



Men's
Issues

BEING A REAL MAN

ROD COOPER

(1 Timothy 6:11)



A free man is an authentic man. An authentic man's view of himself and the world around him is consistent with reality, honest, and accurate. Therefore, an authentic man is a "real" man. He is the genuine thing!

The authentic man is connected to his feelings. He may not know what his emotions mean, but he experiences them consciously and honestly. Too many men have learned to ignore their emotions. Often a man's conscious thoughts are disconnected from his emotions. He cannot seem to get them together. On the other hand, an authentic man is immediately conscious of his feelings because he knows who he is. He understands that his feelings are part of being a man. When those emotions well up in him, he is not afraid of them. He is in touch with them.

The authentic man responds quickly to what he is feeling and to what is happening around him. He experiences those feelings of spontaneity, which allow him to respond freely. It would be easy to assume that an authentic man experiences emotions and then spontaneously does whatever he feels like doing. That is not the case. Instead, an authentic man identifies what is happening inside himself. He processes what he is feeling and evaluates it by getting his feelings out and then acting on them in a responsible manner.

Jesus understood His emotions. When faced with the merchants and money changers in the temple, He reacted with appropriate anger (John 2:13-17). The Bible says that when faced with the death of Lazarus, "Jesus wept" (John 11:35). When He saw the multitudes who were like sheep without a shepherd, "He was moved with compassion for them" (Matt. 14:14).

BECOMING AUTHENTIC

Authentic Men Need to Cultivate Their Relationship with God

It is only natural for people to look to other people to meet their deepest emotional needs. The problem is, they can't! Asking them to do so is like trying to draw water from a dry well. People are not equipped to fill our emotional cup—only God can do that! He knows us for what we really are and still loves us in spite of ourselves. By allowing us to participate in His purpose for our lives, He gives us a sense of significance that we cannot give ourselves. Men need to cultivate their relationship with God—drawing close to Him daily and depending on Him as they make decisions and handle the pressures of everyday life.

Authentic Men Need to Cultivate Their Relationships with Men

Sometimes it shocks men when I tell them they need more than God. That almost sounds sacrilegious. But it is not. We were created for relationship. And if we want to be authentic men, we must cultivate relationships with other men.

Time and time again, Jesus was transparent with His disciples. He ate with them, slept under the stars with them, prayed with them, cried with them, and even resolved their arguments. He revealed Himself clearly to them and told them, "I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you" (John 15:15).

So then, real men—authentic men—care about God and others.

BECOMING A LEADER

Most men want to be leaders, but only a few ever succeed at leading. Too many men want to dictate without leading. They want to command without setting the example. Genuine leadership involves mentoring those around us—our wives, our children, our friends. We cannot simply *tell* them what to do; we must *show* them by the example of our own lives. Most of those we lead will not rise above the level of our leadership—they will simply reproduce what we are. That is why it is so important that we, as men and as leaders, become all that God intended us to be.

Real leaders reach out to others. They see a need and meet it. When someone is struggling, they are quick to lend a helping hand, an open heart, or a word of comfort and encouragement. They help people face their fears, conquer their doubts, and find their way. They are men who have experienced the challenges of life, and who have partaken deeply of the wells of spirituality.

Leaders are men who help others become leaders as well. They are disciplers of men, women, and children. They are men who have experienced the grace of God in their own lives and want to pass it on to others. The apostle Paul told Timothy: “You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also” (2 Tim. 2:1, 2). Peter wrote to the believers, “Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting

kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Pet. 1:10, 11).

Males are born; men are made. God uses the difficulties of men’s lives to strengthen us so that we can better serve those who need our help and leadership.

FURTHER MEDITATION:

Other passages to study about men’s issues include:

- Proverbs 1:5
- Matthew 5:14–16
- 1 Corinthians 4:1, 2; 13:11
- Galatians 6:1–6
- 1 Timothy 5:8
- 1 Peter 3:7
- 2 Peter 1:5–11
- 1 John 3:16–18

To Learn More: Turn to the key passage note on men’s issues at Titus 2:2 on page 1615. See also the personality profile of Titus on page 1613.

to be a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility,^a sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you.^a

⁹Exhort bondservants to be obedient to their own masters, to be well pleasing in all things,

2:7 ^aNU-Text omits *incorruptibility*. 2:8 ^aNU-Text and M-Text read *us*.

KEY PASSAGE



Men's Issues

GODLY EXAMPLES

(2:2)

The "older men" to whom this verse refers are not necessarily elders or leaders in the church. These are the senior members of the church community, and that stature carried a responsibility to be examples to the young Christian men. Paul identified four characteristics that older Christian men should model in the church and to the community:

- *Be sober* can mean the opposite of drunkenness, but a broader meaning describes being balanced, showing moderation and clear-headedness.
- *Be reverent* means worthy of respect, dignified, honorable.
- *Be temperate* means having self-control, monitoring one's words and actions, being sensible about how to live in a heathen society.
- *Be sound in faith, in love, in patience* reveals a soundness in life, with healthy personal faith, positive relationships, and earnest steadfastness.

Christian men, whatever their age, have the responsibility to live well before God and before others who are watching them.

To Learn More: Turn to the article about men's issues on pages 1600, 1601. See also the personality profile of Titus on page 1613.

KEY PASSAGE



Women's Issues

MODELING

(2:3-5)

Christian older women have a responsibility to set a good example for the younger women. These older women in Paul's day had lived much of their lives before knowing Christ. They could help the younger women to avoid their mistakes by teaching about the change Christ had worked in their lives and by modeling the qualities of a godly lifestyle. Older women are to be respectable, good teachers, not gossips, and not heavy drinkers. Then they can teach Christian young women.

An important lesson for young women is that they learn to place a high priority on the family. Young women should be taught to love their husbands and children, placing those needs before their own. Christian young women, married or not, must be discreet, pure, and good. No matter what other activities fill their lives, they are responsible for their homes, and married women must submit to their husbands as the head of the household. Women honor Christ when they place Him first and follow His guidelines for living.

To Learn More: Turn to the article about women's issues on pages 846, 847. See also the personality profile of the virtuous woman on page 845.

GREETING

1 Paul, a bondservant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect and the acknowledgment of the truth which accords with godliness, ²in hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began, ³but has in due time manifested His word through preaching,

SOUL NOTE



Promises Kept (1:2) The power of any promise depends on the character of the person who is making the promise. God promised eternal life "before time began." Those who accept Jesus Christ as Savior will obtain the fulfillment of that promise. We can be certain that the promise will be fulfilled, because it is not in God's character to lie. Because we can trust in the character of God, we can also trust in His promise of eternal life in heaven with Him. Such a promise should motivate us to live for Him each day. **Topic: God's Promises**

PERSONALITY PROFILE



Men's Issues

TITUS—CHOOSING GODLY MEN

(TITUS 1:6)

Titus served as the apostle Paul's ambassador to Crete. They spent time on the island spreading the gospel, and Paul left his young disciple behind to strengthen the local churches. The letter Paul sent Titus served as a job description for a crucial task. Paul knew that the success of Titus's efforts would depend on his ability to identify a few good and godly men.

Paul and Titus were fishers of men. They preached a gospel that functioned like a huge net. People of all different backgrounds, experiences, and levels of maturity were drawn to Christ. That diverse gathering of people had to be sorted out and organized. Character qualities had to be identified. Leadership qualities had to be utilized. Titus had the difficult task of spotting those who were on their way to maturity in Christ. He had to further equip and encourage them to serve others as leaders in the church.

On Crete, Paul told Titus to start with the men. He gave Titus a list of traits to look for in a man who would make a good elder among believers. The qualities Paul listed still measure a man's leadership potential. In fact, those qualities (Titus 1:5-9) include most of the male issues facing men today. Titus was on the lookout for men who were:

- Blameless—who didn't leave problems unsettled in their lives
- Faithful to one wife.
- Raising healthy children.
- Living out a humble relationship with God.
- Not self-willed, quick-tempered, violent, or greedy.
- Practicing hospitality and loving good things.
- Thinking clearly and pursuing justice, holiness, and self-control
- Effectively modeling and teaching the Christian faith.

The church of Jesus Christ still longs for people who will live out their faith with such character. When such leaders are in place, the gospel spreads its net in even wider circles, and more and more people come to Christ. Titus was looking for leaders who had what it takes to care for souls.

To Learn More: Turn to the article about men's issues on pages 1600, 1601. See also the key passage note at Titus 2:2 on page 1615.

divining lies for them, saying, "Thus says the Lord GOD," when the LORD had not spoken.²⁹The people of the land have used oppressions, committed robbery, and mistreated the poor and needy; and they wrongfully oppress the stranger.³⁰So I sought for a man among them who would make a wall, and stand in the gap before Me on behalf of the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found no one.³¹Therefore I have poured out My indignation on them; I have consumed them with the fire of My wrath; and I have recompensed their deeds on their own heads," says the Lord GOD.

TWO HARLOT SISTERS

23 The word of the LORD came again to me, saying:

² "Son of man, there were two women, The daughters of one mother. They committed harlotry in Egypt, They committed harlotry in their youth; Their breasts were there embraced, Their virgin bosom was there pressed.
⁴ Their names: Oholah^a the elder and Oholibah^b her sister; They were Mine, And they bore sons and daughters. As for their names, Samaria is Oholah, and Jerusalem is Oholibah.

THE OLDER SISTER, SAMARIA

⁵ "Oholah played the harlot even though she was Mine; And she lusted for her lovers, the neighboring Assyrians,
⁶ Who were clothed in purple, Captains and rulers, All of them desirable young men, Horsemen riding on horses.

⁷ Thus she committed her harlotry with them, All of them choice men of Assyria; And with all for whom she lusted, With all their idols, she defiled herself.
⁸ She has never given up her harlotry brought from Egypt, For in her youth they had lain with her, Pressed her virgin bosom, And poured out their immorality upon her.

⁹ "Therefore I have delivered her Into the hand of her lovers, Into the hand of the Assyrians, For whom she lusted.
¹⁰ They uncovered her nakedness, Took away her sons and daughters, And slew her with the sword; She became a byword among women, For they had executed judgment on her.

THE YOUNGER SISTER, JERUSALEM

¹¹"Now although her sister Oholibah saw this, she became more corrupt in her lust than she, and in her harlotry more corrupt than her sister's harlotry.

¹² "She lusted for the neighboring Assyrians, Captains and rulers, Clothed most gorgeously, Horsemen riding on horses, All of them desirable young men.
¹³ Then I saw that she was defiled; Both took the same way.
¹⁴ But she increased her harlotry; She looked at men portrayed on the wall, Images of Chaldeans portrayed in vermilion,

23:4 ^aLiterally *Her Own Tabernacle* ^bLiterally *My Tabernacle Is in Her*

SOUL NOTE



Standing in the Gap (22:30) Israel's leaders had become completely corrupt. Jeremiah spoke of how God had "sought for a man among them who would . . . stand in the gap . . . on behalf of the land" so that God would not have to destroy it for its sins. But God "found no one." One man with great faith in God could have saved the nation, but no one could be found. God needs men to be spiritual leaders—in their homes, families, churches, and nations. To be an effective spiritual leader, a man must trust in God and be willing to be used by Him. **Topic: Men's Issues**

putes and arguments over words, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions, ⁵useless wranglings^a of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a *means of gain*. From such withdraw yourself.^b

⁶Now godliness with contentment is great gain. ⁷For we brought nothing into *this world*, and it is certain^a we can carry nothing out. ⁸And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. ⁹But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and *into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition*. ¹⁰For the love of money is a root of all *kinds of evil*, for which some have strayed

from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

THE GOOD CONFESSION

¹¹But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness. ¹²Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. ¹³I urge you in the sight of God who gives life to all things, and

Now godliness with contentment
is great gain.

1 TIMOTHY 6:6

^{6:5} ^aNU-Text and M-Text read *constant friction*
^bNU-Text omits *this sentence*. ^{6:7} ^aNU-Text omits *and it is certain*.

KEY PASSAGE



Money

ROOTED OUT

(6:6-10)

The Bible doesn't say that money is the root of all evil. Everybody needs money; no one can live without it. Money buys food and pays the bills. Financial donations help ministries support missionaries all over the world. Church offerings help pay the pastor. Money can do good things for God's kingdom.

The root of all evil is the love of money. People who love money simply "desire to be rich" more than anything else. Too often, as the Bible says, this leads them into "temptation and a snare," and into "many foolish and harmful lusts." Those who love money never have enough, and they do any number of stupid, illegal, or risky things in order to obtain more. They are never satisfied.

How do believers stay away from the love of money? "Godliness with contentment" is the answer. When we are content with what we have, we can give the extra back to Him.

To Learn More: Turn to the article about money on pages 480, 481. See also the personality profile of the rich young ruler on page 1295.

SOUL NOTE



Man of God (6:11) Paul described Timothy as a "man of God," certainly a fitting title for all men who seek to serve the Lord. In contrast to some who have "strayed from the faith" (6:10), God's men are to flee from the love of money, and to "pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness." This is not an exhaustive list of all of the characteristics of a godly man, but it certainly is a good start. Men who seek to live this way in all areas of their life—work, family, church, friendship—will find true fulfillment and success. **Topic: Men's Issues**