

'Let the Men be Dignified' Supplement

Date: 9/12/2024

Speaking: Rhys Lamont

Book: *Let the Men be Men* by Chris Mueller

Chapter #8: Let the Men be Dignified (The Pathway to Respect)

Scripture: "In all things show yourself to be a model...dignified." (Titus 2:7)

Summary of Chapter #7 'Let the Men be Discerning'

- 1. Last time in chapter #7 and 'Let the Men be Discerning' we learned that for a Christian man to be a man of godly discernment, it requires that he seek to become "pure in doctrine", and as Paul says, "with purity in doctrine" (Titus 2:7).** Pure doctrine (which we can define as a) knowing what's in the bible and b) how it fits together c) living out that truth), is the key that unlocks the ability to discern and judge correctly in all areas of our live. We want to train our conscience to think godly and rightly about situations we come into, and this wont just happen by default! We must learn. In a way of saying, by seeking to develop our doctrine we will find that right thinking and reasonable judgment follows as a consequence.
- 2. One problem is, we are not desperate enough! We are not utilising the free and time we have to study God's Word and learn sound doctrine.** Chris told the story of Howard Rutledge to illustrate, Rutledge said, "*in the Hanoi Hilton (the prison camp) solitary confinement, there was no pastor, no Sunday-School teacher, no Bible, no hymnbook, no community of believers to guide and sustain me. I had completely neglected the spiritual dimension of my life. It took prison to show me how empty my life is without God.*" Chris then says, "*With all the freedom you have right now, what steps will you take to be pure in doctrine?*"

Chapter #8 'Let the Men be Dignified'

Introduction

- 1. From time to time on YouTube or other social media platforms I'll see footage of people from a bygone era at a time when cameras**

first began capturing our world and people. Perhaps you have seen the same? What usually strikes me about such footage is the both the way people carried themselves in public and the way they dressed and presented themselves, even in the privacy of their homes! Even for common and poor people, it appears they put an effort in the way that they dressed and so on. Moreover, if you see footage of an interview with somebody from earlier time, you'll notice the manner of their speaking is of a greater composure, quality and thoughtfulness than what we are accustomed to today. Typically we would associate this with ones "dignity" or being "proper".

2. The point which I'm trying to make here is that of a comparison.

Chris states at the beginning of this chapter, "*dignity is on the decline today*". Saying, "*Basic manners, honouring authority, being on time, a commitment to excellence, and keeping one's promises are becoming increasingly rare. Yet dignity is a cherished biblical quality that Jesus wants all of his children to have and pursue.*" So obviously, there is far more to dignity than the way one dresses, but you get the point! It would appear the western nations have gone backwards culturally speaking in this regard and as Christians we want to discern rightly the type of dignity God desires us to have.

3. In this chapter then, we are setting course for a recovery of a godly, biblical, Christlike dignity of life.

However some might want to switch off at this point! Dignity to some might mean as Chris says, "*a refusing to laugh or smile*", and "*always maintaining a serious demeanour*" even a "*Emotionless zombie who does not experience any highs or lows*". But this is not what to be dignified means! For example, Chris describes how when he is playing with his grandchildren he will make funny faces, use a funny voice and do silly things to make the kids laugh, does that make him an undignified man? Not at all!

4. Chris first asks us to reflect on dignity test. "*See how well this description fits you. If you are dignified then you are not (typically) touchy, aloof, shallow, petty, dry, prudish, argumentative, begrudging, or unapproachable. Now here's the positive dignity test. If you are dignified, the following will be patterns in your life: you earn respect, the right to be heard, you are courteous, serious, responsible, noble, and followed as a model. The goal is to hit low marks on the negative test and high marks on the positive test. How did you do?*"

Q: Confession time! How do you think you went on this test? Which of these points particularly do you struggle with?

DEFINING DIGNITY

- 1. According to Titus 2:7, among other things, the godly man is to be in "all things" showing himself to be a model to others, and dignified.** Earlier in Titus 2:2 Paul wrote, "*Older men are to be temperate, dignified...*" (Titus 2:2). Clearly this is an important quality, so what does dignified in this sense mean? Before we see what it means biblically, the simple dictionary definition means, "*serious and graceful in manner or style in a way that deserves respect*". We might say then it is a type of demeanour which commands peoples respect.
- 2. Well first, how is the word dignity used in some other scriptures?** On Elder qualifications, "*He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity*" (1 Timothy 3:4). On prayers for rulers, "*for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity.*" (1 Timothy 2:2). On deacon qualifications, "*Deacons likewise must be men of dignity, not double-tongued, or addicted to much wine or fond of sordid gain,*" (1 Timothy 3:8). On what we are to dwell on on, "*Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honourable (same word translated dignified in Titus 2:7), whatever is right, whatever is pure...*" (Philippians 4:8).
- 3. There are some other words coming from the same root word as dignified that could be mentioned,** however Chris summarises the biblical data this way, "*Taking all these passages together shows us that a dignified Christian is a "worshipful and devout God-fearer." Those who fear God respect and revere Him in their lifestyle, overall attitude, and everyday words and actions. So notice again that the focus here is Godward. To be dignified is to live life on Earth as if you are living in the presence of God. To be dignified is to live knowing that the God of your salvation is watching you, knowing you, and holding you accountable... Biblically, dignity is a quality that distinguishes you as one who is no longer a child but a maturing Christian. No matter his age, a man is dignified when he has learned how to live on earth as a citizen of heaven. Whether a collegian or retiree, the dignified man is dependent upon Christ, filled with the Spirit in every circumstance, and sees things consistently from a biblical and heavenly perspective."*

4. **Q: So we would 'get it' Chris presents a number of example scenarios so we can understand what a dignified man is in different contexts, we can discuss and answer these (I've modified these to suit the demographic and context of NZ).**

1. **Scenario #1:** You're watching an All Blacks game and the referee has just made an incredibly bad call which costs the All Blacks the world cup final. At that moment, what type of response would you consider to be dignified?
 2. **Scenario #2:** You're driving home after a long hot day with no air conditioning, lack of sleep the night before, you're hungry, and a random driver cuts you off, and you miss your turn-off. At that moment, what type of response would you consider to be dignified?
 3. **Scenario #3:** You come back home after a long day of work. You had to skip lunch and have been craving your favorite leftover pizza. You walk in the door, and your flatmate (or your family or brother) are chomping down on the last bit of pizza. At that moment, what type of response would you consider to be dignified?
 4. **Scenario #4:** You are walking out of church and you see your mate talking to a girl that you like. Your mate knew that you were going to ask her out on a date this Friday, but he beat you to the punch. At that moment, what type of response would you consider to be dignified?
5. **All in all, Chris says** *"What are the marks of a young man who truly has a dignified mind and heart? He will be respectful, responsible, and a representative of the One he worships, Jesus Christ. He will demonstrate those qualities in his relationships with others."*

Q: What are some specific, practical examples you have seen of dignified character or behaviour in other Christians that you can share to illustrate what it means to be dignified?

MARKS OF DIGNITY

Respectful

1. **The *first* key mark of a dignified man we need to understand is that he is reverent and shows honour toward God.** A dignified man, biblically, is a worshipping man. I remember years ago having an older

Christian man tell me that when he died he wanted his sons to remember him as a worshipper! What a great ambition! And that all that really matters ultimately doesn't it? Will he be remembered by others are worshippers of God through Christ, who lived in all things to his glory? Chris says, *"But the reality is, our lives before God are like chicken pot pies. Everything is mixed together and viewed as one offering to Him. If we are not loving our wives, then it does not matter that we look good at church or are doing well at work. Our offering is rotten and the aroma we are sending up to the Lord stinks. Our life, which is a living sacrifice to Christ (**Romans 12:1-2**), is not a sweet-smelling sacrifice but a putrid one. If only one part is rotten, then the entire offering is rotten. If the peas are bad, the entire chicken pot pie is bad....All of the Christian life is an expression of worship. A dignified person does not divide his life up into separate "this is for Jesus" and "this is for me" categories. A godly young man does not compartmentalize."*

2. **Perhaps one of the best passages to help us with this idea of 'all of life lived for the purposes of worship' comes from Galatians 2:20**, "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me." (**Galatians 2:20**). So if that which is our sinful flesh has been dealt with on the cross of Christ where he suffered for sins in our place, and if the life of God is now within us, then everything we do must be considered dead to sin and alive to God. Chris says, *"Men sometimes mistakenly think, "As long as I read the Word and pray this morning, then everything else in my life, including road rage, rudeness to a client, stealing from the office, impatience with my children — it's all no big deal." Men compartmentalize their lives, but God does not."*
3. **A second mark of a dignified man is that he is respectful towards other people.** The basis of his respect is that he knows all people have been created in the image of God and therefore have intrinsic value and are therefore worthy of respect. This means, as Chris says, it doesn't matter whether you're conversing with a well-known political leader, a celebrity or an ordinary person on the street, no matter who, a dignified man shows respect when he interacts with others. He will show Jesus' example of gentleness (**Matthew 11:29**); He will even attempt to perform various social graces such as opening doors for women, standing up to shake someone's hands, looking an individual in the eye, greeting

passers-by, thanking people for their contributions, showing people that their work has value, complementing their efforts, assisting people who need help. Chris says, "*Dignified young men seek to comply with proper etiquette and attempt to dress appropriately. They try not to call attention to themselves but seek to point to Christ, since what they say and do is intended to honour their King. Their Godward focus and the awareness that they are accountable to the Lord in all things transforms their everyday behaviour and the way they treat others. Being a dignified man does not mean that you never laugh or that you cannot enjoy a good time. Acting dignified does not mean you will be haughty, high class, or that you talk down to people.*"

Q: A dignified man is one who is reverent, God fearing and respectful toward others, what are some ways that all need to develop in this area in? What, for example do you think about the "come as you are" mentality common in our churches in New Zealand?

Responsible

1. **First, a dignified man is responsible to God and others.** First to God, this means we are aware of the kind of responsibility we have to actual live the Christian life and so not compartmentalise or regulate the Christian life to rocking up on a Sunday morning and that's it!. Chris says, "*Coupled with his respectfulness, the dignified young man is also responsible both to God and others. In his responsibilities to the Lord, he enjoys daily communion with Christ and faithfully gathers in corporate worship. He is also regularly involved in a smaller community of Christians (e.g., a small group, community group, or discipleship group). He is committed to a local church and exercising his spiritual giftedness as he regularly serves others in the body of Christ. He is sacrificial in his financial giving to the cause of Christ through the church. A dignified young man recognizes that, first and foremost, he is accountable to God. He keeps Christ as His first love above every other love (Revelation 2:4).*"
2. **Taking responsibility for our Christian duties toward God is central to the dignified life.** By doing so, we demonstrate what Jesus said in Luke 14:26 "If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple. "Whoever does not carry his own

cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple." (Luke 14:26–27). This is obviously not to be taken literally, Jesus simply means we are to love and prioritise him about all else, including that which we value most like family. We show that Christ matters most to us.

3. **Secondly, the dignified man sees himself as responsible to be an example in his everyday life to others.** Chris puts it this way, "Men of dignity are willing to surrender their rights for the sake of a weaker brother. They come alongside struggling Christians to bear their burdens, serve, pray, sacrifice, and give generously to them for the sake of Christ. They do not live for themselves but for Christ, who "died for all, so that they who live would no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf" (2 Corinthians 5:15). In this way we must live counter cultural, it seems rare now days to see people take accountability for their actions or show awareness and care for how their actions may affect others, Christians on the other must live with an eye to the needs of others. This is an aspect of what to be dignified demands.
4. **Some of what this responsibly towards others will mean includes:**
 1. Punctuality
 2. Attentive and respectful
 3. Keeping your promises and commitments to others
 4. Building others up instead of tearing them down
 5. Giving God your very best in serving people and the church etc
5. **Summing up the dignified life as taking responsibility, Chris tells the story of a Navy commander in the U.S:** "*Admiral Hyman Rickover was head of the United States Nuclear Navy for almost thirty years. His admirers and his critics held strongly opposing views about the stern and demanding admiral. For many years, every officer aboard any nuclear submarine was personally interviewed and approved by Rickover. Those who went through those interviews usually came out shaking in fear or anger and totally intimidated. Among them was former President Jimmy Carter who, as a young man, applied for service under Rickover. This is his account of a Rickover interview in his 1975 book, Why Not the Best?: I had applied for the nuclear submarine program, and Admiral Rickover was interviewing me for the job. It was the first time I met Admiral Rickover, and we sat in a large room by ourselves for more than two hours, and he let me choose any subjects I wished to discuss. Very carefully, I chose those about which I knew most at the time—current events, seamanship, music, literature, naval tactics, electronics, gunnery*

— and he began to ask me a series of questions of increasing difficulty. In each instance, he soon proved that I knew relatively little about each subject I had chosen. He always looked right into my eyes, and he never smiled. I was saturated with cold sweat. Finally, he asked a question and I thought I could redeem myself. He said, "How did you stand in your class at the Naval Academy?" Since I had completed my sophomore year at Georgia Tech before entering Annapolis as a plebe, I had done very well, and I swelled my chest with pride and answered, "Sir, I stood fifty-ninth in a class of 820!" I sat back to wait for the congratulations—which never came. Instead, the question: "Did you do your best?" I started to say, "Yes, sir," but I remembered who this was and recalled several of the many times at the Academy when I could have learned more about our allies, our enemies, weapons, strategy, and so forth. I was just human. I finally gulped and said, "No, sir, I didn't always do my best." He looked at me for a long time, and then turned his chair around to end the interview. He asked one final question, which I have never been able to forget—or to answer. He said, "Why not?" I sat there for a while, shaken, and then slowly left the room. Jesus Christ is not a harsh and intimidating master; in fact, His yoke is easy and his burden is light (*Matthew 11:30*). Should we not always do our best for Him?"

Q: What steps can we take as men to live so as to give our best in everything, especially for God, and pursue excellence? What truths do we need to internalise more to help us?

Representative

1. **A dignified man sees himself as a representative of the Lord.** Chris says, "Dignified men are called to serve as Christ's dignitaries. Do you see the word "dignity" in "dignitaries?" Our speech, attitudes, behaviour, and demeanour should enhance the reputation of the royal family to which we belong. Dignified men never forget the incredible grace and mercy they have been shown by Christ in their salvation. This salvation includes amazing blessings like the privilege of access to our Heavenly Father, the sublime joys of intimacy with Christ, and the unfading riches of our eternal inheritance." This would reflect what Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5:20 for example, "Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf

of Christ, be reconciled to God.” (2 Corinthians 5:20). We ought to consider ourselves as representatives of Jesus in all areas of life, our relationship and union with him through the cross means we are not our own, but bought with a price, and enlisted in God's own service. We will need the Lord's help in this each day, so we should ask him in prayer as we step out to work each day, into any social environment, whatever it is, "Lord help me represent you faithfully before others today."

- 2. **Going further**, Chris says "The man of dignity is aware that he represents the King of Kings. He knows why he is here, so he lives out that purpose. He is a noble man who represents His Sovereign Lord. He is an ambassador for Christ, and in that role, his lifestyle becomes an example to the real believer. His dignified lifestyle becomes a contrast to "almost believers" (who are the same as false believers; I choose to call them "make-believers"). The young man's life of dignity will also be convicting to the unbeliever. His topics of conversation are uncomfortable to the complacent person because he is a man focused solely upon Christ and His cause. Yes, he can be creative, laugh, and enjoy life, but it never keeps him from his ultimate purpose of bringing glory to God with all he does. The dignified man lives this way in order to reach those who do not know Christ, to help awaken those in the church who have not yet turned to Christ, and to help those who do know Christ to know Him better."*

Q: Name some areas of difficulty you personally have with living as a dignified representative of Jesus Christ?