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Mutuality

the voice of Christians for Biblical Equality



MASCULINITY

Imagining biblical masculinity without patriarchy.
Patterned after Jesus. Characterized by kingdom values. Engaged with the world.

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"Let us then pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding" (Rom. 14:19, NRSV).

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ON THE COVER: Design by Mary Quint.



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Reframing Biblical Masculinity

Several months ago, my wife and I attended an event where a panel of experts spoke about sex trafficking prevention. When asked what we, as regular people, can do to prevent sex trafficking, a Minneapolis police officer who works with both victims and perpetrators on a daily basis had only one response: “We need to reinvent what it means to be a man in our society.”

In subtle and explicit ways, American society teaches men that they are naturally sex-obsessed, and because it’s just the way men are, they can hardly be blamed for the consequences.

We can say that women and men are equal in value and dignity, but as long as our philosophy about men is “boys will be boys,” it won’t matter. What matters is our response to the manifestations of patriarchy in daily life—from sexual violence and degrading jokes to television ads and sitcoms. And how do we respond?

In 2010, an Iowa dentist fired his assistant of ten years, because he suddenly found himself sexually attracted to her, which adversely affected his marriage.¹ I heard plenty of people celebrate his commitment to his marriage; fewer seemed to ask why *his* marriage vows or *his* sexual urges were *her* responsibility. When an adolescent boy gawks at a woman in church, we chastise *her* for immodesty. When girls and women are raped, we ask, “Why did *she* put herself in a compromising position?” When our philosophy is “boys will be boys,” *he* is simply and innocently a man, but *she* is a temptress.

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“boys will be boys,” *he* is
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And sex is just the beginning. When boys are raised to believe that they are better equipped for leadership and decision-making than women, we end up with leaders who ignore the voices and plight of women. When we stereotype male and female behavior, we alienate those who don’t fit; when we stereotype their skill sets, we rob industries, governments, and the church of the diversity they need to flourish. When we force men and women into roles based on their sex, we put marriages at risk before they start. When we insist on patriarchy in church leadership, we disfigure the body of Christ.

Unfortunately, the Christian response to these problems has often been to reinforce patriarchy. We are told that what we need is not to *undo* patriarchy, but to *do patriarchy better*—we need patriarchs who are more like Jesus. Because patriarchy is divinely sanctioned, it must also be the divinely appointed source of every man’s identity. This is beautiful, we are told. What is more, it’s biblical.

But is it? Several hallmarks of “biblical manhood” look suspiciously like modern, Western, middle-to-upper class rites of passage: employment outside the home, financial independence, marriage, and fatherhood, for instance.² Jesus, on the other hand, never married or had children. He abandoned his family business in favor of ministry, becoming financially dependent on others—even women. He could be tough, but he also wept in public. Day after day, he soiled his reputation as a man of God by hanging around the wrong people. In short, Jesus himself fails to live up to the ideals of “biblical manhood.” This, to me, suggests that we might be off track.

So, what does biblical masculinity look like? It would be nice if there were a simple answer—if we could trade one checklist for another. But God doesn’t call us to settle for the easy way.

Jesus himself fails to live up to the ideals of “biblical manhood.”

It is easy to declare God’s simple design for men, so long as we are disengaged from others’ lives. But we are to imitate the God who became one of us, entering into our broken and complicated world. We are to wade into the muck of life, engage people, and wrestle with the challenges that arise when ideas collide with real life. When faith is put into action, easy answers tend to evaporate.

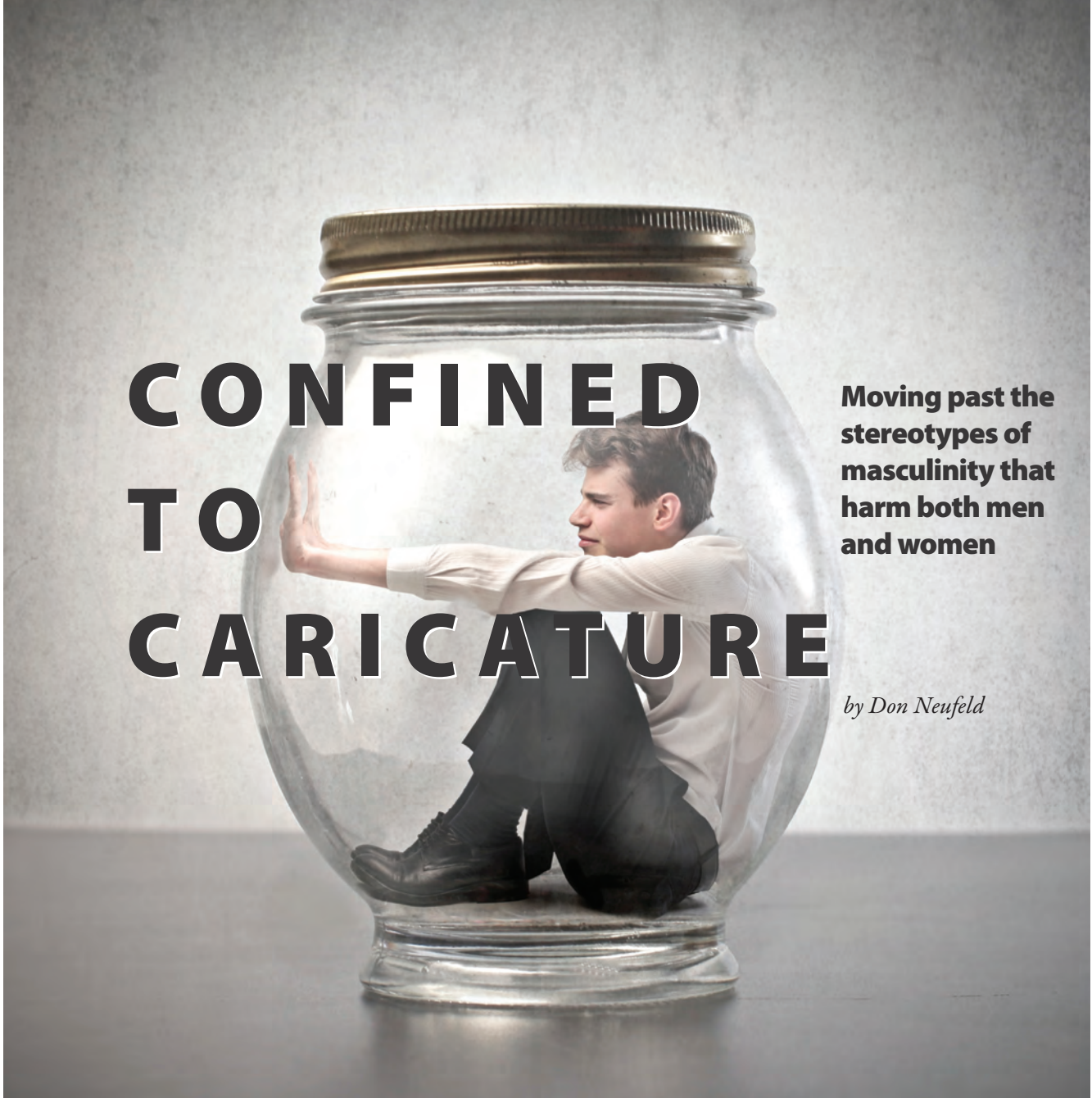
In this issue, we make no effort to land on a single definition of biblical masculinity, and I suspect there is a wide range of opinion, even among our authors. Rather, our goal is to reframe the discussion of biblical masculinity around Jesus, the Bible, and real life, and to do so without the lens of patriarchy. We’ll tackle topics ranging from Jesus’ behavior to social science; from sex, marriage, and family to youth and gender identity; and from abuse to masculine imagery for God.

I invite you to trade quick definitions for discernment, and simple solutions for the complexity of real life. Let’s leave behind the “boys will be boys” mentality of patriarchy and the bullet lists of “biblical manhood.” Instead, let’s embrace an idea (or ideas) of masculinity patterned after Jesus, characterized by kingdom values, and deeply engaged with the real world. When we do, our families, churches, and world will better know and experience the fullness and glory of God.

In Christ,
Tim Krueger

1. cnn.com/2013/07/12/us/iowa-irresistible-worker. Accessed 3/10/2014.

2. See also my review of *Real Marriage* in *Mutuality* 19.1 (Spring 2012).



CONFINED TO CARICATURE

Moving past the stereotypes of masculinity that harm both men and women

by Don Neufeld

Like any injustice, patriarchy victimizes both the marginalized and the privileged, and in so doing, plants the seeds that keep the system alive for another generation.

If violence, abuse, and discrimination against women are the fruits of patriarchy, its seed is the distortion of God's image in each of us. Patriarchy paints caricatures of feminine and masculine identity, and when these messages fall on fertile soil—a culture that will embrace these images—they grow into the next generation of patriarchy. These caricatures marry identity to injustice, establishing patterns that teach their victims that to challenge

patriarchy is to discard your God-given identity and purpose. The last few decades have challenged such caricatures of female identity in the West, but male identity has received less attention. The church should examine its conception of masculinity, allowing the Scriptures to redraw male identity.

For good reason, the primary dialogue on gender justice has highlighted the gender-based violence and discrimination

against women and girls, contrasted with entitlement men and boys experience simply for being male. Research has documented the rates of violence inflicted on women by their male partners, family members, and men in general. Women are also consistently underpaid for equal work and underrepresented in positions of influence and power. Meanwhile, social theorists have shown that men experience specific perks for simply being male,

including unearned social, economic, and political privileges in both private and public life. While race, poverty, religious beliefs, and many other factors affect systems of injustice and privilege, it is difficult to deny the significant social impacts of gender injustice on our lives as individuals and communities.

Undergirding much of this sad reality are religious belief systems that view gender relationships through a lens of hierarchy. These systems claim to oppose gender-based violence or discrimination, but actually propagate beliefs and values about gender that condone such ends. The Bible is full of references that demonstrate the thoroughly patriarchal environment of the biblical period and place in history, and traditional interpretations have translated these descriptions into prescriptions for the ages to come. For thousands of years, strong voices with huge followings have affirmed patriarchy, advocating (often unknowingly) the privilege of men and oppression of women as the divine ideal for human relationships.

What is missing from the often polarized and radicalized conversation on gender justice is the reality that, though privileged in many ways, men are also victims in this system. While men's suffering under patriarchy neither compares to that of women nor negates the benefits men experience, statistics on violence, heart disease, addictions, obesity, life expectancy, and suicide rates demonstrate that men's lives are not free from pain and suffering. How are these issues related to gender justice?

Caricatured identity

The reality is that the messages and behavioral codes that script male interactions with our environment confine us to live a caricature of our true humanity, with grave consequences for ourselves and for those around us. Men are taught that we must take on a disproportionate amount of responsibility for the safety, financial well-being, spiritual development, and overall functioning of our families and our spouses. Men are inundated with messages that our true value is based on competitive and merit-based scales of

worth, such as financial success, athletic prowess, leadership dominance, physical strength, sexual conquest, and high-risk feats of bravery. Esteemed masculine demeanor is characterized by aloofness, stoicism, and aggressiveness. The role models for growing boys and young men are those perceived as heroes and winners, such as firefighters, wealthy businessmen, and athletes.

At the same time that masculine value is determined by external, performance-based indicators, male emotional existence is devalued and feared. Socialization of boys and men emphasizes the public, assertive self while undervaluing healthy, broad, and freely-expressed emotional selves.

The cumulative effect of this ever-exaggerated image of maleness—this caricature of masculinity—is that boys and men are confined to a narrow spectrum of human existence if they are to receive the acceptance they seek.

Many men develop an aversion to the perceived “weakness” of their emotional vulnerabilities.

Unfortunately, many Christian voices affirm these ideas. At a recent men's conference, a noted evangelical leader began his description of what it meant to be a man with the assertion that to be a man means “Don't act like a woman.” He suggested this means to lead, not follow; to not be the “weaker vessel;” to solve problems; and to be stable, without the emotional peaks and valleys women exhibit.

To define maleness as “not-feminine” and then to characterize emotional capacity and vulnerability as feminine instills in men a fear of our own emotions or of any other normal human trait perceived as feminine. Messages such as “real men don't cry” warn boys and men that the display of normal human

emotional responses to experiences such as loss or sadness must be repressed or at minimum be done in isolation, without the comfort and support of others. The cumulative effect of this ever-exaggerated image of maleness—this caricature of masculinity—is that boys and men are confined to a narrow spectrum of human existence if they are to receive the acceptance they seek.

Familiarity with a full range of human emotions and the ability to express these internal realities are keys to deep, healthy connection and intimacy with others. In Galatians 5, the fruits of the Spirit are described as love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control,

all of which grow out of a surrendering to God as our source of true value and created beauty. There appears to be a glaring conflict between the fruits of the Spirit and patriarchal caricatures of masculinity. Are Christians who continue to promote a traditional picture of manhood really prepared to suggest that this passage is not applicable for the lives of men? Or that these can be a reality in their lives without them needing to exhibit emotion, vulnerability, or other so-called “feminine” characteristics? How tragic that the fear-based assertions of Christians who desire to “take back manhood” exaggerate certain behaviors to the extreme and thus create a caricature at odds with a biblical vision of the fruits of the good news!

So long as patriarchy, rather than the gospel, informs male identity, injustice will continue. Traits perceived as feminine,

which our society desperately needs, will be stifled in half the population. Patriarchy teaches men to find their identity in an exaggerated and partial human experience, which precludes the full embrace of the fruits of the Spirit. Is it any wonder, then, that many men fail to recognize or respect the full humanity of others, either male or female?

Casting a new vision

Is there an alternative vision of masculinity and human relationships that can release men from the confinement of this

strengths and vulnerabilities are informed by our unique biology and a lifetime of experiences, and that the resulting interplay between these factors is only partially impacted by our chromosomes?

The difficulty with caricatures is not that they are wholly inaccurate—because they are not. Many men are strong and gifted leaders. And we've all benefitted from the great feats and discoveries of courageous men driven by competitiveness and curiosity. These characteristics are positive and important. The difficulty with caricatures comes when we start to believe that they are (or should be) wholly accurate. The caricature becomes a script for life, negating other equally true and equally valuable aspects of our lives. It becomes a generalized pronouncement that confines us and condemns others who do not fit the dominant group's definitions.

The opportunity to release men to respond to their environment, and to God's calling in their lives, from a full-breadth understanding and comfort with their unique personhoods and gifting,

is ultimately life-giving! Moving beyond the caricature of cookie-cutter definitions of masculinity and into a freedom to develop the fullness of our God-given humanity allows all of us to come alive to a new level of relationship with God and with each other.

Despite many claims to the contrary by popular speakers and authors, the Bible gives no five-point model for manhood. But it does give us a lot of examples. The Bible both celebrates and condemns the behaviors and feats of all kinds of men—warriors and poets, leaders and followers, kings and prophets, wise and foolish. And when God took the form of a man, his behavior differed from the patriarchal ideals of both his world and of ours. Instead, acting sometimes as a bold leader, but other times as an emotionally vulnerable friend, he embodied the fruits of the Spirit. Let us all, men or women, do likewise, cultivating the fruits of the Spirit for the benefit of all and for the glory of our Creator.

Is there an alternative vision of masculinity.... Can we begin to envision a broader, richer picture of our humanity?

caricature? Can we begin to envision a broader, richer picture of our humanity that welcomes a full understanding of our external expressiveness and our inner contemplations? Can we recognize that our



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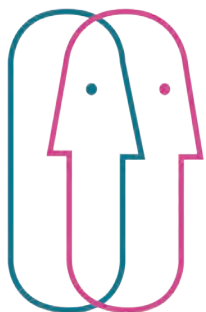
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Masculinity

An Egalitarian's Thoughts

by Susan Howell

ask one hundred people “What does it mean to be masculine?” and you will likely get a hundred different answers, along with a fair amount of blank stares and blinking eyes. When I posed the question, rather unscientifically, to a few people hanging around our campus's social science building, I got a variety of answers with no two being the same.

I'm often reminded by my sociologist colleagues that being masculine refers to one's gender and is not to be equated with being male, which is one's sex. Being masculine, they say, is defined by one's culture and is learned.

It's true—being male and being masculine aren't the same thing. Yet we often assume that males should be masculine and are rather unkind to men who are not. This is particularly unfortunate since, with such a diversity of opinions on what it is, I think I would be confused as to what was expected of me if I were a male trying to be masculine.

Maybe it was easier in years past to define the term. At one time being masculine was equated with qualities such as leadership, strength, and decisiveness, along with some less than desirable qualities like aggressiveness, domination, and emotional detachment.

Yet women frequently remind us that leadership, strength, and decisiveness are not exclusively masculine. And men remind us that defining masculinity by those less desirable traits is, at best, insulting. The assumption that men are emotionally-challenged is offensive to expressive men. And speaking of offensive, to equate masculinity with domination raises the question of who, exactly, will be the recipient of this domination. The answer, presumably, is women. And of course, less “masculine” men.

Now, that's disturbing, to women and men.

So far the implication is that for a man to be masculine, others must lack his positive qualities (otherwise they wouldn't be distinctively his) and be victims to his less desirable ones. It would seem, then, that masculinity (or femininity) is controlled largely by what others do or don't do. Again, disturbing.

But wait. Aren't there definite abilities men possess that women do not? Isn't that how we should define masculinity?

Well, sure. Men father children rather than give birth to them. Men find it easier to grow a beard and harder to sing mezzo soprano. But when we get past the obvious biological differences, social science research weighs in with very little

evidence for innate behavioral differences that truly separate the male from the female of our species.

This, however, seems to raise even more questions: namely, are we now denying any differences between the sexes? If so, why were we created male and female?

The questions are numerous and I don't pretend to have the answers. But let's not be so overwhelmed with the questions that we despair of trying to understand what we can. In this article, I will explore what we know from research and Scripture, and pose questions regarding those things we don't yet know, in order to prompt an informed discussion among egalitarians toward an accurate, biblical definition of masculinity.

What do we know from social science research?

An examination of social science research indicates gender differences much less striking than those touted by stereotypes. Certainly there are general rules of thumb, such as men making up a greater proportion of corporate leadership and a smaller percentage of stay-at-home parents. Yet abilities we once believed were “naturally” stronger in

males (math, spatial skills) and those in which males were believed to lag behind (verbal skills and emotional expression) have been challenged by research that takes into account the influence of others' expectations and the fact that we learn much from modeling others of the same sex. In other words, even where differences do exist between the "average" male and "average" female, science has not proven them to be innate. (On the other hand, science cannot disprove the possibility, either. For a more comprehensive review of gender differences and similarities, see my article, "Gender Differences: Facts and Myths" in *Priscilla Papers*, Spring 2010.)

There is also such a high degree of diversity in abilities among people of the same sex that we cannot make sweeping generalizations about a person's aptitude for a task simply by knowing whether the individual is male or female.

The bottom line? We have yet to identify a truly "masculine" (or "feminine") quality—one overwhelmingly or exclusively present in one sex but not the other—that neatly places males and females in decidedly different groups.

does Scripture provide a definition of masculinity? While thoughtful Christians often disagree on the subject, the egalitarian community has a plentiful supply of material demonstrating Scripture's claim for an equal standing between the genders in regard to the salvation experience, spiritual gifts, and call to service.

Of particular relevance is the distinction between God's original intent for humanity (both Adam and Eve are given the responsibility of ruling and subduing the earth in Gen. 2:28) and the result of the fall, when God tells Adam you will eat "by the sweat of your brow" (Gen. 3:19) and Eve "your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you" (Gen. 3:16). This view suggests that rather than embracing them as God's design, divisions based on gender are the result of sin and with Christ's redemption we can, and should, overcome them (see Janet George's *Still Side by Side*).

Furthermore, the crux of the question for egalitarians is less about behavioral differences and more about whether men and women are different ontologically (in the very

essence of their beings, rather than simply physically or socially). Theological arguments for ontological distinctions between male and female rest on Paul's appeal to creation in 1 Timothy 2:11–15. When viewed through the lens of perceived inborn behavioral differences between male and female, this passage seems to confirm the apparent ontological distinctions between male and female.

But egalitarians tend to argue that Paul's statement here was intended to address false teaching in a very specific situation, not to make a universal statement on male and female ontology. This is more consistent with Paul's other teachings (Gal. 3:28, for instance) and with social science research. Also consistent with this understanding is the fact that Jesus routinely challenged societal stereotypes of masculinity by calling his followers (male and female) to practice humility, meekness, gentleness, kindness, patience, and self-control (Matt. 5:3–12; Gal. 5:21–24)—all contrary to many common views of masculinity.

Where does that leave us?

So where does that leave us? Are there innate differences between men and women? If so, what are they and why do they matter? If not, what was the purpose of God creating us male and female, other than for procreation? I readily admit I don't know the answers. Yet the questions intrigue me and I believe are worth asking so that we can come to a more complete understanding of who we are as God's children and who we are as "siblings" to each other.

Admittedly, we don't have the full story on gender. But not having the full story shouldn't be an excuse to dismiss what we do know from solid scientific research and biblical scholarship.

We certainly do know enough to dismiss inaccurate stereotypes about "natural" male or female abilities. We know enough to quit putting expectations on men that are simply not biblical and hinder them from being all Christ calls them to be. We know enough to start an intelligent conversation.



Susan Howell, EdD, is professor of psychology at Campbellsville University in Kentucky where she teaches classes in gender, development, and the integration of psychology with faith. Susan has written for CBE publications, professional journals, and devotional magazines.

Let the conversation begin.

I offer the following questions that I hope will spark conversation among egalitarians:

- Would the absence of innate behavioral differences between the genders eliminate a diversity God might have intended? If so, what are the differences, and why haven't we been able to identify them?
- Could it be that egalitarian masculinity is about living out within the male body the ideals of personhood as taught by Jesus Christ without claiming sole ownership of a set of traits, good or bad? Could this alone provide the diversity needed for a full, rich society?
- Is our insistence of essential gender differences similar to that of segregationists who maintained racial differences beyond that of skin color and societal treatment?
- What would the consequences be for our churches and communities if we determine that, other than procreation, differences only exist when society produces different mindsets and places different expectations on men and women?

Whatever our answers are to any of these questions, for us to be faithful to the truth, we need to be willing to follow the answers wherever they take us without clinging to any belief that is contradicted by Scripture or exposed as false by sound research.



If Men Give Love to Get Sex

by Micah J. Murray

I've always wanted to get it right the first time. I don't like to make mistakes. I don't like to learn from experience; I'd rather learn from books. So when I was getting ready to propose to the girl who would become my wife, I read everything I could about how to have a good marriage.

One phrase emerged as a consistent theme, a thread of folk wisdom running across a spectrum of dating and marriage advice:

"Women give sex to get love. Men give love to get sex."

It seemed reasonable enough. And it fit neatly with the gender stereotypes I'd heard all my life: Men think about sex every seven seconds. Women aren't visual. Men are like microwaves; women are like crockpots.

But, as a newly married man, I soon discovered that these ideas were both inaccurate and damaging in our

relationship. Beneath the glib cliché was an economic model of sex-bartering that undermines the very essence of love.

If it's true that men give love to get sex, then our shared sexuality is simply a business arrangement, a deal brokered in flowers and kisses. My wife is a deluxe call girl with a long-term contract, marriage is sheer capitalism, and love is a filthy currency.

This sort of thinking drives a wedge between my wife and me, as if we're more different than the same. As if her "emotional needs" are beyond my understanding and experience. As if my thirst for sex overshadows my thirst for a relationship. As if love is something that I'd simply cash in for sexual fulfillment.

This is every sort of false. Before we were lovers, we were friends. I can live without sex, but I deeply need my relationship with my wife.

The gender roles perpetuated in this sex/love arrangement distort our humanity. The man who "gives love to get sex" is assumed to be the paragon of "masculinity"—cool, dangerous, unaffected by soft, "girly" emotions and romance. In control of his world. Stooping to the realm of flowers and chocolates and poetry only to drive a smart deal with a big return in bed.

But in reality, this man—and the version of masculinity he embodies—is not a role model to be emulated or a hero to be cheered. Rather, this false stereotype of masculinity reduces men to base creatures—driven to manipulate women for their own satisfaction, unable to contain their own desires.

This cartoon of a man isn't in control of his own destiny at all, despite all the faux-manly posturing. He is at the mercy of his desires, a slave to his own sexuality.

If it's true that men give love to get sex, then our shared sexuality is simply a business arrangement, a deal brokered in flowers and kisses. My wife is a deluxe call girl with a long-term contract, marriage is sheer capitalism, and love is a filthy currency.

But I think we're better than this.

If we can move beyond easy stereotypes and cheap clichés, we can abandon a sex/love marketplace for genuine, fulfilling relationships.

I'm convinced now that those marriage books I read when we were dating were wrong. For whatever wisdom they may have had, they focused so much on the differences between men and women that it seemed we were more different than the same.

I am a man. I like sex. These two statements are both true, but this is not a uniquely male condition. Neither sex nor love is the sole domain of men or women. I don't believe men give love to get sex, nor do I believe that women simply endure sex to get love. I believe that we all crave meaningful relationship and connection in every aspect of our lives—our spirituality, our families, our sexuality, our community.

But when we reinforce our differences rather than our shared humanity, we shame both men and women for the very real needs and desires that we experience—for sex and for love.

Rather than giving love to get sex, let's give love because we are created to do so. Because giving and receiving love transcends shallow gender stereotypes and gets to the heart of what it means to be truly human.

Rather than perpetuating stereotypes that create walls of isolation and shame between us, let's find common space and meet each other there.



Micah J. Murray loves words, people, coffee, and Jesus. He writes about church and culture at *Redemption Pictures*, *A Deeper Story*, and the *Huffington Post*. Micah lives in Charlotte, NC, with his wife and two small boys. You can follow Micah on Twitter @micahjmurray.

Join the Conversation

What are the most helpful things you've learned about relationships, sex, and masculinity (or femininity)?

How has the stereotyping of men and women impacted the relationships in your life?

What advice do you have for young couples preparing for marriage?

Visit cbeinternational.org/murray to share your thoughts on our blog.



by Dr. Sandra Glahn

JESUS AND MASCULINITY

In the past few years, the Western church has seen an explosion in the number of resources designed to help us discover and embrace our God-given gender identities. Books and conferences tell us how to model biblical masculinity and femininity. More to the point, many seek to help us identify the male or female behaviors that God designed to flow from our sex differences. Numerous lists have been created with accompanying proof-texts to help believers pursue gender health. Consider these qualities of the perfect woman:

She'll do the Father's work; not seek her own success/desires; be filled with the Spirit; walk in God's ways; share the gospel; focus on eternal pursuits; live a life of holiness and obedience; turn from sin; walk in love; seek to meet others' needs; be others-focused; sacrifice her desires for others; be unselfish, gentle

and courageous; have confidence, and zeal; not be wishy-washy or afraid; lead God's disciples; not be a follower when she shouldn't be; show initiative when appropriate instead of waiting on someone else to do right; confront when necessary; not be a people-pleaser; be decisive according to God's revealed will; fulfill commitments; be a worker, not lazy or a quitter; be humble; serve and listen to others in Christian leadership; not lord it over others; glorify another—the Father; not be greedy for recognition.

Okay, I confess. I borrowed this list from a blog post containing a “chart of Christ-like character qualities” that will “help explain authentic manhood more specifically” (“Profiling Christian Masculinity,” at cbmw.org). I merely changed the “he” to “she.” Clearly, none of the qualities listed is exclusive to males or females.

Christians are fairly unified in our belief that God made men and women different by design. *Both egalitarians and complementarians believe in gender differences.* Where the splintering occurs is in determining exactly how biological differences determine the social behaviors we should exemplify to become our true selves. As soon as we assign categories (“men lead,” “women serve”) we create boxes that confine us in ways God did not intend.

The Son of Man and Our Definition of “Manly”

Probably the most-quoted definition of masculinity in this conversation comes from *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*: “At the heart of mature masculinity is a sense of benevolent responsibility to lead, provide for, and protect women in ways appropriate to a man's differing relationships” (p. 35). And

on initial reflection, Jesus does seem to fit this definition. While on earth, he led Mary of Bethany in a theology lesson as she sat at his feet. And since the definition includes protection of women, we also note that Jesus, the world's first recorded rabbi to engage a female student, protected Mary from criticism when she made theology a higher priority than cooking.

So Jesus led women and he protected women. But did he provide financially for them? Luke seems to suggest he did not: "Some time afterward [Jesus] went on through towns and villages, preaching and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God. The twelve were with him, and also some women who had been healed of evil spirits and disabilities: Mary (called Magdalene), from whom seven demons had gone out, and Joanna the wife of Chuza (Herod's household manager), Susanna, and many others *who provided for them out of their own resources*" (Luke 8:1–3, emphasis mine). All Scripture quotations taken from the NET Bible).

Jesus received the financial support of women. His very subsistence depended on females. So apparently receiving the financial support of women does not undermine manhood. And conversely, apparently a woman's femininity is not violated if she financially supports a man or men. Wisdom herself, personified as an upper-class woman in Proverbs 31, is shown to be generating income for her husband and children by dealing in fields and belts.

Usually next to the "ideal" of males providing, we find 1 Timothy 5:8 listed as a proof-text. In Paul's epistle to Timothy, he speaks of caring for widows, and in doing so, he uses no male pronouns: "If someone does not provide for one's own that one is worse than an unbeliever." And in fact, eight verses later his statement is more sex-specific, but not in the way that has been emphasized: "If a believing *woman* has widows in her family, let her help them. The church should not be burdened" (v. 16, emphasis mine).

If we're honest, we must concede that the Bible gives no definition of uniquely masculine or feminine behavior other than references against cross-dressing. What we conclude about gender-specific norms in the Bible comes from picking and choosing

a set of passages and creating our own definitions. But what if we noticed only that Jacob cooked stew, Jesus cooked fish in his post-resurrection state, and the deacons served tables for widows? We might conclude that cooking and serving tables is truly masculine work, or at least that such actions have a "masculine feel," especially when we see Jesus's rebuke of Martha for being too cooking-focused.

In a world in which real men didn't cry, Jesus wept. In a world in which masculine men didn't characterize themselves as women, Jesus compared himself to a hen, and his Father to a woman who lost a coin. In a weapon-wielding world, Jesus told Peter his sword was out of place.

If we step back and look at our Lord, we see that he himself is a misfit with the most-quoted definition of "biblical masculinity." And he was a misfit for the Greco-Roman world's definition, too.

The Son of Man and Rome's Definition of "Manly"

In a world in which real men didn't cry, Jesus wept. In a world in which masculine men didn't characterize themselves as women, Jesus compared himself to a hen, and his Father to a woman who lost a coin. In a weapon-wielding world, Jesus told Peter his sword was out of place.

Roman Sexualities, a collection of essays published by Princeton Press, offers a major contribution to our understanding of sexuality in the Mediterranean world in Jesus' time. And in it we find an explanation for why gladiator, actor, and prostitute were considered dishonorable professions. People engaged in these occupations had their bodies subjected to public observation. And in that culture, enduring such scrutiny was dishonorable. A real man had complete agency over his body.

We also learn that the honor/status-driven culture of the Roman Empire defined a truly masculine man in part by his class, the sign of which he wore on his garments. And class was broader than economic status, carrying with it bodily rights.

A Roman male's masculine power came from having the freedom to say, "You must leave my body alone."

Knowing this, we can better appreciate that from a Greco-Roman perspective Jesus willingly gave up his man-card for us. In his value system, love trumped gender roles. Indeed, Jesus let his "masculinity" be violated for the glory of God. He voluntarily endured the humiliation of nakedness,

beating, and violent death in a world in which a man could suffer no greater insult to his manhood.

Later, Paul looked to this very example of Jesus when describing what the Spirit-filled male householder should look like. Not only was the Christian husband to offer up his bodily rights (1 Cor. 7), but he was to sacrifice his very life (Eph. 5). Shocking!

Considering the example of Christ, it appears that pursuing gender ideals is not the best way. Perhaps doing so is like pursuing happiness, which we find on the road to elsewhere. It appears that we become our true masculine and feminine selves, transforming into the people God intended us to be, as we focus on Jesus Christ, walking in the Spirit (whose fruit *is* defined). Sometimes our obedience may even look unmanly or unfeminine. Yet we must imitate Jesus, not the culture—not even the Christian subculture. Our Lord never hinted that we should conform to narrowly defined gender ideals. Rather, in order to become all we should be, he calls us in the power of his Spirit to follow hard after him.



Sandra Glahn, ThM, PhD, is the author of eighteen books, including the Coffee Cup Bible Study series. Her research focuses on women, gender, and first-century backgrounds.

A Spirit of Mutual Service

What is the mark of a family that is faithfully following Jesus?

by Ed Cyzewski

At 8:30 a.m. on most days, I leave my desk after an hour of work. I trade my computer for a drum full of rattling instruments, a bag of blocks, and a stuffed animal we creatively named Blue Bunny. I usually can't return to work until our son Ethan takes a nap or my wife gives me a break in the afternoon.

While my wife Julie pursues a full-time career as an academic, I divide my time between caring for our son and writing part-time. This isn't just something we've stumbled into. It's a direction we've been praying about for years. In fact, I would go so far as saying that the turning point in our marriage and in my life came when I committed to becoming a work-from-home dad while my wife pursued a full-time career as an academic.

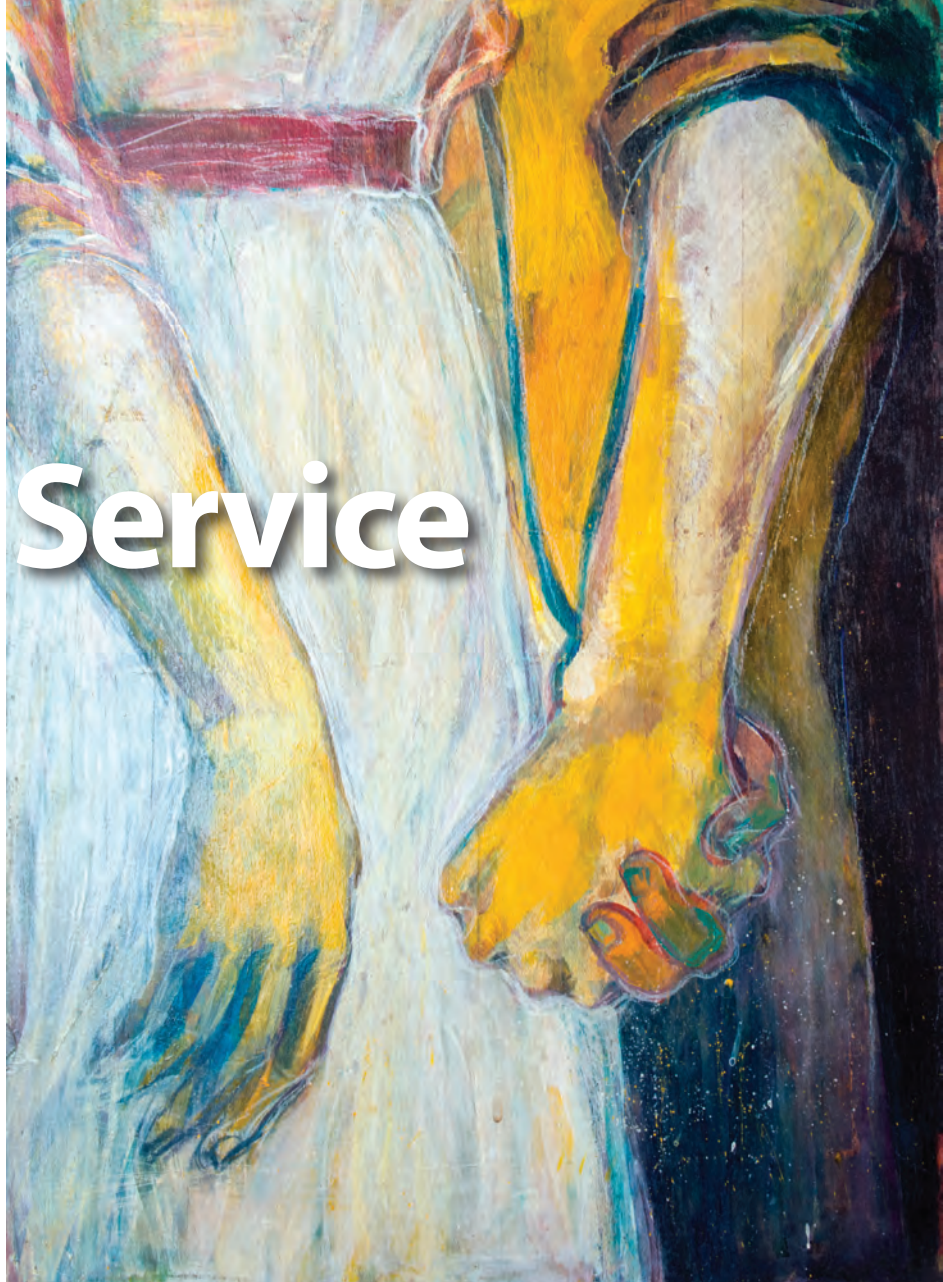
I heard a lot of marriage advice early on that the man had the primary calling and that the wife had to find her calling

through him. That may work for some couples, but in our case, my wife had an extremely clear calling long before I did. And after my wife said yes to God about a career move from public school teaching into the academy, I found the freedom to ask whether creative work fit me better than nonprofit or church work. Working together to figure out what God was calling us both to do made it clear that it doesn't really matter who goes first or who makes more money; it matters that both partners are committed to following Christ, laying their requests before him, and following the direction of the Spirit.

As we've prayed and planned, we've landed on a hybrid lifestyle that gives

both of us opportunities to play with Ethan and chances to work. I spend more time with our son day in, day out, while Julie earns more money day in, day out, but our setup is designed to mutually support one another.

Most days Julie spends the morning with our son Ethan before I take over for a long morning stretch. She comes home for a two hour break before going back to work. I spend chunks of time here and there writing and picking up around the house while she's with Ethan. I try to end the day by taking Ethan for a walk so she can make dinner without his chants of "Up! Up! Up!" Most evenings, after we've caught up with each other, one of us catches up on work for an hour or two.



Our lifestyle isn't for everyone. We don't hold ourselves up as an ideal or standard. Rather, this is a path where we've sensed God's direction and peace. We're giving each other space to pursue our callings while serving in the areas of our strengths. It feels lot like: "And further, submit to one another out of reverence for Christ" (Eph. 5:21. All Scripture quotations taken from the NLT).

Some have criticized us for our choices, saying that my wife should be home with our son and I should be providing full-time for our family. Popular preachers and writers call guys like me a "man fail" and say that our lifestyle flies in the face of the "biblical model" for homes.

Faithfulness is not as simple as implementing a list of directives from the Bible. Faithfulness is a matter of obediently moving with the Spirit and loving others.

But is a biblical man defined by the size of his paycheck? It sure feels like that sometimes.

Does Scripture support fixed gender roles for men and women? Should we change our lifestyle? Or does Scripture point to another way forward for husbands and wives? Perhaps we need to ask this question: "What is the mark of a family that is faithfully following Jesus?"

As we often do in matters of theology and gender, we should pay a visit to Paul. While Paul has often been used to provide specific blueprints for the family and workplace, such black-and-white readings of his letters miss the far more important point for faithful followers of Jesus.

After having a tirade of sorts that involved the shocking declaration that there is neither male nor female in Christ, Paul summed up his argument in the letter to the Galatians with a declaration of freedom:

"For you have been called to live in freedom, my brothers and sisters. But

don't use your freedom to satisfy your sinful nature. Instead, use your freedom to serve one another in love. For the whole law can be summed up in this one command: 'Love your neighbor as yourself'" (Gal. 5:13-14).

As if this vague command to love others without a doctrinal checklist wasn't disruptive enough, he went on to write in verse 16: "So I say, let the Holy Spirit guide your lives. Then you won't be doing what your sinful nature craves."

Faithfulness is not as simple as implementing a list of directives from the Bible. Faithfulness is a matter of obediently moving with the Spirit and loving others. Faithfulness is like a branch that learns to rely on its vine for life.

Following the lead of the Spirit doesn't always make life easier. Following the Spirit often moves us into new categories, conflict, and murky areas that will stretch our faith.

The truth is, we have no choice but to follow the Spirit into the murky areas. Questions about our careers or family structures won't be resolved by asking, "Is this strictly following the model of Scripture?" Because, well, which model will we follow? Are we modeling ourselves after Abraham, who took his wife's servant as a concubine? David, the man after God's own heart, who had many wives? Or Jesus, who was unmarried and depended on the generosity of others to provide for his needs? Are we modeling ourselves after the early Christian households who owned slaves? What about Priscilla and Aquila, a couple who preached and worked together? Or maybe Lydia, a businesswoman who responded to Paul's message?

Even when Paul wrote about women in the home, he added an important

Want more *Mutuality*?

Visit cbeinternational.org/m211 to find online content, including these two all-new articles!

Does the Bible Paint God as a Woman?

by Wendy Herrmann Smith

"How many babies does she *have* in there?" I exclaimed as my seven-year-old daughter altered my drawing of a pregnant woman. Sarah giggled and proceeded to make my stick figure ten times the size of any mother of multiples.

It was breakfast and devotion time. Sarah popped Cheerios into her mouth while I wrote out Bible verses and drew pictures to illustrate them. These were no ordinary Bible verses. I was on a crusade to balance all the masculine images of God that Sarah was learning at church. . .

Read the rest at
cbeinternational.org/herrmannsmith.

First Man Standing

by Peter Grant

My world changed in 2008 when I listened to a Namibian woman speak about her experience of being raped three times as a teenager. I was aware that violence against women was an important issue, but it had not affected my heart. I felt God challenging me about what kind of world we had created—a world of broken relationships, in which many women suffer horrific violence and some men commit crimes against them with apparent impunity. . .

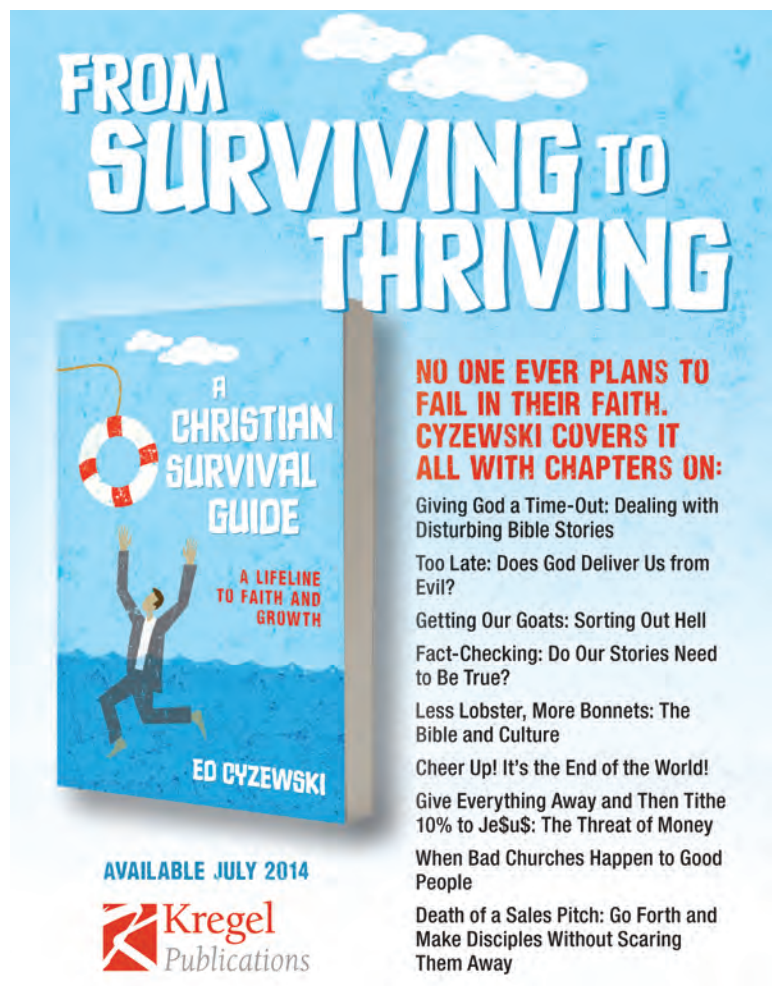
Read the rest at
cbeinternational.org/grant.

cafeat: “These older women must train the younger women to love their husbands and their children, to live wisely and be pure, to work in their homes, to do good, and to be submissive to their husbands. Then they will not bring shame on the word of God” (Titus 2:4–5). Did you catch the last part?

The same guy who urged husbands and wives to submit to one another and

husbands to love their wives as Christ loved the church also wanted to prevent Christians from drawing unnecessary attention. Christians were already viewed with suspicion and disdain (see verse 8). Why add further distraction? Ironically, applying a passage like Titus 2 as a blueprint for our families today gives those outside of the faith reasons to bring shame on the word of God.

Paul understood the complexity of his times. He gave specific instructions at times, but he routinely guided his readers to a far more important question: “Is this led by the Spirit?”



Paul understood the complexity of his times. He gave specific instructions at times, but he routinely guided his readers to a far more important question: “Is this led by the Spirit?”

The Council of Jerusalem in the book of Acts asked the same question, and concluded that the clear revelation of the Spirit trumped legalistic application of Jewish law. For believers today, Scripture is our authority and guide, but the Spirit gives us the wisdom to faithfully interpret Scripture. And the Spirit directs our decisions and rewires us to love what God loves and to make God-honoring decisions for our families.

This is wild, unruly territory. It’s not for the faint of heart.

Isn’t this going to lead to rampant sin and shameless violations of Scripture? Paul’s reply: not if you’re guided by the Spirit.

I’m a rule-keeper by nature. I like the answers in life to be clear and based on the Bible. It took me time to rely on the direction of the Spirit. However, the Spirit is promised to guide us. And we’ll know we’re living by the Spirit if we humbly serve one another in love.

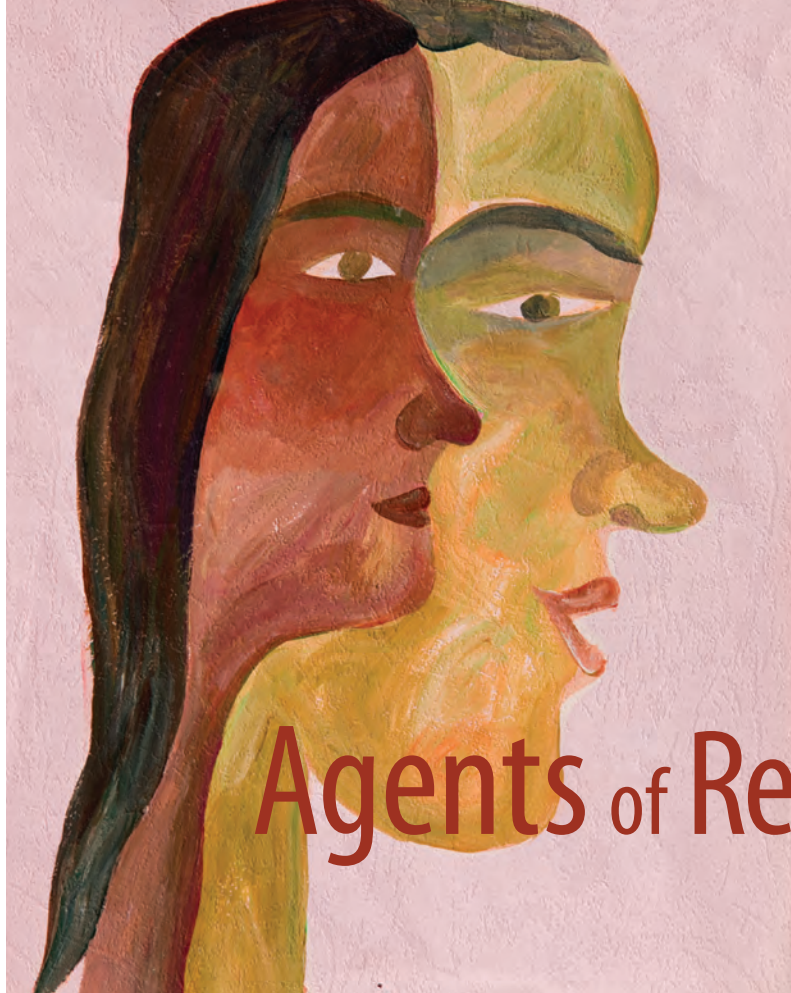
That could look like a lot of things in a marriage, but for us, humbly serving one another in love feels a lot like affirming each other’s gifts and callings; making sacrifices; and sharing roles as caregivers for our son, keepers of our home, and providers for our finances.

There are many different ways we can manifest love and service to each other in marriage. Our love isn’t blocked by boundaries. God isn’t about to stop us from making sacrifices for each other.

The Spirit has come and we are free to love and serve each other.



Ed Cyzewski is the author of *Coffeehouse Theology: Reflecting on God in Everyday Life* and *A Christian Survival Guide: A Lifeline to Faith and Growth*. He is the co-author of *Unfollowers: Unlikely Lessons on Faith from the Doubters of Jesus*. Find him at www.inamirrordimly.com and on Twitter @edcyzewski.



Agents of Reconciliation

by W. Tali Hairston

“Who do people say the Son of Man is?”

Jesus asked this question of the disciples (Matt. 16:13–19) after warning his followers about the false teachings of the Pharisees and Sadducees, who had been hounding Jesus for a sign from heaven to validate his identity as Messiah. This was done to test or disprove Jesus. Asking for a sign from heaven when the prophecy of Isaiah foretold him to be the sign denoted a level of distrust in both the being and doing of Jesus. If he took the bait, he’d annul his identity as the Messiah. If Jesus was not the fulfillment of prophecy, his miracles and profound teachings would lose their value in the marketplace of beliefs and ideas.

Likewise, embracing our God-given identity is critical to living a life of reconciliation. When we abandon our God-given identity, even at the level of gender, we can easily adopt a divisive and exclusive identity. This is critical for young people, whose entire relational, emotional, and spiritual well-beings are

forming, storming, and norming. Today’s youth culture message-makers market a plethora of gender-specific messages to impressionable youth. But what is the message of reconciliation that Jesus’ identity reveals in the Jesus-Peter dialogue of Matthew 16:16–19, and how does it inform the way we relate one to another as male and female? Young people want and need to know.

For several years, I have regularly encountered high school and college young men confused about their masculinity and how to relate to femininity. I suggest men (and women) understand their identity not through the lens of an “Archie Bunker theology,” but through the lens given to us in Jesus. When we cultivate and nurture an identity informed by Jesus’ identity, we raise male and female agents of reconciliation.

As a young and nervous father of three children, my early parenting experiences reflected more of an Archie Bunker kind of masculinity than it did anything else. Archie was the self-centered patriarch of

the Bunker family in the 1970’s American sitcom, “All in the Family.” Archie’s humorous diminishment of everyone else was deeply rooted in his masculinity. His gifts, skills, abilities, and passions were not the issue. Neither were his wife’s, daughter’s, son-in-law’s, or neighbor’s, for that matter. Whatever anyone else did, thought, and believed filtered through Archie. His masculinity defined others for them, and thereby prescribed the life they lived. We do this so simply whenever we ignore the gifts and abilities of women and/or kindly diminish what they have to offer the family, church, or community. Furthermore, prescribing a role for women after first describing what is masculine not only diminishes, but dismisses their God-given identity, gifts, and abilities. Jesus and Peter model something different in this text.

Allow me to unpack the dialogue between Jesus and Peter further. The Pharisees and Sadducees’ feeble challenge of Jesus’ messianic identity brings forth a powerful dialogue between Jesus and

Raising Reconcilers

Training our sons and daughters to be reconcilers happens when we unpack the identity male and female have in Jesus. We must equip them with the necessary tools to think rightly on who they are in Jesus Christ. Here are some pointers to get started:

- **Mentor** the young people in your life. Ask them what they're learning about their identity as men or women. Be ready to enter into real conversation with them, pointing them to Jesus as the basis of their identity.

- **Pay attention** to what your kids are being told in church, at school, by their friends, and by their music and movies. Listen to their music, watch their movies, and train them to critically evaluate the messages they hear in light of Jesus.

- **Model** a lifestyle different from the misogyny that surrounds us, and explain how your lifestyle is patterned after Jesus.

- **Build a network of healthy relationships** to insulate them from the "virtual leaven" passing for biblical teaching today. But do not simply insulate them; teach them to engage with their world, viewing it through the lens of Christ.

It all begins with asking the question... **who is Jesus?**

Peter—two men, vulnerable as their identities are exposed in a moment of profound revelation of human and divine personhood. When Jesus' and Peter's earthly purposes are revealed, there is no doubt they've heard from heaven—Jesus says to Peter "flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven" (Matt. 16:17). In turn, Jesus reveals Peter's purpose and calling: to be the rock upon which Jesus will build his church. Jesus is revealed as the Messiah—the one High Priest and mediator between God and humanity, and Jesus' and Peter's identities enhance one another.

I find this interaction and dialogue to be a great teaching text as it relates to identity and reconciliation. How so? First, Jesus' identity is a divine revelation with earthly implications, and which does not exclude or diminish Peter. In fact it is Peter's revelation of Jesus and Jesus' revelation of Peter we are reading. They speak revelatory words about each other's identity and purpose, affirming and exhorting the other. Do we allow such mutuality to inform both masculine and feminine identity?

Christians seem more comfortable defining masculine identity, and then, based on that, prescribing feminine identity. Such one-way defining of another is not what we read in the account of Jesus and Peter. Instead, Jesus and Peter share in a mutual revelation of personhood. Jesus could have easily dismissed Peter as a participant in the discussion, but it appears Jesus was modeling something much more important. Identity formation patterned after Jesus is divinely revealed and mutually enhancing. Many settle for a mutually exclusive masculinity like Archie Bunker's. This is not so with Jesus. An identity modeled after Jesus is mutually enhancing, not mutually exclusive.

Second, from this mutually enhancing masculinity, we are drawn into a dialogue—an exchange, a sharing so self-giving that it leads to reconciliation. The type of reconciliation we see between Jesus and Peter may contrast sharply with what many might expect. For some, reconciliation denotes an abandonment of one's gifts, skills, and abilities so as to make the relationship work. Many youth fall headlong into this trap. In order to reconcile or be reconcilers, girls and women hide their gifts and abilities so as to not be out of the will of God by excelling at something men traditionally do. Notice how Jesus magnifies Peter's purpose and highlights his capacity.

"And I tell you that *you are Peter, and on this rock* I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it" (Matt. 16:18, emphasis mine). What a powerful moment.

I've had many conversations and heard many stories of young, bright, talented female students afraid to demonstrate the wonderful gifts and abilities they carry. Their fears all stem directly from false notions of healthy masculinity, which at times lead to a misdirected femininity. Instead of being celebrated and applauded for her capabilities, she eagerly covers them in hopes of being a reconciler. Jesus demonstrates in this text that a healthy interaction of identities (regardless of gender) leads to a reconciliation that fully embraces the other's gifts and abilities.

In my own growth and understanding of masculinity, I was challenged by these truths. Fighting my Archie Bunker theology, I was conflicted whether to include female perspectives, voices, and influences. It was all too easy to exclude, diminish, and dismiss. While some may not interpret the Jesus and Peter dialogue as reflective of male-female identity formation, I ask you to reconsider. Reconsider the dialogue as a lens through which we can more fully understand a masculinity that reconciles and does not divide; mutually enhances instead of being mutually exclusive; and does not diminish or dismiss others' gifts, skills, and abilities.

This is the identity I hope and pray my children pursue. It is what my father, uncles, and grandfather tried to model against the backdrop of an out-of-control, misogynistic culture. This is what we, as men unduly benefitting from so much privilege and power, should strive for. Let us not engage in masculinity more reminiscent of Archie Bunker than Jesus. Rather, let us be men capable of mutual enhancement, allowing Christian community to flourish. When we teach the young men in our lives to walk in identity formed in Jesus, both our sons and daughters will rejoice in who God has made them to be. That begins with asking the first question... who is Jesus?



W. Tali Hairston is the founding director of the John M. Perkins Center at Seattle Pacific University. In his thirteenth year, Tali continues to contribute to the educational development of students, faculty, and staff in reconciliation and global urban leadership and Christian community development.

Manly Men, Common Clay Pots, and a Harvest of Good Deeds

Worldly stereotypes about men abound. Movie-goers watch jet-setting spies spring back to life after leaping out of airplanes. Professional athletes are valued for their physical prowess. Romance readers lust after rugged cowboys. Gamers pretend they are militaristic superheroes. And Wall Street applauds twenty-something billionaires.

The evangelical world is not immune. Pastors of mega-churches and best-selling authors are viewed as being anointed by God. Veterans are always noble, self-sacrificing, and courageous. Missionaries love hardships. Single men, lonely and domestically-challenged, must pursue marriage and parenthood to be truly fulfilled. And middle-class breadwinners are to make the family's decisions because they have a pipeline to God's will.

What's a biblical egalitarian to do?

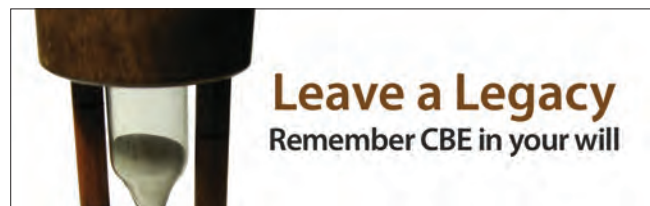
We return to Scripture. "Do not conform yourselves to the standards of this world, but let God transform you inwardly by a complete change of your mind" (Rom. 12:2. All Scripture quotations taken from the Good News Bible).

We remember whose children we are. "The God who said, 'Out of darkness the light shall shine!' is the same God who made his light shine in our hearts, to bring us the knowledge of God's glory shining in the face of Christ" (2 Cor. 4:6).

We put away discouragement. "We who have this spiritual treasure are like common clay pots, in order to show that the supreme power belongs to God, not to us" (2 Cor. 4:7).

We receive the Holy Spirit's gifts. "But the wisdom from above is pure first of all. It is also peaceful, gentle and friendly; it is full of compassion and produces a harvest of good deeds; it is free from prejudice and hypocrisy. And goodness is the harvest that is produced from the seeds the peacemakers plant" (James 3:17-18).

And we rejoice in our future hope. "I am sure that God, who began this good work in you, will carry it on until it is finished on the Day of Christ Jesus" (Phil. 1:6).



Praise God with us for...

A fruitful 2013.

CBE's ministry continued to flourish in 2013, increasing its distribution of resources, strengthening its strategic partnerships, and growing its membership. Read more on page 21.

CBE's presence at the 2014 Justice Conference.

Mimi delivered a pre-conference lecture, and CBE hosted a booth and a community dinner. Attendees said that CBE's booth was one of the busiest at the conference! Read more on p. 20.

CBE's youth curriculum in Kenya.

Four thousand copies of *Called Out* have been printed and are being used in Kenyan public schools.

Pray with us for...

CBE's 2014 conference in Colombia.

This July 7-9, CBE and the Biblical Seminary of Colombia will present "Male and Female in Christ: Toward a Biblical View of Christian Identity and Ministry" in Medellín, Colombia. Pray for the planning and preparations, and pray that God uses the conference to build momentum for biblical equality in South America.

CBE's website upgrade.

CBE inches closer to the launch of its new website, which will feature more content, easier sharing, and a better user experience.

International partnerships.

CBE continues to partner with organizations around the globe to distribute journals, translate resources, and provide training for humanitarian workers. Pray for God's wisdom and guidance as we engage strategically with partners around the world.

Tackling Injustice at the Justice Conference

A Report from the 2014 Justice Conference

My wife, Ruth, and I recently had the privilege to staff CBE's booth at the Justice Conference, where we were able to share stories and dialogue with many individuals seeking to eliminate oppression. Along with other volunteers, we were able to introduce hundreds of people already doing justice work to the wealth of resources CBE has to offer.

We met many who hold to a hierarchical theology, and we had thoughtful discussions with them about the biblical basis for the restorative message of egalitarian mutuality that Jesus and his followers introduced to the world.

For many, the robust biblical basis for mutuality presented by CBE's resources was life-giving and provided new hope for their justice work. They had known in their hearts that Jesus' message was one of mutuality, but had previously only heard patriarchal teachings that maintain prejudicial and oppressive treatment of women.

For others, the biblical support for egalitarian relationships was sincerely troubling. It countered what they had been taught by trusted friends and church leaders. It introduced uncertainty into how they lived out their daily relationships. Feelings of grief surfaced as these champions of justice had to contemplate their role in perpetuating non-biblical systems of hierarchy rather than Christlike mutuality.

I have often heard it said by those who passively live within male hierarchical belief systems that in our enlightened communities of the twenty-first century, women do not suffer any limitations, even when church leaders foster environments of male hierarchy. But this is just not true. I was brought to tears by stories of the oppression and shame directed toward women and those who champion Christ's egalitarian restorative work:

- A woman with proven, effective gifts for reaching the homeless and disenfranchised had her work rejected in her own church because she was a woman and not "eligible" to lead.
- Because of their egalitarian theology, men at a leading Christian college have been ostracized and ridiculed as less than godly men by faculty and peers.

- Women were discouraged to routinely see only male speakers (or mostly men with a token woman) at many Christian conferences.

- One woman from a Bible college was overtly and publicly criticized for having aspirations of teaching others the hope of Christ. She was devalued by her male peers purely because she was a woman.

- One woman faced uncertainty as she grappled with the reality that she was engaged to a man who believed in hierarchy, while she believed in mutuality.

- One woman had recently been at yet another leading Bible college, where an audience of young men and women were specifically told that hospitality, emotional sensitivity, and nurturing were the only "biblical" gifts women had to offer in today's church.

- One woman shared how difficult it was for her and her husband to find a faith community that was willing to affirm their egalitarian marriage and that would not try and shame them into compliance with non-biblical, hierarchical theology.

My conversations at the CBE booth impressed upon me that not only does the existence of patriarchy in the modern-day church oppress women within the church, but also discourages many from placing their faith in Christ.

On the other hand, mutuality has the opposite effect. I was encouraged to hear from egalitarians who shared that their work and ministries thrived when they put their egalitarian beliefs into practice. What is more, mutuality enables them to communicate to those they serve that Christ has not come to perpetuate oppression in some new religious clothing, but to overturn all injustice.



Rich discusses biblical equality with Justice Conference attendees



Treasuring being Ruth's husband for 30 years, on most days you can find Rich exploring the outdoors with Ruth, his best friend and life partner on their journey. He is most grateful for the breadth, depth, and diversity of God's expressions of love that he witnesses in Ruth, their three daughters Rachel, Hannah, Sarah, and their son-in-law Jared.

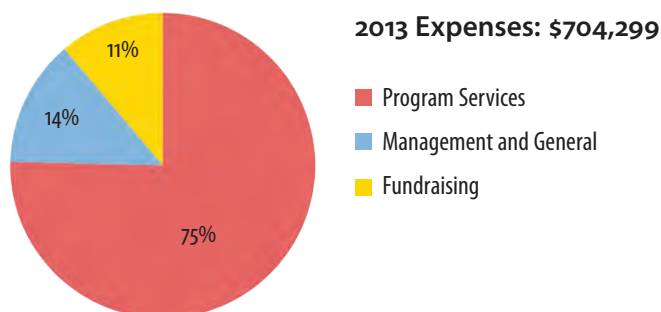
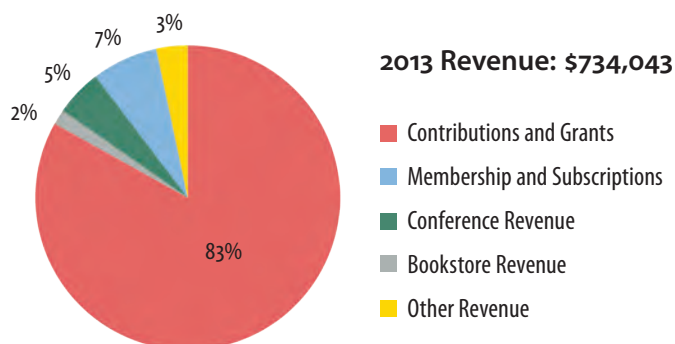
2013 Annual Report to CBE Members and Donors

To our treasured members and friends,

Thank you for sharing in God's work at CBE, which continues to flourish globally. God's power and your faithfulness resulted in significant outreach in 2013. We are truly thankful to have worked beside you, reaching many new people and also encouraging our members and friends. Here is a glimpse at what God has done through CBE's amazing community in five key areas:

Promoting Egalitarian Scholarship

- CBE staff participated in 29 academic speaking engagements, including lectures at the Evangelical Theological Society, Palmer Seminary, and St. Paul's University in Limuru, Kenya.
- CBE distributed special edition journals to every member of the Evangelical Theological Society in the US and Canada, and to pastors of several Baptist denominations.
- CBE's publications received two Evangelical Press Association awards, and Mimi was recognized for an award-winning contribution to *Christianity Today*.



Popularizing the Message

- Complimentary distribution of *Mutuality* increased by 28% compared to 2012.
- Work began on a new website, which will ultimately host digital versions of all of CBE's publications and dramatically increase accessibility of CBE resources.
- CBE published its first youth curriculum, *Called Out*, which introduces biblical equality to young teens.

Producing Greater Market Penetration

- CBE membership grew by 7% in 2013.
- CBE's 2013 conference had 13% more registrants than the previous US conference, held in 2011.
- Seven new chapters were established in 2013 and attendance at chapter events more than quadrupled, compared to 2012.
- CBE staff participated in international events in Kenya and Cambodia to increase the dialogue between egalitarians across geographic and cultural borders.

Establishing a Financially Sound Organization

- Individual contributions, recurring donors, and foundation giving increased in 2013 by 3%, 5%, and 49%, respectively.
- Honorarium income from speaking engagements rose by 50% compared to 2012.
- CBE achieved the GuideStar Exchange Gold Participant level for excellence in demonstrating openness and transparency to donors.

Articulating and Promoting a Theology of Gender and Justice

- In partnership with World Vision, CBE staff delivered webinars on the biblical basis for gender equality. CBE also became a gender consultant for World Vision.
- CBE distributed over 1,000 journals to humanitarian workers around the world.
- CBE published new resources for youth, marriage, and family, including a youth curriculum, *Called Out*, which is now being taught in twenty Kenyan schools.

CBE's 2013 achievements reflect your passion for Scripture's teaching on gender, God's providence and power, and the sacrifice of CBE's global community. Thank you for standing with Christ's body, making known the glories of Calvary.



Male and Female: One Image, One Purpose

Have you ever wondered why, when a friend announces they're expecting a child, your first thought is, "Will it be a boy or girl?" Granted, gender is *the* most obvious distinction noted in a newborn, but we seem to ask the question as if there is an essential quality to gender, as if biology is destiny. Can we really predict a person's identity or scope of service based on their maleness or femaleness? Some would say yes.

Those who believe that gender is the most important aspect of personhood are called "gender essentialists." For them, maleness or femaleness is an attribute that shapes the fundamental meaning and purpose of life—a view that, sadly, drives gender hierarchy in the world and also in the church. Significantly, gender essentialism is not a biblical idea. It arises from Greek philosophy.

Scripture points to a "human essentialism," which is not associated with gender. The fixed and unchangeable essence of humankind is that both male and female are created in God's image!

Aristotle argued that there is an essential property or attribute that distinguishes all things, apart from which a thing would not be itself. For gender essentialists, men and women possess a fundamentally different essence—which is fixed and unchangeable—that gives rise to their distinct identity and destiny. Is gender essentialism biblical?

Scripture points to a "human essentialism," which is not associated with gender. The fixed and unchangeable essence of humankind is that both male and female are created in God's image (Gen. 1:26–28)! And, to bear God's image is an identity with a purpose: both Adam and Eve share authority in caring for the world. Scripture emphasizes not the differences between Adam and Eve but their unity and oneness. They share a physical substance, because Eve comes from Adam's body. They also share God's image, an essence that imparts a purpose—caring for the garden with shared authority and ruling over the animals, not over each other!

Sin *does not* rupture the shared essence and identity of humanity (God's image in man and woman); sadly, however, it *does* rupture their purpose—their shared authority (Gen. 3:16).

To limit women's authority obscures their real identity, fueling a gender essentialist mentality. But Adam's rule over Eve was *not* God's original design. A result of sin, patriarchy opposes and diminishes the identity and purpose of females.

Despite sin, Genesis 3 also teaches that a redeemer will be born of a woman and will reconcile us to God and to one another. Though Eve came out of Adam's body, the second Adam, Jesus, comes through Mary. Just as Eve shared authority with Adam, Jesus—the second Adam—not only affirms women's spiritual authority, but also consistently opposes cultural and religious patriarchy in his teachings and practices. When a woman called out to Jesus, "Blessed is the mother who gave you birth and nursed you," Jesus replied, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it" (Luke 11:27–28). A woman's identity resides not in her gender, but in her response to God, and this becomes the standard for all members of Christ's new covenant. Women are now daughters of Abraham (Luke 13:16), a phrase first used by Jesus to welcome women's full authority within his New Creation project. Sitting at Christ's feet, women became disciples, evangelists, and teachers. Women also witnessed every miracle marking Christ's messianic mission. Women are the first to meet the risen Lord, and interestingly, do so in a garden as a new world dawns (see N.T. Wright, *The Challenge of Easter*).

Strikingly, the events of Easter parallel the creation account in Genesis. Just as God breathed life into our parents in Eden and gave them authority to care for the world, the resurrected Jesus appears to Mary and the other disciples and grants them spiritual authority to forgive and retain sin (John 20:18–23). Renewal in Christ is an identity with a purpose: to exercise spiritual authority equally, as male and female, just as our parents did in Eden.

Paul offers a theological rationale for women's shared authority, which he explains throughout his epistles but summarizes in Galatians 3:27–29. Our identity in Christ, not our gender, shapes our relationships in the church. Greeks, slaves, and women inherit a new identity not of shame and subjugation but of liberation, dignity, and equality. Paul builds the church beside women teachers, evangelists, prophets, a deacon, and an apostle.

In Christ we are made strong where the old creation had become weak, because the gift is not like the curse (Rom. 5:15). Remade in Jesus, we become equal agents of Christ and partners of reconciliation, serving by giftedness, not by gender. Our identity is not in our gender, but in our union with Christ, made possible through Calvary. May we glory only in the cross.

Christians for Biblical Equality

Christians for Biblical Equality is an organization of Christian men and women who believe that the Bible, properly interpreted, teaches the fundamental equality of believers of all ethnic groups, all economic classes, and all age groups, based on the teachings of Scripture as reflected in Galatians 3:28.

Mission Statement

CBE affirms and promotes the biblical truth that all believers—without regard to gender, ethnicity or class—must exercise their God-given gifts with equal authority and equal responsibility in church, home and world.

Core Values

We believe the Bible teaches...

- Believers are called to mutual submission, love and service.
- God distributes spiritual gifts without regard to gender, ethnicity or class.
- Believers must develop and exercise their God-given gifts in church, home and world.
- Believers have equal authority and equal responsibility to exercise their gifts without regard to gender, ethnicity or class and without the limits of culturally-defined roles.
- Restricting believers from exercising their gifts – on the basis of their gender, ethnicity or class—resists the work of the Spirit of God and is unjust.
- Believers must promote righteousness and oppose injustice in all its forms.

Opposing Injustice

CBE recognizes that injustice is an abuse of power, taking from others what God has given them: their dignity, their freedom, their resources, and even their very lives. CBE also recognizes that prohibiting individuals from exercising their God-given gifts to further his kingdom constitutes injustice in a form that impoverishes the body of Christ and its ministry in the world at large. CBE accepts the call to be part of God's mission in opposing injustice as required in Scriptures such as Micah 6:8.

Envisioned Future

Christians for Biblical Equality envisions a future where all believers are freed to exercise their gifts for God's glory and purposes, with the full support of their Christian communities.

Statement of Faith

- We believe the Bible is the inspired Word of God, is reliable, and is the final authority for faith and practice.
- We believe in the unity and trinity of God, eternally existing as three equal persons.
- We believe in the full deity and full humanity of Jesus Christ.
- We believe in the sinfulness of all persons. One result of sin is shattered relationships with God, others, and self.
- We believe that eternal salvation and restored relationships are possible through faith in Jesus Christ who died for us, rose from the dead, and is coming again. This salvation is offered to all people.
- We believe in the work of the Holy Spirit in salvation, and in the power and presence of the Holy Spirit in the life of believers.
- We believe in the equality and essential dignity of men and women of all ethnicities, ages, and classes. We recognize that all persons are made in the image of God and are to reflect that image in the community of believers, in the home, and in society.
- We believe that men and women are to diligently develop and use their God-given gifts for the good of the home, church, and society.
- We believe in the family, celibate singleness, and faithful heterosexual marriage as God's design.
- We believe that, as mandated by the Bible, men and women are to oppose injustice.

CBE Membership

CBE membership is available to those who support CBE's Statement of Faith. Members receive CBE's quarterly publications, *Mutuality* magazine and *Priscilla Papers* journal, as well as discounts to CBE Bookstore and CBE conferences. Learn more by following the "Membership" link on our homepage.

CBE Membership Application

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3 Years

Individual

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Household

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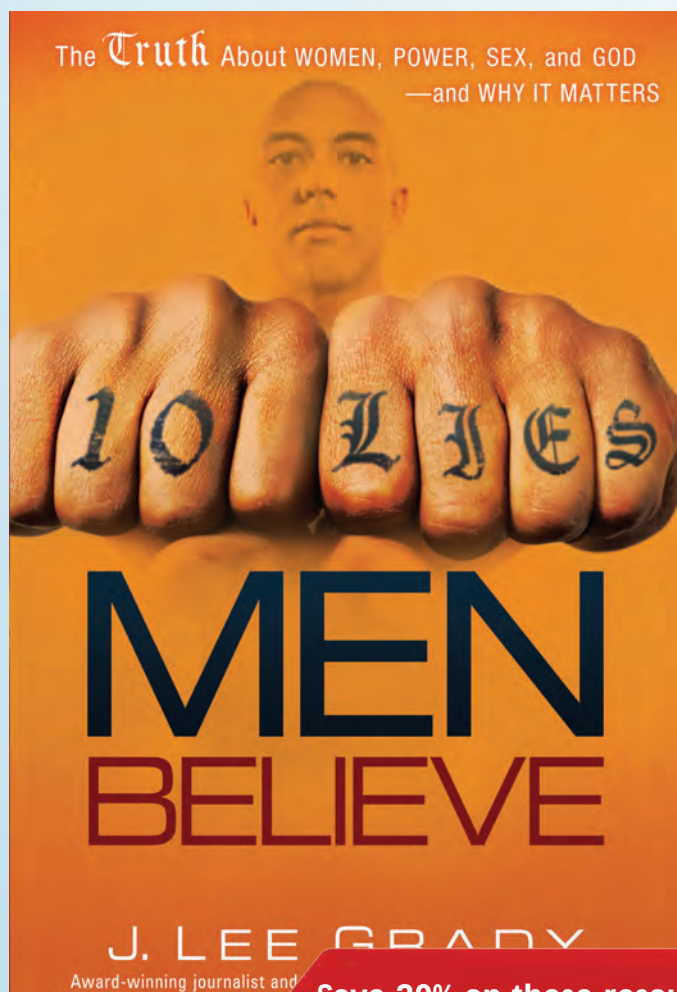
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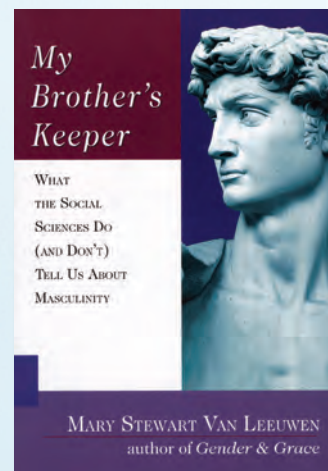
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