



HOAW Newsletter

"Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4)." "Train up a child in the way *he* should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it (Proverbs 22:6)." "In the fear of the Lord one has strong confidence, and his children will have a refuge (Proverbs 14:26)."

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HELPING MEN LIVE LIVES OF INTEGRITY AND HONOR

The Dumbing Down of Fathers

Dr. Greg Bourgon

I have grown increasingly alarmed at the social diminishment of the role of the father in the family. Pundits abound declaring disparaging remarks as to the need of fathers much less male influence in the home. Trite phrases like 'toxic masculinity,' 'mansplaining,' and the more recent term 'misandry' are presented as common features of all males.

Toxic masculinity, "an expression common in popular culture, frequently applied with a bias contrary to its original intent. When misused, these two ideas, "toxic"

and "masculine," are assumed to be one and the same. Rather than implying an inappropriate concept of maleness, toxic masculinity typically implies that all things masculine are inherently toxic. Initial use of the phrase toxic masculinity was a well-meaning effort to confront unhealthy attitudes that put undue pressure on men. Over time, attempts to confront negative behavior degenerated into an attack on almost anything associated with maleness."¹

Mansplaining became popular in our culture. This phrase was "coined to denote a man's speech when talking down to a woman, assuming she doesn't understand a subject—when, in fact, she understands better than he. Some

*people now use that expression nearly any time a male expresses a strong opinion or attempts to rationalize a viewpoint. Rather than dealing with the substance of the conversation, they dismiss it as "mansplaining" and reject the speaker for simply being a self-assured male."*²

Finally, **misandry**³ is defined as "the dislike of, contempt for, or ingrained prejudice against the male sex." Like its counterpart, *misogyny* (prejudice against females), *misandry is a form of sexism. Common statements that could be construed as misandric include "girls rule, boys drool," "a man wouldn't understand," and "men only care about one thing, sex."*

¹ Taken from "What is toxic masculinity?" GotQuestions.org

² Ibid.

³ Taken from "What is misandry?" GotQuestions.org

More recently, congresswoman Alexandria Occasion-Cortez, known by most of us as AOC, called out America's **"patriarchal society" and masculinity** saying that they are **"rooted in the subjugation of other people"** on the day after the Robb Elementary School shooting in Texas.

The inability or woeful refusal to define what a woman is, much less a man, the disregard of biological distinctions between a man and a woman, the agenda to destroy the **nuclear family** (refers to the core members of a family, usually parents and children originally understood to mean the nucleus of society, something deemed as essential for a healthy fabric of society), the absence of healthy male influence for children, the growing percentage of fatherless homes, the removal of God from our society, the marginalization of the church, and the assault on Christian beliefs and values, in my view, have been the primary contributors to a whole host of societal ills let alone the rise of crime and violence in our nation.

In an article titled **"Dumbing down Dad; How media presents husbands, fathers as useless"** by Sarah Peterson, the following reflections summarizes the cultural negative attitudes of fathers.

"Ad after ad makes doltish Dad the butt of all jokes," wrote Seth Stevenson with Slate Magazine. "He's outwitted by his children. He's

the target of condescending eye rolls from his wife. He's a dumb, incompetent, sometimes even selfish oaf — but his family loves him anyway."

*It's not hard to find. If you watch TV, then you've most likely witnessed the portrayal of the modern-day husband and father as **lazy, incompetent and stupid.***⁴

Just these three characteristics are sure to bring to mind one commercial or sitcom that personifies this type of man.

"One evening, after watching Homer Simpson wreck the family car at a monster-truck rally and plunge on a skateboard into Springfield Gorge, my 6-year-old son asked me, 'Why are dads on TV so dumb?'" wrote John Tierny from the New York Times. "Where did we fathers go wrong? We spend twice as much time with our kids as we did two decades ago, but on television we're oblivious ('Jimmy Neutron'), troubled ('The Sopranos'), deranged ('Malcolm in the Middle') and generally incompetent ('Everybody Loves Raymond'). Even if Dad has a good job, like the star of 'Home Improvement,' at home he's forever making messes that must be straightened out by Mom."

In yet another article titled **"How mass media portrays dads and what you can do about it"** by Melissa Byers she quotes National Fatherhood Initiative's president, Christopher A. Brown.

"Fathers are still often portrayed by consumer brands as one extreme or the other. On the one side fathers are shown as incompetent, foolish, and emotionally disconnected as parents. "The double standard involves competent, wise, emotionally connected mothers who must often rescue those fathers," says Brown. He cites Lowe's and LG for his research."

I think this trend of derogatory comments will continue in new and novel ways. Society in general is moving on a downward trajectory. I don't expect it to get better. In fact, I expect it to get worse.

I am once again reminded of Paul's words to Timothy just before his martyrdom.

"Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage-with great patience and careful instruction. For the time will come (and I believe is upon us now) when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry (2 Timothy 4:2-5 ESV)."

⁴ In an article written by J. Neil Tift in the Early Childhood Education Journal, the

author says that "Through almost every studied culture, fathers have assumed

three primary roles; the **protector**, the **provider**, and the **disciplinarian**."

Echoing this Biblical warning are the words of **Alasdair MacIntyre** in his book, *After Virtue* (former senior research professor at Notre Dame), where he comments on our culture today by comparing it to the dark ages. He makes the following comment.

"A crucial turning point in that earlier history occurred when men and women of good will turned aside from the task of shoring up the Roman imperium and ceased to identify the continuation of civility and moral community with the maintenance of the imperium. What they set themselves to achieve instead - often not recognizing fully what they were doing - was the construction of new forms of community within which the moral life could be sustained so that both morality and civility might survive the coming ages of barbarism and darkness. If my account of our moral condition is correct, we ought also to conclude that for some time now we too have reached that turning point.

What matters at this stage is the construction of local forms of community within which civility and the intellectual and moral life can be sustained through the new dark ages which are already upon us. And if the tradition of the virtues was able to survive the horrors of the last dark ages, we are not entirely without ground for hope. This time however the barbarians are not waiting beyond the frontiers; they have already been governing us for quite some time. And it is our lack of

consciousness of this that constitutes part of our predicament." (263)

I believe it is hard to argue that Paul's warning and MacIntyre's observations. They reflect our current state of affairs. That being the case, our role as a male influence, as a father, as a grandfather is clear. We are to stand in bold relief against the backdrop of our culture, prepared to defend our beliefs and values, to model godliness beginning in our homes.

Where do we go for guidance on being a 'real man?' What is true 'masculinity?' Let's turn to the Bible for the answer to these questions.

Masculinity in the Bible⁵

Scripture debunks all notions of toxic masculinity; it condemns inappropriate behaviors and applauds positive ones. There is no better example of real manhood than Jesus Christ. His example, as given in the Bible, not only confronts hypermasculine attitudes, but it also shows how it's possible to express supposedly "male" traits in a positive way.

Jesus was unafraid to show His emotions (John 11:35), and yet He was also willing to chase crooks out of a temple with a whip (John 2:13-16). Christ cared for the needs of others (John 6:5-13) and demonstrated compassion (Mark 1:40-41), sensitivity (Luke 10:38-

42), forgiveness (Luke 7:44-50), and humility (John 13:1-16). At the same time, He exhibited bravery (Mark 11:15-18; Luke 22:39-46), righteous confrontation (Matthew 23:13-36), proper judgment (John 4:15-18), boisterousness (John 7:37), self-control (Matthew 4:1-11), and even playfulness (John 1:47-48).

More generally, God's Word speaks against those attitudes that are truly toxic. Scripture denounces domineering (1 Peter 5:3), greed (Hebrews 13:5), refusal to rest (Genesis 2:3; Mark 6:31), promiscuity (Romans 13:13), selfishness (Philippians 2:3), arrogance (Romans 12:3), vengeance (Romans 12:19), and so forth. It extolls the value of love (John 13:34-35), openness (Galatians 6:2), gentleness (Galatians 5:22-23), and peace (Romans 12:18), while promoting strength (Ephesians 6:10), bravery (1 Corinthians 16:13), respectability (Titus 2:7; 1 Timothy 3:7), and boldness (Ephesians 3:12; Titus 2:15). A truly biblical approach to manhood, then, is not toxic, nor should it be labeled as such.

Fatherhood was established in the Garden of Eden when God commanded Adam and Eve "to be fruitful and multiply (Genesis 1:28)." As one writer put it, "providing sperm for conception is merely the beginning of God's expectation for fathers. Sperm can make a child, but it takes a real man to be a father. Some men who want to be good fathers have little

⁵ Taken from "What is toxic masculinity?" Got Questions.org

understanding of what godly fatherhood looks like.”

He goes on to identify **10 characteristics of a godly father.**⁶

1. A godly father knows God.
2. A godly father loves and honors his wife.
3. A godly father accepts responsibility for his children’s spiritual training.
4. A godly father is continually aware of his influence.
5. A godly father models selfless service.
6. A godly father is consistent.
7. A godly father disciplines his children appropriately.
8. A godly father does not allow himself to be controlled by outside influences.
9. A godly father is a man under authority.
10. A godly father will lead.

Regardless of our past or our parentage, we have the potential to be a godly father. But none of it is possible without first becoming a man after God’s heart.

The first step to becoming a godly father is to **establish** a relationship with your heavenly Father through receiving Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. This act of repentance acknowledges the fact that you are a sinner in need of redemption and that Jesus paid the penalty for your sin through his death and

resurrection. Such a prayer might sound like this...

Jesus, I believe that you are the Son of God and Savior of the world. I believe that you died for my sins and rose from the dead. I believe that through your sacrifice, I am a new person. Forgive me for my sin and fill me with your Spirit.

If you have taken the first step but have lapsed into ungodliness and recurring sin, you need to **restore** your broken relationship with your heavenly Father by recommitting yourself to Him through confession. Such a prayer might sound like this...

Heavenly Father, I confess my sin of disobedience. I admit I have violated your standards for holiness. I recognize that our fellowship has been broken. I acknowledge that my sin resulted in Christ’s suffering on the cross. Please forgive me and restore my relationship with You.

Once your relationship has been established or restored, you need to place yourself under God’s authority over your life, submit to Him in obedience to His word, and use the Bible as His guideline for a life of godliness. Obedience to Him will produce strength, disobedience to Him will produce weakness.

His manual for becoming a godly father is the Bible from which you will learn how to be godly and to be

a godly father. **There are no shortcuts.**

OTHER NEWS



Heart of a Warrior Ministries offers four journeys you can take to become who God

created you to be.

The Foundation (Ground Zero) helps establish strong biblical foundations for the battles ahead.

The Compass (Phase I) calibrates a warrior’s heart and tunes that heart to the heart of God. I am currently leading 45 at Calvary Church WBL Campus on this journey.

The Map (Phase II) helps men focus on what matters in accordance with their unique divine wiring.

The Guide (Phase III) develops the spiritual discipline of being mentored and mentoring others.

Go to our website for more details.
www.heartofawarrior.org/journeys/

If you would like to contact me directly, email me at

Greg@HeartofaWarrior.org



Donations

Please consider giving to Heart of a Warrior Ministries. HOAW Ministries needs your financial support. Our ability to help men live God-honoring lives

depends on the resources we can use to

⁶ Taken from “What does it mean to be a godly father?” GotQuestions.org

that end. Simply go to the donations tab on heartofawarrior.org. Thank you for being a subscriber.

Check out ***The Store*** on our website (www.heartofawarrior.org). There are downloadable resources you can use to lead a group through Phases I, II, or III, Foundations of a Warrior, and Bible Study Guidelines.

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Heart of a Warrior Ministries
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