

# Authentic Masculinity

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Over 250 years ago the philosopher theologian Jonathan Edwards wrote the following concerning the glory of Christ. He said that Christ was “an admirable conjunction of diverse excellencies.”

John Piper explains, “we admire Christ for his transcendence, but even more because the transcendence of his greatness is mixed with submission to God. We marvel at him because His uncompromising justice is tempered with mercy. His majesty is sweetened by meekness. In his equality with God He has a deep reverence for God. Though He is worthy of all good, He was patient to suffer in evil. His sovereign dominion over the world was clothed with the spirit of obedience and submission. He baffled the scribes with His wisdom, but was simple enough to be loved by children. He could still the storm by a word, but would not strike the Samaritans with lightning or take Himself down from the cross.”

Edwards statement may be further explained from the book of Revelation 5:5-6 which says, “And one of the elders said to me, ‘Weep no more; behold the Lion of the tribe of Judah’...And among the Elders I saw a lamb standing as though it had been slain.” Here Christ is referred to as a Lion and also as a Lamb. So we may say that Christ is a Lamb like Lion and a Lion like Lamb. The Lion is noted for its strength and fearlessness and conquering qualities. The lamb on the other hand is known for its weakness, harmlessness and being easily preyed upon.

Jesus conquers like a lion and is crucified like a lamb. He has the strength to determine and control history and open the scrolls to explain it (Revelation 5:1-6) and in His humanity he gave his neck to the knife and was slain like a lamb (Revelation 13:8). So it is with authentic masculinity. A man on the one hand is given a disposition to conquer and on the other hand a disposition to protect the weak. He desires a mountain to climb and conquer and yet in his tenderness takes an infant in his arms to care for. Genuine masculinity feels that it was made for ruggedness while simultaneously able to wipe the tears from the cheeks of his teenage daughter.

## **1. Authentic Masculinity Manifests itself by vigorous thinking**

Paul exhorts Timothy to “Think over what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding into everything.” Among other things Paul said Timothy was to “think over” are (1) sharing in suffering as a good soldier of Jesus Christ (2) no soldier gets entangled in civilian pursuits, his aim is to please the one who enlisted him (3) an athlete does not win unless he competes according to the rules (4) the hardworking

farmer should be the first to protect the fruits of his labor. (2 Tim. 2:3-6). Paul calls us to intellectual trench work. Paul directed Timothy to the world of the military, the world of sports, and the world of farming to think about how the skills of each have application to Christian ministry.

The Big Idea: If we will not think vigorously the Lord will not usually give us understanding regarding who He is or how He works and what He requires of us. (Romans 12:17). How important is reading and thinking to your spiritual development?

## **2. Authentic Masculinity manifests itself by a balanced emotional expression.**

Paul records that “When Jesus saw her weeping He was deeply moved in his spirit (the account of Mary weeping at the death of her brother Lazarus). The words DEEPLY MOVED could well be translated INDIGNATION. It seems that Jesus was simultaneously indignant and sympathetic. He was indignant with sin but sympathetic with those who were suffering. This is one of many illustrations where Jesus responded to a variety of diverse events with emotional reactions (Mark 3:1-6; Mark 10:13-16).

The Big Idea: True and valid masculinity will express diverse and appropriate emotions toward complex and varied human interactions and events.

## **3. Authentic Masculinity manifests itself by suffering with dignity**

A beautiful example of this is given to us in the life of Jesus. Matthew records in 26:36-46 six distinct events which occurred in the life of Christ leading up to the cross.

- (1) First, He chose some close friends to be with him. “He took with Him Peter and the sons of Zebedee (Matthew 26:37)
- (2) He opened his soul to them. “My soul is deeply grieved to the point of death.” (38)
- (3) He asked for intercession and partnership in the battle. “Remain here and keep watch with me.” (39)
- (4) He poured out His heart to His Father in prayer. “My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me.” (39)
- (5) He rested His soul in the Sovereign wisdom of God. “Yet, not as I will, but as you will.” (39)

(6) He fixed His eye on the glorious future grace that awaited Him on the other side of the cross. “For the joy that was set before Him, He endured the cross, despising the shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God (Hebrews 12:2).

The Big Idea: Masculine suffering does not isolate or insulate a man from exposing the pain, the circumstances, or the anticipated outcome from others.