

The Esteemed Qualities of Manhood

Text: I Kings 2:1,2; I Corinthians 16:13
“...shew thyself a man.” “...quit you like men....”

There are more qualities of manhood, however these are three qualities that should be highly esteemed by a conscientious man. These are the qualities defining the way a man is designed by his Creator to function from a biblical perspective.

I. A MAN OF CONTROL

I Corinthians 6:12: “All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.” In I Corinthians 6:19, 20 the Bible tells us that our motivation for this control is the price that was paid for our redemption.

Daniel 1:8: “But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king’s meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.” Daniel said, “Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days; and let them give us pulse to eat, and water to drink.” (Daniel 1:12). The result is found in Daniel 1:15: “And at the end of ten days their countenances appeared fairer and fatter in flesh than all the children which did eat the portion of the king’s meat.”

Rudyard Kipling wrote the poem *If* for his son, shortly before his son died while fighting for England against the Turks. He was as heartbroken as a father could be. When England became involved in World War I, Kipling compiled a small book of his writings, which were issued to the young men now going into harm’s way. It was his way to serve his country, by raising revenues and giving inspiration to the troops. There is a touching true story of a young man who had the small book in his left side top pocket during combat. A bullet struck him and lodged with the tip of the bullet pointing to the opening lines of his famous poem. Although the words did not save his own son’s life, they were used later to save the life of another young soldier in war. Allow me to borrow my favorite lines from Kipling’s “If” to challenge all of our boys to be men! “If you can keep your head when all about you are losing theirs ...If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster...and so hold on when there is nothing in you...Except the Will which says to them: Hold on! ...If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue, Or walk with kings - nor lose the common touch, If you can fill the unforgiving minute - With sixty seconds’ worth of distance run, Yours is the Earth and everything that’s in it, And - which is more - you’ll be a Man, my son!”

II. A MAN OF CONVICTION

In Daniel 3:16-18 and Daniel 6:3-10, we see conviction portrayed in four young men, that have become high water marks, measuring the essence of manly conviction. We find it when Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego refused to bow and they did not bend and ultimately, they did not burn. We find it in Daniel, who, when the entire country was commanded not to pray or petition anyone

except the king, continued to pray to his God, "...as he did aforetime." The result after being thrown to the lion's den turned out to be a most comfortable night for Daniel. Instead of the prophet for supper, Daniel's accusers became the lion's breakfast.

God blesses men of conviction, men who have a back bone and refuse to compromise.

III. A MAN OF COMMITMENT

II Timothy 1:12: "For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day."

Jesus was asked what was the first or great commandment. His answer: "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment" (Mark 12:30). Jesus said, "On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets" (Matthew 22:40). On this very principle (along with loving our neighbor as ourselves) all proper behavior and motivation begins. This is basic; this is vital. If we miss this, we miss everything. If we don't love God the way He should be loved, we cannot fulfill the command to love our neighbor or anybody.

We are made in the image of God. God is a Trinity, so also is man. Therefore, if we love God supremely, we love with all that we have. We love him with our heart, which is our spirit. The Bible says, "The spirit of man is the candle of the LORD, searching all the inward parts of the belly" (Proverbs 20:27). The belly speaks of the deep inside of you. The heart is the center of who you are. The spirit of man is that place which the Lord speaks to you. If you are not in Christ, your spirit is still alienated from God and your spirit is dead to Him, yet active toward the world, the flesh, and the Devil. That's why the Bible says about the moment we get saved, "And you hath he quickened (made alive), who were dead in trespasses and sins" (Ephesians 2:1). When we get saved our spirit is re-activated and we now have contact with God. We are to love God by staying strong in the spirit. The Bible says of John the Baptist, "And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his shewing unto Israel" (Luke 1:80).

The Bible also records of our Lord: "And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him" (Luke 2:40). Let us not just have contact with the Lord; let us nourish and grow spiritually so that the voice of God we hear in our spirit is as real as the food we eat or the air we breathe. Let us go on to love the Lord with all our soul; this is the personality of man. The soul is driven by the spirit. The language that we speak, the very words we choose, our control of temperament and the decisions we make are reflective of where we are in the spirit. Our personality is a barometer that not only we can see, but others can as well. When we love God the way we should in the soul, we don't use His name in vain, our speech is not full of vulgar double entendres, we don't lose our temper and we make the right decisions. We should love the Lord with our strength, which means we get physical with the expression of our

love to the Lord. "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts (spirit) sprinkled from an evil conscience (soul), and our bodies (physical body) washed with pure water (the Word of God)" (Hebrews 10: 22). "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (Romans 12:1). When I render my body to the Lord, I love him with my strength. This means if the Lord calls me to the mission field, I transport my body to the place in the earth He has chosen for me. If I make a visit to a lost person to win him or her to Jesus, I am loving the Lord with my strength. If I make a hospital call on a sickly saint, I am giving my strength or body to Jesus. In the Old Testament the command was given thusly, "And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might (strength)" (Deuteronomy 6:5). In the New Testament, Jesus added one word, "mind" (Matthew 22:37; Mark 12:30). This word is also translated "imagination." The Lord is telling us to love Him imaginatively. In other words, improvise, experiment, see all the ways in which we may express our love to Jesus. Never settle for the mediocre. When a little girl plays house with her dolls and tea set or a little boy plays army with his GI Joe, they are using their imagination and perhaps will literally grow onto their fantasy. Think of the way Charles Sheldon used imagination in his book, *In His Steps* to illustrate that we all should live with the question, "What would Jesus do?" ever before us. Think of the way C. S. Lewis captured not only the inquiring child, but also the adult in his *The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe*, showing in fairy tale form evil broken by sacrificial death and resurrection of Aslan. Let us use our imagination to bring our love to Christ to another level.

Pastor Pope