

# PLAY THE MAN

## *Becoming A Real Man By Beholding "The Man"*

### **In The Beginning:**

This study is about becoming a MAN. Not just a male, but a man! Not just a young man with plenty of testosterone. Not just "a man's man" with all the traits of masculinity as the world defines it. But a Man of God. A Godly Man. A man who lives in the full image of God, just as God designed you to be. And that kind of Man is rare in our modern world. If you become this Man, you will stand head and shoulders above the vast majority of men today.

The Bible describes the qualities of a Virtuous Woman (Proverbs 31). But does it describe the qualities of a Manly Man? Yes, it does. But to become this kind of Man, you will have to work at it. It will require tremendous effort to put on all the qualities of Manhood that God had in mind when He created Adam. That first man, Adam, failed in his role when he stood by and watched his wife Eve be deceived by Satan and fall to sin. Then, when confronted by God, cowardly cast blame on her for his own failures. Read Genesis 3 and weep: *"Then the man said, 'The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate.'" That is disgusting! Adam did not play the man, own up to his own faults, and lead his family in the way of God.*

1 Corinthians 15:48-49 says a mouthful about that first Adam, but then follows it up by speaking of a second Adam (Jesus Christ). *"As was the man of dust, so also are those who are made of dust; and as is the heavenly Man, so also are those who are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man."*

The apostle Paul in this text is referring to our ultimate purpose in life. The purpose you are on earth is to *"bear the image of the heavenly Man."* One day, the great resurrection day, you will finally become the perfect being God designed you to be. *"Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, **we shall be like Him**, for we shall see Him as He is."* One day you will become like Jesus. But while you are still on this earth you will always be a work-in-progress. As a young man, you are just now getting started toward your goal of becoming a Man of God.

Right now, while in your youth, you are trying to figure out who you are and what you are to become. I once sat where you sit. I wanted to know what I was supposed to be, and who I was supposed to be, but didn't know exactly how to do that. But I was then shown some great role models of what a Man of God was to look like, and how to become that Man, and while I had lots of failures along the way, I would like to share

with you what I learned. I want to help you become God's Man. Thank you for this opportunity.

### **“BEHOLD, THE MAN!”**

John 19:5 *“Then Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. And Pilate said to them, **Behold the Man!**”*

The Roman governor, Pontius Pilate, had no idea he uttered the greatest understatement in the history of the world. For Jesus Christ was truly *“THE MAN!”* And we should *“behold”* Him carefully. We should examine every word and deed of His life and try to imitate Him exactly!

It was the apostle Paul who once said, *“Imitate me, as I imitate Christ.”* (I Corinthians 11:1). He also said, *“For though you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet you do not have many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. Therefore I urge you, imitate me.”* (1 Corinthians 4:15-16). This is Paul's way of saying, we need role models to follow. You do. I do. We all do. But those role models should all be imitating The Standard of Manhood, the Perfect Man, Jesus Christ.

As we *“Behold The Man”* – we know we are looking upon the Perfect Man. He is the Standard by which we measure ourselves. It was Paul who explained our life's goal of manhood exactly: *“till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ”* (Ephesians 4:13). When I was a boy I wanted to grow up to be as tall and strong as my daddy. In my child-like eyes and heart my daddy was almost God-like. He seemed invincible and perfect. As I grew up I began to realize my dad, like all men, was not perfect and invincible. But my dad pointed me to Jesus Christ and said, *“HE is the standard to which I pray you will grow. I wish you to grow to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ!”* Just as John the Baptist pointed disciples to Jesus and said, *“He must increase, but I must decrease”* (John 3:30), so my dad did the same to me. And so I now do to you.

Yes, in this life on earth, James put it exactly: *“For we all stumble in many things. If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body”* (James 3:12). While you are young, and even when you become old, you will *“stumble in many things.”* You will not be that *“perfect man.”*

So, let me ask you, who is your role model to becoming a Man of God? Do you have one in mind? If not, begin right now to think of the kind of man God wants you to be, and then look around, both in the Bible, and in your own life, and write down who you most want to be like:

*Bible Examples:*

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_

*Living Examples:*

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_

### **Act Like Men**

Acts 17:31 says of Jesus: "*because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.*" The perfect Man will one day judge all of us – imperfect men. We can take comfort in knowing He was tempted in all points as we were, and will show mercy and sympathy to our imperfections.

1 Timothy 2:5 says, "*For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man - Christ Jesus.*" As we pray to God to become more like Jesus, we also take comfort in knowing it is the God/Man that sits in heaven as our mediator and advocate (cf. I John 2:1). He knows we are trying to be like Him, but often fail as we grow into men. He will help us reach our goal of becoming a man of God.

What am I looking for if I say I want to "*behold the Man*" Christ Jesus? Let me ask it another way, what did Paul mean in I Corinthians 16:13 when he said:

"*Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, **quit you like men**, be strong.*" (KJV)

What does it mean, "*quit you like men?*" Read other translations to get Paul's point:

"*Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong.*" (NKJV)

"*Be on the alert; stand firm in the faith; acquit yourselves like men; be strong.*" (Weymouth's NT)

"*Watch! Stand fast in the faith! Be men! Be strong!" (Young's Translation; Modern KJV)*

"*Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, be manly, be strong.*" (Montgomery's NT)

"*Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be courageous; be strong.*" (NIV)

"*Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong.*" (ESV and NASB)

"*Be alert, stand firm in the faith, act like a man, be strong.*" (HCSB)

"*Quit you like men*" is from the Greek word *andrizomai*, and it is defined as "to make a man of, or to make brave; to show one's self a man; to act manly." This verse 13 commands our attention. It seems to have "masculine" written all over it. It would be a great war-cry from a captain as he leads his men into battle! "Act like a man! Be strong and brave and manly! Acquit yourselves as men today!"

We can think of a few “manly” men in the Bible. When we think of real men we often let our minds think of great strength or acts of heroism. We think of men who showed courage and bravery that exceeded others of their time. For example, I always think of men like:

**1. Noah.** Read Genesis 6-9. Not only did he live a very long time (950 years), but he was an incredible man in several areas of life. His amazing physical endurance to build a huge barge (ark) over a period of a century forever proves his masculinity. His amazing faith in the midst of an entire world that had become “only evil continually” stands out above all else.

**2. Moses.** Read Exodus 1-20 (also Numbers and Deuteronomy). We see in Moses a powerful example of long-suffering and fortitude in the midst of great enemies. His stand against Pharaoh in Egypt is well known. His leadership of Israel for 40 years is virtually the standard all Bible readers compare to true leaders today. His physical strength in killing the Egyptian, along with his strength in being a shepherd for 40 years, then leading a nation through the wilderness for 40 more years, is truly incredible.

**3. Joshua & Caleb.** Read Numbers 13, then the book of Joshua. They truly acted with great courage and bravery when they stood against their fellow spies who acted cowardly when they said, “we are well able to go up into the land and defeat those giants, for God is with us!” Then their leadership in conquering the promised land is well known. They were men among men in their generation.

**4. Samson.** Read Judges 14-16. His super-human strength is legendary. His heroic battles with the Philistines are the stuff of legends. There likely has never been a man in history as physically powerful as Samson, for it was God who gave him this strength. And yet, he had a glaring weakness in his lust of the flesh that led to his own death. His love of women caused him to sin. While his masculinity can never be questioned, we should never seek to imitate this former judge of Israel.

**5. Gideon.** Read Judges 6-8 for this gripping story of victory in the face of unbelievable odds. The Midianites had become Israel’s masters and put them in terrible bondage. They cried to God for deliverance. In Judges 6:12 it says, “*And the Angel of the LORD appeared to him, and said to him, “The LORD is with you, **you mighty man of valor!**”* We know the rest of the story. In spite of his fears he does lead a puny army of 300 unarmed men against 135,000 battle-hardened soldiers. “*The sword of the Lord and of Gideon!*” was their battle cry. They win a great victory. He was truly “*a mighty man of valor.*”

**6. David.** From 1 Samuel 16 all the way through 2 Samuel we read the story of perhaps the greatest man in Israel’s history. He was called by God Himself as “*a man after God’s own heart*” (I Sam. 13:14; repeated in Acts 13:22). As a very young man, perhaps a teenager, David has held our fascination for his courage and manliness. I have always loved this quote from I Samuel 17 just before he faced Goliath:

*33 And Saul said to David, "You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him; for you are a youth, and he a man of war from his youth." 34 But David said to Saul, "Your servant used to keep his father's sheep, and when a lion or a bear came and took a lamb out of the flock, 35 I went out after it and struck it, and delivered the lamb from its mouth; and when it arose against me, I caught it by its beard, and struck and killed it. 36 "Your servant has killed both lion and bear; and this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, seeing he has defied the armies of the living God." 37 Moreover David said, "The LORD, who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, He will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine." And Saul said to David, "Go, and the LORD be with you!"*

Throughout his entire life David played the man. He acquitted himself like a man. He was brave. He lived with honor and integrity and bravery.

**7. Jonathan.** Read I Samuel 14 to learn the great bravery and leadership skill of the one who was to become David's best friend. It is a powerful example of faith in God and courage and manliness. The Philistines were oppressing King Saul's army. Jonathan, his son, took matters into his own hands and took his brave armor-bearer with him to challenge 20 Philistine soldiers. Look what happened:

*6 Then Jonathan said to the young man who bore his armor, "Come, let us go over to the garrison of these uncircumcised; it may be that the LORD will work for us. For nothing restrains the LORD from saving by many or by few." 7 So his armorbearer said to him, "Do all that is in your heart. Go then; here I am with you, according to your heart." 8 Then Jonathan said, "Very well, let us cross over to these men, and we will show ourselves to them. 9 "If they say thus to us, 'Wait until we come to you,' then we will stand still in our place and not go up to them. 10 "But if they say thus, 'Come up to us,' then we will go up. For the LORD has delivered them into our hand, and this will be a sign to us."*

*11 So both of them showed themselves to the garrison of the Philistines. And the Philistines said, "Look, the Hebrews are coming out of the holes where they have hidden." 12 Then the men of the garrison called to Jonathan and his armorbearer, and said, "Come up to us, and we will show you something." Jonathan said to his armorbearer, "Come up after me, for the LORD has delivered them into the hand of Israel." 13 And Jonathan climbed up on his hands and knees with his armorbearer after him; and they fell before Jonathan. And as he came after him, his armorbearer killed them. 14 That first slaughter which Jonathan and his armorbearer made was about twenty men within about half an acre of land.*

**8. David's Mighty Men.** I have always been spell-bound by the reading of 2 Samuel 23 describing a special group of men called "David's Mighty Men." It beats any Hollywood super hero. These Supermen defy our imaginations with their incredible acts of courage and strength. What these mighty men did is almost unbelievable. Men like Adino, who killed 800 men at one time. Or Eleazar, who slew so many men with his sword that it permanently attached itself to his hand as if frozen on. Or Shammah's

courageous stand to defy the entire army of the Philistines in the middle of a field. Or the three brave soldiers who risked their lives to break through the Philistine army at Bethlehem to get their King a drink of water from his childhood well. Or Abishai, who killed 300 men with only a spear. Or especially Benaiah, who did several superman-type feats of courage and strength when he killed two lion-like Moabite champions, or chased a lion down a pit on a snowy day and killed it, or faced a Goliath-size Egyptian warrior with only a staff in his hand, and proceeded to wrestle the spear from him and kill him with it!

**9. Elijah & John the Baptist.** I will put these great men together because Jesus did. They were two peas in the same pod. They both were bold and courageous in the face of kings and queens who hated them and sought to kill them. Elijah had to stand against King Ahab and Queen Jezebel. John the Baptist had to stand against King Herod and Queen Herodias. Both defied the threats of powerful monarchs to preach the message of God and turn the people to righteousness. Just imagining them telling these Kings they are sinners and must repent is truly “acting the man!” They suffered persecutions for their faith and courage, and John was beheaded for acquitting himself as a man.

**10. Stephen.** Read Acts 6-7. When the young church in Jerusalem was having problems it was men like Stephen who stepped up to help. Acts 6:3-5 *“Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business... And the saying pleased the whole multitude. And they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit.”* When that was solved he played the man in what was to become the first martyrdom in the church. He bravely preached a powerful finger-pointing sermon to a very angry mob of Jewish leaders. They stoned him for it. He acted the role of a man.

**11. Paul.** Read 2 Corinthians 11-12 and read the long list of trials and sufferings that Paul endured as an apostle of Christ. He was one tough man! Most of us would have played the coward under such trials, but Paul acquitted himself like a man’s man! We admire him greatly for his faith, strength and courage.

**12. Jesus Christ.** But it is the life of Jesus that fully explains what it means to be a MAN. His virtues of manhood can be seen in passages that describe what God is looking for in all of us. He lived them to perfection, thus showing us how to acquit ourselves like real men. The measure of a man can be clearly understood by God’s description of a church Leader (i.e. Shepherd) found in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. Everything we see in this list describes Jesus perfectly. If you will now, while young, set your life’s goal to meeting these qualifications, you will surely become a man of God and make a huge impact on your family, your local church, your school, your workplace, and your world.

Trying to summarize Jesus’ perfect life is very difficult. What better way could I come up with than God’s own description of a leader using the qualifications of an elder? If

God has defined manhood and leadership using these descriptions, then I can be assured that if I become this kind of man, then I am growing into the kind of man Jesus became. These following character traits will define Jesus perfectly, and so I make them my life's goal as a man.

## **THE QUALIFICATIONS OF LEADERSHIP (Becoming A Man Like Jesus)**

### **1 Timothy 3**

*1 This is a faithful saying: If a man desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work.*

*2 A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior,*

*hospitable, able to teach;*

*3 not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not covetous;*

*4 one who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence*

*5 (for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?);*

*6 not a novice, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the same condemnation as the devil.*

*7 Moreover he must have a good testimony among those who are outside, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.*

### **Titus 1**

*6 if a man is blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of dissipation or insubordination.*

*7 For a bishop must be blameless, as a steward of God, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money,*

*8 but hospitable, a lover of what is good, sober-minded, just, holy, self-controlled,*

*9 holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict.*

## **A MANHOOD'S TO-DO LIST**

### **Domestic Qualifications (Family Man)**

1. A man (male)
2. Older man (not a novice; not new to the faith of Christ; an "elder")

3. *Husband of one wife* (a one-woman man; committed to his vows of marriage)
4. *Rules own house well* (accepts the headship and leadership in his home; priority to his family)
5. *Children in submission with reverence* (a father who teaches children by his word and example)
6. *Faithful children not accused of riot or unruly* (brings his children to faith; leads them to Christ)

### **Public Abilities (Church Man)**

1. *Able to Teach* (knowledgeable in the Scriptures; student of the Bible; feeds the flock – I Peter 5:2)
2. *Hold fast the faithful word* (steadfast resolve to always put God and the Bible first, no matter what)
3. *Able to exhort and convince false teachers* (a strong defender against error and wolves in the flock)

### **Positive Qualifications of His Character (The To-Do List of a Man of God)**

1. *Blameless* (not sinless, but not having a character flaw that others can take and use against him)
2. *Vigilant* (alert to watch for danger, to watch for souls – Heb. 13:17; cautious and ever aware of sin)
3. *Temperate* (self-controlled, disciplined in mind and body; keeps everything in perspective; calm)
4. *Sober* (sensible, prudent, discreet; able to soundly reason through a problem; clear-headed always)
5. *Good Behavior* (a dignified, decent, respectable, well-ordered man; carries himself with dignity)
6. *Hospitable* (a people-person; loves others; a Good Samaritan; attentive to the needs of others)
7. *Patient / Gentle* (fair-minded, reasonable, willing to give a person the benefit of the doubt)
8. *Just* (upright; judging without any prejudice or favoritism; making the right decision in a case)



9. *Holy* (devout, pious, pleasing to God; how God sees him; seeking the blessings of God's favor)

10. *Good Report from Without* (well thought of by outsiders; a stepping stone, not a stumbling block)

### **Negative Qualifications of His Character (The Not-To-Do List of a Man of God)**

1. *Not given to wine* (not a drinker of alcohol; always clear-headed, sober; able to think clearly)

2. *Not a striker / not violent* (not quarrelsome, or a fighter; turns other cheek; leaves vengeance to God)

3. *Not greedy for money* (earns money honestly, yet gives liberally and cheerfully to help the church or others)

4. *Not a brawler* (never looks for a fight or controversy; not demanding of his own opinion; a gentle, kind man)

5. *Not covetous* (money and things are not his idol; uses his money as God's gift; stewardship to bless others)

6. *Not self-willed* (open to other's opinions; willing to listen to other's views; not demanding of having his way)

7. *Not soon angry* (a man under control of his emotions; disciplined in mind and body; a calm voice of reason)

### **Play The Man**

In one of my favorite stories in the Bible we find a phrase that should stick with men forever. The Ammonites had joined forces with the Syrians to defeat the army of David. Joab was the commanding General of Israel's army. He soon discovered that the enemy had his army surrounded. He made the decision to divide his army, sending David's Mighty Men to defend against the Syrians attack on one side, while sending his brother Abishai to lead the rest of the army against the Ammonites. His speech to his brother Abishai went like this: "*If the Syrians be too strong for me, then you shall help me; but if the children of Ammon be too strong for you, then I will come and help you. Be of good courage, and **let us play the man for our people, and for the cities of our God:** and Jehovah do that which seems him good.*"

I love that phrase, "*let us play the man for our people and our God.*" We might say today, "man up!" Or, if you are in Texas, "cowboy up!" Don't wimp out or play the coward. Swallow your fear and do your duty. Play the man! Do you know how the battle turned out? "*So Joab and the people that were with him drew nigh unto the*

*battle against the Syrians: and they fled before him.”* They played the man for Israel and won the victory.

As you grow into a man, you must soon leave behind the life of your youth and accept the responsibilities and decisions of manhood. You are right now in a state of transition in life. Childhood is behind you and adulthood is before you. You will shortly (if you haven't already) be making many life changing decisions for your future. Where you might further your education. What career you will pursue. Who you will date. Who you might marry. What roles you will accept in the church. And many other life-changing decisions as well.

Through all of these major choices you will have to make the biggest one of all – will you “play the man?” In other words, will you be God's man? Will you be like David, “a man after God's own heart?” You can make that decision right here, and right now! And if you decide to “play the man” and accept the responsibilities of manhood as we have outlined in this lesson, then all other decisions will be made based on this one choice. As long as you are determined to be God's Man, then it will help determine all of your other decisions in life.

You will date “a girl” based on the definition of “playing the man.”

You will marry “the girl” based on the description of “playing the man.”

You will lead your family by the principles of God's leaders when you “play the man.”

You will make your choice of education, or career, based on “playing the man.”

You will become a leader in the church because you have chosen to “play the man.”

The world in which you are growing up has been nearly neutered. Manhood has been redefined and dumbed down to where it barely resembles the description God has given it (I Timothy 3 and Titus 1). Corporations and Schools and Churches have become feminized to the point where “playing the man” is rarely seen anymore. God had His reasons for saying the following:

*“Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression”* (I Timothy 2:11-14).

*“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. 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.”* (I Corinthians 14:34-35).

*“Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body.”* (Ephesians 5:22-23)

Neither the church, nor the home, is to be led by women, but by men. But many churches and homes have turned to the woman for leadership because men have meekly

surrendered their role of headship. The same pattern is found in government, schools and companies across our nation. Leadership has been abandoned by men as the Feminization of America continues. God has His divine roles for each gender to play. One is not superior or inferior to the other. Males are not greater in God's eyes than Females. But God has defined the roles He wants each to play. When those roles are compromised, chaos results. When obeyed, peace naturally comes.

I'm asking each of you young men to accept your God-given role with courage and faith and live up to the standard God has set for men. Make your decision. ***Play the man!***

*Lesson by Rick Lanning*