

## Let the Men be Men Part I Supplement Notes

### Woodlands Community Church

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Leading: Rhys Lamont

Series: Let the Men Be Men

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

**Chapter #1 Title:** Let the Men be MEN

**Scripture:** "And God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them." Genesis 1:27

### Introduction:

#### *Opening thoughts*

1. Whether we are young men or old men, as those who profess faith in Jesus Christ, it must be our lifelong commitment to discover and obey the way in which God desires us to live our lives as men. We should never presume that age is a measure of how we fare with respect to this goal. Life experience is no guarantee that our lives are in step with God's design intentions.
2. I propose that we begin this journey towards a biblical manhood by making two key observations. *Firstly*, there are distinct creational differences between men and women in God's design that go beyond mere biological facts. And *secondly*, there are two competing sources of authority on such realities. One source is secular, and the other is from God in the Bible. We must have clarity on these two foundational truths in order to continue at all. So, first, yes, God's creational design of male and female has implications much deeper than mere biological facts of gender. And 2) only God himself can truly teach us what it means to live as a man in his world.
3. To illustrate the practical nature of the discussion, understand that biblical masculinity operates in three primary contexts, or spheres. *First*, there is the man in the home. Within the context of family life, God has a vital role for men to play. *Second*, there is the man in the gathering of the church. A biblical man has a carefully defined role to play in the assembly of God's people, and this is another area that will require careful, intentional thought with regard to worship and service. And *thirdly*, there is the man in his community or in the world. In the world, every man is a witness for Christ, and it matters to God how he is perceived. Everything we learn moving forward about biblical masculinity can find a home in one or all of these spheres, and there will be significant overlap between them. What happens in one sphere will heavily influence the others.

### Discuss the following questions:

**Q1.** What do I mean by the statement that God has deeper implications for male and femaleness beyond "mere biological facts"?

**Q2.** A mans three spheres of influence are in the home, the church and the community, what do I mean by the statement that they all have overlap and that each sphere will affect the others?

### Content:

*Structure and key thoughts*

### Reasons for Confusion

*"We know there are differences between the sexes. But confusion lingers as to what those differences actually are. There is no shortage of cultural influences seeking to answer the question for us. Even when we're seeking to be biblical (which is the goal of this book), we may be more influenced by our society than we think." - CM*

Chris Mueller outlines five reasons why he believes there is such confusion about biblical masculinity and femininity even in the church today. I've added further comment in places.

1. The first confusion is a **societal push towards unisex or no-sex ideals**. The impulse for some time in western society has been to flatten gender distinctions, especially the Judeo-Christian form. This no-sex ideal puts men and women in antagonism against each other rather than complementing each other as God intended. These ideals overflow out of the Women's Liberation Movement, particularly the so-called "second wave" feminist movement, which began in the 1960s.

*"While the women's liberation movement has had some positive impact ensuring dignity and equal rights for women, many areas of this movement depart from or directly contradict what God has laid out in Scripture." - CM*

2. The second confusion is a **normalisation of the LGBTQ+ movement**. We, as a society, have been saturated with this for quite some time. There is always a risk that we, as Christian men and women, and especially our children, may become numb to the fact that homosexuality and transgenderism are manifestations of the human sin nature and the natural inclination of the heart to rebel against God. An example of this today would be the attempt to normalise the idea that a 'real woman' could be a biological man who thinks he is in fact a woman trapped inside a man's body.

*"While the women's liberation movement argues that one's sexual makeup shouldn't make any difference in how one lives, the LGBTQ movement emphasizes that one's sexual makeup makes all the difference in how one lives. The world is divided not into male and female, but gay, straight, bisexual, transgender, non-binary, and a growing list of other labels. While these two movements were intended to be liberating, they have resulted in a variety of complications, especially for young men and women" - CM*

3. The third reason for the confusion is a **breakdown of marriage**. Most of us know people who are divorced. Divorce is nothing new, but it has become increasingly prevalent and fractures families as a result. When a boy grows up without the example of a healthy two-parent home, he will likely learn about masculinity from undesirable sources. Even children from believing homes can get a skewed view of what biblical manhood or womanhood ought to look like within a two-parent home if the husband-and-wife dynamic is not biblically constituted. Furthermore, television shows, movies, and media all influence the way we view what manhood and womanhood are.

*"You may not have grown up with an admirable, godly father. And when we lack real-life examples, there is a greater tendency to develop our views of manhood and womanhood based on an assortment of television shows, movies, and other media. We do our best to live out our God-given gender, but without a biblical model, we are not really sure how to act, which compounds our anxiety and confusion." - CM*

4. A fourth reason for the confusion is that **social media, entertainment, education, and news outlets routinely distort biblical standards**. For example, a stay-at-home mom is often somewhat frowned upon and considered disempowering to women. Women are told that careers and influence are what they should be pursuing first. To see the consequences, we only need to look at today's birth rates in western culture, which are looking increasingly grim. So, for example, as men raising daughters or as men in the church having influence culturally speaking in the lives of other believers, we need to ensure that we have a clear, well-defined doctrine to combat the world's voice.

*"In contrast to God's view, young men and women are continually bombarded with anti-biblical views on the roles of men and women. We even find these immoral ideologies embedded into kindergarten through university class curriculum." - CM*

5. A fifth and final reason for the confusion, is due to **Bible teachers and pastors not discussing it clearly enough**. Perhaps their lack of boldness or naivety towards the current issues people face contributes to this confusion.

*"Even in churches and institutions professing to have sound doctrine, there is an absence of true biblical instruction on what men and women are to be, based on the actual text of Scripture." - CM*

**Discuss the following questions:**

**Q1. On the first confusion of no-sex ideals, what are some ways this may impact the biblical man in any of our three spheres of influence mentioned earlier?**

**Q2.** What are some of the ways (anything) you can think of which are causing strain on the nuclear family in today's society and how can we combat those things in our Christian families as men?

**Q3.** Hyper masculine figures in pop-culture seem to emerge when there is a masculinity crisis in society (think Andrew Tate) but what is the problem with the type of masculinity they portray and espouse?

### **Examples of Confusion**

*"Where does all of this leave us? For many individuals, these conflicting messages result in a perpetual state of internal conflict. For example, you may have a conflict concerning your identity. You begin to ask questions like these: Who am I really? What kind of person am I supposed to be? How am I supposed to act in certain situations?" - CM*

1. Christian men of any age can easily end up in a perpetual state of internal conflict over these issues. They might even struggle with questions like, 'Can I make myself emotionally available as a man?' 'How about crying?' 'What about venting emotions?' 'Should I mask my emotions?' Even older men might struggle with clarity on some of these things. A young man in his teens may be wondering, 'Should I get a girlfriend?' 'What is the purpose of getting a girlfriend?' 'What would this actually look like?' 'How would I honour God with this relationship?' For those who are married, there might be a lack of communication regarding roles within your marriage, or you might be uncertain about what your role as a man in the home truly entails. Your wife may even be confused, resulting in tension.
2. Such questions are only well answered when we have a robust Christian worldview defining God's ideals for masculinity.

### **Discuss the following question:**

**Q1.** As older men are there any ways we are perhaps failing our younger men and sons in helping equip them for manhood so as they not become confused? How might we make real change in this area?

### **Finding our way out of the confusion**

*"Only through God's Word and by the power of His Holy Spirit can men and women know who God wants them to be. Only if we approach the Word of God with an attitude of total humility, submission, and obedience can we swim against the tide of our society and live out God's design for us." - CM*

1. Chris wants us to ask ourselves a few questions to help us get out of this confusion. He suggests that if the answers to these questions do not align, we have a problem; we're not on the right path to biblical manhood.

### **Think through the following questions on your own:**

**Q1.** "What do you really want to be?"

**Q2.** "Who does God want you to be?"

**Q3.** "Are the two answers you gave to those questions aligned?"

On Q3, Chris says: *"If they're not, are you willing to change and become who God wants you to be? Can you be humble enough to lay down your life before God and commit to learning and living according to Scripture?" - CM*

2. This is where the rubber meets the road: it will not be enough to simply *know* the doctrine of biblical masculinity. The doctrine must manifest in our lives. We must consciously put into practice what it means to be a man, as God desires. We don't want to be like those whom Paul is thinking of when he writes to Titus: "They profess to know God, but by their works they deny Him, being detestable, disobedient, and unfit for any good work." Titus 1:16.
3. There are many practical things that could be said here. One might ask: If our goal is to live out what the Word of God says to men, *are we practicing* daily meditating on His Word so that we know what that is!? Fathers, take special note: when your family knows and sees you regularly reading and studying the Bible, it is nothing less than transformational. It becomes even more significant when you establish a consistent routine of teaching and discussing the Bible with your family. Without genuine attempts to progress in this direction, we simply cannot be biblical men. Young men also

take special note that your time of singleness is likely a unique time in your life before all of a sudden you're married with a family. Preparation is paramount.

4. Downstream of Christian men who are not even attempting to grow in the Word, in the sphere of family, are spiritually malnourished wives and children. In the sphere of churches, there are congregations flailing about without leadership or sound theology. And in the community, there are people who will never see Christ's glory and love radiating through godly men and their families.

### **Good news!**

*As we embark on this journey of learning what God says about manhood, we can only do so once we have experienced the stunning grace of God and the beauty of the person of Jesus Christ. And because we love the One who modelled perfect manhood during His thirty-plus years on earth, we want to learn to become more like Him so that He receives honour and praise through our lives. For any young man, there is no greater life-long journey than to diligently pursue God's design for men. - CM*

1. Chris makes it clear that this is much more than a set of rules to follow in your own strength; the Spirit of God at work in the believer provides strength for every assigned task, as well as for becoming a man as God intends. At the end of the day, this is about conformity and obedience to the person of Jesus Christ, the very work of the Spirit in you (Romans 8:29). It is therefore our salvation in Christ that matters first. God's intentions on how you are to live are of no consequence unless first we are reconciled to God from our sin through the saviour.

“For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour, Christ Jesus, who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds. These things speak and exhort and reprove with all authority. Let no one disregard you.” (Titus 2:11–15).

2. This is an important call for us all. Don't be discouraged if you feel like you have failed this task in some way, for we all have and will. Instead, look today to the perfect man, the Lord Jesus Christ, and pray that God will make you more like Him, and so start making intentional efforts to follow Him more fully, just as God intends, in your family, your church, and in your community.

### **Discuss the following questions:**

**Q1. What part will the gospel play in your pursuit of becoming a man after God's own heart?**