

Biblical Gender Roles – Part 3

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Brethren, over the last several months, we've been working our way through a multiple-part sermon series on the subject of biblical gender roles. As I mentioned when we started this series, it's a very large topic. It's not something that can be covered in a single sermon or two, so this is a multiple-part series.

Today's topic is biblical gender roles – part 3. As we covered in the first two parts, gender roles today, especially in the western world, are basically in a state of confusion. That would be the best way to put it. That's why you see the transgender issues, you see same-sex marriage and you see a whole culture of, frankly, men who don't know how to be men and who are confused on what that role is, and you see women who are confused on what it is to be women. You see a society in mass confusion. This has largely come about because of a social movement that has been dominating our culture for the last forty to fifty years. It is the feminist movement. As I mentioned in the previous two sermons, this movement set out with a stated agenda of removing biblical gender roles from our culture. They weren't just trying to confuse it, they were literally trying to remove these from our culture, and did it basically through a two-step process.

One was basically convincing our culture that men need to be feminized for the safety of mankind; that masculinity is inherently toxic and bad and we need to feminize men to be more like women. At the same time, they've also taught our culture that being in a feminine role inherently equates with victimization and oppression. Therefore, women need to basically become more masculine and compete with men for a masculine role to avoid this victimization. Actually what this is doing is reversing everything that God intended when He created men and women. It has created mass confusion in our culture and numerous other problems we have.

As I mentioned last time, what we're going to do today is specifically focus on the role of men. Before we go there, let's start by looking at a prophecy that Isaiah foretold would happen to the nation of Judah, specifically because they had turned their backs on God and rejected His way of life and went their own way. As we read this prophecy, we're going to see that he foretells things that would happen specifically to gender roles. This will kind of set the scene for where we want to go today. Let's turn to Isaiah, chapter 3. We will cover the first half of this chapter.

Isaiah 3:1. For behold, the Lord, the LORD of hosts, takes away from Jerusalem and from Judah the stock and the store, the whole supply of bread and the whole supply of water;

Notice what else He is taking away.

- 2) *The mighty man and the man of war, the judge and the prophet, and the diviner and the elder;*
3) *the captain of fifty and the honorable man, the counselor and the skillful artisan, and the expert enchanter. (NKJV)*

He is basically saying that you're going to lose your leadership. Your strong and masculine men who know how to be good Godly leaders of a nation; you're going to lose them. You will see later in this chapter, it's a direct result of them turning their backs on God and abandoning His whole way of life. Notice, "Your strong masculine men who know how to be good leaders and lead a nation in a good direction; you're going to lose those," He says. Let's notice the next verse and what He says is going to replace this.

- 4) *"I will give children to be their princes, and babes shall rule over them. (NKJV)*

He is saying, "You're going to lose your strong men and what you're going to wind up with is children and babes ruling over you." Realize here that He is not saying that all the governmental positions would be filled with twelve-year old boys. He's not literally saying that it's just going to be children now running the entire nation. What He is actually saying is that in terms of age, these are going to be men walking around in men's bodies, but with the emotional and spiritual maturity of twelve-year olds. So He is basically saying, "You're not going to have strong masculine men anymore." You'll understand this reference a little later today. You're going to wind up with boys who can shave. That will basically be your leadership. Instead of having men, you're going to have overgrown adolescents walking around in men's bodies, and they will fulfill your leadership roles. You will have feminized men. In verse 5, notice what this does to a society.

- 5) *The people will be oppressed, everyone by another and every one by his neighbor; the child will be insolent toward the elder, and the base toward the honorable." (NKJV)*

We have a society here that is described in a way that it has lost its masculine men. You now basically have overgrown adolescents running the place. What do you end up with? Oppression. You now have children who have no respect for their elders. You have disobedient, dishonorable people having no respect for the honorable. As we read through this, you will see parallels to our modern-day society. Even though Isaiah is addressing the nation of Judah and what would come about with them, there are very strong parallels between what he is describing and what we see in our modern-day culture today.

- 6) *When a man takes hold of his brother in the house of his father, saying, "You have clothing; you be our ruler, and let these ruins be under your power,"*
7) *in that day he will protest, saying, "I cannot cure your ills, for in my house is neither food nor clothing; do not make me a ruler of the people." (NKJV)*

Notice that you have people abandoning leadership. They are looking for someone to stand up and take responsibility and take charge of things. However, nobody wants to do it. Everybody says, "Not me; don't look for me to be a leader." Again, this is similar to what we see today. In verse 8, it tells us the reason behind why this is happening.

8) For Jerusalem stumbled, and Judah is fallen, because their tongue and their doings are against the LORD, to provoke the eyes of His glory. (NKJV)

Notice the reason all this is happening is because they abandoned God's way of life; they abandoned Him as the source of knowledge, and basically went after Satan's way. That's the alternative. When you're abandoning God's way of life and going in your own direction, you'll end up going in Satan's direction. That's what happens.

9) The look on their countenance witnesses against them, and they declare their sin as Sodom; they do not hide it. Woe to their soul! For they have brought evil upon themselves. (NKJV)

So here it talks about a society that is proud of its sin. It has rampant immorality and sin and they don't even try to hide it. They're loud and proud about it. Does this not sound familiar? This sounds quite familiar to society around us today.

10) "Say to the righteous that it shall be well with them, for they shall eat the fruit of their doings.

11) Woe to the wicked! It shall be ill with him, for the reward of his hands shall be given him.

12) As for My people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them. O My people! Those who lead you cause you to err, and destroy the way of your paths." (NKJV)

Summing up what we've read here, as a result of a nation turning its back on God and His instructions on how to live, what is the result with this description? Again, he's talking about Judah, but I think it applies very much to our modern-day culture.

You wind up with feminized men and essentially with adolescents that are in adult male bodies who end up being the rulers. You have feminized men and aggressive women. You have children who have no respect for their elders, that are out of control. You have an oppressive society that flaunts its sin like Sodom. Does that not sound incredibly familiar to the society we live in today? That's exactly how we got here. Society rejects God's instructions, deciding to go its own way, throwing away and demonizing everything that God teaches about the subject, and decides that it knows better. This is the result.

Notice verse 12, the last verse I read. The first half of the verse was: "As for My people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them." Let me clarify one thing about that verse. There is more than one way to rule over someone. If you look back at the history of Judah, I don't think there was ever a time when you could say (in terms of

governmental leadership) that women filled those positions and were running the country. I don't think you will find that there was a time when that was the case. Nor would that be true today. If you looked at the U.S., for example, there certainly are women in leadership positions in government and business, but if you did a head count of top positions in governmental offices and/or CEOs of companies, etc., you're going to find that it is heavily male. There is more than one way to rule over someone. Let's understand that. To illustrate this point, I'd like to share a famous quote that you may have seen on Facebook over the last couple of years. The quote is often attributed to the philosopher, Voltaire. There is some debate whether he actually said this. Whether it is historically produced by Voltaire is kind of irrelevant. The quote itself teaches us a valuable lesson. Here it is:

To learn who rules over you, simply find out who you are not allowed to criticize.

Think about that in our modern-day culture. We have a culture today that is very much ruled over by the concept of political correctness. That is oftentimes used to enforce all manner of liberal, sinful ideas. Think about it today. We have a very "P.C." culture. Personally I think that's one of the big appeals as to why Donald Trump is so popular, because he throws political correctness to the wind. I'm not endorsing him as an individual or future president. Please understand that. However, I think one of the reasons he is so popular is because he pays no regard to political correctness.

If you look at how this has affected our society today, if you even speak out at all in any significant way in our culture against, you might say, the liberal philosophies or liberal lifestyles, you will quickly find yourself on the receiving end of character assassination. You are a racist, you are a sexist, a homophobe, you're guilty of Islamophobia, and you're guilty of hate speech and you need to be silenced and shut up. That's basically where you're going to find yourself.

If you think of the feminist movement in all of its ideology, it is deeply engrossed in our society today. It's very much the liberal mindset that runs political correctness. Again, speak out against that and you will quickly find that you're being accused of being sexist. You hate women; this is hate speech and you need to just shut up and get in line with the culture. This is basically how this is forced on people.

We have a culture that tries to not only dictate what you can say, but even tries to tell you what you can think and tries to control your life. That is ruling over someone. Also think in terms of the mindset of what dominates our culture today. It can be summed up in the statement: Feelings are more important than facts. That is the viewpoint.

Do you notice that today you hear, "I'm offended?" Everyone is offended by something. Understand that I'm not advocating that we live our lives not concerned about how our words and actions affect others. I'm not trying to say that. But very often when you hear the words, "I'm offended," it is in defense of sin and a sinful lifestyle that someone has actually had the guts to speak out against. "I'm offended" is kind of a way to silence you, because that means you're engaged in hate speech and you need to be silenced.

So realize if you can control the culture to the point that it is basically trying to dictate to people what you can say and what you can think, you don't have to be in all the governmental positions. You don't have to be in the top offices of the presidency or governmental offices or even CEOs of companies; if you're dominating the culture, that's very much ruling over people.

To demonstrate a modern-day example of how this affects particularly the role of men and masculinity in today's world, I'd like to share an article that I took from a website entitled faithstreet.com. The title of the article is The World is Filled with Boys Who Can Shave. It is authored by Mark Driscoll, and it was posted on August 22, 2010. Let me give you a little background on this. He is primarily addressing the twenties and thirties crowds, young adults. I believe a number of the points he makes are valid for those of us who are a lot older than that as well. I think it demonstrates what this culture has produced in masculinity and the trends of where things are going. It's very much producing a generation that's going to turn into what we see in Isaiah 3. You have children and babes ruling over you. That's what this is turning into. I will read this article almost in its entirety. The reason I say, "almost in its entirety, is because Mark Driscoll is a Protestant minister of a church in the Seattle, Washington area. The article is primarily in regards to the state of masculinity today. He is coming from a biblical perspective. There were a few statements here where his Protestant theology was coming through, and I didn't want to validate that, so I omitted a few sentences to take that out of the equation.

The New York Times Magazine ran a story this past week called What is it About 20-Somethings? looking at the new life stage of emerging adulthood. The article echoed what other recent studies are showing and something we've been saying at Mars Hill Church for a while: The world today is filled with boys who can shave.

Historically, a guy would go through two life phases: boy, then man. The transition from boy to man was comprised of five sociological variables that happened almost simultaneously or in very close succession:

1. Leave your parents' home (Gen. 2:24);
2. Finish your education or vocational training;
3. Start a career-track job, not a dead-end-Joe job;
4. Meet a woman, love her, honor her, court her, and marry her;
5. Have children with her.

But here's what's happened. Rather than moving from boy to man by this succession of sociological transitions, we've created something called adolescence. It's a third life stage in the middle between boy and man. We don't know what to call them so we just call them guys. These are boys who can shave. Today, adolescence starts somewhere in the teen years and continues indefinitely. There is no foreseeable end. The problem with adolescence is guys

don't know when they're ever going to grow up and be men, and no pressure is exerted on them to do so. Is it when you're sixteen and you can drive, or eighteen when you can vote and join the military, or twenty-one when you can drink? Is it when you graduate from college after you've worked on your undergrad degree for seven or eight years? Is it when you get married? Is it when you have kids? Is it when you buy a house? No one knows. So, we are left with indefinite adolescence and a Peter Pan Syndrome epidemic where men want to remain boys forever.

The Apostle Paul says, "When I was a boy, I talked like a boy, I thought like a boy, I reasoned like a boy. When I became a man, I put childish and boyish ways behind me" (see 1 Cor. 13:11). A lot of guys don't, as if responsibility is a bad thing and the longer you can prolong it, the more masculine you are. That's the world. It's absolutely childish and consumerism.

The marketing sweet spot for many companies is young men ages eighteen to thirty-four. These guys don't know what it means to be a man, and so marketers fill the void with products that define manhood by what you consume rather than what you produce.

The tough retrosexual guys consume women, porn, alcohol, drugs, television, music, video games, toys, cars, sports, and fantasy leagues, as if being a man is defined by how much meat you can shove through your colon, how many beers you can pound, how fast you can drive, how hard you can hit, how far you can spit, how loud you can belch, and how big your truck is.

The artsy, techie metrosexual types consume clothes, decaf lattes, shoes, gadgets, cars (not trucks), furniture, hair products, and underwear with the names of very important people on the waistband. For them, manhood means being in touch with one's feelings, wardrobe, and appearance.

A legion of moms and girlfriends enable these boys who can shave. They pay his bills, pick up his messes, loan him their car, and refill his sippy cup with beer or martinis, depending upon his preference. Girlfriends, gal friends with benefits, and miscellaneous other "mannies" (nannies for men) need to know this: you want a guy you can marry and have babies with. You don't want to marry a guy who's a baby.

Men are supposed to be producers, not just consumers. You're defined by the legacy, the life, and the fruit that comes out of you, not by what you take in. But most guys are just consumers.

What happens if you walk into a church and try to find out what a man looks like? First of all, you're not going to find a lot of guys in most evangelical churches. The least likely person to see in church is a single, twenty-something male. He is as rare at church as a vegan at a steak house.

In the world, boys who can shave are children who are consumers. In the church, boys who can shave are cowards who are complainers. A buddy of mine calls them “evangellyfish” because they have no backbone. They don’t declare a major, church, theology, or fiancé. They don’t want to fail and they think if they don’t try, then they can’t fail. And by definition, that’s a failure.

They are, however, endowed with the spiritual gift of complaining. They say, “I hate the church. The church just wants my money.” As if the church wants his futon, Xbox, light beer, and computer filled with free Internet porn.

Here’s the cold hard truth: it’s a lot harder to do something than it is to complain about those who are doing something. The notorious sin of Christian guys is complaining about guys who are doing something rather than doing something.

Paul says a man is “the image and glory of God” (1 Cor. 11:7). He is to reflect the truth, goodness, love, and mercy of Jesus, his God and Savior. He is the glory of God.

I have no hope in guys. But I still have hope for the guys because they are the glory of God. God wants his glory to shine through men. God wants them be his sons. God wants them to follow, by the power of the Holy Spirit, in the example of Jesus.

I don’t care if you buy a truck or play some video games or rock out on your guitar. But the problem is when those are prevalent, predominant, and preeminent in your life. Some of you guys would argue and say, “It’s not a sin.” No, but sometimes it’s just dumb. You got fired because you were up trying to get to the next level and become a guild leader. That’s dumb. You work one part-time job so you can play more guitar or Frisbee golf. That’s dumb. You spend all your money on a new car or truck, or toys, or gear, or clothes, or gambling, or fantasy football. Dumb. Some of you say, “Well, it’s not a sin.” Neither is eating your lawnmower. It’s just dumb. There are a lot of things that Christian guys do that aren’t evil, they’re just dumb and childish.

Men, you are to be creators and cultivators. God is a creator and a cultivator and you were made in His image. Create a family and cultivate your wife and children. Create a business and cultivate it. Be a giver, not a taker, a producer and not just a consumer. Stop looking for the path of least resistance and start running down the path of greatest glory to God and good to others because that’s what Jesus, the real man, did.”

As you can see, it’s kind of a verbal spanking in terms of the article because he is very bluntly honest. But if we honestly look at our culture today, that pretty accurately sizes up what a lot of masculinity is today. It’s not just your twenties and thirties crowd. Look at our entertainment. I’m going to pick on a couple of entertainers because they

particularly get to me. Some of the men that are oftentimes in the media, you might say, as role models; take Adam Sandler and Will Farrell for example. These guys are about my age. They're in their late forties or pushing fifty. What do they typically act like in their movies? What are they typically modeling? Boys who can shave are middle aged men. They are of that age group. What is their behavior like? It's like a perpetual adolescent, like they're never going to grow up. This is modeled as if responsibility is bad, and this is masculinity and this is what men should become. We have an entire culture that is falling into that ditch. This is what we commonly see. This is becoming very destructive to our entire culture.

Let's take a look at the Bible to see some of God's design of what He really intended the transition from boy to man to be. Turn to Genesis, chapter 2. We will look at how God worked with Adam. I think we can speculate from the Bible that Adam was created as an adult male. He was made as a kid and then had to grow up. But still he was instantly created. He didn't have a history to grow up, and God still has to mentor him and prepare him for the role that He wants to place him in. Keep in mind that when God created Adam, He works with him for a while and He takes him through a process before He introduces Eve. God obviously had all this in mind. His purpose for creating mankind was to create lots of human beings that He could offer the chance of salvation to in order to expand His family. So obviously He never intended Adam to be solitary. He intended him to start a family and begin to populate the earth. He already had this in mind. However, He doesn't just create Adam and then immediately give him a wife and throw him into that role. He tries to prepare him ahead of time to be able to handle this role well, because the role that Adam is supposed to play is to be the social and spiritual leader of His family. God tries to set him up to the steps He takes in working with Him before He ever brings Eve into the equation, to prepare Adam for success in this role.

We're going to see later that Adam fails anyway; but we can learn a lot about the role of a man when we look at how God went about this. For those of you listening to this, especially those of you who are ladies, don't think this information is just for the men. This part is specifically targeted more towards men. However, if you're a young lady and you are in this process of looking for a man you want to spend the rest of your life with, this is some good information for you to know; what you should look for in order to find a successful husband.

Let's turn to Genesis 2:15.

Genesis 2:15. *Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it. (NKJV)*

Here in Genesis, we have what you might call the Reader's Digest version of the story. I'm sure there were a lot of things that took place and we have a very brief account.

One of the things that God does here is that He not only gives Adam a job, He's basically giving him his profession. He is getting him set up so that he can be the provider and social leader of his family, and He is getting all of this started before He

ever introduces Eve into the equation. The Garden of Eden is where they live and God has assigned Adam to be the maintenance guy. His job was to be the gardener, basically tending to and keeping the garden. I'm sure a lot more occurred here than God saying, "Here's some tools and here's the garden. Go for it." I'm sure God instructed him about the plants and what he is supposed to do and trained him for the job he was supposed to fulfill.

So basically what this tells us is that one of the things a man should do in preparing for the role of the family is first to get himself established. In other words, to get his feet on the ground, starting a career so that he can be the provider for his family, because again, this sets him up as the leader of the family going forward. It sets things off in a good way going forward. You can see that this is what God tried to do with him.

Now let's notice what else God did.

Genesis 2:16. *And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat;
17) but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."* (NKJV)

Notice what he's doing here. He's giving him spiritual instruction. Keep in mind that this was long before the Bible began to be written. The first author of the Bible is Moses who isn't going to exist for another 2,000 years. So the only Bible Adam had was the verbal instructions that God gave him. I'm sure that God gave him more instructions than just this little verse here. Notice what He has done. He set him up in a career so he can be a provider and start taking responsibility to be ready to have a family and He is giving him spiritual instructions. He is schooling him basically on how to live and what God expects of him. What is his role? His role isn't only to live these instructions himself, he is the spiritual leader of his family. How can he do that if he is not well versed in what God expects of him?

Notice something else. If you read through the rest of this chapter, and we will go through a lot of this today, what you will see here is that there is nothing that is directly indicated that would tell us that God specifically came to Eve with these instructions after He created her. She was created later in this chapter. When we get to chapter 3 when Satan confronts her, she is obviously aware of these instructions because she repeats them back to Satan. She is obviously knowledgeable about them, but it doesn't tell us how she became aware of them.

With that in mind, turn to 1 Corinthians 14. We're going to look at a scripture that we read last time, but I want to cover a Biblical principle here. Then we are going to speculate a little bit.

1 Corinthians 14:34. *Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; but they are to be submissive, as the law also says.*

35) And if they want to learn something, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is shameful for women to speak in church. (NKJV)

Now keep in mind, the apostle Paul was taught directly by Jesus Christ. He spent basically three years being taught by Jesus Christ and Christ was the one who inspired him as what to write here. As we know, Christ is the God of the Old Testament. He is the same individual who is working with Adam and Eve. So this is the same mind, the same viewpoint and philosophy that He would implement to handle these situations.

Here's where we speculate on these principles. I think it's likely that God probably entrusted Adam as it says in 1 Corinthians 14: "*Let the women learn from their husbands.*" He would be responsible for passing on God's instructions to her. That's how she becomes aware of them.

Also what this tells us is that one of the things a young man should be doing is not just having fun and finding how much X-Box he can play, how much fun he can have and how many beers he can drink. He should be establishing a career and should be spiritually educated, because he is going to be entrusted with the role of being the spiritual leader of his family. He cannot do that if he is not well versed in God's word.

It also tells you that if you're a young lady looking for a husband, these are criteria you want to look for in a man.

Genesis 2:19. *Out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to Adam to see what he would call them. And whatever Adam called each living creature, that was its name.*
20) *So Adam gave names to all cattle, to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper comparable to him.*
(NKJV)

Notice also that God is giving him other responsibilities. Adam is not just looking to have fun and loaf around, not that fun is inherently bad, but he is taking on responsibility for all that's around him and he's being a leader. God is also taking him through this process to get him to notice that all the other animals have a mate, but he doesn't have one. This causes God to take action to then create Eve for him.

21) *And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place.*
22) *Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man.*
23) *And Adam said: "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." (NKJV)*

Now we see Eve entering the equation. Notice also in verse 23, it was Adam who named her "woman." If you look in chapter 3, you will see that later he changed her name to Eve because she is mother of all.

The point I'm making is that he is the leader of the family. He names her. There is a tradition that we have today, not only in the U.S., but in most western cultures that when a man and a woman get married, the wife typically takes on the last name of the husband. He names her. That's where this whole tradition comes from.

You'll also notice that one of the other things the feminist movement has tried to create in our culture is to throw away the idea of the wife becoming Mrs. So-and-So or Mrs. John Smith. Again, it's the biblical tradition of the husband naming the wife. And that's where that comes from. Notice in verse 24.

24) Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. (NKJV)

Obviously he's referring to a future principle here, because Adam and Eve didn't have fathers and mothers to leave. They were the only two human beings here. Notice how this is worded. It basically says the man shall leave his father and mother before he cleaves to his wife. It says that a man needs to get a career established, get out on his own, have a home prepared that they can move into and be established. He must be spiritually educated so he knows how to be the spiritual leader of his family and someone who takes on responsibility. In other words, he's not just an overgrown adolescent who stayed in his parent's basement playing X-Box all day and decides, "Oh, I like my girlfriend. I'll marry her and move into the basement." I'm making fun of that, but this kind of thing really happens today because we have a culture of overgrown adolescents.

This is more the structure that God intended for men to be. God took Adam through this process trying to set him up in a situation where he would be an effective social and spiritual leader of his family.

Adam took over this role, but he messed it up anyway as we will see. We'll pick up in chapter 3.

Genesis 3:1. *Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden'?"*

2) And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden;

3) but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.'"

4) Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die.

5) For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

6) So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate. (NKJV)

Please notice the words “with her.” Prior to working on this sermon, I pictured in my mind (very incorrectly) as to what actually took place. I had always pictured this as ... Eve is off isolated in the garden somewhere and Adam is on the other side of the garden doing his job of tending to it. Satan approaches her and talks her into this and she takes the fruit and then she goes and finds Adam and talks him into taking it as well. That is not what it says. It says: *She also gave to her husband with her and he ate.* With her where? He’s with her as all of this is going down. He’s standing there with her while all of this is happening.

Last time when we talked about different roles and the upside and downside of all of them, we went through Romans, chapter 5. I pointed out that when we talk about sin entering the world, Adam was mentioned as the first man who sinned. However, we know from the details of the story here, who it was that took of the forbidden fruit. That would be Eve. But keep in mind what Adam’s role was. He is supposed to be the social and spiritual leader of the family.

Now this is speculation, but he was likely entrusted with even passing on these instructions to Eve as to what God wanted. Now he is standing there and Satan is approaching them and basically selling them a bill of goods. He is lying to them. He approaches Eve and appeals to her emotions. He’s saying, “God is cheating you out of equality. He’s holding you down. Here, eat this fruit because it is empowering.”

We know from 1 Timothy, chapter 2 that she was deceived by this. Eve thought that Satan was giving her the straight scoop and he was enlightening her with good information. We know from 1 Timothy, chapter 2 that Adam wasn’t. He wasn’t fooled by this, because it directly says that he wasn’t directly deceived. Then later in chapter 3 of Genesis, when God is correcting Adam for this, He started off by saying, “*Because you listened to the words of your wife ...*” That’s where he messed up because he wasn’t fooled by Satan.

Now think about how he acted through all of this. He is supposed to be the spiritual leader of the family. He is behaving like a boy who can shave. He is standing there passively while Satan is pitching them to go completely astray and he says nothing. He never attempts to step in and say to Satan, “Get lost. We’re not interested in buying what you’re selling and you need to get out of here.” He doesn’t even attempt to tell Eve that Satan was lying to her. He didn’t say, “You don’t want to listen to that; you don’t want to do this.” Not only does he not try to talk her out of it, he just passively takes it himself. He basically just checked out and went along the path of least resistance. He is acting like a boy who can shave. He is abandoning his responsibilities of being a leader. He’s kind of a jellyfish, like when Mark Driscoll was joking of evangellyfish; he won’t take a stand on anything. What is likely going to happen? His wife has totally bought into Satan’s argument and if he says, “No, I think he’s lying to you and you shouldn’t take this”, he’s probably going to get into an argument with her. She would probably get upset with him and Adam may have to deal

with some flack. But that comes with leadership. When you have to take a stand, sometimes you take some flack.

He is abdicating from his role as a leader and sort of blindly following along even though he knows it is wrong. He is basically acting like a jellyfish. He checked his masculinity at the door and is passively going along. Also we have a man who is acting feminized. The woman is taking charge and everything is going wrong.

This is how it happens to our society today. How did we get here? How did we get to this state of what we have today? To understand this and why this is so epidemic in our culture today, we first of all need to realize a couple of Biblical principles. First, turn to Proverbs, chapter 22.

Proverbs 22:6. *Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it. (NKJV)*

First of all, we should realize that this scripture is not doing away with free moral agency. It's not telling you that if you raise a child right he will never go wrong, he will never rebel and he will always do good for the rest of his life. That's simply not the way it works. We all have free moral agency and we all have to make our own choices, and we all stand or fall on those choices. However, what it says is how a child is raised from the time they are very young has a deep impact upon them. That will shape their life, good or bad, for the rest of their life. The way they are raised has a meaningful impact on a child, from the time that they are very young. If you raise a child in the way that he should go, he is likely to follow that for the rest of his life or at least it will have a deep impact on him. The opposite must also be true. In other words, if you raise a child in the way that he should not go, that way is going to make a lasting impact on him as well.

Turn to Exodus, chapter 20 and we will notice another Biblical principle.

Exodus 20:4. *"You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth;
5) you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, (NKJV)*

This is specifically in the context of idolatry. However, the other concept that is being addressed here is the fact that the actions of one generation can significantly impact not just themselves but multiple generations to come. That's how the sins of the fathers can affect the third and fourth generation going forward.

I wanted to illustrate that, but I would also like to give you a little history of how masculinity in particular has wound up in the state that it is today. This is in regard to the younger men, but it applies to us older guys as well in terms of how this has affected our society.

We talked about the feminist movement, but I think the seeds of the problems that we have today, particularly regarding masculinity, go back quite a bit further. I think one of the first big events you can look to is the industrial revolution. Why would I say the industrial revolution and what would be the point there? That was a big change in U.S. culture, because prior to that, families were typically on farms. Not everyone lived on farms, but that was kind of the norm. What that meant was that children grew up on a farm, and when you're working on a farm, the concepts of home and work are intertwined. They are mixed together, because you have the home and the land around it is the farm. Not only that, but it tends to be a family affair in terms of running the farm. If you're a young boy growing up on a farm, typically by the time you're old enough to be useful and productive on the farm, the father has you out there doing chores and working with him. As a result, there is a natural mentoring and interaction that takes place as the boy is growing up because he is oftentimes working right next to his dad. Not only is he learning the trade, there is a mentoring and an example set for him as to what a man is like, what a husband and a father is like, so he can see and interact with that as he is growing up. So that natural mentoring teaches him what to be when he has grown into an adult.

Once you get to the industrial revolution, now you get to a concept where home is here and work is over there. It's across town or miles away. Dad gets up and goes to work and works eight to ten hours away and comes home in the evening when he is tired. So what's happening now is that you change the structure where the boy is not growing where he interacts with and is mentored by his father a majority of the time. The time now has been limited in how he is interacting.

Of course, this would affect all of the children in the family. Consider if you're the daughter growing up in this environment, the moms were oftentimes running the homes and they are taking care of the kids. If you're the little girl growing up in this situation, you have a role model of what an adult woman and what a wife and mother is, you're directly interacting with the mother and you're there all day. The mother is coaching the daughter as to what you're going to be when you're grown up. If you're the little boy, you're now spending more time with a female role model than you are with a masculine role model because dad is away providing for the family. As a result, this changes the entire culture and then becomes the norm.

Other major events that take place are things like World War II. That war had the largest death toll of any battle that the U.S. has ever been in. There were probably over 400,000 Americans killed in that war. Primarily the men were sent off to battle. There were women that died as well, but there were hundreds of thousands of men who didn't return home. Many of them had children. So now you have a significant number of kids growing up without their dad. Many other fathers did return home, but they're emotionally scarred as a result of the horrors of war. So maybe they are physically present, but they are not as emotionally engaged and connected with the kids. You now have a generation where a large number are growing up affected by this. Remember ... *"Visiting the sins of the fathers upon the third and fourth generation."*

This influences another generation and another generation. If nothing reverses this course, human nature tends to result in things going downhill.

So even after WWII, you have Korea, Vietnam, etc. In the middle of this, you also have the feminist movement. Now in the sixties, you start introducing the idea that masculinity is inherently bad in the first place, and when you start feminizing them, we get the sexual revolution where single parenthood is starting to skyrocket.

When we get to the present day, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, we've got at least one-third of the children growing up in a home where the father doesn't live under the same roof with the children. For a number of those individuals, it may be a father that is not involved at all. We all hear about the problem of deadbeat dads. In many other cases, it may be due to a divorce. Dad may still be involved with the kids, but he sees them every other weekend or has only a limited involvement with them.

Now you have lots of boys growing up without a masculine role model to teach them about being a man. What are they going to do much of their time? They see the culture, they are watching TV and movies. What are they going to see? They see the role of the husband and father as a bumbling idiot who is stupid, incompetent, not capable of leading school children across the street, because the kids in the family are always smarter than the dad. They see examples of Adam Sandler and Will Farrell. Even in your forties, you act like an overgrown immature adolescent who is unreliable. This is what is modeled to them and this is what is teaching them. So what you end up with is a huge gap in what they are supposed to be as a man. There is no positive example to teach them what it actually means. The culture is teaching them to be boys who can shave. It teaches them that masculinity is inherently bad and they should be passive and feminized because that's the right thing to be. They should just be irresponsible and overgrown children. This is what they're being coached to be.

What if you have been or are currently in that situation? What if that's what you came from? You didn't have that father figure to coach and teach you what a Godly man is? What do you do with that?

The first thing you must do is reject the culture. Don't look to television and movies and movie stars, etc. as to what it is to define a man. That is the wrong place to go, because basically you're going to see one of two extremes. You'll see the boy who can shave or the jerk who is violent, overbearing, and a perpetual adolescent. That's what you see most of the time.

You must look to Godly examples. Turn to 1 Corinthians 10. We will see a Biblical example that Paul teaches. He's specifically referring to the Old Testament, but this can apply to the Bible in general. The first ten verses of this chapter cover major events that happened to Ancient Israel, so it's obvious in verse 11 as to what he is referring to.

1 Corinthians 10:11. *Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.*

12) *Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.*

13) *No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it. (NKJV)*

Notice he's saying that whatever situation that life or circumstances have placed you in, God can deliver you through it. One of the ways He does that is through the examples recorded in this book. That's why it was written. That's why there are so many anecdotal stories in the Bible. These are examples for us to look to and learn from. This is where you need to look for examples of what masculinity is and what the role of a man is. Reject the culture. It's only going to teach you garbage. Look more to this. These examples can teach you much more that you can learn from and follow.

As human beings, we oftentimes tend to learn from tangible things, things we can touch and feel. We may read these old stories and think that these people lived thousands of years ago in a different culture and time. It's just not as real for us. It doesn't connect to our lives. Well, God has an answer for that one too. Turn to Psalms 68.

Psalms 68:5. *A father of the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in His holy habitation.*

6) *God sets the solitary in families; He brings out those who are bound into prosperity; but the rebellious dwell in a dry land. (NKJV)*

We see here that God has promised to be a Father to the fatherless, in other words, to fill in the gaps. It says that He puts the solitary in families. As I mentioned, we have all the Biblical examples to look to in the stories of those who lived in the past. Oftentimes, as human beings, we just need an interactive. We need something more tangible, a person to help us along the way. What I'm getting at is that there is a principle here. A concept that Herbert Armstrong oftentimes would refer to is reading the Bible back to God. In other words, you can go boldly before the throne, take God's promises and read this back to Him and say: "You promised that you would do this. You promised that you would fulfill this role and you would help me if I was in this situation." Let me assure you ... this works.

The reason I know that this works is from personal experience. You see I grew up in a basically fatherless situation. At the age of 8-1/2, my parents divorced and my mom took me and my siblings and we moved in with her mother, because her father was already deceased at that point. So from the age of 8-1/2 going forward, I was raised by my mother and grandmother. My father was in the church at the time of the divorce. My father was an alcoholic. As you can imagine, that was a very problematic relationship. Not only that, within the next few years after the divorce, my father left the church. He didn't just leave a corporate organization, he turned his back on a way of

life and a belief system. Quite frankly, he became antagonistic to it. In fact, he was literally on a mission to pull his kids out of the church. I say that because he actually stated those words to me. He told me that he felt responsible for the fact that his kids were in the church, and he felt it was his responsibility to try to pull us out of the church. As you can imagine, as all of this was happening, the relationship was problematic enough as it was. I decided that it was an easier route not to have a relationship with him at all. Therefore, growing up through most of my pre-adolescent and teenage years and even into adulthood, there was no father figure around to model what masculinity or what a Godly man should be. There was a big void in my life. Again, as good as a single mom may try to be, she cannot provide the example of what a man should be. You need to see what role you're supposed to play, and there was a big void there.

In my late teenage years, I began to realize the void that this left in my life. Typical of most people in their late teens and early twenties, you don't know how much you don't know. That was me too. I realized that this left a void in my life. I needed a mentor to show me the things that I lost in life as a result of being fatherless.

I took God up on His promises. I asked Him on a number of occasions to put mentors in my life. I asked God to provide people that I could learn from, because I'm a much more interactive learner. I needed something tangible that would affect my life and teach me the things that I didn't learn because I didn't have someone there to teach me those things.

Over the years, there were a number of ways that God fulfilled this need in placing people in my life. What I'm going to share with you today is the most powerful way that He ever fulfilled that promise. It happened in March of 1995. As you can imagine around that timeframe, that was when the Worldwide Church of God was really coming apart because of all the changes. That's when I also kind of reached my breaking point with all that was going on there. I decided to check on another church group. That's when I got the guts to leave and be with another church organization. As I walked into that church hall that first day, little did I know that the man who met me at the front door was going to change my life. He was the greeter that day. That's the day I met Harold Lee. I mention his name because I know a lot of you out there remember him fondly and you know who I'm talking about. I had no idea, and neither did he, that God was working behind the scenes to fulfill the request that I made several years earlier. It took me a while to figure that out as well.

There are a lot of complicated details, so I will give you the Reader's Digest version of the story. What played out there, as I look back, I could see that God was clearly orchestrating events to force us together, to not only facilitate a relationship, but to just kind of force us to one another so we would bond with each other. About a year after I joined that congregation, Harold was asked to make trips to two isolated congregations in west Texas. He lived just north of Fort Worth at that time and we were attending a congregation in Dallas. He was the closest elder to those folks in west Texas. He asked myself and my wife, Linda, to travel with him and Freda. Karleen would go with us and we were kind of a traveling show. Harold and I would do the speaking and Linda

and Karleen would do the music. The farthest location we went to was five hours in one direction from his house. Five hours out there and five hours back. Every couple of months we would make a trip like this. Imagine this. You're in a car with somebody for five hours going and five hours back. What are you going to do? You're going to spend a lot of time talking with each other and getting to know one another. This is what naturally developed. A relationship began to bond as a result of all this.

About a year later, circumstances worked out where we already had a Dallas congregation, but Harold started a Fort Worth congregation that actually met in his living room. It was the original Church of God that met in Harold's house. That was long before the Worden congregation did that. In fact, we jokingly called it the Church of God that meets at Harold's house. This resulted in spending literally hundreds of hours with one another, and we formed a bond.

So in the back of my mind, I was looking for people to help me grow up to learn the things I didn't learn. One of the things I started to figure out with Harold was the fruits. I like to refer to this as the biblical criteria for assessment. It's in Mathew, chapter 7 and Galatians, chapter 5. *"By their fruits you shall know them."* Galatians 5 gives you the good list and the bad list.

As I got to know Harold, what quickly became evident was that he was successful in his career, he knew God's word very well and seemed to live it. I got to know him and Freda and see that this guy's marriage seemed to work well. Karleen and Eric were teenagers at the time, and I saw that his children were well adjusted and well behaved. His life was going well. I could learn a lot from this guy. He seems to have it together. What you want to look for in a mentor is fruits. Yes, he had a piece of paper that said that he is ordained, but that wasn't the issue. The issue was the fruits of his life. That's what drew me to him as someone to learn from.

Over the next several years, I spent hundreds of hours with him and this developed into almost a nineteen-year friendship. If he had lived three more months, it would have been a full nineteen years. The friendship ended because he died. I couldn't even put into words to you how much that helped to develop my life.

Recently I've seen a post on Facebook and it basically asked the question: Have you ever met someone who had such a major impact on your life that you couldn't imagine who you would be today if you had not met them? When I see that, I always think, yes, his name was Harold Lee. He had that big of an impact on my life. As I often put it to him, and I said this often during the last few years of his life; and he would just about choke up when I would say this. I'm going to try to say it to you without choking up. I would always say that the Apostle Paul said that he was taught at the feet of Gamaliel. I was taught at the feet of Harold Lee. He had that large of an impact on my life.

Imagine growing up without a father figure. There wasn't anyone there to be a positive example. From what I'd seen, I knew one thing for sure; I didn't want to follow that example. I didn't want to grow up to be the kind of person that I saw in my own father.

However, there was no one to fill that gap in my life. What I did was go to God and say, “Okay, You are all powerful, and You say that You will fill this in. Help me out here and put people in my life.”

God will do that. Let me assure you, because I experienced it. He not only brought about that person, but He manipulated circumstances to force us together so that we would bond with each other. The story is more complicated than the details I have shared with you of how we were pushed to each other. Harold would refer to it as foxhole buddies. Oftentimes some of the circumstances we went through made it seem like we were in a war zone and we were foxhole buddies. That bonded us together.

However, the back story that neither of us realized is that several years before I had ever met him, I was praying and asking for this. This was God’s way of fulfilling it.

The reason I share this is because I know there are many of you out there who have a similar story. Maybe you are currently experiencing that as a young man growing up in that situation. Maybe you’re in your early twenties or thirties, and that’s been a gap in your life and there is still mentoring that you need. Don’t make the mistake of thinking, “I’m older and I’m an adult now and I don’t need someone to help me along.” Because when I walked through that door in March of 1995, I was twenty-seven years old and recently married and I was in graduate school getting my Master’s Degree. I was still in great need of a good masculine role model to teach me the things that I had not learned growing up. That made a huge impact on my life. I cannot imagine who I would be today if I had not met Harold. He had that huge of an impact upon my life. Again, that was all because I had reached out to God and I asked Him to fill in that gap, and He did.

Again, I know a lot of you out there hearing this may have come from a similar circumstance, or you may be a single mom raising a son wondering how you’re going to fulfill this. Think of it this way, even if your son is not old enough and isn’t ready to comprehend and to make this request himself, it doesn’t mean that you can’t make it for him. It doesn’t mean that you can’t go before God and quote back the same scriptures and ask Him to take the action to fill that gap. He has promised to be the Father to the fatherless and the solidary He will place in the families. This can help you fill that gap and deal with the issues in your own life.

I don’t think we’re going to turn our culture around, in general. We know where this is headed and it’s not good. But as individuals, we can try to deal with our own lives to correct these things so that we as men don’t grow up to be immature boys who can shave, but can be Godly leaders and fulfill the role that God intended.

Brethren, we are about out of time today. As I mentioned, this is going to be a multiple-part series. Next time we will pick up more on the role of men. That will be in part 4. Let me just end by saying: Tune in next time for [Biblical Gender Roles – Part 4](#).