

'Let the Men be Sensible' Supplement

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

Chapter #5: Let the Men be Sensible (The Stability of a Sound Mind)

Scripture: "Likewise, urge the younger men to be sensible." (Titus 2:6)

Summary of Chapter 4

1. Last time in chapter 4, we considered how God desires that His men become spiritually mature in Christ. In our hobbies, sports, pastimes, work and careers, many different facets of life, we desire to progress, but how much thought do we put into our spiritual progression which is most important!?
2. Chris established an obvious point early on that we unfortunately live in youth elevated culture. And one of the by-products of a youth-elevated culture is that the maturity of older people (some) is not considered as a critical virtue that younger people should seek to pursue from a young age. And this is why there is an epidemic of overgrown teenagers in our culture today. Such as men in their late 20s and 30s still behaving as youths. The Bible's view on age and maturity is quite different to the world's.
3. Chris established a spiritually mature man is temperate, meaning he is moderate and balanced, sober-minded, watchful, alert, a man with clear thinking. He is a dignified man, who desires to live a life worthy of the respect of others. He considers himself as always in the presence of his Lord and representing Him. He is not a man attracted to or pursuing the pleasures of this world, seeing them as a snare and a trap. He is sensible (that which is developed here in chapter 5). As a sensible man, he not only prevents certain ways of thinking, but takes on that which will feed and grow his mind in Christ. He controls his appetites: food, money sexually related, etc.
4. Further, he is a man who is sound in faith; theologically and doctrinally grounded in the Word of God. The Word is not only in his mind, but it flows into his obedience to God and how he lives his life. His convictions do not make him lacking in compassion and care for others, he's not a fault finder. He responds with grace. He goes out of his way to care for those in need and meet people where they're at. He doesn't have a "child's bib" on, waiting to see how others will serve him. Rather, "he puts the apron on", that he might serve others. He is a man of perseverance. He stands firm. He remains resilient in the face of adversity. A spiritually mature man seeks to be discipled and have role models in the faith that are older than him, who have more life experience and have walked through tough situations. He makes the most of his time. All these things and more are the desire and pursuit of a spiritually mature man.

Chapter Five 'Let the Men be Sensible'

Introduction

1. In the 14th century, there was a Duke (of what is now Belgium) named Raynald III who was significantly overweight and called "the Fat". Reynold was in a succession to power battle with his brother Edward. Edward captured his overweight brother and built a room

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around him, promising that he could regain his title and property so long as he exited the room. The room had a number of windows, and the door was even unlocked. But Raynald himself was the problem. He would have to lose weight to achieve his freedom. Every day Edward sent delicious food to his brother and Raynald grew only larger. When Edward was challenged over the way he was treating Raynald he responded: "My brother is not a prisoner. He may leave when he so wills." But Raynald never lost the required weight and remained in the room for 10 years, released only after his brother Edward died, apparently they had to cut the walls away to get him out.

2. **Chris applies this account by saying:** "We are all aware, on some level, of how difficult it can be to exercise self-governance, relying on the Spirit of God, and prioritizing the Word of God over our own desires. Just like Raynald was enslaved by his appetite, every young man has something that competes with the Lord for control of his life."
3. **Young and old men alike need to learn how to be sensible Christian men.** Training ourselves to be sensible guards us against the underlying issue in the story of Raynald and Edward, a lack of self-control and poor judgment. But sensibility is about far more than this. Sensible Christian men are desperately needed in the church today.

THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING SENSIBLE

Why Is "Sensible" Mentioned First?

1. **It would seem some things never change.** In Titus 2 Paul addresses the older men and the older woman, the younger woman and then he turns to the young men and he immediately says that Titus is to urge them to be sensible! It seemed Crete had a need for men of faith who were sensible! Have things really changed?
2. **Chris says,** "Too many men today act like they have lost their minds—from making bad decisions to behaving recklessly; from indifference to dangerous risk-taking; from frustrating silence to thoughtless words; from not providing to overspending; from arrogant self-righteousness to hypocritical ungodly living."
3. **It should be clear enough, even from Chris' above reminder of what being sensible is not (such as reckless behaviour and indifference to risk-taking), that we realise that asking ourselves and others how we stand in relation to Christian sensibility could certainly be a sore point!** Chris goes on to say, "The sensible man seeks to avoid being enslaved by habits, vices, or his own weaknesses. He does not allow his desires, emotions, lusts, expectations, hopes, or anger to control him. He remains spiritually alert for himself, his family, and his friends. He makes certain it is God's Word which guides all his steps. He is not one to go off the rails when things go bad, to engage in impulsive purchases, to fight over non-essentials or preferential matters, or to otherwise act without thinking. A young man cannot mature into a godly man, fulfill his God-given role, or be used greatly by our King unless he cultivates a consistent pattern of sensibility."

Q: If the Apostle Paul were writing a letter to young men today, do you think he would put sensible first on his list like he did with Titus? Why or why not?

Why Is "Sensible" Mentioned So Many Times?

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1. Chris points out that Paul mentions sensibility in some form or another four times in the first two chapters of Titus. The idea is repeated because the Christian community on the island of Crete is surrounded by a societal culture that encouraged their citizens to live without thinking! We see this in the biblical text, "For there are many rebellious men, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, who must be silenced because they are upsetting whole families, teaching things they should not teach for the sake of sordid gain. One of themselves, a prophet of their own, said, "Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons."" (Titus 1:10-12)
2. The pressing need for the Christian community of Crete to show sensibility comes forward when we take Titus 2:6 in its context with with Titus 2:7. "Likewise urge the young men to be sensible; in all things show yourself to be an example of good deeds, with purity in doctrine, dignified," (Titus 2:6-7) Paul has in mind an all-of-life-encompassing ethic. And when sensibility is not applied to our lives, just like Reynold III, we can fall prey to the destructive consequences of its absence. Chris points to Alexander the Great as another example, "Not living as a sensible man can be incredibly destructive. In fact, it was the lack of this very quality that destroyed Alexander the Great. Alexander had everything a man could desire. His body was a spectacular specimen of masculine perfection. He married the most beautiful princesses of the known world. He was the son of Philip of Macedon, a great Greek king, and raised in a palace with Aristotle himself as a companion and teacher. Yet, Alexander the Great died at age 33 from alcoholism and venereal disease. He conquered the known world but never conquered himself. His private life was lived without sensibility. Sensibility is necessary to think rightly, control yourself, make wise decisions, set the best goals, and exercise true spiritual leadership. Without it, one's life will fall apart."

THE MEANING OF SENSIBLE

1. In 1 Peter 4:7 the same word used by Paul translated "sensible" in Titus 2:6 is used by Peter and translates as "sound thinking". The use of the word indicates the skill of making good decisions and logical thinking for the purpose of praying to God with wisdom. "The end of all things is near; therefore, be of [sound judgment] and sober spirit for the purpose of prayer." (1 Peter 4:7)
2. Another example comes from Romans 12:3. There the sensible man is realistic, honest about himself and his abilities. "For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have [sound judgment], as God has allotted to each a measure of faith." (Romans 12:3)
3. Chris says, "Translators sometimes use "sound" in translating this Greek word because one of its root words means "safe." So we could say that the thinking of a godly young man is "safe and sound," and that he is "of sound mind." These terms are also related to the idea of being healthy, so sensibility includes assessing your spiritual state accurately and making beneficial decisions for yourself and others. Young men can be idealistic, but as they mature, a healthy dose of realism should accompany their idealism. A young man needs to be able to see life through the lenses of God's Word and sound theology (the most accurate lenses), so he will be able to see things as they really are."
4. As an example of sound sensible thinking, Chris refers to singing competitions on TV, the kind we probably all remember. Think of New Zealand or American Idol. On such shows, there are always people who enrol to sing before a panel of judges who really don't belong there! They go through their rehearsed piece, thinking themselves brilliant only at the end to

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have the judges bring them back to reality. And then they learn that their thinking about themselves was not actually sound or sensible. How they thought and perceived their own abilities did not align with reality. Chris says, "[Why? Because their family and friends informed them over the course of their life that they were a star in the making. That singer is an example of someone who lacks a sensibility. Their goals or dreams have no basis in reality. God wants you to rightly assess how He has made you and live accordingly.](#)"

- 5 God wants us as Christian men to rightly assess our shortfalls and limitations and live grounded in reality so as to live and think sensibly. Chris recognises that we may see this as a "tall order". But desiring to live as a sensible Christian man is not about perfections but patterns. We will all struggle with with this, and if you think you are already a perfectly sensible person, you show how naïve you really are about yourself! Not realising how lacking you are of the ideal of Christ himself. But even if we struggle with consistent sensible living, remember as an encouragement, King David. "[...The Lord has sought out for Himself a man after His own heart...](#)" (1 Samuel 13:14). Though David was FAR from a perfect example, even after some of his worst failings and sins, God forgave him and continued to use David for His glory. Despite his failings, David's ultimate desire was to live to so please the Lord, the God of his salvation. Set it as your goal to live before the Lord and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ that he will complete the work he has begun in you, despite your failings, and continue to use and grow you (Philippians 1:6).

Q: What are some of the ways we can avoid having an "American Idol" moment? Can you think of an example you'd like to share Where you realized you hadn't had sound thinking concerning how things really were in reality?

Q: How would you counsel someone who says to you, I know I should be more sensible in all the ways discussed in this chapter, but I feel depressed and hopeless because I am so far from what I ought to be?

HOW TO BE SENSIBLE

1. Chris now moves into some practical stepping stones to living as a sensible Christian man. He qualifies these practical steps by saying, "[You should never seek to be more sensible in order to earn the love and favor of God. That has been already accomplished for you in Christ.](#) Instead, out of gratitude to Him, you should want to grow spiritually as a way of pleasing Him and knowing Him more intimately. So practically speaking, what should you do? [Remember that all we do for Christ, we do in dependence on the power of the Holy Spirit and in obedience to the Word of God with a willingness to submit to Christ as King over every area of life.](#)"

Be Goal-Orientated

1. We want, as Christian men, to be carefully considered men with a plan. We know each day what needs to be done, and we consider the best way to do it, ahead of time. We don't want to stumble our way through life. We want to plan as much as we pray. I think it was Martyn Lloyd-Jones who said that the New Testament gives the Christian as much guidance on how to think and act soundly as it does to pray and trust in the Lord. And so the answer is not simply pray and walk away (though we should pray!) The answer is pray *and then* so act with sound

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judgment and sensible thinking as we are commanded to. For the Lord has instructed us spiritually as He has practically. The two go together.

2. **Chris says,** "The sensible man knows where he is going. When you aim at nothing, you will hit it every time. So the sensible young man makes goals that are measurable and achievable: "I will spend 30 minutes in the Word and prayer every day," "I will encourage three people today," "I will stay on task at work all week," "I will ask my unbelieving friend to have lunch with me today," "This week, I will call three of the junior high students I disciple," "I will pray about an older woman who might be able to mentor my wife," and so on."

Live Biblically

1. **The Lord Jesus said,** "Why do you call Me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?" (Luke 6:46). Men, young and old, need to walk in the light of God's Word, not in the darkness of the world and its thinking. We want to train our minds in the word of God, so that our thinking aligns with God's will and we become sensible in how we live. "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect." (Romans 12:2)
2. **What this above text in Romans 12 tells us is that we need to be men who are being transformed (for the purpose of living in accordance with God's will) through the training, renewing, and forming of the mind.** Chris says, "If you are walking in obedience to what you know is right from Scripture, but still are not sure about which way to go in a particular decision, seek wisdom from the general principles of God's Word to help you... True Christians do wrestle with obedience, but they have been given hearts that desire to submit to Jesus Christ and the authority of Scripture. Paul affirms this in Romans 6:17: "But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you obeyed from the heart that pattern of teaching to which you were given over." True Christians want to obey God's Word, even though they sometimes fail to obey. As Jesus told his disciples, "If anyone is willing to do His will, he will know about the teaching, whether it is of God or I speak from Myself" (John 7:17). Willingness to obey God is a necessary condition for being led by God and is found in every born again heart."

Seek God's Wisdom

1. Referring back to my earlier Martyn Lloyd-Jones example of prayer and trust in God as alongside sound thinking and action, Chris lists such related principles that can be used to inform your decisions as a Christian man.
 - Will this spiritually benefit me and my family? "Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear." (Ephesians 4:29)
 - Will this assist my witness to others? "Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity." (Colossians 4:5)
 - Will this set a good example for others to follow? "Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ." (1 Corinthians 11:1)
 - Do I have the right motives? "For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain." (Philippians 1:21)
 - Is my conscience clear? "But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith; and whatever is not from faith is sin." (Romans 14:23)

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- Will this bring glory to God? (1 Corinthians 10:31) “Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.” (1 Corinthians 10:31)
2. The obvious point here is if we can't answer yes, sincerely, that is, to all these questions, then are we really seeking God's wisdom and to live according to His word? And it's important we consider and truly try to answer these questions as a daily habit to make them part of our subconscious thinking process. If we don't ask these sorts of questions, then we're not really having a sensible manner of thinking as God intends for us. Chris says, ["Never primarily trust in your own ideas and feelings, remembering to "lean not on your own understanding" \(Proverbs 3:5\).](#) If godly people who know you well advise you in a different direction, take that input very seriously. Proverbs 15:22 says, “Without consultation, plans are frustrated, but with many counselors they succeed.” And Proverbs 11:14 says, “Where there is no guidance the people fall, but in abundance of counselors there is salvation.”

Practice Repentance

1. Fourth on Chris's list of practical steps to live sensibly is easily one that could be first on that list and most important. We want to live as repentant Christian men. If we are living in disobedience to God in any area of our lives, we need to come to Him and repent of that sin, before we can be assured of knowing God's will in other aspects of our lives. Sin grieves the heart of God and he wants us to come to him and confess our sin to him.
2. Chris says, "If a man steals at work, either overtly or by wasting time, he cannot know whether God wants him to ask for a raise. If a Christian student cheats on his exams, he cannot know which school God wants him to attend later. If a young man does not minister with his spiritual gifts in his local church, he will not learn what ministry God wants him to be serving in. Why? [When believers commit such sins, they are grieving or quenching the Holy Spirit \(Ephesians 4:30, 1 Thessalonians 5:19\)—The Holy Spirit is the One who reveals God's will. Unrepentant sin in your life will hinder you from knowing God's will.](#)"

Q: Looking at these four practical ways we can practice Christian sensibility as men, which stands out to you as the most difficult or significant? How might we go about putting these into practice more?

SENSIBILITY AND DATING RELATIONSHIPS

1. Chris moves in the final heading of this chapter to consider how these things apply to single men and dating relationships. Initiating relationships and dating can be intimidating as a Christian. Chris puts it this way, ["Christians have rejected the hook-up culture of the world. So when a guy-girl relationship begins to form, there is often a lot of pressure from the Christian community. On your first date, your parents and Christian friends may have you married off before you finish your first round of miniature golf."](#)
2. Because it is this way, sensible sound thinking is in order. A Christian young man, seeking to be sensible in how he approaches pursuing a woman for marriage should ensure he is doing so not simply for appearance's sake, and must apply biblical wisdom to the important decisions involved. As an older Christian man said to me years ago "nothing will so impact a man's life for good or for bad than the woman he wakes up beside for the rest of his life." To be sensible as a Christian man is to pursue a woman whose love for Christ is greater than her love for you. You want to look for someone who is proven in ministry, a faithful church member, lives by the

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gospel, shares the gospel, ready and desiring to fulfill her God given role as a wife to her husband. Chris says, "In a dating or courting relationship, a sensible young man will love selflessly, seek God first, and not deceive or defraud his sister in Christ in any way (Colossians 3:9, 1 Thessalonians 4:6). Don't promise anything until you are ready to promise everything. He doesn't make promises, either with his words or actions, that he's not ready to back up with a proposal. He avoids giving outlandish gifts and spending excessive time with a young lady, falsely communicating a future promise he is not ready to make. A sensible young man understands that determining God's will for a marriage relationship will take time and cannot be instantaneous. He recognizes the importance of counsel and accountability from others through the process of dating, courtship, and engagement."

3. **To close this section, Chris ends on a gospel high note, particularly concerning sensibility and dating relationships.** "If you want to please God in these ways but are falling short in one or more areas, first repent of your sin and pursue purity. As you do, remember the good news that "Christ died for our sins...and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures" (1 Corinthians 15:3-4). If you are God's true child, Jesus bore the wrath of God in your place, so now you can experience His love for you, even when you require His discipline for living disobediently (Hebrews 12:10). Our adoption by the Father and union with the Son ensures that we will also partake in His resurrection life by the power of the Holy Spirit. He can empower you to live more sensibly, so ask God to make you more sensible, and work toward that goal by pursuing obedience to God's Word, motivated by gratefulness for God's goodness to you."

Q: Are there any points from this chapter you wish to make mention of or discuss further? Do you have anything to add on this last heading of Sensibility and Dating Relationships?