these needs by focusing on these dimensions of God's nature.

2) While comfort, nurture, and security are important truths, this "culture" often leaves men feeling that church is the place where you go to learn to be "nice". (*Tame*)

2. Men respond to challenge, risk, competition, etc.

A. These different "perspectives" (and strengths) tend to be viewed as

"uncomfortable" or even detrimental to the "status quo". (Nurturing, etc.)

1) These masculine "attributes" seem to conflict with the "gentler" attributes of God.

2) As a result, the "needs" or strengths of men are often minimized by churches.

B. There's a distinctly "*dangerous*" dimension to God's (and man's) nature!

Heb 12:29 *"let us ...serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: For our God is a consuming fire."*

Heb. 10:31 *"It's a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God"*

Zeph. 3:17 *"The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty.."* (Gibbor: powerful *Warrior*)

1) Jesus rode meekly into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday then cleansed the Temple with a whip!

2) Rev. 5:2-6 describes him as both a lamb and a lion!

3. God is sometimes less like "Mother Teresa" and more like William Wallace! (13th Century Scottish Freedom fighter "Braveheart")

A. In Mt. 11:11 Jesus used John the Baptist as the highest example of masculinity!

"Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist:"

"He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." (vs 15)

- 1) What Jesus said next is “alarming”! Vs 12 *“And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, (biazō: to crowd, press into so as to seize) and the violent (biastēs’: energetic) take it by force.”* (harpazō: take or seize)

B. Jesus didn’t ignore the needs of women he met, but he invested most of his time on the men! Mt. 4:18-22; Mk 3:14

- 1) This is still God’s pattern for the church. (2 Tim. 2:1-3)
- 2) By minimizing the “masculine” strengths, we downplay a significant force for God and Good!
 - a) When a “mother” comes to Christ, her “family” follows her 36% of the time.
 - b) When a “father” comes to Christ, his family follows him 93% of the time!

Conclusion:

Jesus is the personification of all of God’s qualities. Heb. 1:3; Jn. 1:14

Many of the old Hymn’s focused on the “Masculine” qualities of our faith.
“Am I a Soldier of the Cross” “Onward Christian Soldiers” “Dare to be a Daniel”, etc.
Over the next several weeks I’d like to inject a shot of spiritual “testosterone” into our church, by focusing on some of the more “masculine” sides of God’s image and design!

Application:

In Mt. 11, After commending the courage of John, challenging the hypocrites and condemning the communities that rejected him, Jesus closes Mt. 11 with this statement:

Mt. 11:28 “Take my yoke upon you and learn of me. I am meek (Praos: Gentle) and lowly...”

Meekness is not Weakness, but our Strength under God’s control!

- 1) Are you willing to place your strengths under God’s Control and fight for your faith and family?

In the movie “Braveheart”, Wallace challenged the injustice and corruption of his day. He convinced Robert the Bruce to “take a stand” and join him in the fight.

Bruce was later convinced (by his father) to betray Wallace for political expediency.

When he realized what he had done he told his father:

“Lands, titles, men, power...I HAVE NOTHING! Men fight for me because if they do not, I throw them off my land and starve their wives and children! Those men ...fought and bled for William Wallace. “He Fights For Something that I never had! And I took it from him, when I betrayed him. I saw it in his face on the battlefield, and it’s tearing me apart!”

“I will never be on the wrong side again!”

God made men “in his image”. If God is a “Mighty Warrior”, then there’s a part of every man that’s created to reflect that “valor”! (A Brave Heart)

Satan knows this and seeks to *“bind the strong man and spoil his house”* (Mt. 12:29)

Jesus warns in the very next verse (30) that we must take a side.

“He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.”

- 2) Are you willing to choose God’s Side in this battle?