The Christian Man

Man—God's Image

by
George Creach, MA., L.P.C.

Course II – Unit 5, Lesson 1
(New Life Behavior English Edition)

Dallas, TX

"If any person be in Christ, he is a new creature..."
(2 Corinthians 5:17)

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Before you begin this lesson, consider what you believe it means to be a man and how do you feel that you measure up to your own standards. **Write your thoughts on the enclosed** Response Sheet **then put it away before studying the lesson.** Next, we recommend that you read the entire lesson through once without looking up the scriptures. **Finally, go back for a more in-depth study before completing the** Response Sheet.

I. Introduction

The greatest war being fought in the second half of the Twentieth Century is the one between men and women. In the 1950's the feminist movement came into being. Although, its initial goals were to gain equal pay for women in the work place, it soon degenerated into male bashing. According to feminist theology, men are the source of all evil in the world. Men kept women in slavery and called it home. Men created war. Men ravaged the environment and called it economic progress. All sex, even in marriage, was rape. If we were to get rid of men, and everything would be rosy and perfect.

At first, many people, men and women, bought into this view. For a while, they developed the idea that the only difference between men and women was that women could have children. If that were the only difference, then make everybody alike. Thus, rose the androgyny movement. Treat everybody alike and all the sex and gender differences would disappear. There will be nothing left but a single sex race. It did not take long for the absurdity of this idea to be seen. Parents tried to make little boys play with dolls and little girls play sports. It just did not work; little boys still played rough and tumble and little girls still played with their dolls. No wonder they failed. Everybody was going against nature.

At another time some women declared that young boys were not being initiated into manhood by older men. This idea of initiation is just a fancy term for being taught what it means to be a man. How important is it that men teach boys to be men? It is essential; nobody else can do it.

Preston Gillham wrote, "Boys become men by watching men, by standing close to men. Manhood is a ritual passed from generation to generation with precious few spoken instructions. Passing the torch of manhood is a fragile, tedious task. If the rite of passage is successfully completed, the boy-become-man is like an oak of hardwood character. His shade and influence will bless all those who are fortunate enough to lean on him and rest under his canopy."

In some segments of society they were right. The men who fathered these boys had abandoned them. There were no men in these boys lives to teach them what it meant to be a man. In the past, when the father was not there, other males in the family or community taught the boys how to be men. Unfortunately, not only were the fathers gone, so were all the other males in the family and community. So these women decided that they would teach the boys what it means to be men. It did not work. Instead of teaching the boys to be men, they taught them to be a woman's version of what they thought a man should be. These boys were in limbo, neither men or women. Are these women to be criticized? Yes and No! In one aspect these women are to be praised. They saw a problem and tried to fix it. They are to be admonished because of the method they chose to fix it. Instead of these women trying to make boys into men, they should have demanded that men assume their God ordained duties of being husbands and fathers. As a result of this failure on the part of both women and men, we have several generations of men who do not have the foggiest idea of what it means to be a man.

Our very nature makes men and women different. Everything about us from our physical appearance to our body chemistry to the way our brains functions says men and women are different. Difference is not unequal or inferior. Difference does not mean that something is right or wrong. Often there is no moral or ethical right or wrong in things and people being different. Sometimes different is just different. This is one of those times. Men have one purpose; women have another. Men and women are different! To refuse to accept this simple fact is a rejection of God, nature, and science. The French have a saying, “vive la differance.” Instead of trying to erase those differences that God has placed within us, we need to be more like the French and glory in our differences.

Men began to fight back, forming what has become known as the Men's Movement. Unfortunately, instead of going to the Bible and seeing God's plan for man, the leaders of this movement turned to pagan myths. Men were taught that they could find their masculinity by getting together and beating on drums, spontaneous dancing, sweat lodges, trail drives, dude ranches, and on and on and on. Men were taught that they had to be kings, warriors, magicians, etc. Sounds and works great if you are want to create a secular or pagan man. If you want to create a Christian man, you have to go to God's Word.

II. Man—God's Steward

Even before man was created, God declared that man was to be different from all the rest of creation. It was only man who was created in God's image (Genesis 1:26-31). As we read Genesis 1, we see that after God had created everything except man, he declared that “it was good.” After He created man, God declared that His creation “was very good.” What made the difference between the universe being “good” and “very good?” It was

man, the image bearer of God. If you have never stopped and thought about it, do. What does this say about man? What kind of creature is man? What kind of responsibility does this place on man? When you think about it, it is extremely frightening. Man is not just a wild beast with thumbs and a brain that somehow domesticated himself as the evolutionists want us to believe. Also, man is not the lord of creation, the mythical eternal king and warrior, as the modern secularists and pagans want us to believe.
Man is God's steward. He is the caretaker of God's creation. He is God's servant with the job of taking care of the earth and all that it contains. He is God's servant with the job of providing for and teaching his family the "ways of the Lord." He is God's servant with the job of helping God's other servants in times of crises and dangers. He is God's servant with the job of praising God and following God's commands. In ancient times, stewards were chosen because of their talents of organization, being able to deal responsibly with others, not being afraid to stand up for what is right, and knowing that they are only servants, not the master. The steward was the leader of the servants, but he was still just a servant. That is the way a man is. He is the pinnacle, the crown, of God's creation, but he is still God's servant.
No matter how smart or dumb we think we are, how strong or weak we think we are, how rich or poor we think we are, we all stand equal before God as His stewards upon the earth. All men have the same job of caring for themselves, their families, and the earth. When we do our God ordained job, we are fulfilling our purpose. When we refuse to care for ourselves, our families, and the earth, we rebel against God and create a void in our lives.

Do we all have the same abilities, talents? Yes, but not all in the same quantity or quality. Yes, we can all talk, but not everybody is a Ronald Reagan. Yes, we can all think, but not everybody is an Einstein. Yes, we can all provide for our families, but not everybody is a millionaire. Yes, we can all lead our families to the Lord, but not everybody is a Joseph. God does not hold us accountable, responsible for those duties we do not have the abilities to do. All God demands from us is to fulfill the potential, the abilities, we each have. How about you? Are you living up to your potential, or are you cheating God?

III. Man—Created In God's Image

What does it mean to be created in the "image of God?" People have come up with all kinds of ideas; some make sense, others do not. As we read the Bible we see some ways in which man is like God.

A. <u>Man is an emotional being</u>. – We see the image of God in us though our emotional composition, makeup. From the earliest days of the world, we see a God who is loving and caring for his children, mankind. We also see a God who is hurt and sorrowful because of man's rebellion and evil. The first emotion we see in Genesis is

that of love. Although the first few chapters of Genesis never tell us God loves us, it shows us God's love. God's love is even shown for Cain after he had murdered Abel. Yes, God punished Cain, but He still showed Cain His love by protecting him from the vengeance of others.

The first time God's emotions are mentioned is in Genesis 6:6-7. Because of man's extreme wickedness, God is said to be sorry and grieved. Even God's love has a limit. As we continue to read throughout the Bible, we see that God becomes angry and joyful. He has all the other emotions that we have.

B. Man is a rational logical being. – We see the image of God in our ability to think and reason in a rational logical manner. Although the Bible does not say that God is logical and rational, it does show it. In Genesis 1 as we look at the creation of the universe, we see creation was not some haphazard occurrence that spanned billions of years. It was a one time event planned by God. All things hang together in balance to provide a place for man to fulfill God's divine purpose.

God's plan for man's salvation was not something He just threw together after Adam and Eve's sin. In Matthew 25:34 Jesus says that the Kingdom of God was prepared for His followers from the "foundation of the world." Peter says that Christ's sacrifice was known "before the foundation of the world." (1 Peter 1:20) Again we see the idea of planning for the future. Only logical, rational beings plan.

God told Israel, "Come let us reason together." (Isaiah 1:18) When we take time to reason with God, the only choice we have is to see the truthfulness and rationality of His position. This does not mean that we will follow Him, but there is no logical way in which we can ignore Him.

C. Man is a creative being. – We see God's creative nature in the creation of the world and the making of the Christian a new creature in Christ. Man has an overwhelming desire to create things. The difference between our creations is not the quantity, but the quality.

God is able to create something from nothing. When He created the universe, there was nothing there from which to create it. First, He created matter, then He created the remainder of the universe from that matter. The things we create, on the other hand are made from the matter that already exists. We transform a blank page into a book, play, or song. We transform a canvas into a painting. We transform a scattered collection of people into a nation. We transform a wilderness into a garden.

Of all God's creations, the greatest is life itself. Because God is eternally living, He does not create the sterile and the dead. Death is the greatest insult to God. It is a rejection, denial of Him as Eternal Life. His creation is like Him, alive. We see this in man's desire to recreate himself, that is to have children. God not only gives us

physical life, He also gives us spiritual life. After we have committed spiritual suicide by sinning, He can make us spiritually alive by the blood of His Son, Jesus Christ.

D. Man is a communicator. – Throughout the Bible we see God communicating with man, with angels, with the Devil, and Himself. God has communicated with man through nature, dreams, trances, voices, and ultimately in the Incarnation of the Third Person of the Trinity, Jesus Christ. God did not just create the universe and then go on a vacation. He remains in control. He did not just create man and leave him on his own. He teaches, guides, disciplines, judges, and saves him.

Paul, in Romans 1, tells us that by looking at nature we can see that God is so therefore, we do not have an excuse for denying His existence. In more specific incidents, God has used nature to communicate with specific men. God spoke to Moses from a burning bush. He taught Elijah His power with a hurricane, earthquake, fire, and a voice. He spoke to Job from a whirlwind. He demanded of Job, "Who are you, that you think you have the right to question or challenge me?" Job's reaction was silence. Job finally realized that no matter how angry he was with God and how much he believed that God was treating him unfairly, only God could understand the great spiritual war that is being fought.

Finally, God has communicated to us during the Incarnation of the Second Person of the Godhead, Jesus Christ. This was the ultimate form of communication; God became man and showed man how he should live with other men and with God.

Man constantly communicates. He communicates with his fellow man and with God in many ways. Just because we are constantly communicating does not mean that our communication is always effective. Too often we see communication as only talking with one another or at each other. Some researchers claim that only about twenty percent of our communication is done by talking. Even within this twenty percent the actual words used are only a small percent. Verbal communication includes cues. These include the tone of the voice, the volume, how loud or soft, which words are emphasized, how the words are pronounced, purpose expressed (joking, irony, sarcasm, satire, euphemism, parable, allegory, etc.).

The other eighty percent of our communication is done with body language, facial expressions, hand and arm gestures, body posture, and how we position ourselves with others. People from different cultures have different nonverbal languages. Although, men and women share much of the same nonverbal language, each gender uses some nonverbal language that the other does not use. Also, men and women have nonverbal

language that they use with only members of their own gender and nonverbal language that is used with only members of the opposite gender.

Does this sound complicated? It is. Do we understand most of the verbal and nonverbal language? Yes and No! We hear and see what is being said, but that does not mean that we understand it. Sometimes, the message that is being sent to us is unclear even to the sender. Sometimes, the message gets lost or confused by the interference and noise of the environment. Sometimes, the beliefs of the sender and the receiver make the message mean one thing to the sender and something else to the receiver.
Sometimes, the sender sends an incongruent message. This is a message in which the words and the verbal cues and the nonverbal language do not match the meaning of the actual words. An example of this is when a mother tells her son that she loves him and for him to come give her a kiss, but her voice is cold and harsh and her body posture is rigid. This creates a double bind in the son. His response is something like, "Does she love me or not? She says she does, but she acts like she cannot stand to be around me. What do I do?" Some researchers believe that this type of relationship between a mother and son is so overwhelmingly confusing that it leads to schizophrenia in the son.

It is the sender's job to make sure that he or she is sending a message that the receiver understands. It is the receiver's job to let the sender know when he or she does not understand the message, so that the sender can explain and simplify the message.

Does this make you wonder how we are ever able to communicate with one another? Well, it is not easy. It takes a lot of work. How are your communication skills? Are they effective? Are they ineffective? On a one (ineffective) to ten (highly effective) scale, rate your communicative skills.

E. Man is a spiritual being. – God is the One Eternal Spirit, the source of all other life, physical and spiritual. When God created man, He created him with a dual nature of physical and spiritual.
Man's physical aspect lives only within this physical universe. We are creatures of the here and now. Our physical nature is part of us. There is nothing wrong or evil about it. The problem comes when we allow the Devil to corrupt our physical nature and instead of using it to praise and glorify God, we use it to serve the Devil. Our physical nature only exists in this physical universe. On the day of our death we leave it behind and exist only within the spiritual realm.

IV. The Worth of a Man

One of the big lies of the latter part of this century is self-esteem. We are told that unless we have high self-esteem, we are somehow dysfunctional. We are told that our self-esteem is determined by what we do, how much we earn, what others think about us, and other external objects. Robert S. McGee in *The Search For Significance* put it in the equation as:

SELF–WORTH = PERFORMANCE + OTHER'S OPINIONS

In this concept of self-esteem we are passive in determining our self-worth/self-esteem. If we perform at a high level and others think we are doing a great job, we have high self-esteem. When our performance slips or someone might not like us, our self-esteem goes down the toilet.

When we base our self-esteem on something as changeable as our high performance and others opinions, we have to reject the idea that we might make a mistake, that someone might not like us or that we might be less than "perfect." When we base our self-esteem on such irrational ideas as these, we set our self up for failure. We can never perform at our peak, whatever that might mean, all the time. We can never be liked and admired by everybody. If we can perform at our peak twenty-five percent of the time, we are doing well. If fifteen or twenty percent of the people we know like and admire us, we are doing well. I hope this gives you and idea of how illogical the modern idea of self-esteem/self-worth is.

Our self-esteem is not based in what we do, but in what we are. It is based in the idea that we are created in God's image. As a famous singer once said, "God didn't make any trash." We have unlimited worth because we are created in God's image. That image is damaged because we live in a fallen, sinful world, but that does not change the fact that we are still God's image. We can further damage God's image in us by living a sinful lifestyle. This can be repaired when we turn our back on our sinful lifestyles and live as God and Christ wants us to live.

Our self-esteem is internal. It is part of our basic being. It is being created in the image of God. When we look at self-esteem/self-worth in this light, we will never have low self-worth.

V. Conclusion

Men, the male of the human species, have been declared to be the source of all wickedness and evil in the world today. The radical women's movement tells us that if we as a species are going to survive, then men need to be like women. This entire idea is a total perversion. It flies in the face of both God's revealed word and scientific facts.

Men and women are innately different. Difference is neither right or wrong. It is just different. God created men and women to perform different functions in life.

As we begin our look at what it means to be a Christian man, we first look at the very nature of man. That nature is that men and women are created in God's image. Part of being created in God's image is that man is an emotional, rational, creative, communicative, spiritual being. When we accept being created in God's image as the basis for our self worth we will never have to worry about the modern bug-a-boo of low self-esteem.

Now, please start over and study the lesson and the related scriptures. **When you finish your in-depth study, return to the enclosed Response Sheet and write your answers to the study questions about this lesson.**