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Extreme Home Makeover: Men and the Women who Put Up with Them

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1 Corinthians 15:45-49

VIDEO—Plastic Jesus. In *your* life, in my life, real or plastic? Meaningless or meaningful? Difference or no difference? Is faith real or isn't it? Because somewhere there's a disconnect. I think God has given us his message of faith and hope and love for every man and woman. No one is beyond God's reach. No one is beyond their own *need* for God. Then why do we struggle to draw people to God, men in particular? After all, God *wants* to engage the hearts of men as well as women. How much of our identities, our choices, our values, are based on a false image, basically a lie? And if that's the case, then what is God's idea of manhood? And how many women are simply putting up with, or living life in spite of this lack of godly manhood in their lives?

Manhood is in a state of confusion. When you look around, even in the news, there seems to be a general disappointment with life. There's a pain, right below the surface in many men. For some, it's a feeling of loneliness or a sense of drifting, without much significance or purpose. For others, it's a hurt, a dullness, or even an anger that damages them and their relationships.

For younger men, there's almost a reluctance to move into adulthood. Boys who refuse to step into manhood become Passive. Or, they live in this extended adolescence. They *dominate* areas of no importance. For many guys, it's hard to get us beyond focusing on our selves. We become experts at fantasy football, or rock groups, or online computer games, with not much sense of responsibility. Anything to run away, or deaden the pain, or the opposite, to get excited about. When these young men refuse to step into manhood, they refuse to engage life. There is a definite historical context for our current state:

- Before the Industrial Revolution, about 160 years ago, Dad was around. The I.R. came, and Dad was leaving family and kids during the best part of my day. There was no energy for blessing your kids. Dad's heart followed work, not home, and many dads go flatline.
- WWII, Korea, and Vietnam changed a generation of men. Men exchanged youth for war. And they became responsible. But some of those men turned off their emotional/relational switch. They'd say "I'll provide, but don't expect me to engage emotionally." They'd seen too much. He didn't talk about those things."
- The shift in the 1970's of the feminist movement from the empowerment of equality to sameness led to gender confusion and the loss of authentic gifts that men can bring to society.

The problem is that **confused men create major problems**. There is nothing more dangerous than a man without a purpose. About 90% of major crimes are committed by men, DUIs are predominantly men as well. Confused men settle for less in life. Monotonous routines in the suburbs, dying of boredom. Church, it's time to change. The Greek word is *Katargeo*. To put these things behind you. It's an act of will. "*When I was a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me.*" 1 Cor. 13:11.

Men, I want this Extreme Home Makeover to include you and me. If ever there was a time in history when our culture *needs* leaders, it is today. So, why isn't it working? Why can't we "get it?" Why are we in need for such an extreme makeover?

Because, **God's design for men is not natural, but supernatural.** Most of us didn't grow up hearing about *God's* design for our lives, but it's there. And God *calls* us to trust Him. That takes strength when you can't always see what God is doing. But trusting God means forging your will to obey God. This is tough stuff, because when it's your own flesh warring against God's will, it's painful. It's *supernatural* because ultimately it's a spiritual battle. Christ never said it would be easy, just worth it. Second, God *calls* us to work. (In other words, work is not bad. It's God's design). As a matter of fact, many of the world's greatest problems can be solved, if we could get to work on them. Our social witness—not just *talking* about it, but *doing* something about it, could make an enormous difference. Like 16 year old Allen in Manila, Philippines, during the flooding 2 weeks ago who gave his life helping so many past a whirlpool. Like those who go to help folks in Southeast Asia, Samoa, and India to survive the natural disasters made worse for the poor people there, because the society there doesn't care if sewers back up with garbage or building codes get ignored. God's calling us to work. And third, God calls us to love and protect and *care* for and lead our families. But since the beginning men apart from God have struggled.

Adam failed miserably. The first official sin may have been eating the forbidden fruit due to pride, but *before* the fall, there is this *passivity* in Adam that sets up the wreckage in which Adam disobeyed God, left the Garden, and left Eve to the serpent. Adam wimped out!!! Look at this in Genesis 3:6 “...*Eve also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.*” Her husband who was with her...as though temptation of Eve happened in front of Adam. I want to say, “Adam! For crying out loud! Jump on the snake! Kick it! Grab a hoe and whack it! Chuck it against a tree! Don't just stand there, you Dope! Speak up! Defend your family! Defend your wife! Your children! The untold millions who will suffer! Don't even go there! Don't even mess with it!” *That's* the problem with our problems. It's not a porn problem. It's not a relationship problem. It's not a kid problem or a work problem. It's a manhood problem! And ultimately, it's a supernatural, spiritual problem.

When it comes to that, you and I are living out our ancestral father's failure. “3 *When Adam had lived 130 years, he had a son in his own likeness, in his own image; and he named him Seth.*” Genesis 5:3. Because of the reality of sin, we're one step further away from the image of God. We're now the image of Adam, who is in the image of God. You might say “How can all this world catastrophe, let alone my own life, happen (or not happen), because of the sin of one man? Because of the power of sin.

But hear the good news: *There is another Adam* in the Scriptures, who gets it right. This Adam *restores* the relationship with God the Father. This 2nd Adam was also tempted in the Garden. But He remained true. He owned the responsibility. He didn't go passive. And he obeyed God all the way through, till He could rightfully say “It is finished.” The second Adam is Christ. Listen to 1 Corinthians 15:21 “*For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. 22 For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.*” Jumping ahead to 1 Corinthians 15:45 “*So it is written: “The first man Adam became a living being”; the last Adam, a life-giving spirit. 46 The spiritual did not come first, but the natural, and after that the spiritual. 47 The first man was of the dust of the earth, the second man from heaven. 48 As was the earthly man, so are those who are of the earth; and as is the man from heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. 49 And just as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so shall we bear the likeness of the man from heaven.*”

The Message Paraphrase says “*In the same way that we've worked from our earthy origins, let's embrace our heavenly ends.*” Paul lays it out: while there's a lot of gray in the world, some things are black and white. How will you live? For whom will you live? **What's your model?** Scripture spells it out: The first Adam was set on earthly goals, and draws what he thinks is life from entertainment, and anything else he can from others. The second Adam is set on God's kingdom goals, and seeks to give life and empower others. The first Adam is without deeper meaning, a living soul, nothing more. The second Adam is full of transcendent meaning, a life-giving Spirit. It's personal rewards (anybody can earn) versus eternal rewards. It's focus on self versus others. Going for success versus significance.

This week, when you face conflict at home, will you be passive, or will you reject wanting to go shut yourself up in your cave and lead your family through it, without getting caught up in it? Will you own up to your responsibility at home and at church, or will you leave it up to someone else? Will you abandon your leadership, or will you lead courageously? Will you invest in temporary legacy, or will you invest in the

legacy that can change lives eternally?

I go back to one of the greatest lines I've ever heard, by Jan Alford. In a new member class, we were talking about the every 6:30am Tuesday Men's Prayer Breakfast. One of the new members asked "We've heard the men eat and pray. What do the women do?" And Jan Alford piquishly grinned and said "Everything else." ☺ The great news is, she's only partially right. ☺ One of the things about this church: if you are a man, and you get involved, there is *so much* for you here, including the weekly Tuesday 6:30am time and monthly Saturday mornings. And *so much* for you in your own Extreme Home Makeover. This church has generations of guys working through life, and enjoying life, with the goal of strengthening men and their families. Some of whom fought in WWII and Vietnam. Some of whom can work with you to help fix things. Build things. Pray for things. And laugh at things. And walk with you to discover God's supernatural design for your life. With this church, that strength and building could happen here or at your house, in Ypsi or Detroit, Red Bird Kentucky or SOS Tennessee, Haiti or around the world.

Imagine how powerful that could be...not just in your life, but for the sake of God's Kingdom. Amen!