

STUDY GUIDE

MAN

HOOD

RESTORED



**HOW THE GOSPEL
MAKES MEN WHOLE**

ERIC MASON

LifeWay | Men

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Manhood Restored

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INTRODUCTION

Who taught you how to tie your shoes?

Who taught you how to ride a bike?

Who taught you how to drive a car?

Who taught you how to be a man?

Isn't it just like life? The lessons and the questions get progressively more difficult. Maybe you know who taught you to do all of those things, but focus on the nature of those questions. The first question comes with a set of assumptions. The implication is that you actually have shoes and that you indeed know how to tie them. Skip ahead. Knowing who taught you how to be a man means that you rightly understand what it actually means to be a man. The problem is that so many of our definitions of manhood come with a few thousand years worth of distortions.

What does it mean to be a man? Is it merely gender? Is it linked to legal age status? Does it come with registering to vote or driving a car? Is it about power and authority, or status and significance?

It's not a question you can answer just by reading a book, listening to a sermon, or doing a Bible study. It takes a real encounter with the gospel.

Manhood was murdered. Adam fell, sin moved in, and death was born. When our connection to the One who created manhood was broken, so was our ability to be the men God called us to be. Fast forward a few thousand years and history records all the ways man has tried to reclaim manhood apart from God.

It's only in the gospel that we discover what it really means to be a man. It's only in Christ that we can truly be the men God created us to be. It's only when we abandon all the false ideas of manhood and embrace Jesus as the picture of perfect manhood that we even stand a chance.

This Bible study will not make you a man, but it will give you a chance to connect with God in a meaningful way and discover what it really means to be the man He has called you to be.

HOW TO USE THIS STUDY:

This 6-week experience is organized into sections and can be used for small-group or personal study. You will obviously benefit most from doing this study together in a community of men.

INTRODUCTION

Each session begins with a narrative overview of the weekly topic. You will probably want to read this before your group meets so that you'll better understand the topic and the context for your time together. Leaders may also summarize for those who may not have read it.

GETTING STARTED

Your actual group time will most likely begin here with an icebreaker that is designed to help you ease into the study and get everyone talking. Questions set the table for the topic as well as allowing members to share how God spoke to them through their personal study time the week before.

VIDEO DISCUSSION

The DVD contains teaching related to each session, as well as a testimony from a man of God. Each video session is accompanied by several discussion questions designed to build your faith.

BIBLE STUDY

This section will help your group dive into Scripture and further discuss how God's Word applies to your lives concerning the topic of the session. It is God's Word that brings about real change in men's lives.

WRAP

This section includes a lesson summary and a reflection or challenge to live faithfully in the area of study for this session. A suggested prayer is included or you may choose to pray together in a format that your group is used to.

ONE ON ONE

This page is to facilitate accountability between you and another man in the group. You will probably feel more comfortable addressing some topics with a trusted friend as God helps each of you sharpen the other in becoming men of God.

PERSONAL STUDY

This section is designed for you to continue your growth at home. Each personal study session includes Scripture, questions, and material for you to digest to promote continued growth. These can be done every other day, or perhaps in one day each week as a concentrated personal retreat.

LEADER GUIDE

The Leader Guide helps you prepare for each session and the study as a whole. Tips are included for setting up your meeting place and following up with group members. Answers to the fill-in-the-blanks are also included to help in the Video Discussion phase.

SO GOD CREATED MAN
IN HIS OWN IMAGE;
HE CREATED HIM IN
THE IMAGE OF GOD;
HE CREATED THEM
MALE & FEMALE.

WEEK ONE MAN'S PROBLEM

Who would you say is or was the greatest example of manhood in your life? Is it your father? Grandfather? Pastor? Boss? Teacher? Coach? What is it about them that sticks out as a particularly important measure of manhood? All of us have an idea of manhood in our minds. But we must be careful when we consider the filter for that ideal.

Different facets of pop culture would have us believe that manliness equals certain behaviors or attitudes. In some conversations, manliness might be synonymous with liking sports, cars, or sadly, even dirty movies or jokes.

Al Mohler had this to say about the definition of manhood: "As defined in the Bible, manhood is a functional reality, demonstrated in a man's fulfillment of responsibility and leadership."¹ Sadly, this definition has been lost and forgotten with each generation's interpretation of what it takes to be a man.

We could list numerous distortions about manhood. Some are traditional and historic such as, "the husband is the breadwinner." Some are culturally relevant like, "real men don't wear pink." Some are family specific like, "the men in this house play football."

While there are character traits, interests, qualities, and assumptions that can certainly be associated with males, none of them are what turns a boy into a man. Being athletic, liking sports, wearing pants, and making more money don't define manhood. When we allow those attributes to determine what it means to be a man, we are settling for something less than what God intended. On some level, we are accepting a lie and living an alternative life than the one God designed.

In this session, we will consider God's design for manhood and the factors that keep us from achieving God's ideal.

GETTING STARTED

Read the following statements and choose AGREE or DISAGREE:

1. Manhood can be characterized by specific interests.

AGREE

DISAGREE

2. Manhood comes from power and authority.

AGREE

DISAGREE

3. Manhood is a right of passage that every boy automatically achieves.

AGREE

DISAGREE

4. Manhood comes from our sexuality.

AGREE

DISAGREE

What about your interests, abilities, or characteristics make you feel like a man? What about these make you feel less manly according to society's standards?

In what ways have you attempted in life to be a man, be respected as a man, or be more of a man? How has that worked out for you?

VIDEO DISCUSSION

This session is about the image of God represented in humanity. Three important R's are referenced with regard to that image: representation, responsibility, and relationship. In this video we discover the problem with manhood today and why we fall short of God's ideal.

Watch Video Session 1 and complete the following statements. Be sure to watch the personal testimony following the teaching by Eric Mason.

"The Life and Death of Manhood" (20:00)

1. Man on planet Earth was to _____ the beauty and reign of who God is to all of creation.
2. Relationship meant that God and man were in _____ and spiritually connected.
3. Daddy _____ has impacted the furthering of a lack of manhood being clarified and understood by men.
4. Jesus came to _____ and reaffirm biblical manhood.
5. Christ came to be the _____ of all things and to make all things new.

Discuss:

1. How are you impacted by the death of manhood in your life?
2. In what ways has daddy deprivation affected your life directly or indirectly?
3. How can you relate to Octavius's personal testimony?

Video sessions available for purchase at lifeway.com/manhoodrestored

BIBLE STUDY

In order to discover God's design and identify the root of the problem with manhood today, we must look to the first man God designed, Adam. The Hebrew for Adam means "man." The first man was literally named, Man.

READ GENESIS 1:26-27.

²⁶Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness. They will rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the livestock, all the earth, and the creatures that crawl on the earth."²⁷So God created man in His own image; He created him in the image of God; He created them male and female.

According to this passage, what is man's defining characteristic? What does that say to you about your value to God?

READ GENESIS 2:15, 18-20, 22.

¹⁵The LORD God took the man and placed him in the garden of Eden to work it and watch over it.

¹⁸Then the LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper as his complement."¹⁹So the LORD God formed out of the ground every wild animal and every bird of the sky, and brought each to the man to see what he would call it. And whatever the man called a living creature, that was its name.²⁰The man gave names to all the livestock, to the birds of the sky, and to every wild animal; but for the man no helper was found as his complement.²²Then the LORD God made the rib He had taken from the man into a woman and brought her to the man.

According to verse 15, what role(s) did man play within God's creation?

What additional details of mankind's creation does verse 19 offer us?

What are the implications for us?

READ GENESIS 2:25.

Both the man and his wife were naked, yet felt no shame.

As part of God's creation, mankind lived in perfect harmony with God and all He had made. Sin was still at bay. Death wasn't yet part of man's vocabulary. Shame didn't exist. Man's gaze wasn't fixed on what he lacked (clothes, knowledge of good and evil, status, importance, etc.). Man's focus was on God and God's purpose.

READ GENESIS 3: 7-8.

Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves. ⁸Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and they hid themselves from the LORD God among the trees of the garden.

The immediate effect of man's sin was shame. Perfect fellowship was broken. God's creation began to serve an alternative purpose. Plants, which were once declared to be food for man (see Gen.1:29), became clothing. The result was an end to the perfect union between Adam's form as a man and his function within God's creation.

READ GENESIS 3:17-19.

¹⁷ And He said to Adam, "Because you listened to your wife's voice and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, 'Do not eat from it': The ground is cursed because of you. You will eat from it by means of painful labor all the days of your life. ¹⁸ It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. ¹⁹ You will eat bread by the sweat of your brow until you return to the ground, since you were taken from it. For you are dust, and you will return to dust."

How did Adam's purpose change as a result of his sin?

How do you think your purpose is altered by sin in your life?

When do the world's definitions of manhood direct you away from these purposes God has for you? Explain.

The presence of sin in the garden robbed Adam of his purpose and destroyed his manhood; at least the way God intended it. The presence of sin in this world and in your life robs you of your purpose and destroys your manhood, at least the way God intends it. The irony of all the ways we describe manliness is that many of them involve the very sin that actually destroys true manhood.

One of the most unfortunate by-products of the fall was the future of fatherhood. God's intent was that families would always have fathers.

READ GENESIS 2:24.

This is why a man leaves his father and mother and bonds with his wife, and they become one flesh.

This verse assumes an important facet of family relationships. Man leaving home implied the presence of a relationship between a son and his parents. God's plan identified the father as a key figure in the development of His family and even in His plan for faith redemption. The role of the father in Scripture was to lead his children to know and follow God.

In our society today, whom do you see assuming the primary role of spiritual development in most families? Why?

What role has your father played in your life? Present and active? Absent or passive? Explain.

What common substitutes do you see men using for the missing element of a father in their lives?

God's purpose for a man's life and God's design for fatherhood are among the great casualties of sin's presence in the world. Only by adopting a biblical definition of manhood and firmly establishing the powerful presence of godly fatherhood can we turn the tides. Like everything else in this fallen world, Jesus' sacrifice came as a covering for these sins and as a remedy for sin's consequences. It is in Jesus that we find the model of manhood and the proper treatment for this deficit in our lives.

WRAP

- God created man in His image to reflect His glory and for us to be His representatives.
- Man's identity is found in his relationship to God and his God-given purpose within God's creation.
- Sin severed man's relationships with God and creation. Man's identity and purpose have been distorted by sin.
- The role of the father is paramount according to God's design. Its loss is one of the greatest casualties of our fallen state.

This week, choose to define manhood God's way. In the space provided, construct your own biblical definition of manhood.

Commit to fully reject the world's distorted images of what it means to be manly and to fully embrace the Bible's definition of manhood.

PRAY TOGETHER:

Father, Your Word tells us that You have given us everything we need to live a godly life (2 Pet. 1:3). Help us to completely reject the false notions of manhood birthed by sin that the world pushes on us as men. Instead, help us to embrace what Your Word teaches about purpose and to find our identity as men in knowing and fulfilling Your purpose for our lives. It's in the name of Christ, who gives us life and whose life we model ours after, that we pray. Amen.

Be sure to meet with another group member for One on One and allow time to engage in the Personal Study section for the week. It's all about allowing God to lead and develop you according to His Word and His will.

ONE ON ONE

Use the following section to guide your One on One weekly accountability meeting with another believer.

Consider God's plan for man and specifically God's plan for your life. Help each other to clarify and then encourage one another in your time together today.

Discuss:

How have you let your own needs and desires become the focus of your life?

What do you understand God's purpose/responsibility to be for your life?

In what unique way has God designed you to reflect His glory and represent Him to the world?

What distortions of manhood do you struggle with most?

In what ways can your One on One partner pray for you and hold you accountable during this period of study?

As you begin your time today, take a moment to pause and reflect on God's goodness. Call to mind as many of His great qualities as you can think of.

Considering all the wonderful attributes of God is both an easy and arduous task. Easy because bringing to mind His infinite goodness requires no effort. Arduous because the beautiful qualities of God are too many to name or count. In many cases, our vocabulary falls far short of offering an appropriate description.

What would you consider the five most noteworthy or important attributes of God? List them below.

In what way(s) do you feel called to reflect those characteristics in your life so that others may see God?

READ EPHESIANS 4:20-24.

²⁰ But that is not how you learned about the Messiah, ²¹ assuming you heard about Him and were taught by Him, because the truth is in Jesus. ²² You took off your former way of life, the old self that is corrupted by deceitful desires; ²³ you are being renewed in the spirit of your minds; ²⁴ you put on the new self, the one created according to God's likeness in righteousness and purity of the truth.

What does one take off or remove as a result of encountering the truth of Jesus?

What does one put on in its place? What does that look like?

According to verse 24, the new self is the image of God characterized by righteousness, purity, and truth.

Man was meant to function like a mirror—something to reflect the image of God into creation. Humanity, made in the image of God, was created to be an earthly representation of who God is. In man's God-given dominion and rule over creation, he was to display the ultimate rule of God in his limited dominion.

Man, as an image bearer, was to reflect God's heavenly reign on earth. In other words, man represents God by virtue of being in His image. In representing God, man was to glorify the God who created him.

READ 2 CORINTHIANS 4:4.

In their case, the god of this age has blinded the minds of the unbelievers so they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

According to this verse, Jesus Christ is the best representation of God's image. Knowing this, how then might you be a better reflection of God?

READ PHILIPPIANS 2:5.

"Make your own attitude that of Christ Jesus,"

As you close today, offer to God a prayer of commitment for the journey ahead. God's plan for your life certainly includes very specific details, but it also centers on a very generic will He has for all believers, that you live a life modeled after Jesus. It is certainly easier said than done, but it is the goal of the Christ follower nonetheless. Commit yourself this day to the mind and attitude of Christ. This is God's will for your life and the best reflection of His image in your life.

[DAY TWO] GOOD WORK

A survey of young boys revealed superheroes, firefighters, and police officers among top career choices. It would appear that being a hero, regardless of the reality of the variety, is more than just common. Consider your own childhood fantasies and aspirations compared to where you landed as an adult for a moment.²

When you were a boy, what did you want to be when you grew up? Are you fulfilled by what you currently do for a living?

If yes, how? If not, what is missing?

Men are best characterized by what they do. While women often describe themselves in the context of relationships, men describe themselves in the context of their vocation, achievements, career, and title.

What is the one thing you are meant to do or be? The occupation, function, or purpose you know you were created for?

READ GENESIS 2:15, 19-20A.

¹⁵ The LORD God took the man and placed him in the garden of Eden to work it and watch over it. ¹⁹ So the LORD God formed out of the ground every wild animal and every bird of the sky, and brought each to the man to see what he would call it. And whatever the man called a living creature, that was its name. ²⁰ The man gave names to all the livestock, to the birds of the sky, and to every wild animal.

Adam was a leader. He was a gardener. He was a caretaker.

Adam's vocation was inextricably linked to the purpose for which God had created Adam within creation.

How is what you do tied to God's purpose for you?

Adam's responsibility within God's creation was at the core of God's purpose for his life. The role Adam had to tend the garden and watch over creation was part and parcel to the image of God within him. Before Adam had a wife, he had a job.

This is an incredible responsibility. Both Genesis 1:28 and 2:15 describe this responsibility as the act of subduing and caring for creation. The general meaning of the verb in those passages appears to be "to bring under one's control for one's advantage." In subduing creation man is given the ability to use it for his personal benefit on God's terms.

In the context of man's relationship with God, even before the fall, man was given a role to play. He was given work. His work was for his own benefit and it was also part of the context of man's relationship to God.

In closing, take a moment today to thank God for work. Thank Him for the benefit that work is to maintain your livelihood. Even if your current job is not your dream career, praise Him for meeting your needs and helping you achieve purpose by working.

Note: If economic recession or unemployment is currently part of your story, ask God's favor over this prayer request in your life. God designed you to work, so do not hesitate to ask Him for a job opportunity to meet your needs and support your family.

[DAY THREE] WORSHIP & SACRIFICE

Many times throughout the Old Testament, the concept of worship takes center stage. The first two of the Ten Commandments deal specifically with the idea of worship. The sacrificial system is built on the altar of atonement in the context of worshiping God. Long before God's revelation to His people at Sinai, worship was already part of their relationship with God. Abraham, Jacob, and Joseph all offer significant stories to the narrative history of God's worshipers, but it was Cain and Abel whose lives introduced this concept to us from the beginning.

READ GENESIS 4:2B-5.

²Now Abel became a shepherd of flocks, but Cain worked the ground.

³In the course of time Cain presented some of the land's produce as an offering to the LORD. ⁴ And Abel also presented an offering—some of the firstborn of his flock and their fat portions. The LORD had regard for Abel and his offering, ⁵ but He did not have regard for Cain and his offering.

Cain was a farmer. Abel was a shepherd. Each of their vocations were not only the purpose for which they were created, but a distinct opportunity to worship God.

How is what you do an opportunity to worship God?

This first recorded instance of worship gives us significant insights into the relationship God had with people post-Eden. First, God has always been a God worthy of worship. Worship is how we honor Him for who He is and connect to Him in a manner of respect. Next, worship has always involved sacrifice. David said, "I will not offer to the LORD my God burnt offerings which cost me nothing" (see 2 Sam.24:24).

For worship to be genuine, it invokes the unique purpose for which God made you, and also costs you something. Without cost, there is no sacrifice.

What does it cost you to worship God?

How do you best experience God in worship?

How is your vocation/purpose included in your attitude of worship?

Do you find modern interpretations of worship difficult?

Do you feel like this is a challenge for most men or a problem unique to you? Why do you feel this way?

READ HOSEA 6:6.

For I desire loyalty and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.

This is not the only recorded instance of God denying the use of sacrifices. His admonishments were a rebuke to the abusive way His worship was treated. It isn't that God doesn't desire any sacrifice; He desires genuine sacrifice from a committed heart.

How have you tried to get by with less than your best when it comes to worship?

How has God responded to your lackluster offering? How did it make you feel?

Today, close by offering God a concert of praise. Perhaps you resonate with music. Sing a song to your King. If not, simply offer God a prayer of love and thanksgiving. Take some measure of time that costs you something and give it completely over to God. Use those moments to ascribe to Him the worth that He is due. Better still, compose a list of reasons God is worthy and post that list in plain view all week as a constant reminder for you to worship God in a manner that glorifies Him.

[DAY FOUR] SIN & CONSEQUENCE

Do you have a remote control lying around that no longer works? Perhaps for you it's a box of old electronics that you no longer use like flip phones and corded computer mice. Don't you think when things no longer serve their purpose, it's best to get rid of them? In the case of kitchen gadgets, sure. However, when it comes to us, aren't we fortunate that God didn't do just that?

READ GENESIS 3:16-19.

¹⁶He said to the woman: I will intensify your labor pains; you will bear children in anguish. Your desire will be for your husband, yet he will rule over you. ¹⁷ And He said to Adam, "Because you listened to your wife's voice and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, 'Do not eat from it': The ground is cursed because of you. You will eat from it by means of painful labor all the days of your life.

¹⁸ It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. ¹⁹ You will eat bread by the sweat of your brow until you return to the ground, since you were taken from it.

What consequence did Eve face as a result of her sin in the context of the fall?

What consequence did Adam face as a result of his sin in the context of the fall?

Each of the responsible parties faced a consequence that reflected the purpose for which they were created. Eve was created to help Adam. Before her, no suitable helper was found (see Gen. 2:20). Now the very relationship for which she was created would be broken. Adam was created to tend creation. Now the very purpose for which he was created would be painful.

The overarching curse of mankind was tied directly to the purpose for which God created them. In a very real sense, men ceased to serve their purpose. God, however, stood ready to pardon their sin.

READ GENESIS 4:11-12; 16.

¹¹ So now you are cursed, alienated, from the ground that opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood you have shed. ¹² If you work the ground, it will never again give you its yield. You will be a restless wanderer on the earth."

¹⁶ Then Cain went out from the LORD's presence and lived in the land of Nod, east of Eden.

What consequence did Cain face as a result of his sin subsequent to the fall?

Like his father Adam, Cain's consequence for sin was integrally tied to his vocation. What defined him and gave him an opportunity to bring worship unto God was ripped from him when he failed to make an acceptable offering.

Greater still than the singular punishments each faced as a result for sin was the broken fellowship Adam and Eve experienced in their relationship with God. The gates of Eden were closed (see Gen. 3:23). Cain left God's presence (4:16).

Sin tells you that you can go at it alone, out on your own. Sin tells you to choose your own way. Do you think Adam knew the full implications of his sinful choice? Most likely not! That is sin's strategy. Adam set aside his perfect relationship with God and the pleasure of his responsibility in creation in exchange for a lie.

What unfortunate exchanges have you made because of sin and what consequences have you endured as a result?

Finish your time today thanking God for His grace over your sin and confessing the moments when you have exchanged His truth for a lie.

1. Albert Mohler, "From Boy to Man- The Marks of Manhood, Part One," *Albert Mohler* [online], 21 June 2005 [cited 21 February 2013]. Available from the Internet: <http://www.albertmohler.com/2005/04/21/from-boy-to-man-the-marks-of-manhood-part-one/>.
2. David Ewalt, "When I Grow Up: Kids' Dream Jobs," *Forbes* [online], 1 October 2008 [cited 21 February 2013]. Available from the Internet: http://www.forbes.com/2009/02/26/starting-second-career-leadership-careers_dream_jobs.html.

MANHOOD IS IN A STATE OF CRISIS. BUT THE GOSPEL OFFERS THE HOPE MEN NEED TO BE RESTORED TO GOD'S DESIGN.

The earthly crisis within manhood will be there until Jesus returns, but in Christ men are pointed toward the gospel as the vision for renewal. *Manhood Restored*, written by Eric Mason, combines theological depth with practical insights, putting you in step with a gospel-centered manhood that will enrich every facet of your life.

In these six sessions, Eric lays out the primary problem that men face and shines a light on its many forms. He next points men toward the One who came to restore man's brokenness to a place of wholeness. Key areas addressed include: worldview, sexuality, vision, and family. You will be encouraged to face up to these challenges and seek the Lord who can help you gain victory in each one.

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For the man who wants to confront his brokenness and be brought to wholeness by the only One who lived life right and has the power to bring healing to yours!



DR. ERIC MASON is co-founder and lead pastor of Epiphany Fellowship in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He holds degrees from Dallas Theological Seminary (ThM) and Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary (D.Min.). Eric and his wife have two children.

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