



HE MADE THEM MALE

Defining manliness in today's culture

He has a Plan!

Proverbs 16:9

Men's Breakfast

Sermon given on April 21, 2018



Pastor Rick Lancaster

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Opening Comments

- Today we begin a new series: **HE MADE THEM MALE – Defining manliness in today’s culture!**
- Once a month I meet with a group of men and we talk about leadership – about how to be the leaders that God created us to be
- This month was a topic that nearly every man struggled with
- That is not unusual – in fact, virtually every man in all the groups I have led have struggled with this
- And here’s why that is important to all of us
- A leader is someone who knows where he is going and has people helping him to get there
- This month’s exercise for the Joshua’s Men group was to at least begin to answer the big life question, ‘Why am I here?’
- And not to answer with a general response like, ‘to love God and love others’
- There is a specific thing that God created you for **Ephesians 2:10**
For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.
- It is God’s will that we discover the ‘good works’ that he prepared for each of us and that we walk in them
- God made you male – on purpose and with a purpose
- One aspect of your purpose is that you are created to lead
- And to lead effectively, you need to know where you are going
- A leader can see what others may not be able to – he sees the destination he is leading toward – we call that vision
- Without vision, a leader cannot lead effectively – and he and those he is leading will suffer
- This morning we are going to take a little time and see if we can start down a path toward a clearer vision
- Let’s pray and ask God to do something radical in our hearts
- **Pray**

Teaching

- **He has a Plan!**

- We have been using a working definition of manliness

Manliness: Being the man God created you to be, in the time, place, and culture He placed you in.

- So far, we have looked at integrity, loyalty, personal responsibility, sacrifice, friendship, perseverance, authenticity, and humility
- This morning, we will look at the topic of **Vision**
- The definition of vision is:
 - **1. The act or power of sensing with the eyes; sight. 2. The act or power of anticipating that which will or may come to be. 3. An experience in which a personage, thing, or event appears vividly or credibly to the mind, although not actually present, under the influence of a divine or other agency.**
- The book we use in J-Men for this topic is Visioneering by Andy Stanley
- It is a book I would highly recommend that all men read
- Go to ccfv.life/resources to order from Amazon **Andy Stanley**
- **Everybody ends up somewhere in life. You can end up somewhere on purpose.**
- You're going to end up somewhere, shouldn't it be somewhere important?
- But let me warn you – it is harder to end up somewhere important, rather than just ending up wherever life takes you
- It often means paddling against the current of life – it is what Teddy Roosevelt would call the arduous life
- Most men find it very difficult to discover a vision for their lives
- First, it is **Complex** – life can't be defined by a single thing
- Every man's life has multiple segments: career, finances, marriage, family, leisure, and ministry
- Imagine these like cars on a train – we need a vision and plan for each segment of our life
- For most men, these cars are not on the same track, maybe even going in opposite directions
- To get to the good works God prepared for you – need to get all your cars on the same track, going in the right direction.
- Second – it is **Resisted**

- Any man who has tried to change directions in their life knows there will be resistance
- It comes from the people we are trying to lead – because people don't like change, even when there is a promise of good
- We also have an enemy who resists us if we are trying to move toward the 'good works' God prepared for us

• The new also have to deal with our own flesh **Galatians 5:16-17**

I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.

- It is complex and you will be resisted
 - Third – it is **Costly**
 - One of the lessons we all have to learn at some time in our lives is that nothing worthwhile is cheap or easy
 - People who have achieved great things in life paid the price greatness demanded
 - You may not think very much of yourself, but God thinks you are capable of greatness
 - God is writing a story of greatness – the greatness of Jesus Christ lived out in the life of a man fully surrendered to God's plan for his life
 - But that story is going to cost you something
 - Maybe it will cost you your pride, or selfishness, or laziness, or some sin, or some non-sinful habit that distracts you from God's vision for your life
 - I don't know about you, but I want to live a life of greatness
 - I want to be used by God to change the world around me
 - Jesus used fishermen, tax collectors, and other average people – He can use a former salesman
 - I know I will never live a life that compares to the Apostle Paul's, but I want to end my life like he did **2 Timothy 4:6-8**
- For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.**
- I want to live a life that matters in the end

- And the only way to live a life that matters is to live the story that God wants to write in your life
- But that is not going to happen by accident, or by just going with the flow – you need a plan
- There is no way I can tell you how to make a plan in just 45 minutes
- Depending where you are starting in the process, it could take years
- But don't let that discourage you from trying
- Once you start discovering your unique purpose, you can start living deliberately the life God created you for – very fulfilling
- So where do you start?
- First – **Pray**
- To discover God's plan and purpose for your life, you need to talk to Him about it
- In each of the six segments of your life; career, finances, marriage, family, leisure, and ministry – pray for God to give you a vision

Psalm 37:23

The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD, and He delights in his way.

- Let God direct you along the way
- Second – **Study**
- What does God's Word say about that area of your life?
- The better you understand the Word of God, the clearer your vision will become
- For example – you can't have a God-honoring vision for your marriage if you don't know how God views marriage
- Your vision for every segment of your life will be in alignment with God's Word **Psalm 119:105**

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

- Let God direct your steps toward what He wants in your life
- Third – **Write**
- You know that God wants to talk to you about this, right?
- He wants you to discover His plan for your life. He wants to help you
- When might He talk to you about it? Just during your quiet time?
- No, He can talk you anytime and anywhere, and through anyone
- Create a note on your mobile device – one for each segment
- Or get a notebook and create sections for each segment

- And then, just start writing – whatever comes to mind
- Maybe something you hear on a podcast, or something that comes up in a conversation **Jeremiah 10:23**

O LORD, I know the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man who walks to direct his own steps.

- There is a vision inside every man, but it is not always easy finding it
- Fourth – **Eternalize**
- As a vision starts to form, you need to view it from the perspective of eternity
- What about your vision will affect what happens in heaven **Matthew 6:1**

Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in heaven.

- What we do in this life matters for heaven
- Not just for us, but for others
- Ask yourself, how does my vision impact eternity for others
- As you do this, you will start to discover things about yourself
- Here's an example from my own life
- Growing up, I thought success was making a lot of money – money was my god
- At one point I had a vision of making a million dollars before I was thirty
- That was a selfish, me-centric, goal, but it wasn't a vision
- My financial vision has been clarifying over the years – the latest is: To give for the Lord's work more than we keep
- That is a good simple vision statement – short and easy to remember
- With that I can start making a plan
- So far, the plan has three parts: eliminate all debt, minimize expenses, and increase income
- Each has its own strategies and plans – including deliberate choices based on the vision
- But remember something I said earlier, each segment of your life is like a car in a train; each connected to the others
- You can't create a vision for your finances in isolation from the other segments for your life

- I can't have a vision for my finances that doesn't take into account my vision for my marriage, or for my family, or for my ministry
- Here's the bottom line guys
- As men, we can keep living as the rest of the world lives, mostly just going with the flow
- Or we can begin letting God create a God-sized vision within us
- A vision that only He can bring to pass **2 Chronicles 16:9**
For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him.
- God created you on purpose and for a purpose – some kind of grand vision for your life that impacts the world around you
- I can tell you from a personal level, the clearer the vision becomes in the various segments of my life, and the more those visions start to come together into a singular vision for my life, the more fulfilled and excited I become
- Pray – study – write – eternalize - then start planning
- And then trust God to do His part **Proverbs 16:9**
A man's heart plans his way, but the LORD directs his steps.
- We'll close with our final Teddy Roosevelt quote
- **Courage, hard work, self-mastery, and intelligent effort are all essential to successful life.**
- **Prayer**