

"FOR MEN ONLY"

RECLAIMING MANHOOD TODAY A Series of Articles For Christian Men

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"FOR MEN ONLY"

RECLAIMING MANHOOD TODAY

No. 1 In A Series of Articles For Men by Jerry Schmoyer

LIKE FATHER - LIKE SON!

Men are in trouble today! Despite there being roughly the same number of men as women in this country, the suicide rate for men is 10 times higher than women. Our life expectancy is 10% shorter. Ninety percent of all arrests for alcohol and drug abuse involve men, and 80% of the homeless are men. Six times as many men die of lung cancer as women, and twice as many die of heart disease. There is a reason for all of this.

Women recently have been going through a time of 'finding themselves.' There are books, seminars, and much information available defining, describing and explaining womanhood. Until recently, however, there has been almost nothing about men. Gordon Calbey in *Healing the Masculine Soul* says "Men don't know who they are as men. They tend to define themselves by what they do, who they know, or what they own."

The breakdown of our society today is rightly blamed on the breakdown of the family. The breakdown of the family today is mainly blamed on the breakdown of role of the man of the family. Many families are trying to reverse this trend and re-establish the family as the central unit in society with the man as the head of the family. However, men are having a very hard time, despite their good intentions, of knowing exactly what God expects of them and then being able to carry that out. Several years ago I found myself in that very place. When I tried to answer the question, "What is a man?" I always came up short. God has been teaching me and leading me on a journey to reclaim manhood today. On the way I have discovered that most (not "some" or "many" but "most") men today are going through the same thing I am. That is comforting, but also scary. How can we be the Christian men, husbands and fathers God wants us to be when we aren't sure just what that is?

Unless you had a mature, secure father who was able to communicate what a man was and to affirm you in your growing manhood, you are probably like me: filling a role but not always sure of exactly what that role is. Mark Twain said, "A male is someone who starts pretending he is a man when he turns 12 and keeps doing it the rest of his life." Many of us keep pretending we are men, but down inside we aren't sure of it at all. We assume a "man" is whatever our father was, and that we aren't a man until we are just like him and he assures us we are a man. Unfortunately too many of our fathers didn't exemplify Godly manhood and weren't able to make us feel accepted by them as men. Surveys show that less than 1% of males have or had at one time what they would call a 'close' relationship with their father.

Without a father to show us what a man is like or affirm the growing maleness in us when young, where do we turn? To mother -- with the result we turn further from finding ourselves as men and become dependent on women affirming us as men (thus our need to please women no matter what the cost and our deep fear of criticism or rejection)? To the

world -- with the result we put on the veneer of some false image (super-jock, rebel, woman's man, computer whiz, macho tough-guy, etc.) and hide our real selves and emotions inside? To our job -- to produce and impress ourselves and others with what we accomplish? None of those satisfy. They are all false substitutes. There is no substitute for a father in our masculine development, at least no substitute in this world. Fortunately we have a Heavenly Father who is perfect and accepting and Whom we can turn to (if we don't read too much of our earthly father into our Heavenly Father and feel distant from Him, too). It is only as a man turns to God that those little-boy needs can be met and filled in.

If you feel hurt or rejection from your earthly father, or an empty place where you would have liked to have unconditional acceptance and affirmation, you have to admit that to yourself and let the hurt, pain and anger from it come to the surface. You must turn all of that over to God your Heavenly Father and forgive your earthly father. After all, he is a product of his own father's failings as well. Let Jesus fill the empty places in your life. He suffered the ultimate Father-rejection just so He could heal you of those very things. He is the only solution. Pray about these things and allow God to do His perfect work in you.

QUESTIONS TO PONDER:

What is a man? How would YOU define a man? How does that compare to the world's definition of what a man is?

When did you feel like you became a man? What marked that passage?

How will you know when your son becomes a man? How can you help him now?

What hurts do you still carry from your father?

In what ways does your earthly father influence how you see your Heavenly Father?

BIBLE STUDY TO HELP WITH THIS

Read about Absalom, David's son (II Samuel 3:3; 13:20 - 14:33). How did David fail as a father? How did this effect Absalom? What should he have done differently?

Why did David feel so guilty (II Sam 18:33)? Did he ever show this love to Absalom?

Read about Joseph, Jesus' father (Matthew 1:18-25). What kind of a man was Joseph?

What kind of a father do you think he made to Jesus? What did he do to help Jesus be secure to be His own person when He turned 12 (Luke 2:49)? How can you do that for your sons?

FOR WOMEN ONLY: What can you do to help your husband with these things? (I KNOW you read the article, in fact I'm sure many more women than men will read it!) Talk with him in a loving, accepting way about his manhood. Ask him if he sees himself as a man and how he would define a man (how will he know when your son becomes a man?) How has his father influenced him in this? Let him talk, patiently give him time to think and express himself. Reassure him that you see him as a man and give him specific reasons and examples of why. Talk about the good impact he is having on your sons as men. Be gentle in making suggestions, and do it in a context of love and acceptance. I can't begin to tell you how fragile a thing the male ego is (you probably already have discovered that!). Look at your husband as a little boy still needing his father to hold him on his lap and assure him of his love and acceptance -- but knowing that will never happen. Consistently pray for him, and check your expectations of him. Most women, without realizing it, have almost super human expectations of their husbands, and this just makes him feel like a failure. He cannot feel like a man if he feels he is a failure to his own family. Make him feel like a hero!

"FOR MEN ONLY"

RECLAIMING MANHOOD TODAY

No. 2 In A Series of Articles For Men by Jerry Schmoyer

"O ABSALOM, MY SON!"

There's no doubt that David was one of the finest, most Godly men who ever lived. He was truly "a man after God's own heart." There are many areas of his life where we would do good to learn from him and try to be just like him. However there is one area where we can learn from him and try to not be like him. That is his role as father. David's relationship with his son Absalom gives a clear picture of the damage that can be done when a father-relationship is not strong and open. This can not only help us to be better fathers to our sons, but also can help us to better understand how our own fathers have affected our lives -- and what to do about it.

Absalom was one of many sons David had by his several wives (II Samuel 3:3). It is humanly impossible for a man to meet his wife's needs when he has only wife, when that time is divided between many families and running a large kingdom on top, that is a sure formula for failure. David just never was close to his sons. He didn't have time, but the Bible is clear that God held him accountable for that lack. He COULD have taken time and had things different, as can any man today (or in past generations).

Our story starts with the repetition of a sad pattern which David brought into his family years earlier: forced sex that results in murder. Amnon, another son of David, fell in lust with his step-sister Tamar and through deceit raped her (II Samuel 13:1-19). Actually Amnon manipulated his father David into setting it up for him (II Samuel 13:6-7). It seems David's children knew how to get what they wanted from their father, who perhaps gave them gifts instead of time and attention. David never suspected what was going on between his grown children. Amnon's reaction after the rape (II Samuel 13:15-18) shows he was spoiled and indulged, with no godly manly traits to his name!

That could be the end of it, except David did nothing about it (II Samuel 13:21-23). He was furious, but he took no steps to help either Tamar or Amnon. This really bothered Tamar's brother, Absalom. He was very close to his sister (proven by the fact he named his own daughter after her - II Samuel 14:27). When, after waiting 2 years, no justice came from his father, Absalom took matters into his own hands and killed Amnon (II Sam. 13:23-33). David's message by not doing anything was that he didn't care. Actually he did, but wasn't able to do what should have been done (more about that later).

Absalom fled in guilt. David missed Absalom and wanted to be reconciled with him but for 3 years made no move to do anything about it (II Sam. 13:34-39). He just put it off and time passed. Meanwhile Absalom wants to be reunited, and gets Joab to talk David into letting him come back (II Samuel 14:1-23), but David refused to see Absalom (II Sam. 14:24). That perceived rejection hurt Absalom. His need for his father was as strong as ever, but his respect for him was greatly diminishing.

After two years of waiting, Absalom again had Joab intervene. This time Joab didn't want to, knowing David needed to work this out on his own as a man and father. Absalom got his attention by burning his fields and persuaded him to intervene to bring justice (II Samuel 14:28-32). Joab obviously sympathizes with Absalom in all this. However, when they were finally reunited again (II Sam. 14:33), nothing happened to break down the walls that had been developing. Aside from a

perfunctory kiss, the Bible account leaves a cold, empty, formal picture of two men going through the motions. Inside each loved and needed the other, but neither made the first move. Each interpreted that as rejection from the other so neither wanted to expose themselves any more. A real marked change develops in Absalom from here on, though, for he turns very bitter against his father.

When a son doesn't feel his father's love and acceptance, he tries other things to prove he is a man. Absalom used his good looks (II Samuel 14:25-26) and winning personality (II Sam 15:1-6) to get attention and approval from others, trying to prove to himself he was a man and OK as a person. He turned to the world for power and prestige (II Sam 15:10-11), even taking David's best counselor from him (v. 12). He tried to outdo his father to prove he was as good a man as his father (taking over his father's throne), even using sex to prove his maleness (II Sam. 16:21-22) while trying to hurt his father at the same time. Absalom is totally obsessed by David's rejection, and it completely controls all his thoughts and actions.

You know how the story ends, Absalom is killed (despite all David can do to prevent that) and the kingdom is returned to David (II Sam. 18:1-32). Instead of being glad, David is heartbroken over the loss of his son (II Sam. 18:33-19:4). Perhaps guilt and failure contributed to David's remorse. In any effect, it is interesting that of all the good David must have accomplished in this decade of his life, the one thing that is recorded is his failure as a father to correctly influence or impact his sons. The heartbreak of this stayed with David his whole life.

Now while it is easy to see how David than, and our fathers today, can really make it harder for us in the present because of their perceived rejection of us, there is another side to the story. What about Absalom? He was a grown man with his own family (II Sam. 14:27), but doesn't seem to turn to his wife for help. Nor does he turn to God. The only time he speaks of spiritual things is to use them to manipulate his father so David thinks Absalom is getting close to God and will give Absalom what he wants (II Sam. 15:7-9). Sure, David didn't meet Absalom's needs as he should have, but then Absalom tried to force what wasn't there. He then tried to punish his father for not being the father Absalom needed.

What should Absalom have done instead? What should we do today about the hurts we have from our fathers? First we must honestly admit them, feel the pain of the, and acknowledge them. Then we must forgive our fathers for their part in them. To do this it is helpful to realize that they themselves are the products of poor male relationships as they grew up. If Absalom would have checked into David's background he would have found that David wasn't accepted by Jesse the same as his older brothers were (I Sam. 16:8-11) and his brothers mocked and rejected him (I Sam. 17:28-29). Obviously David didn't have any males in his life who accepted, affirmed him as a man, and taught him how a man is to show love and anger. This set the pattern for David with Absalom -- he had never learned how to act to men in his family and treated his sons much the same as he was treated. Realizing this about your father will help you see he wasn't the perfect person who couldn't love you because you were so imperfect, but that he didn't show love because of how he was taught.

The only way to outgrow this is to forgive your father, stop trying to either earn his approval or hurt him back, and let Jesus heal you of it all. Spill it all out to God in prayer. Let your Heavenly Father remake you in His image. He knows. He's been through it all. Jesus suffered the ultimate Father-rejection -- on the cross! He knows what it is like, and because of what He went through He can heal you and reform you in the image of His own dear Son, Jesus. There is no other way to get free from the terrible chains from the past that bind and limit us. Jesus alone has the key to unlock you and set you free, and He is more than anxious to do it if you turn your past over to Him and let Him.

"FOR MEN ONLY"

RECLAIMING MANHOOD TODAY

No. 3 In A Series of Articles For Men by Jerry Schmoyer

LIKE MOTHER - LIKE SON!

There's no doubt about it -- Jacob was a mama's boy! Now it wasn't his fault, after all a boy must turn to someone for love and attention if he doesn't get it from his father. But I'm getting ahead of my story. First, let's gather some background information on this dysfunctional family.

Jacob was the son of Isaac and Rebekah. Although Isaac tended to be passive and Rebekah was a bit domineering, they seemed to have a strong love at the start. They were programmed for difficulties before they even met. Isaac grew up with a domineering mother (Sarah) and weak father (Abraham), something that is still common today. In his formative years Jacob didn't have the benefit of seeing his father fulfill the man's role in his family, and seems to have been especially close to and dependent on his mother. In fact, her death left such a hole in his life that the only way he could get over it was to fill it with his new bride, Rebekah (Genesis 24:67). However, it isn't a wife's duty to replace a mother in a man's life. That is a sure formula for trouble! Still, things may have worked out except...

One day Isaac faced a tough situation: stay where God wanted him and trust God for food in drought conditions, or take off and try and meet his own needs his own way. Now Isaac had seen his father Abraham take the later option twice (Genesis 12:10-20; 20:1-18) in the same situation and "like father like son." Isaac, too, took off. One sin always leads to another and before long Isaac, like his father, had to make another choice: his neck or his wife's. Isaac, too, had Rebekah say she was his sister so, when she was taken to Abimelech's harem, Isaac would be paid instead of killed (Genesis 26:7-11). Can you imagine how this made her feel? A woman needs to feel protected and secure, that she is the most important thing in her man's life and he will do anything to take care of her. If not, she will take her protection into her own hands, like Sarah did. Sarah wasn't domineering until Abraham sold her out to protect himself, and I don't think Rebekah was, either. However because of this she lost respect for Isaac and took meeting her needs into her own hands, manipulating her husband to make sure she was safe and cared for. This set the groundwork for the break between Isaac and Rebekah when Jacob was born.

Isaac was never able to restore his relationship with Rebekah and meet her needs as a husband must. He never saw his father handle this right and so was unable or unwilling to change the pattern. Thus Rebekah turned to the next man in her life to meet her needs -- her son (Genesis 25:27-28). It seems Jacob ended up his mother's favorite by default. He wasn't as 'manly' as Esau (out-of-doors macho stuff, etc.) and therefore his father favored Esau and neglected Jacob, a very clear message that Jacob didn't measure up as a man! When his mother offered her acceptance naturally he jumped for it. What woman wouldn't try to make up for her husband's lack, and what boy wouldn't accept what love he could get? Still, that isn't the way God meant it to be. That wasn't the way for Jacob to turn into the man God wanted him to be. When a boy is closer to his mother than his father (and this is very

common today), several things happen that aren't good for his manly maturity. For one thing, it develops a pattern that can be life-long -- needing a woman to affirm him as a man (and feeling incomplete without a woman in his life). Unknowingly he can expect his wife to 'mother' him and fill a similar role in his life to that of his mother. Also, growing up with his mother's view of men (not good at all) won't give him a right idea of what a man is, nor will he want to be a man if that means being like his father (whom he and his mother both reject for the same reason -- he doesn't meet their needs).

A man will never feel like a man simply because a woman tells him he is one. Only another man, either his earthly father or Heavenly Father, can do that work in him. If not, he will always stay dependent on women, while growing to resent their control, fear their rejection, and confusing the roles of wife and mother. As he grows this inner hurt turns to anger and comes out in occasional anger explosions which shock him and those around him. Some men continue to seek for male affirmation, turning to other men in homosexual relationships (I think this is why homosexuality is so prevalent today). Unless a mother is willing to release her son and the father willing and able to bond with him man-to-man by the time the boys start puberty, something will be missing that will emotionally hinder him the rest of his life, especially in his feelings of being a man.

That is what happened to Jacob. He grew up with no respect for men and probably no desire to be like the men he knew. He deceived and used his male images: his father Isaac and his brother Esau (Genesis 25:29-34; 27:1-37). He let his mother dominate and use him, hiding behind her skirts for protection and courage, using her manipulative methods instead of trusting God and standing for what was right like a man. As a result he lost everything, including his mother. He fled for his life and never saw his mother again -- but he, too, following the pattern started generations earlier, married a strong woman like her.

Jacob needed Rachel's approval and support, her affirmation that he was a "good boy" and a man! Domineering women are afraid to submit to a man and need to keep control in their hands (if not total at least the right to final veto over anything they disagree with). Rachel lost respect for Jacob because he let her dominate him. Even though women try to dominate or control (at least to some extent), down inside they know it isn't God's way and need a strong man to lovingly not allow them to do so. If they can control their man, they will lose respect for him.

Never fear, though, our story turns out well. Jacob got out-manipulated by Laban and a series of events over about 20 years forced him to return home and work through things with Esau and Isaac. On the way he wrestled with God face-to-face. There is no woman to hide behind, no trick to use, nothing but standing and facing whatever comes. He took it like a man, one-on-one with the Creator of the Universe. As a result of being willing to die to himself and let God remake him in the image of his heavenly Father, Jacob's experience left him a changed man with a new name to show for it (Genesis 32:32). Facing his past hurts and present inability was difficult and painful, but he did it. You can, too, if you are willing to let God touch you and remake you into His image, however painful that may be. You must be willing to pay the price to become the man God wants you to be. Jacob couldn't change himself, no one can. But God is in the business of change. He alone can make you the man He created you to be. Your earthly father may not have, and your mother can't, but the Lord God Almighty can and will! He did with Jacob. Try Him and you'll be changed, too!

"FOR MEN ONLY"

RECLAIMING MANHOOD TODAY

No. 4 In A Series of Articles For Men by Jerry Schroyer

FATHER TO A PERFECT SON!

"Father to a perfect son!" That may not sound like something you can identify with. What about this title instead: "How Can An Imperfect Father Raise A Son To Be Like Jesus"? Can you identify with that better? I sure can.

All right, so who is this perfect son with the imperfect father? You guessed it, the only One it could possibly be -- Jesus. When Jesus came to earth He voluntarily laid aside the use of His divine attributes in order to grow, learn and function just like any other human being (except He didn't have a sin nature). He did not coast through on His deity. The Bible says He experienced all we do, and learned obedience by the things He suffered in life. Thus He needed an earthly father to teach Him to mature into a Godly man. Now none of us can choose our fathers, but in a way you can say Jesus chose His! That makes it all the more interesting to see what kind of a man Jesus would pick for His own earthly father, the one to whom He would entrust His growth and development. Joseph is the young man He chose.

Now the Bible is full of many poor examples of father-son relationships: David and Absalom, Isaac and Jacob, Jacob and his sons, etc., etc., etc. The best example of a good father-son relationship is that of Joseph and Jesus. You'll soon see why.

We don't know much about Joseph. He is never quoted in the Bible and very little is said about him. We see him mainly in our Christmas pageants when he follows Mary around like a shadow. He is more like one of the props than a person. The inn keeper has more of a part than Joseph, and there really wasn't an inn keeper in a small place like Bethlehem! Still, Joseph is very special.

We first see Joseph when he is engaged to Mary, a legally binding contract. He finds out she is pregnant by the grape vine. She knows the baby is from God because 1) Gabriel appeared to her when she was fully awake, 2) she knows if she had sex with anyone or not, and 3) Elizabeth confirms it without any prompting by Mary. All Joseph gets to go on is a message in a dream. He had tremendous pressure on him to do what any 'right' Jew would do to show up sin and help put an end to immorality. He could accomplish that by having her stoned or publicly divorced, suing to get his dowry back. Marrying her was not an option for God's law forbid it and Joseph put God before Mary. In agony he had decided to privately divorce her, taking the financial, social and emotional loss himself so as to spare her from facing any of it. Now that's a real man! How many men today would take the loss themselves and do all they could to protect their wives if she turned up pregnant with someone else's child? How would YOU react? Despite his youth (most likely late teens) Joseph handled it like a real man.

We all know what a fine, Godly, committed woman Mary was. That goes without saying. Yet the fact that she responded so completely to Joseph's leadership shows something else about the kind of man he was. When Jesus was about 4 and they had settled into a home in Bethlehem (Nazareth was full of gossip about the early pregnancy so they stayed away from there until God sent them back). One night, after a house full of company all day (the magi), Joseph was told in a dream to grab what they could and head for Egypt immediately. What wife wants to move on 5 minutes

notice, in the middle of the night, with a young child, and after a house full of company all day? Yet she believed and obeyed. God could trust Joseph to obey and so He directed His Son's future through Joseph, and Mary trusted him, too. The return trip from Egypt and the place of their future home were all revealed to Joseph in dreams and Mary followed.

It was Joseph's responsibility to train his sons and teach them a trade. They all learned carpentry. By looking at Joseph's full sons you can see something of the man himself and what he built into them. James was the leader of the church in Jerusalem and wrote the book that bears his name. It focuses on the importance of godly living, treating others fairly, not being materialistic, enduring whatever happens by trusting God, and total commitment to live for him. All these things James got from his father. Another son, Jude, also wrote a book in our Bible. He had at least one or two more sons and several daughters.

Of all his sons, Jesus was the one Joseph was closest to. Not only was He his firstborn, but he was with him longer. The others married in their late teens, but Jesus stayed with Joseph another dozen years. Despite not being his physical father, the emotional ties must have been very strong. They were best of friends and talked about everything together. They spent 24 hours a day, 7 days a week together. Often they knelt together in the carpentry shop to pray about the special future God had for Jesus. Together they sought God's will as to what that future was and when His ministry would start. Jesus was no mamma's baby, hanging around Mary all the time. He was known publicly as "the carpenter's son." They had everything in common. I bet you could even see some of Joseph in the way Jesus walked and talked! What better influence could a boy growing up have than to spend it with a father who loved and accepted him? What would you give to have had that? In order to go to the cross it was essential to have such a start in life.

Still, Joseph knew his place. So did Jesus. When He was 12 He told Joseph, "Don't you know I must be about my Father's business?" That would have really hurt a lesser man. No father likes to see his son prefer another man to him, but Joseph was mature enough to handle it.

Picture the day Jesus hung up His apron, lay down His hammer, and left Joseph and the carpenter shop for good. Hugs and tears marked the end of their father-son relationship and the start of a Master-servant one. It was hard, but Joseph makes the adjustment. Joseph's main work in Jesus' life is now over, and Joseph seems to drop from the scene sometime about the middle of Jesus' ministry. God removed Joseph so Jesus would have to depend on His Heavenly Father 100%. He completely weaned Jesus off Joseph.

Why didn't God keep Joseph alive to see Jesus' whole ministry? It seems obvious. To have Joseph at the cross with Mary would have been too hard on Joseph and so God spared him that pain by taking him to heaven before it. I think, too, it would have been hard on Jesus to see his father there and watch him suffer. It may have tempted Jesus' resolve to go through with it all. I don't know all the reasons, but obviously God did for that's how He made it happen.

Joseph is a fine example of a Godly man and father. He put others first, was open and honest with his emotions, and spent the time to build himself into his sons. He left an enduring legacy in Jesus as well as the books of James and Jude. He wasn't perfect, but He could raise a perfect Son because He let God use him and work through him. That's the only way any man today can be the kind of father his sons need. Remember Joseph, think of him, make him your pattern and example. Ask God to build into you the masculine traits He built into Joseph. Don't look at the faulty father-son relationships around you, or even yours with your father. Pattern your relationship with your son after Joseph and Jesus. Real man can talk and laugh, hug and cry, kneel to pray and get up to pound nails together. Real men aren't real men unless they are real. Are you?

"FOR MEN ONLY"

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No. 5 In A Series of Articles For Men by Jerry Schmoyer

Men And FEAR

Jesus experienced fear. That's right, He was afraid! He was tempted in every area we are yet without sin (Hebrews 4:15). Therefore He must have faced fear. Why, days before the crucifixion, did He ask God to keep Him going to the cross if possible (John 12:20-28)? Why did He sweat drops of blood in Gethsemane the night before His crucifixion (Matthew 26:36-46)? Why did He cry, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me?" Yes, Jesus felt fear.

If Jesus, the ultimate Man, felt fear, why is it so hard for men today to admit to fear? Why do we cover it over with machoism, hide it behind a 'cool' exterior, drown it in alcohol, submerge it in overwork, express it as anger, or just totally deny it? When was the last time you said, "I'm afraid"? How do you think the people around you at work would respond if you said that? How would you feel about yourself? If Jesus faced fear, and reached out to those closest to Him for help (to pray with Him in Gethsemane), why don't men today admit to fear and reach out to other men for help?

Somewhere along the way we get taught that men can't show or admit to fear. We learn from our fathers that fear makes us inferior. In fact, in an unspoken way it is communicated to boys that any show of emotion is wrong. We are taught that to be a man is to be like a wooden Indian. We have no, or very few, role models of mature men handling fear. Others hide it, so we think they don't have it and if we do then something is wrong with us, so we hide it, too.

Before I get any further let me say that not all fear is sin. Like anger, fear can be sinful or good. Also like anger, it is a motivator. Fear warns us to do something about danger, to protect ourselves and those we love. In that way it has a positive effect. However, when it causes us to doubt God and not put faith in Him as we should then it is sin. Call it worry, concern, or whatever, if it causes us to doubt that 1) God is in control of everything happening and 2) all that He does is guided by His love for us then it is sin. Just as with other mental attitude sins (like lust, greed, etc.), it isn't having the thought that is sin but what we do with it. The thought must immediately be turned over to Jesus so it doesn't become sin. Jesus didn't let the fears that attacked Him become sin.

Is it easier for women than men to turn their fears over to God? Lets take that a step back further: is it easier for women to admit their fears than men? To this I say yes. That is the first step in turning them over to God, but that doesn't mean it is easier for them to turn them to God. I do think men and women become fearful about different things. Men seem to

fear rejection and criticism, what others think of them (or what they think of themselves). Many men fear losing people they love and being alone. Our male image and ego is very fragile. Women seem to fear that which threatens the security of themselves or their loved ones. Perhaps, too, it would true to say that introverts are more open to fear. Those who are analytical, sensitive, or perfectionistic are more fertile ground for fear. Thus it could be said that men who are introverts have the hardest time with fear (more predisposed to it as introverts) but less able to admit, face and work through their fears (as men).

Fears seem to be worse when they are built on a bad past experience. We men seem to do all we can to avoid situations that brought fear in the past. "Once burnt twice wary" certainly seems true. Other things we may face head on to conquer, but we seem to run from our fears. When we face two conflicting fears we really get into a bind. We can fear rejection by fellow workers by not taking a stand with them while also fearing losing our job because we did take the stand. These fears really do a number on our health: stress, high blood pressure, heart problems, digestion ailments, back aches, etc., result.

There is no way to avoid things that bring fear. God just won't allow it. He will not allow man to remove everything than can bring fear. No amount of money, power, security or control takes away fear. God allows it to penetrate any defenses we put up because it is to motivate us to turn to Him. Instead of ignoring or trying to control our environment, God wants us to come to Him with our fears. That's what Jesus did in Gethsemane.

Fear becomes sin when it becomes stronger than our faith. The only cure is to put our trust back in God's promises that He will not give us more than we can handle (I Corinthians 10:13), He'll always be with us (Hebrews 13:5), His strength is sufficient for us (Philippians 4:13, 19), and all things work together for good for those who love Him (Romans 8:28). Remember, God has not given us a spirit of fear (II Timothy 1:7) but His perfect love casts out all fear(I John 4:18).

Learn to be sensitive to your fears. 1. **Admit** them, recognize fear is there. 2. **Realize** it is natural to feel fear. 3. **Discern** if it is to give you positive motivation to do something or temptation to cause you to lose faith in God (or both at once). 4. **Reaffirm** your faith in God no matter what happens. 5. **Depend** on Him to help you when the time comes. 6. **Keep** foremost in your mind positive, godly thoughts and not negative ones (Philippians 4:8). Fear is natural. We'll face it our whole lives. However, instead of it defeating us we need to learn to defeat it. Fear has been a good tool of Satan to defeat men, but it doesn't have to defeat you. Will you begin to admit and face your fears? Then "the truth will set you free" from them! That sure beats any substitute way of handling them!

MULL OVER THESE QUESTIONS:

What is the greatest thing you fear in life? Why do you fear it?
How were you taught to handle fear when you were young? Was that right or wrong?
What are some of the wrong ways you handle fear?
How can you teach your son to handle fear the right way?
Does your wife think less of you if you admit to a fear?
Do you think less of yourself if you admit to a fear?
What can you do this week to begin handling your fears better?
What is the best thing your wife can do to help you face & handle your fears?

"FOR MEN ONLY"

RECLAIMING MANHOOD TODAY

No. 6 In A Series of Articles For Men by Jerry Schmoyer

MALE ANGER

The quiet Saturday morning sounded like any other. The TV was on in the living room and a couple of lawnmowers could be heard in the neighbor's yards. All of a sudden several gunshots sounded in the back yard. Running to the back door, a wife saw her husband standing over his smoking lawnmower, rifle in hand, firing every bullet it had into their new, expensive lawnmower. What was wrong? What caused such an outburst from a seemingly quiet, steady, self-controlled man? What would happen next?

Has this ever happened to you? Oh, maybe it wasn't shooting a lawnmower. It could have been kicking a hole in a wall, putting a fist through a car windshield, a verbal attack on a loved one way out of proportion to what happened, or an uncharacteristically violent outburst out of the clear blue. Unfortunately, we can all identify with such an event. But what causes these things? What can we do to prevent them from happening again?

Male anger. What is it? What causes it? What controls it? Why is it more prevalent today? We see the outward obvious forms of it: wife-beating, child abuse, sexual violence, rape, beatings, gang violence, etc. We also see a rise in displaced anger in men in compulsive/addictive behavior: increasing use of alcohol, drugs, tobacco, gambling and sex. The most difficult to recognize and identify, though, is suppressed and internalized anger. Most men stuff their anger inside and it implodes, devastating the man and his family -- as well as his lawnmower! Until it explodes there is a slow but steady leak of the poison onto those around us: sarcasm, gossip, criticism, withdrawal, not reaching out in love, pointing out failures in another, keeping a mental record of other's failures, etc.

Very, very few men today grew up with a male image who knew how to handle anger correctly. Our male role models handled anger in a way that was destructive -- either to those around them or to themselves. Thus we learn to either lash out violently or to stuff it and withdraw. As men we don't have example of how to handle anger, and we become afraid of it. As Christians we think we are never to feel anger so we stuff it down harder. We fear losing control of ourselves if we recognize it. We think we will be rejected for even honestly admitting it. We figure if somehow we were a better father or husband or Christian or employee others wouldn't do things to make us angry. All this nails the lid tighter and tighter on our anger until it all of a sudden explodes.

We learn the wrong ways to handle anger from other men, but other factors contribute to this. As men, we have often not learned to be in touch with our emotions and feelings. Thus we can't label and handle them properly, nor can we communicate them to those around us. Too high expectations of ourselves (and others) combined with low self worth and feelings of guilt, failure and incompetence magnify this. As time goes on it gets worse.

Moses is an example of this. In anger he killed an Egyptian, broke the 10 commandments tablets, and struck the rock twice instead of speaking to it. This kept him out of the Promised Land. He had a life-long battle with anger. He never defeated it but it defeated him. What could he have done about his anger?

The first step in correctly handling anger is to admit it, identify it. Ignoring it or stuffing it will never ever help. In the short run it will explode when unexpected, in the long run it will contribute to

stress, high blood pressure, strokes, heart attacks, etc. This contributes to men having a suicide rate 3 times that of women. First, anger must be correctly labeled.

Then the root cause of the anger must be honestly sought. Anger is a secondary emotion which substitutes for a primary emotion that is harder to handle -- like pain, rejection, or not getting our own way. Notice closely and you'll see all sinful anger comes from some kind of hurt or rejection (which is pain, also). The sooner you can recognize the inner hurt and handle it the quicker you can diffuse the anger that masks the real problem. The only way to keep the hurt from turning into anger is to forgive the one who caused the pain. Without forgiveness the hurt will remain, and anger will come.

While doing this watch the big enemy of honestly confronting your anger -- fear. Fear of rejection, failure, losing control, having to face the hurt, not being a 'man,' etc., keep us from honestly facing our anger and hurt.

The key word to handling anger is HONESTY. Be honest with yourself and God about what is going on. Then you must be honest with the person causing the hurt/anger. This must be done in love, not to hurt back. It must be done with wisdom and patience. Usually it is good to say something to the person causing the hurt - but not always so they hear it. Pretend they are there and tell them how they have hurt you, not in a way to hurt back but to get it out of yourself. Writing it down is also good. Again, it isn't necessary to give what you write to the person. Often getting it out of you honestly is more important than the other person hearing it, unless you think God really wants them to hear/read it. Pray first before speaking to the person.

So, if you see inside yourself the potential to shoot your lawnmower one day, follow these steps and gain victory over your anger. If not it'll shoot something more than the lawnmower, it'll shoot you!

HOW CAN A WIFE HELP HER ANGRY HUSBAND?

An angry man needs to know that his wife is on his side, loves and accepts him no matter what. She must:

- 1. Be his friend, not his mother.** He doesn't need a mother but a friend who will treat him and insist on being treated by him as an equal. You can't live for him. You can encourage him in his problem-solving but not try to solve his problems for him.
- 2. Appreciate him, don't nag him.** Especially don't nag about things that make him feel like a failure, like his ability to provide for his family. Tell him you appreciate what he does do. Be content.
- 3. Affirm him, don't criticize him.** Affirm him for what he is and what he does. Compliment him for his good points. Make sure he knows you love him for who and what he is, not just what he does.
- 4. Give him space, don't crowd.** No one likes to be pushed or controlled, especially men. Men are intimidated when their women can't accept them the way they are. Let him know you're satisfied and available to listen, then back off to pray and wait. Pushing him may cause him to make some exterior changes to get you off his back, or it may cause an explosion at you.
- 5. Give him time, don't rush him.** His anger built over years, even decades. It won't go away overnight.
- 6. Hold him responsible, don't be co-dependent.** Don't cover up for his anger or bail him out when it gets him into trouble. That doesn't stop the problem it just keeps him from facing and doing something about it. He must face the consequences of his own actions.
- 7. Give to him, don't withhold from him.** Don't leave him (except for your own or your child's safety). Love, forgive and support him. Don't put up walls. He needs your friendship, not your judgment.

"FOR MEN ONLY"

RECLAIMING MANHOOD TODAY

No. 7 In A Series of Articles For Men by Jerry Schmoyer

MALE SEXUALITY

This is a hard subject to write about, especially in an article like this. Its a subject much easier ignored and overlooked, but then that is the very attitude that has made male sexuality the problem it often is. No area so quickly and accurately cuts to the heart of who a man is as his sexuality. The deepest truths of our psychological makeup are revealed through our sexual response, what affects us and what doesn't, and how we relate sexually. Sex functions as a mirror. We meet ourselves in it, and often we don't like what we see. Men often feel they don't have their sex lives as together as they want others (or themselves) to think. We usually reveal only a small layer (the acceptable layer) of their actual sexual thoughts and lives. We feel that if others would know the truth, we would be thought of as either perverted or sexually dysfunctional.

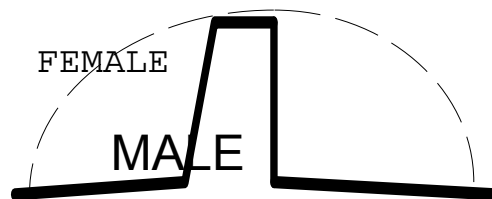
Wrong sexual stereotypes start young and are reinforced as boys grow to men. What talking boys do about sex often does more harm than good. Sometimes Christianity contributes to this wrong stereotype by its silence on the whole matter, making talking about sex taboo. Thus misinformation and ignorance about the role and function of sex grows. This sets fertile ground for pornography, lustful fantasies, and wrong sexual thought patterns. Parents teach children how to handle money, but not how to handle sex. As a result men today often go around pretending they have it all together sexually, but in reality do not. There is much to be learned from our sexual choices and fantasies if we are honest and courageous enough to face them.

Although in our minds we know better, **we still seem to consider adequate sexual functioning as proof of our masculinity.** On top of that, we aren't really sure of what 'adequate' is. We know what we've been exposed to in the world isn't right, but what is? Any supposed sexual failures on our part inevitably damage our male identity. Much has been written and taught about a woman's sexuality and how it works, but almost nothing about men. Women assume one thing about their husbands sexuality, and the men assume something quite different. Usually neither is right. Sooner or later this causes problems!

Often men and women's view of sex has been influenced by exposure to **pornography** in some form. Actually pornography is a fantasy, a substitute, an escape. Pornography for men is the same as soap operas and romance novels for women. Both are sexual, vicariously experiencing a forbidden fantasy. Both are self-centered and self-serving. In each, the underlying emotional needs and dynamics are much stronger than the physical reality of it all. Emotional needs more than physical needs make them appealing.

The same is true of **mental or physical unfaithfulness.** This usually has little to do with sex. The reasons go much deeper. They fulfill unmet emotional needs. These unmet needs must be honestly admitted, explored, and met in legitimate, Godly ways. Often the root causes go back to faulty childhood relationships with mother or father.

There is a common saying that pretty well summarizes the sexual differences between men and women. It is that **women give sex to get love, men give love to get sex**. Sex for a woman starts first thing in the morning as closeness is cultivated by small talk, touches, time and attention. Men turn on and turn off quickly, but for a woman each is a slow, gradual process that men must be aware. Here's a place where you must certainly put her needs before his! Romance and attention are still very important, like when you were dating her. That's why small talk is so important for her in the evening, it is her way of making emotional contact with you. If you don't take that first step anything past it will be much harder.



Pray together before sex. We pray before we eat, thanking God for his gift of this and asking Him to bless it to our benefit. Why not do the same for sex? After all, God created sex -- it was His idea! What's more, He gave it to mankind BEFORE there was sin or evil. Sex in marriage is a beautiful gift, symbolic of the oneness of Christ and His church.

I know I've been speaking in vague generalities here, and that can be frustrating. I feel its the best I can do in an article like this. Please feel free to contact me for more personal advice or counsel if you'd like (Jerry Schmoyer, 348-8086).

WHAT CAN A WOMAN DO TO HELP?

Honestly admit to yourself any pull you feel to soap operas, romance novels, or any related type of sexual/romance fantasy. What emotional needs cause that to be appealing to you? Turn those needs to God for Him to meet in His time and way.

Do you have too high expectations of your husband physically, emotionally or spiritually? I think most women do. He will sense that and it puts extra pressure on him. It can make him feel less a success and this impacts all areas of his life. Reassure him often of your acceptance of him as a man in all areas.

Allow him to NOT want sex sometimes without your thinking something is wrong with you or him.

Make sure you do not fill the role of mother in his life. If you take on that role, or he puts you in that role, it will be more difficult to adjust to being sexual lovers at night. That's also true if you see him in a father-figure or father replacement role.

Remember how the sexual curve differs for men and women. Gently educate him to your needs. Don't assume he knows these things, men don't unless taught them.

Don't make his ultimate pleasure the only focus of sex. Pornography does that. Don't use that as your assurance of how successful the act was for you or him.

Remember, sex breaks down walls for women and they like this. But that can be threatening to men and they may withdraw emotionally during sex. Be patient and understanding. Gently talk to them about this later.

Pray for him and yourself in this area. Pray before sex, even if it is just to yourself.

If you have had sex with someone you aren't now married to that bond must be broken. If it was in a previous marriage, remember the government can only break what the government makes (the legality of a marriage). Only God can break the spiritual bond which is entered into by sex, with or without marriage (1 Corinthians 6:16). Confess the sin (if it wasn't in marriage). Ask God to break the union physically and emotionally. Accept His forgiveness and carry no guilt. Don't ever let your thoughts dwell in it again.

"FOR MEN ONLY"

RECLAIMING MANHOOD TODAY

No. 8 In A Series of Articles For Men by Jerry Schmoyer

CALEB and the MALE MID-LIFE CRISIS

Caleb is one of the most overlooked men in the Bible. He was one of the spies who went in to check out the Promised Land (Numbers 13:30-33). Only he and Joshua had enough faith to trust God to defeat the giants for them, and as a result the people wanted to stone them (Numbers 14:10). Still, he held faithful to God. Caleb was a man of God. Six times we are told that he followed God completely (Numbers 14:24, etc.). Despite this, he had to suffer the negative consequences of the sins of others and also had to wander for 40 years with the rest. What was his attitude about having to give up the prime years of his life (early 40's to early 80's) because of other's sins? How did he handle not meeting his personal goals? What about how he felt seeing his family do with less than he wanted to provide for them? Caleb had some adjustments to make, but so did Joshua. However Joshua was chosen to be Moses' replacement and spent these years in training and as second-in-command. Caleb was passed over by God for this promotion. How did he handle that in addition to everything else?

Evidently he handled it quite well for the Bible tells us about the excellent, godly children he raised. A bitter, self-pitying old man doesn't accomplish that! We know for sure that he made his adjustments well for when he finally did enter the land and was given first choice of which land he wanted, he chose the land where the giants lived (Joshua 14:6-15). He and his sons, by God's strength, drove out the giants that the whole nation was afraid of 40 years earlier.

Yes, Caleb was a fine man of God. I'd love to have a talk with him. I'd ask him, "How did you handle being held back because of the sins of others?" "What did you do to overcome thoughts of bitterness, self-pity or failure during all those wasted years?" "How did it affect you when Joshua was chosen over you?" "What was your attitude while the prime of your life was passing and your goals and plans weren't being met?" "Did it affect you as a man to see your family live on a lesser level than you wanted to provide for them?" Unfortunately I'll have to wait a bit to ask those questions. Still, we can guess at what the answers must have been. Caleb saw God in control and was content being in His will instead of measuring himself by worldly standards for success. He adjusted his expectations and was content with what he had. All men need to do that as they grow older.

Several years ago it really hit me that I was never going to pastor a super-church, be on TV or the speaking circuit, or write books for publication. Those were the goals we all had in seminary, for they mean success and God's blessing on a ministry. Many of my classmates have attained such things, and frankly I sometimes envy them if I'm not careful. But then I confess that sin of discontentment and remind myself that how God sees success

and how the world sees success are two different things. As a man I want to rise to the top of my profession, provide the best for my family, make my loved ones proud of me, be important and productive. I've had to make adjustments as the years passed and those things didn't come. I'm in my 13th year of pastoring this church and love it. I know this is where God wants me. I've had to adjust my expectations or be frustrated, bitter, and feel like a failure. Most men must do the same. Seldom do we achieve more than we expected at the start, often it is less.

Not only must we adjust as to the quality we attain in life, we must adjust in the quantity we produce, too. As we age we just don't have the energy we once had. Our testosterone starts declining in our 20's and is down 50% by middle age. Eventually it drops to where we were at puberty. We can't run as fast, compete at work with younger men, etc. When we try to keep up our bodies strive to produce more testosterone to meet our need but just can't. As a result depression, nightmares, loss of memory, insomnia, boredom or loss of sex drive may occur.

Unfortunately men are slowing down just when many women are starting to gear up. Men hit their physical and sexual prime in their late teens, but for a woman that doesn't come until their 30's (I've always wanted to ask God about His reasoning behind that!). Also, by the time a man is slowing down his wife is finally getting free from being tied down to house and children and looking for excitement, career, something to pour her energies into. By the time grandchildren come we find grandpa is the sweet, affable one who does the more "feminine" things like gardening while grandma has become more decisive, tough-minded and intrusive. Their roles almost reverse.

What does all this mean for men today? First, it means we must start off with the right expectations about what success really is, and we must make sure our children grow up with those same goals. We can't feel like a failure because we don't provide all we want to provide. That is God's choice to make. Also, we cannot get our identity as a man and human being tied up in our work or career. That's why men overwork and suffer the stress and heart attacks that come with it. (More about that in a future article.) As we age we must continually readjust so we are content in whatever state God has us (Philippians 4:11-13). If not we will blame God and get bitter, or blame ourselves and get depressed. If we push ourselves to do more than God has for us we will burn out. If we try to do what we did earlier in life we won't be able to do it. In this world where youth is everything it is a real skill to age gracefully, and that attitude starts in our 20's!

How about you? What is your definition of success? What are you doing now to help make those mid-life adjustments easier? In prayer ask God to show you where your expectations for yourself are above what He would have them be. Talk these things over with your wife. You may find the values of the world, and especially those of your own father, are influencing you in a negative way. God wants to provide peace and joy for His people, but if we don't make the necessary adjustments in our goals and values as life goes on we will lose them. You'll never find them in work or career or worldly 'success' anyway. You'll only find them in Jesus. He didn't rush and push. In fact, career-wise the world considered him a failure as a carpenter (he quit) and leader/teacher (his audience rejected him). We know He was a success because He did what God wanted, and that is the only way true success can be attained. Pattern your life after His to find true satisfaction and accomplishment in life!

"FOR MEN ONLY"

RECLAIMING MANHOOD TODAY

No. 9 In A Series of Articles For Men by Jerry Schmoyer

MALE FRIENDSHIPS (Or: Are The Beer Commercials True?)

Jim Mosher and I were the best of friends in high school. We went everywhere and did everything together. He lived down the block. We were both on the wrestling team, football team and track team. On Saturday evenings we watched Red Skelton and did sit-ups in his basement. We walked to school together and both took the vocational-technical course. We were best of friends, inseparable. Then I was drafted into the army while a football injury kept him out. That was in 1965. I only ever saw him once since then. We live less than an hour apart, but we have absolutely no contact. What happened? We didn't argue, we just separated. Weren't we really friends before? Sure we were -- the kind of friends men have: friends of convenience, location, and common achievement, friends one can walk away from and never see again.

That's not the only time that's happened in my life. In grade school it was my cousin John Guldin. In junior high my friend was Robert Raines. In the army it was Tom Palmer, and in college Fred Bluffington. In seminary it was Sammy Puckett. I could tell the same story about each friendship, for when that time of my life was over the relationship ended.

That's not how it was with my sister and her friends, though. She never lost contact with any of her friends. Our family still hears from Margie Patty, her elementary friend of 35 years ago. Although my sister died 9 years ago, I still know more about what her old friends are doing today than about mine! Why is that? Why were her friendships entirely different than mine?

To understand we must step back and have an overview of male relationships. The romanticized image of friendship between males has long been part of our country: men in their loyalty and resourcefulness, defeating the common enemy together (Indian fighting, foxhole mates, baseball team, fishing, same project at work, home-repair, etc.). Like the Lone Ranger and Tonto, male relationships are based on accidents of association, not special personality characteristics. Thus they don't ripen into deep relationships. Also, when the association is broken so is the friendship.

For men, friendships do not come easily. They are complicated, rarely evaluated, and never talked about. After a man marries and has children, if friendships develop among men it is usually at work and stays within working hours. (That's what makes it hard for men to leave a job. The only male relationships they have are usually there.)

This is why the beer commercials are so successful. Men picture themselves having buddies like that: drinking together after the rugged soccer or softball game, reliving the key plays and enjoying one another's company, everyone accepted and fitting into this men's world. Does that ever happen? No! It never has been that way and never will be. Still, men think things were (or can be) that way and that's what sells the beer. Two men can sit in the same room 10 minutes without ever saying a word but in their minds they're buddies like in one of those commercials!

Men have a deep-seated need for friends, but there are many difficulties in men initiating and cultivating personal relationships. I must admit I don't have any close male friends. All my best

friends (those I share personal and intimate things with) have been girls. I grew up in an all-woman world and so felt more comfortable and accepted by women. My sister Judy, my cousin Mary Jane, my friend from church Linda, and friends of recent years like Nancy Kremm and my wife Nancy, all are female friends.

I never learned how to make close friendships with men. We can work on a project together and enjoy each other's company. We can joke, play softball, discuss the Eagles, or many other things. But talk about my feelings and fears? Express my appreciation for and need of him as a friend? Share my failures and hurts and tears? Suppose I called one of the men in my church that I feel comfortable with and asked him to meet me for lunch one day because I miss his company and would like to spend more time with him than I have been doing? How would that go over? See what I mean. Now suppose I ask him to meet me for lunch so we can go over some long-range planning for church programs or some such thing and there would be no problem! This proves my point -- men's relationships are utilitarian, always serving some function or purpose. They aren't just for the joy of each other's company.

For men, friendships either just happen or they don't. If they don't fall in place men usually don't work at developing or pursuing them. Men just don't know how to do that without feeling (or thinking they are perceived as) gay, unmasculine, or just somehow different. Men work at hiding their real emotions, especially from other men. Men don't make commitments to each other. That's why relationships like David and Jonathan stand out so strongly. Gale Sayers and Brian Piccolo in "Brian's Song" is another exception that proves the rule. Apart from a few examples like there, men have no role models of how to develop male friendships. My son, Tim, from when he was young, always said he liked to have girl friends because with boys he always felt like he had to compete with them in some way. I don't know where that comes from in men, or how to get rid of it, but it is a fact of life.

For another thing, men don't admit their problems to other men. I counsel many times more women than men. Men don't ask advice, even when lost while driving. It is "unmanly" to turn to others for help.

Is this lack of male friendship so bad, though? Why should a man bother having a male friend if he has a wife? Is anything lost by men not having a male friend? I think so. Even Jesus needed and cultivated male friendships. He had the 12 whom He invited to live and work with Him 24 hours a day. From them He had 3 specially close friends (Peter, James and John) to enjoy an even deeper level of intimacy (sharing the Transfiguration, etc.). Even closer to His heart yet was John, "the disciple whom Jesus loved." Jesus leaned on his chest during the Last Supper. (It is an unwritten rule today that men never touch other men outside of carefully understood gestures like handshakes, slap on the back, playful arm punch, etc.) Jesus needed them with Him, and wanted them praying with Him as He went to Gethsemane. It wasn't just because He wasn't married. A good male friend can be someone you can bounce things off of you can't bounce off your wife (sexual temptations, feelings of inadequacy, fear of failure, frustrations and hurts from your wife, stress of work, etc.). I think there is a place for close male friendships today. We all know that widows adjust to life much better than widowers, and I think this is one reason why.

Could this be why so many, many more men than women become workaholics, alcoholics, drug addicts, etc.? I'm sure it's one of the reasons women have a much easier time witnessing to other women than men have witnessing to men. If we don't develop relationships with other men how can we help reach them for Christ and help them grow spiritually? Is this why Christian manhood is often so much weaker than Christian womanhood today? I don't know the answers to all these things. I don't even know if there are answers. I do know, though, that this is an area worth considering. It's not easy being a man. It's harder being a man alone. Satan's strategy is divide and conquer, and I think he's done that pretty well with men. I'm not the only one he's done it with. It doesn't have to stay that way, though. Are you willing to pay the price to do this? I hope so.

"FOR MEN ONLY"

RECLAIMING MANHOOD TODAY
No. 10 In A Series of Articles For Men by Jerry Schmoyer

DO WOMEN EXPECT TOO MUCH OF MEN?

I'm a classic baby boomer. I was born in 1946, a not-so-subtle celebration of my father coming home from World War II. My era was populated with heroes who were larger than life: Generals Eisenhower, Patton and MacArthur. My generation was the first in history to be nurtured on Technicolor images. TV made its own set of colossal figures around which many of our expectations for manhood were built. I remember John Wayne, the Lone Ranger, Hopalong Cassidy, Randolph Scott, Sergeant Preston of the Yukon, Gene Autry and my favorite, Red Ryder. They became what true masculinity should look like to me. I acted out what I saw in TV. I was the good guy, dressing and acting like my heroes. I carried the same kind of gun. My backyard was the corral, my dining room the old home place, and the arm of the sofa was my faithful horse. Everything was simple and straight-forward. I wanted to be a cowboy when I grew and I knew just how a grown-up cowboy should act.

Then somebody threw me a curve ball! The rebellion of the 60's wiped out my old heroes. People changed. One of the changes is that women decided they wanted sensitive, feeling men. John Wayne was replaced by Alan Alda and Michael Landon. The trouble was, no one told men how to be like this. Divorce rates doubled. Roles blended and became obscure. People didn't know what to expect of others or themselves. Everyone was trying to 'find' themselves. This clash of images can still be heard today. The shock waves continue to rock marriages even now.

Think of your grandparents' marriages. What did your grandmother expect of your grandfather? It was clear to all the man was to be the provider and to be faithful to his wife. The woman took care of the inside of the home and the children. The man took care of the outside. The same was true of our parents generation. Everyone knew what their roles were and what was expected of them. That just isn't true today. Wives are seldom satisfied with a man doing just what their father or grandfather did. What does your wife expect of you? What do you expect of yourself? I think one of the biggest problems marriages face today is the high expectations wives have of their husbands. Let me explain.

In the past marriage was one of several institutions where meaning was found and intimacy needs were met. Others included the church, neighborhood, extended family, fellow employees, etc. Today marriage is usually the only place where people can go for intimacy and companionship. That puts extra pressure on marriage to meet these needs.

In the 1950's and 1960's man was the physical provider and protector (John Wayne). In the 1970's and 1980's he was also to be the emotional provider (Alan Alda and Michael Landon). In the 1990's he is to have an equal share in child raising, too. This is a contributing fact to the great rise of the home schooling movement today. The problem is

that no one has trained men to be this new kind of open, feeling, emotional man. We still identify maleness with our fathers. Expectations for men have greatly increased: from their bosses, their wives, their children and themselves.

It isn't easy for most men to say, "You're expecting too much of me!" Usually we give the impression, especially in courtship, that we can and will handle anything that comes along. Our wives believe that, and expect us to always be on top of everything. God says men are to be the leaders of the family and this adds to the load. By keeping things hidden inside man gives the impression he is able to handle it all. Also, he believes it is his responsibility to handle everything, like his father and John Wayne did. That just isn't true, though. No man ever handled it all, even though they gave that illusion. To admit and face ones inability to be able to be on top of everything is the first step out of this bondage. Even Jesus never made any claim to be able to handle everything that was expected of Him but constantly went to the Father for strength, wisdom and help. If He had to do that, certainly we must do that also.

Its been greatly freeing to me to realize I can't do all others expect of me, or that I expect of myself. I'm working on what expectations are right and which are too much. God will never let you be the perfect husband, you will never be able to meet all your wife's needs. He reserves that role for Himself to make sure she turns to Him instead of always to you. However knowing that I can't and won't meet them all, nor do I need to, is greatly liberating. It frees me from always being a failure and allows me to be me. Check out expectations that are made of you. Does it seem your your wife expects too much of you? What about your children? Mainly, what do you expect of yourself?

WOMEN: WATCH WHAT YOU EXPECT!

Women must constantly realize that most men are really little boys doing their best to act like men and fulfill a role they feel wholly unsuited for. The pressure of the responsibility of raising a family correctly, earning a living, and being what God wants them to be can be overwhelming. Men struggle inside as much as you and face the same fears and feelings. We just don't show them. Help us to express these. Ask "How did that make you feel" to get us to label and communicate our feelings. DON'T put more expectations on us, for we'll just try to meet them, fail, feel like a failure, and be more unable to do all we have to do. Remember, only God can meet your needs as a woman, mother and wife. If He chooses to meet those through your husband or in some other way (meet them inside you himself by His Spirit or put them on hold for awhile) is His business. Don't expect your husband to meet them, only expect God to meet them. NEVER try to change your husband. Men had enough of that from their mothers and that isn't why they married you! Accept them as they are and pray for God to change them (or you -- or both!). Its not easy being a man today. Don't see them as someone who has arrived and is on top of things, see them as fellow strugglers, as brothers alongside you working together to grow to be all God wants you to be. Encourage them, support them, compliment them, love them, forgive them -- but never scold, nag, or make demands of them. Ask him sometime, "Do I ever expect too much of you?" Then LISTEN QUIETLY for however long it takes him to get it out. Don't defend yourself, just apologize and hug him!

MEN VRS WOMEN

When God created man something was missing, so He created woman to "fill up the empty spaces" (literal translation of Genesis 2:18). Man, being the more rational and objective, was given the role of leader and provider. Woman, being the more emotional and subjective, was given the role of caregiver. Each complements the other. Neither is superior to the other. They are equal but different. Listed below are some of the differences:

	MEN	WOMEN
MEETINGS DECISIONS	<p>Preconceived idea when meeting starts, then argue their side until one wins.</p> <p>Structured debate...</p>	<p>Attempt to achieve consensus before voting, solve problems & develop opinions as open discussion proceeds. Free-flowing discussion...</p>
CONVERSATION	<p>Must interrupt, talk louder, force opinion. Assume if someone has something to say they will make it known.</p> <p>Quick to cut off, interrupt. To others: competitive Focus on content (report)</p> <p>Give local 'expert' higher status & more influence Quick to give solution to each problem. No patience for "whining"</p>	<p>Seek out other's opinions, invite others to talk, important for all to participate, all are drawn into the discussion.</p> <p>Hesitate to interrupt, esp men To others: sensitive Focus on interaction (rapport)</p> <p>See all as equal, intimate</p> <p>Share troubles, not expect solution. If not able to say everything on their heart, they don't feel they have been 'heard.'</p>
WORK, ORGANIZATION	<p>STAIRCASE, clearly defined set of steps to be completed in order</p> <p>Plan all steps, complete step 1 before going on to step 2</p>	<p>JIGSAW PUZZLE, divide work as they go, deciding what needs to be done when get to that state of the process</p> <p>Start, develop as they go, then go back to change, add, correct, etc.</p>
TOLERATE CONFLICT	<p>Can put up with continuing personality conflicts and disagreements seemingly forever</p>	<p>Acutely uncomfortable when people clash, want to straighten it out without confronting anyone.</p>
DISAGREEMENTS	<p>A way of affirming independence</p> <p>Boys playing argue about rules, that's part of the fun</p>	<p>Threat to intimacy</p> <p>Girls playing quit when argument arises, relationships more important than rules</p>
SUMMARY	Objective (do the job)	Subjective (close to the person)
	Competitive	Affirming
	Final Product most important	Process most important
	Goal: final product right	Goal: intimacy & relationship
	Product & Process over Person	Person over Product & Process

"FOR MEN ONLY"

RECLAIMING MANHOOD TODAY

No. 11 In A Series of Articles For Men by Jerry Schroyer

WHY ARE WOMEN SO BIG ON ROMANCE?

Perhaps you've heard "The Seven Ages Of The Married Cold." It goes like this:

1st year of marriage: "Sugar dumpling, I'm worried about my baby girl. You've got a bad sniffle and there's no telling about these things. I'm putting you in the hospital for a general checkup and a good rest. I'll bring your meals in. I've already got it all arranged."

2nd year of marriage: "Listen, darling, I don't like the sound of that cough and I've called Doc Miller to rush over here. Now you go to bed like a good girl, please?"

3rd year of marriage: "Maybe you'd better lie down, honey. Nothing like a little rest when you feel punk. I'll bring you something to eat. Have we got any soup?"

4th year of marriage: "Look, dear, be sensible. After you feed the kids and get the dishes washed, you'd better hit the sack."

5th year of marriage: "Why don't you get yourself a couple aspirin?"

6th year of marriage: "If you'd just gargle or something instead of sitting around barking like a seal!"

7th year of marriage: "For Pete's sake, stop sneezing! Whatcha trying to do, give me pneumonia?"

Why does this make us smile? What is there in this that strikes a cord near home? Most married couples realize that things change as married life goes on. Women notice and regret that the 'romance' has gone out of marriage. Is this all right? Is it natural and inevitable? Is it avoidable? In this article we want to see just what this is all about from a woman's side and then we'll be able to understand what they need and how to provide it.

Ephesians 5:22-33 is the major passage on this subject. Please get a Bible and read it right now. Not the key words there. The woman is told to "submit" to her husband. This word is a military word which means "respond".

Woman is a responder (surely you've discovered that!). She responds to how she is treated. After all, she was created to "fill up the empty spaces" (Genesis 2:20) in Adam, so naturally God made her to respond to him. She was made strong in what Adam was weaker in (subjective emotionalism) while man was stronger in what she didn't need because he already had it (objective rationalism). Thus man is told to "love" his wife because that makes her feel secure so she can respond to him as she should. The Bible never tells a man to submit to his wife, nor does it tell a woman to love her husband! The chart above shows how these work.

	MAN	WOMAN
NEED	PROVIDE, GUIDE	LOVE, SECURITY
DUTY	SACRIFICIAL LOVE	SUBMIT, RESPECT

The key element in making a marriage relationship work is the husband having his wife feel secure in his love. The Greek word for "love" is "*agape*" which refers to unconditional love, 'no matter what' love, 'love in spite of.' In contrast the other Greek word for love is "*phileo*" which is friendship, conditional love, love 'if' or 'because.' There is no security in that. I Corinthians 13 describes *agape* love. Read that chapter and put your own name in where the word 'love' is to see how you measure up! Paul says our pattern of love is Jesus. He says we are to love our wives "just as Christ also loved the church" (Eph. 5:25-33). That means our love is to be sacrificial, giving our very lives for our wives. He also says we are to love them "just as you love yourself" (Eph 5:33). We must overlook their mistakes and errors as we do our own. We must show the same acceptance for them as we do for ourselves.

Joseph, Mary's husband, is a fine example of a man making a woman feel secure. He put her needs first (more about this in the next article). She responded with complete trust. Hosea, too, put Gomer before himself. He bought her back from slavery and prostitution and reinstated her as his wife. Boaz's unselfish treatment of Ruth won her heart, too.

Women are responders. How your wife treats you is in response to how loved and secure you make her feel. It is up to the husband to initiate this in love. Then the wife can respond with submission. It isn't just outer submission that is referred to, but submission built on security and respect (Eph 5:33). Just as children are to respect and trust their parents, and based on that want to please them, so a wife is to want to please her husband because he meets her needs. Thus it's up to the man to initiate the love and security in the relationship.

HUSBAND initiates
submit
response **WIFE**
love

That's where romance comes in. It's a tangible way for a woman to see and know she is loved. Women give themselves to men in an entirely different way than men give themselves to women. A man takes on a new addition to his world when he takes a wife. It is a new responsibility and commitment. For a woman, though, she completely gives of herself. She becomes open, dependent, vulnerable, totally affected by her man. That's why she needs extra security, extra reminders that she is loved and special and important. Romance does that. So does listening when she talks. Talking, to a woman, is key to intimacy. By sharing her thoughts in words she is setting a secure foundation for what is to follow. Without that security a woman can't really give herself. So, men, listen to your wives. Romance your wives. Show them you love them in ways that mean a lot to them. Keep on doing the things you did before marriage when you wanted to convince her you loved her and she could depend on you. Unfortunately that is hard for most men, for we draw back into our shells after marriage. Especially when harsh words have been said it is difficult to be the first to reach out. Apologizing isn't easy, nor is admitting our failures and sins. Our male ego gets in the way. But it's worth it. An investment in our wives is an investment in ourselves. We get so much more back from them than we put into them that it is really beneficial to us, as well as right and good, for us to make sure their needs for security and love are met. Peter says if things aren't right in our marriage even our spiritual life suffers (I Peter 3:7). Go tell her now how much you love her and how important she is to you. She'll be glad you did -- and so will you!

"FOR MEN ONLY"

RECLAIMING MANHOOD TODAY
No. 12 In A Series of Articles For Men by Jerry Schmoyer

ABRAHAM & SARAH A LOVE AFFAIR GONE WRONG

I think Sarah has gotten a bum rap. She is usually used as the epitome of unsubmission and bossiness in a wife. Peter talks about her as if to say "if even Sarah can learn to submit, any woman can!" (I Peter 3:1-7). Now I'm not saying she wasn't that way, but when we imply she was always purposefully that way and go on to pity poor Abraham, we are missing an important lesson for husbands today. I contend that Sarah started off submissive and trusting, but Abraham 'burnt' her badly a couple of times and to protect herself she became domineering. Of course that doesn't make her response right, but there is something we as men must learn from Abraham's sin. Follow along with me please:

When we first meet Abraham and Sarah (Genesis 11:27-30) they were called Abram and Sari then, but we'll use their common names throughout) nothing seems amiss in the relationship. In fact, she doesn't seem to have any problem leaving her home and family to go to an unknown land when Abraham says to pack up and leave (Genesis 12:1-5). It might be this that Peter refers to when he talks about Sarah being submissive to Abraham and obeying him completely (I Peter 3:1-6). But then there is trouble in paradise!

When they finally get to the promised land a famine comes. Instead of staying and trusting God Abraham takes matters into his own hands and comes up with an idea. They go to Egypt to take care of themselves, but because Sarah is still beautiful despite being in her late 60's Abraham is afraid pharaoh will kill him so he can take Sarah into his harem. Thus he has her lie about their relationship to protect him by having her say she was just his sister (Genesis 12:10-20). How did this make Sarah feel? She was sacrificing to protect Abraham, when it should have been the other way around (see article 11 in this series about Ephesians 5:22-33). It became 'every man for himself.' A woman needs to be protected and feel secure in her man's love. Sarah did not have that. Thus she built up walls between herself and Abraham. She still should have submitted and trusted in God, who really is in control. Wives today must realize that it is really God they are submitting to and trusting when they do so with their husbands. I am not excusing or justifying Sarah's sin, I do want to point out what happens when a man does not put his wife's needs first and have her feel secure and protected.

Could this have been a one-time slip with Abraham? I think not. Twenty years later he does the same thing when God gives him a retest. This time he fled to the Negev, but everything else was handled the same (Genesis 20:1-18). In fact, we see their son Isaac picked up this pattern and it continued in his relationship with Rebekah (Genesis 27:5-13) and even down to Jacob and Rachel (Genesis 30:1-3). I think it was a pattern in many ways. When a man puts his needs first and doesn't make his wife feel like a precious treasure who means more to him than he himself, it really makes it easy for a woman to take things into her own hands. That is just what Sarah did.

She took control of her own life for her protection (just as Abraham did when he led them into Egypt). She told Abraham to have an heir by Hagar (Genesis 16:1-3), then when she was jealous of

and hurt by Hagar she had Abraham kick her out (Genesis 16:4-6). How hard and bitter she eventually became is seen in her laughing at God's prediction of a coming son (Genesis 18:9-15). When Isaac was born it seems she used him to meet needs her husband wasn't meeting: feeling significant, needed and fulfilled (Genesis 21:1-7). This just taught Isaac to be submissive to a strong woman, a pattern he continued in and passed on down to Jacob.

Sarah even made Abraham send Ishmael away (Genesis 21:8-13). When God started working on Abraham about all this and told him to take Isaac and sacrifice him it seems certain he didn't tell Sarah (Genesis 22:1-3). Notice how this relationship had deteriorated, starting with Abraham's putting himself first. Men today can learn much from this. Would your wife say she can identify with Sarah? It's not too late to turn things around. Don't just expect your wife to submit and respect you, put her needs first so you deserve her trust and respect. God holds us men responsible for our marriages. Learn from Abraham.

JOSEPH & MARY

A LOVE AFFAIR GONE STRONG

Not all relationships are like Abraham and Sarah. One that was the exact opposite was Joseph and Mary. Joseph put Mary first. When he found out she was pregnant and they weren't married he could have sued for divorce and protected his reputation (some say he could have had her stoned). Then she would have taken the blame and disgrace for the rest of her life. A 'good' Jew would have done that. Joseph must have been terribly hurt to find out about her infidelity, still he didn't get bitter or try to take revenge. According to the law he could no longer marry her, but he intended to end it in the way that she suffered the least. He decided to protect her at the sacrifice of his own pride, reputation and finances (Matthew 1:18-25). For the rest of his life he was mocked and laughed at for marrying someone carrying someone else's baby (John 8:41 implies they thought it was a Roman soldier who got Mary pregnant). Now how do you think Mary responded to this show of love and sacrificial protection? Its no wonder God chose someone like Joseph to raise His Son!

We always see Joseph putting Mary and her needs first (Luke 2:1-20). No wonder she wanted to go to Bethlehem with him, even though pregnant. No wonder she quickly obeyed when God, through Joseph (not through Mary), told them to leave for Egypt and then later to return to Nazareth where all the talk about them was ripe (Matthew 2:13-23).

I think Joseph is one of the finest men in the Bible, a great example for all husbands today. He stands in direct contrast to Abraham. That's why Mary stands in direct contrast to Sarah, too.

Who are you more like? Maybe I should ask first of all who your wife is more like? If she's more like Sarah what do YOU need to do to have her feel secure trusting you? If she's more like Mary -- great! But wait a minute before taking all the credit. Is she like Mary because of your sacrificial love and protection, or because she is trusting God despite how you are? These are heavy things to think about, things we'd rather avoid. However if we are to be the husbands God wants us to be then these must be addressed and worked through. What can you do to make your wife feel more secure in your love? In what ways can you show your love for her more? What can you do to protect her better (from too hard work, from criticism she receives from out or inside the home, from disrespectful children, from too much responsibility, etc.). We'd all love to have wives like Mary. We can, too. The first step is for us to be more like Joseph!

"FOR MEN ONLY"

RECLAIMING MANHOOD TODAY

No. 13 In A Series of Articles For Men by Jerry Schroyer

PASSIVE MEN - WILD WOMEN

Chuck Yeager in "The Right Stuff," when asked by his wife what was the only thing of which he was afraid, answered, "You!" Unfortunately here is a lot of truth to this. There is often an awesome fear between men and women which undermines mutuality and togetherness. For the believer, Jesus removed all fear on the cross (II Tim 1:7), but often there are fears we aren't aware of and thus don't turn over to Jesus. I think a man's fear of his wife is one of them. Please read on and hear me out before you make your decision about this.

WHY MEN ARE OFTEN PASSIVE:

The pattern of strong women marrying passive men is nothing new. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are all examples. This is formed by parents in their children. When a woman dominates and a man takes a less active role the children see this as the way they should be and often grow up to repeat it. The man finds a strong woman like his mother who can and will take some (or all) of the decision-making burden and responsibilities off his shoulders. The woman, like her mother, looks for a man who 'needs' her, whom she can mother, and who will give her what she perceives as her freedom. Thus people subconsciously look for these things in a mate when dating.

Married life often magnifies this. The man comes home from a long, hard day of work and is emotionally and physically drained. All he wants is peace and quiet, to be left alone, and to not have any more demands made on him. The more demands his wife makes of him the more he withdraws. He feels criticized or unappreciated for what he does do and withdraws more. She wants to 'make contact' with him and talks about one little thing after another. He seems to ignore her and not hear what she says. She takes this as rejection. So she becomes more pressuring and even abusive. He puts up solid walls (or stays out of the house, coming home late). Eventually she goes 'wild'!

The man then gets angry, too. However he can only show his anger in passive ways: putting things off, putting up walls, ignoring her, being late, etc. He is like a child who can't win a war with parents can get stubborn and drag his feet. This affects their emotional as well as physical relationship. Men don't express their anger at their wives much because they were taught not to show anger at the other significant woman in their life, their mother. They never saw their father handle his anger correctly, either.

When this brings out direct anger from his wife, a man will often sit back and discount what she is saying because "that's just her anger speaking." Since she shows anger and he doesn't she must be sinful and he is righteous and justified in his actions. All communication ceases and more walls go up. Sometimes instead the man caves in out of fear of the wild woman (which is probably what he did with his mother).

WHY ARE WOMEN OFTEN ANGRY

So, why ARE so many women angry at their men? Part of it is training -- its the only thing they've seen in their parent's marriage. There is more to it than that, though. Some of it comes from expectations not being met in marriage. They think from young on that if they marry the right man they'll be happy, satisfied, fulfilled. A man will solve their problems and meet their needs. The man promises this by word and action. He is attentive, romantic, and puts her first. Then gradually things change and she gets angry (frustrated).

Its not uncommon for a woman to battle a man tooth and nail for control, but when she 'wins' and gains control she then loses respect and becomes angry at him for letting her control him. He thinks he is giving in (being passive) to keep the peace, but really he is creating a never-ending war. Secretly inside she wants him to be strong enough to control her when she can't control herself. She thinks, "If he really loved me he wouldn't let me get away with this!" When he doesn't control her she gets angry/wild. More and more today women are chewing men up and spitting them out, all the while longing for a man to stand up to them and offer a credible counterpoint worthy of their respect.

When a man grows up being afraid of woman-anger (his mother, sister, etc.) he has a very, very difficult time handling that same woman-anger in his wife.

SO WHAT'S THE SOLUTION?

If you are a **woman** and you realize you have an anger problem realize you are not alone in it! Check out your expectations of him to make sure they are realistic (see Article 10 in this series). Give him some space when he needs it, especially when he comes home from work drained and empty. Put your needs on the back burner and minister to his, the return will be manifold! Go to God with your needs, He is the only one who can meet them anyway!

For **men**, admit that your passivity is just as wrong as her anger, and often a lot more dishonest. Understand her high expectations as a show of her need of you. Men must find a way to honestly convey their feelings -- not stuff them inside until they explode. Study yourself to become aware of the subtle ways you show anger and fight back: walls, procrastination, criticism, withholding love, etc. Be the man in your family, take control lovingly from your wife. Be more aware of what God thinks of you than what a person thinks of you.

Engaging an angry woman can be like boxing with someone who has long arms. If you "stay outside" trying to calm her down and backing off or giving in, she'll batter you. But if you're willing to take a few blows and move deliberately closer to her -- perhaps insisting that you sit down and work it out, and refusing to let her harsh words continue to hurt you -- both of you can win the match. A man must be emotionally healthy to "move inside" and take a few punches for the future good of all. Sadly, many men today bear deep wounds caused by demanding mothers or distant fathers. In confronting the woman he loves the man is ruled either by suppressed hostility toward his mother or the model of withdrawal from his father. Without an example of a father who handled his wife's anger correctly the boy grows up fearing woman-anger and will not express his true feelings so as to not make things worse.

'Wild' women long for a knight in shining armor who is both strong and bold enough to cut her free, so that she can be restored to what God wants her to be. A woman knows in her God-created spirit that she needs a man strong enough to help her face things about herself which she would otherwise avoid if left to herself. She needs a man capable and willing to wield the sword of truth with a manly sensitivity, that is, with the courage to cut where and when necessary, and with the love to do it with respect for her and submission to the God who has created them both.

When the man can't face the woman-anger he needs to recognize the spirit of fear and condemnation which is his enemy -- not his wife. He must battle his own insecurity and past hurts, not battle his wife. She just points them out by her anger and forces him to become aware of his failings. Remember, the woman is not your enemy but a victim of her own past hurts, just like you. She probably grew up afraid to trust a man with her needs.

A man must let Jesus control Him and depend on His strength in virtually every area of his life and marriage to have the strength to be the husband his wife really needs. Pray constantly for your wife, and yourself. Ask Jesus to show you how He's praying and interceding for your wife and pray for her the same way yourself! As you pray keep in mind that God will usually work through you to answer those prayers, so be ready to do what He wants when He wants it. Its not easy, but its certainly worth it!

"FOR MEN ONLY"

RECLAIMING MANHOOD TODAY

No. 14 In A Series of Articles For Men by Jerry Schmoeyer

DO YOU OVERWORK? (Would Your Wife or Kids Say You Overwork?)

Overwork is common today! It is a killer stalking our society. It is really a problem, but it is a problem others applaud. Many today see overwork as what is expected to 'get ahead' and 'be a man.' Overwork is the fastest-growing killer of men today. Its getting worse all the time, not better. Men just seem to overwork. Before we can talk about what to do about it we must understand why it happens.

One reason we men overwork is the example and training we receive growing up. We see our fathers always being busy. We equate success and busyness in the workplace and even in the church. In school and college we are rewarded for being productive perfectionists and devalued when we are not. The busiest people we know are looked up to as the most successful: the doctor and the pastor. Recently I've heard of an alcoholic doctor who is losing his 3rd wife, is an alcoholic, his kids are on drugs and his employees hate his guts, but his practice is making money and he's seen as a success in the eyes of his peers. Now if he were on his first marriage, had a good relationship with his family and employees, but was having to cut back office staff he'd be branded a failure. He throws himself into his work and that makes everything OK.

Another reason we overwork is that our male ego is closely involved with our work and activity. Men identify themselves by what we do. We are "Ken, the salesman," or "Bob the banker." The first thing men wonder about each other is what they do, for we evaluate each other (and ourselves) on this basis. A man without a job (unemployed, sick, retired) often doesn't feel like a full, functioning man. A man whose wife has to work (or earns more than him) often has a hard time accepting this. Thus our identity is too closely tied up in what we do. If you don't think this applies to you, ask yourself how you would feel if you were paralyzed in bed and your wife had to take care of you for the rest of your life? How would that affect your ego and self-worth? (By the way, what kind of a patient does your wife say you are now when you get sick?)

Still another reason for our tendency to overwork is that we get our feelings of accomplishment from our work. We get a 'high' from a completed project. In fact, workaholicism is like other addictions in that work is the drug of choice, and the adrenaline flow from pressure or accomplishment gives a high. The 'stash' is lists of work, projects started at home, things in mind that need doing, etc. Thus in overwork a man feels successful and gets a high from his accomplishments.

His family feeds into his overwork for they appreciate and depend on the things he can provide. Also, his busyness is an escape from thinking about other things in life: personal relationships, fears, his mortality, etc.

Often we stereotype workaholics as yuppie types with their briefcase and car phone. That just isn't true. As with other dependencies, there are binge workaholics and closet workaholics (hide their addiction even from their families). Housewives and home school mothers can be workaholics as easily as a man. There are cleanaholics (always keeping the home perfect), careaholics (always doing for others), busyaholics (running around with a tight schedule), rushaholics (over committed), and others. This is done for the same reason: insecurity, guilt if not doing, earning other's approval, self-identity be what one does.

Signs to look for that show overwork include denial (rationalize it with various excuses), poor self esteem (productivity becomes our identity), inability to relax (feel guilty when relaxing, need the adrenaline high from accomplishing something), perfectionism (expects too much of self), and isolation (works alone so not held accountable). Too much work brings physical symptoms, too. In Japan 10% of the deaths of working men are from "karoshi" (death from over work). In America this is called Epstein-Barr Disease, or Chronic Fatigue Syndrome. The immune system is suppressed and a man becomes open for infections, etc. His high adrenaline flow masks the problem for awhile, but then depression, forgetfulness and mood swings enter. When hospitalized, the first thing a workaholic asks for is his brief case (his stash)!

What can we do to prevent this epidemic from claiming us? What should we do if we think we might have some of the symptoms? The cure is two-fold. First, ADMIT TO THE PROBLEM. The surface problem is overwork, but the root problem is what makes us turn to work: insecurity, fear of failure, unsure of ourself as a man/person, etc. Admit it as sin for it breaks God's principle to rest one day out of seven. It is idolatry, for we are to have no other gods before Him and work has become a god. The other part of the cure is to PLAN OPTIONS TO REPLACE OVERWORK. Find someone who can and will hold you accountable. Your wife probably won't do well at this. She isn't in the position to hold you accountable. Also, she helped allow it to get to this point. Each addict needs an "enabler" to keep his addiction going, and without knowing it many wives fill this role with their husband's work addiction by bailing him out, making excuses for him, accepting his excuses, and doing things he should be doing. Wives often are more part of the problem than of the solution. With a person who can hold you accountable, write down your goals and plan your hours to meet those goals. Often our goals are for family relationships but 95% of our time goes into work projects. Spend time praying and meditating, Seek to understand why you overwork -- what need does work meet in your life? Commit yourself to make some hard choices, to say "no" to things, to put your priorities into practice in your life.

Remember, Jesus himself only had seven 24 hour days in a week. He just had 3 years to complete His mission, and He was never rushed, never overworked, never too busy for God or people. God doesn't give you or me 25 hours of work to do in a 24-hour day, and He doesn't expect us to shortchange our family or our health to force more work out of ourselves. Enjoying and relaxing are legitimate and necessary. Let's do what we can to come in line with God's expectations for us!

WHAT CAN WIVES DO TO HELP THEIR HUSBANDS?

Pray for them, specifically and in detail. Pray that the need work is meeting in their life be met in other ways.

Pray for yourself, that God would show you how you enable your husband to continue in his addiction. Pray that God would use you instead to help meet his needs so he can be free from the compulsion to overwork.

Talk with him about this in a loving, accepting way. Keep in mind that his work is the rope he hangs onto to hold up his male ego. Don't go cutting that rope unless you first give him something better to replace it. Build him up as a person apart from his work. Taking away a cripple's crutch without teaching them to walk without it isn't helping them!

"FOR MEN ONLY"

RECLAIMING MANHOOD TODAY

No. 15 In A Series of Articles For Men by Jerry Schmoyer

Stress is a growing problem in American life today. *Time* magazine called it a national epidemic. Two-thirds of all office visits to family doctors are said to be prompted by stress-related symptoms. Stress is a byproduct of 20th century living. It is a sign of the times that the three best-selling drugs in this country are an ulcer medication (Tagamet), a hypertension drug (Inderal) and a tranquilizer (Valium).

STRESS!!

Stress drains us. Think of a battery. When more is being drained out of it than is put back into it there is only one ultimate result: emptiness. Our batteries can be drained emotionally or physically. Often they overlap. Some short-term stress can be helpful for the extra adrenalin helps us focus our attention and motivate us to meet the situation. Long-term stress, though, results in burnout. Usually one of the main causes of stress is overwork.

SYMPTOMS

How do you know if you are suffering from stress? Usually, you'll know. Sometimes we get so wrapped up in our own lives, though, we lose perspective. You are suffering from stress if you often or always: eat or talk too rapidly; rush people to hurry up and say what they are going to say; think of your problem, even when others are talking; take work home on weekends or vacation; feel guilty when you sit down to rest; pack more and more activities into less and less time; become easily irritated by little things; lash out at the people you love the most; sense a loss of self-esteem and intimacy with others; and feel a sense of loss of spiritual presence in relationship with God. Moses is an example of this. He did all the work himself (Exodus 18:13-26). As a result He saw the Jews as a burden - His burden (Numbers 11:4-15; Deut. 1:9-13). Then he lost it and struck the rock twice instead of speaking to it (Numbers 20:1-12). He was suffering from burnout.

Physical symptoms include cold hands (especially if one is colder than the other), indigestion, diarrhea, too-frequent urination, being susceptible to every cold or virus that goes around (weak immune system), shortness of breath, sore muscles in jaw, back or neck, headaches, tiredness, sleeping too much or too little, and becoming accident prone. Elijah, after the victory over Jezebel and the prophets of Baal, ran away in fear, wanted to quit and die, and collapsed in physical exhaustion (I Kings 19). God graciously sent an angel to feed him and have him sleep. When you notice a symptom, treat it like a red light going off on your dashboard. Don't ignore it!

CURE

Burnout from stress isn't a self-terminating illness like poison ivy. It will not change unless you change it. It cannot be cured by trying to take better control of circumstances around you. The more you try to control the circumstances the worse the stress will become. That's like using gasoline to put out a fire. The antidote for stress is four-fold:

ANTIDOTE 1: REPENTANCE. This is anti-denial, admitting there is a problem and it is can't be changed from without. Admit your are draining more out of your emotional battery than you are putting back into it. Allowing stress to remain is a sin against the peace, freedom and joy God provides in Christ. It is NOT God's will for us. It will keep you from really doing the whole life work God has for you (Acts 20:24). Life is like a marathon race, not a 100 yard dash. Many of our lives are like a series of dashes with collapses in-between. God wants consistency from us. Confess it if you haven't been consistent because of allowing too much stress to result in burnout.

ANTIDOTE 2: REST. When we carry burdens that God hasn't given us to carry, we cannot expect Him to help us carry them. When we do ask for His help He just tells us to drop them. He'll only help us carry things He wants us to carry. Make sure you are only carrying what God wants you to carry. That way you'll have rest. When we pursue our own aims thinking they are God's aims we lose our rest and peace (Hebrews 4:10; Isaiah 26:3; 30:15; Psalm 37:8; Romans 8:6). Paul said he had to stop trying to please men in order to be a true servant of God (Galatians 6:10) and often we carry extra burdens to please others, impress others, or earn their approval.

Think of it like this. God is like a warehouse and we are warehouse men. Each burden that comes along we unload on Him. When we become the warehouse ourselves, placing each burden on ourselves, it will weigh us down and crush us. Don't be the warehouse, that is God's job. Just transfer the burdens to Him!

The second most stressful day in Jesus' life was when John was killed. Jesus received the news, along with the report Herod was after Him. Jesus knew what happened to the forerunner would show what would happen to Him. Before He could work this through the disciples returned from their missionary journeys anxious to fill Jesus in on all the good things that happened, but crowds gathered so they couldn't talk or even eat. They sailed across Galilee to get away and handle all that had been happening, but the crowds followed and Jesus spent the rest of the day teaching, healing and feeding the people. The disciples became jealous so Jesus sent them home by boat. The people wanted to make Him king by force for more free food so Jesus hid from them. He spent the night in prayer and intimacy with God the Father. Many times Jesus withdrew, hid, or slipped away to pray. Often He stayed up all night praying. That was His only way to keep the stress from getting to him.

Stress can ruin your health and peace. I read somewhere a list of things to do to be sure to have a heartattack (often the result of stress and burnout). This is what it said you must do: never say "no"; insist on being liked by and try to please everyone; never delegate responsibility; never have a day off; volunteer for all the extra work you can; and never leave enough time to do things or get places so you'll always be in a rush. Its our choice if we burnout or not. However, its not God's will for us, nor is it necessary.

"FOR MEN ONLY"

RECLAIMING MANHOOD TODAY

No. 16 In A Series of Articles For Men by Jerry Schmoyer

FATHERHOOD

There are fine examples of fathers in the Bible (Joseph for example) and bad examples (Jacob, Eli, Samuel and David for example). What makes the difference? Sometimes there seems to be a very fine between being a success or a failure as a father. Every man wants to be a good father, but not every one knows how. Many don't even know just what it means to be a good father. We often become the kind of father we had. As we think about these things in this article I want to use a question-and-answer format. Read the question. Answer it to yourself, write down the answers, or go through it with someone else (your wife, your children, another friend, etc.). It is designed to help you think your way through this subject and come to your own conclusions. Enjoy!

- 1. Describe your father in one sentence.**
- 2. What is the BEST thing your father did for you as a child?**
- 3. What is the WORST thing your father did for you as a child?**
- 4. In what ways did your father treat his son(s) differently than his daughter(s)?**
- 5. How does it affect a man when a son is born?**
Is this any different than when he has a daughter?
- 6. What does it mean to you to be called the "head of the family"?**
- 7. Do you think too much responsibility is put on men for their families today?**
Does the father get too much of the blame for family problems?
Who should have the primary responsibility for raising the children: father? mother?
both shared equally?
- 8. Is there more expected of you as a father than there was of your father?**
In what ways?
Is this right or wrong?
- 9. What do men feel most adequate about as a father?**
- 10. If children grow up and rebel, does that mean there must have been a problem in the parenting process (is it your fault or your child's fault)?**
How much is the free will choice of the child and how must the result of how he was raised?
- 11. What is the main role a father has in the development of a son?**

Why do many men feel more responsible for the raising of their sons than their daughters? Is this right?

During which stages or areas of development is a father most important to a son?

What is the hardest part about raising a son?

What is the most important part about being a father to a son?

How much open affection should a man show to a son?

12. What is the main role a father has in the development of a daughter?

Why is it easier for most men to show love to a daughter than a son?

During which stages or areas of development is a father most important to a girl?

In what ways can a father find needs met in a daughter that his wife should meet?

Is it possible to cause a daughter to be too dependent on her father?

Why is this wrong?

What are the warning signals?

What should be done about it?

13. If you are a stepfather, how does that compare to being a father?

What is the hardest part about being a stepfather?

14. Who should come first, a man's wife or his children (whose needs should he put first)?

15. Does the fact that are in the image of God in your children's eyes (as they see and relate to you they will probably see and relate to God) put extra pressure on you?

16. How do you handle your failures as a father?

Is it ever possible for anyone to ever become a perfect father?

Why doesn't God ever let any man become a perfect father?

17. What word of advice would you give to someone about to become a father for the first time?

18. What is the BEST part about being a father?

19. What is your LEAST ENJOYABLE part about being a father?

20. In what ways are you still like your father?

Which are good (and should be kept) and which are bad (and should be changed)?

21. In what areas have you grown beyond your own father?

22. In what area should you pray about improvement as a father and exactly what should you pray for?

22. On a scale of 1 to 10 where would you rate yourself as a father?

Where would your wife and children rate you?

I haven't given you a lot of input this time. Hopefully thinking through these questions and applying the answers to your own life will be revealing and helpful. Ask God to use these things to your maturity and His glory.

"FOR MEN ONLY"

RECLAIMING MANHOOD TODAY
No. 17 In A Series of Articles For Men by Jerry Schroyer

ARE WOMEN REALLY MORE SPIRITUAL THAN MEN?

I think if a vote were taken in many of our churches today the majority would say that women are more spiritual than men. Their higher numbers (quantity) and often more open expression of their faith (quality) cause it to seem they are more spiritual. I think it seems that way to men even more than women. But are they? Are women more spiritual than men, or do they just express their faith in a different way? Because men are in the more subdued minority, are they really less spiritual?

By comparing the spiritual practices of men and women we can see how some men can feel spiritually inferior to women. For one thing, men aren't able to attend as many Bible studies and meetings as their wives, and since men often equate spirituality with 'doing' they think they fall short. Also, men don't read like women do (women read 80% of the Christian books published). Then, too, men don't pray like women do. Women seem to feel more comfortable praying out loud. Men's prayers are direct memos to God, short and to-the-point. Women tend to show their emotions more in prayer, and go into greater detail. Unfortunately we often consider that makes women spiritually superior. However, if you look at Jesus' and Paul's prayers in the New Testament you'll see they are also very utilitarian and nothing flowery, just like men pray today. By looking at these standards, it can seem men aren't as spiritual as women. In reality, however, just because their spiritual expression is different doesn't mean it is inferior.

Men often have unrealistic expectations of themselves as the spiritual head of the family, and failure to meet these will make them feel a failure. We picture the Norman Rockwell view of family devotions -- the perfect family seated at the dinner table with all eyes fixed on dad while he reads from the family Bible. From two-year-olds to teens, all are transfixed on father's masterful enunciation and enthusiasm for the biblical text. What usually happens when we try to do this, though, is that the two-year-old spills his milk all over the family Bible and the teenager sits with arms folded, smirking and finally responding by saying, "This is boring. Can we go yet?" The truth of the matter is that a father who does anything of a spiritual nature with his kids is light years ahead of the pack in today's world.

Also contributing to the myth that men aren't as spiritual is the fact that many church programs are more geared to meet women's needs than men's needs. Thus men feel left out or that their failure to respond is their fault. The church as an organization is often overly female-dominated and female-influenced. Flowers, gowns, quiet music, poetry, dressing in nice clothes, and use of best manners are often taken as being feminine and many men feel uncomfortable in those surroundings. Compare them to the surroundings and activities beer commercials picture 'typical men' in and you'll see what I mean.

As a minister I am keenly aware of the image I portray to the men in the congregation. Often the image of a pastor is not something men can identify with. Pastors on TV are usually portrayed as effeminate old men totally out of touch with reality. Most men can't comprehend what a minister does with his time all week. When we were first married Nancy assumed we'd have Bible study all day every day, that was her perception of being in the ministry. When a woman looks up to her pastor as spiritually what she would like her husband to be she puts an unrealistic and unfair burden on her husband. If he feels this it just makes him resent the minister and that makes him feel less spiritual. Many men have had poor experiences with pastors or churches in the past and that makes them extra sensitive to comparison. Godly male role models are very rare today.

Some men are uncomfortable with the Christian life because it is so different than the male world they function in. There is no clear game plan. Decisions are made as they come, depending on the leading of the Holy Spirit. Submission, love, servanthood, patience, and putting others first are the traits that are recognized. Men often like to have things planned, organized and well-structured so they know what they are to be doing when. Christianity just doesn't work this way at all. I read somewhere that churches that emphasize God's control, power, sovereignty and holiness are more attractive to men while those which emphasize God's love, grace, mercy and compassion appeal more to women. I don't know how true this is, but I do believe there is some basis in it.

So, are men less spiritual than women? NO! They are different, but not less spiritual. Realizing that has really freed me up and removed much guilt from me. I used to feel if I couldn't pray or worship, share or witness, cry or hug, or spontaneously gush like my wife or other women whose walk with Jesus I admire, that something was wrong with me. Knowing I can be ME and do these things the way that comes naturally to me is very liberating. Realizing God loves and accepts me in my less demonstrative, more down to business way has taken a heavy burden off of me. If you are falsely laboring under that load, drop it! God made us different, but not inferior. You can see this in Joseph and Mary (God revealed His will for the family to Joseph every time), Aquilla and Priscilla (she was very outgoing and he quiet, and God accepted each of them equally), and others. That false guilt can really defeat you and take away your joy. Don't let it. Don't try to be someone you aren't. God knows and accepts you just as you are (Psalm 103:14). Isn't that great?

QUESTIONS TO HELP YOU THINK THIS THROUGH:

1. Do you ever feel spiritually inferior to your wife? What do you base that on?
2. What are the main differences between your and your wife's prayer & devotional life?
3. What different spiritual needs do you and your wife have?
4. In what ways do you and your wife express your faith differently?
5. Who feels more comfortable in your church, you or your wife? Why?
6. What can you do to help other men feel more comfortable with their spiritual lives?

ARROWS IN THE HAND OF A WARRIOR

By Jerry Schmoyer



*Unless the LORD builds the house, its builders labor in vain. Unless the LORD watches over the city, the watchmen stand guard in vain. In vain you rise early and stay up late, toiling for food to eat-- for he grants sleep to those he loves. Sons are a heritage from the LORD, children a reward from him. Like arrows in the hands of a warrior are sons born in one's youth. Blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them. They will not be put to shame when they contend with their enemies in the gate. **Psalm 127:1-5***

I've always been fascinated by arrows and how they were made. The analogy between children and arrows has always interested me, too. Children are compared to arrows in Psalm 127. This analogy applies to the forming of the child/arrow as well as the sending of out of it/them. I'd like to share a few thoughts about the later with you.

In archery the release is all important. You must relax, apply all your energy, focus and release. If not done perfectly correct the whole flight will be affected. The same is true with children. As home schoolers we spend much time raising/forming our children, molding them into the image we want. Arrows are made to be released to go to their destination, or they are useless. Releasing our children, too, is an all-important aspect of raising them. Without doing it right growth will be stifled and stunted. Studies of Christian youth show that one of their greatest problems in life is freedom from parental control. Ask yourself: did your parents release you smoothly or are you still struggling to be free?

Why is it so hard for us parents to let go? Probably because we are afraid we haven't done a good enough job and they may fail. Ask yourself another question: how mature and competent were you when you felt the need to be released by your parents? Releasing our children leads to their maturity, and it won't come as long as we hold on. We can't wait until they have it all together! Sometimes we 'use' children to meet needs in our lives which should be met in other ways: significance, meaningful relationships, vicarious accomplishments, etc.

Letting go is something we must do over and over, from the moment of birth on. It is an attitude we must form and apply daily, even hourly. We must constantly be weaning them from dependence on us to dependence on themselves and God. This is a moment-by-moment process which starts inside us but is shown in the role we play in their lives.

One more thing about the release: when an arrow is shot it leaves the string. There are no strings attached: no more demands, manipulation, control, guilt, or self-centered expectations.

So, the arrow is formed and then released. But what is the target? What are we aiming at? A well-formed arrow and good release fails if we aren't aimed at the right target. The target is Christ-likeness, not high test scores, musical accomplishment, or athletic ability. Being the man or woman God wants them to be is our goal for our children.

Thousands of years ago the invention of the bow and arrow changed the face of warfare forever. For the first time a warrior could impact a battle scene from a great distance. Similarly, our children are the only messages we'll send to a world we'll never see. They are the only provision we have for impacting a world at a distance. May God grant us the strength to draw our bows to the full and the wisdom to release our arrows with practiced skill. I want my arrows to hit their mark for God. As time draws to a close on this darkened planet, surely



every arrow must count!