

Toxic Masculinity vs. Biblical Masculinity (Men's Ministry)

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 05 August 2023

Preacher: Shawn Woo

[0 : 00] Thanks for coming, guys. I tried to put in a lot of work for this, and there's a lot of content. So I'm going to try to cut it down, whittle it down as I'm going through it.

And so excuse any rough parts in it. But let me pray for us as we start. Heavenly Father, you, in your infallible and inerrant word, you revealed yourself to us as a father. Because there's something in you, who you are, in your character, where you want to teach us what it's like to be a godly father and a man.

And we come to your word this morning with a posture of humility and submission.

Wanting to find our ideas and views about what it means to be a man, what it means to be masculine even, that not from the world or from our peers, but from the word of God.

[1 : 33] So lead us, Lord. Teach us. Help me as you speak to say only what you want me to say. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Amen. I wanted to ask you guys to start off. How many of the men here have, at some point, had someone in your life tell you to man up or be a real man?

How many of you guys have heard that? Yeah. Okay. Some way or another. And if you guys can remember any specific context where you've heard that. Can you guys share that?

Or maybe some general context in which you hear those kinds of things said. I didn't socialize a lot in the normal high school. So like, any of the time we get to say.

But like, when you move on, it's like pretty good. Like, I'll make a man. I'll make a man. That's actually a really great example. Yeah. That's a really good example. And in that context, it's like, it's fighting, right?

[2 : 37] Aggression. Anything else? Yeah. Gay real? Yeah. That's something we yell at each other a lot. Football. Yell at each other a lot in football.

Yeah. Did you play football? Yeah. Okay. So that's, what position did you play? It's O-line. O-line? Okay. Yeah. Yeah. In a dating context, like if a guy is shy about asking a girl, you just tell him to man up.

Man up. Okay. So in terms of relationship with women, anything else? Just a believer, my grandfather was notorious for like, locking us out of the home and saying like, be a man, go do these things.

Interesting. He locked you out of what? Of his own. Yeah. Wow. Okay. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. After an injury or something. So I remember like when I was young and stuff like that, I don't know how to do myself and stuff, but then I think it was a camp counselor, somebody was like, man up.

Man up. Like crying or something. So in that situation, it was, it meant don't cry. Don't cry. Don't show emotion. Right. Right. So I think the, so these are very common.

[3 : 42] So speaking of playing football, a couple of years ago, I read a book called The Season of Life by a Pulitzer winning journalist named Jeffrey Marks. And he used to be a ball boy when he was a kid for the Indianapolis Colts, which back then was the Baltimore Colts.

And, and he met a star defensive lineman named, what's his name here? Joe Airman.

Have you guys heard of him? You guys football fans? No. So, and Joe Airman goes from a star defensive lineman to becoming a pastor eventually. And along that journey somewhere, he begins to coach the high school football team, Gilman high school football team in Baltimore.

And this guy, the journalist is tracking his work because his coaching is so transformative for the lives of the young boys in that program. And, and one of the reasons for that is he, he teaches them to penetrate, pursue and punish, which is what you're supposed to do as a football defensive

lineman.

But even more importantly, he teaches the boys that their athletic prowess on the field is not what makes them manly or masculine. In fact, he argues that, that, that be a man, that those three words are the three most destructive words that almost every boy hears when he's growing up.

[5 : 03] And he gives a TED talk about this if you guys want to listen to that. So, sociologist, Michael Kimmel ran an experiment and he asked several thousand young men and boys all over the world from all boys schools in Australia and police academy in Sweden to cadets at West Point and former soccer stars at FIFA.

Two simple questions. The first question was, what does it mean to be a good man? Right? If at your funeral, someone were to say that you are a good man, what would they say about you?

Uh, and with very little variation across the globe, geographically and age wise, people respond along these lines. Integrity, honor, being responsible, being a good provider, protector, doing the right thing, putting others first, sacrifice, caring, standing up for the little guy.

But then he'd follow that up with the second question. What does it mean when someone says to you, man up, be a real man. And then they'd all start shaking their heads and say, oh, no, no, that means something completely different.

Hey, Daniel. And they would say, no, that means never cry, be strong, don't show your feelings, play through pain, suck it up, win at all costs, be aggressive, get rich, and get laid.

[6 : 20] That's how they understand that. So these are real pressures that boys and men face. So according to a survey conducted in 2018, among over a thousand adolescents between the ages of 10 and 19, a plurality of boys responded that traits that society values most in boys are the traits of the real man, rather than the traits of the good man.

Toughness, aggression, whereas only 2% of them listed honesty, morality as traits that society values in boys. So one in three boys report that they feel pressured to be physically strong, to throw a punch if provoked, to hide their feelings of sadness or fear, and to make sexual jokes and comments about girls.

That's one in three boys feel pressured to do that. And so I want to be clear from the outset that there is such a thing as toxic masculinity. And we live in the age of the Me Too movement, right? And where powerful men like the Hollywood mogul Harvey Weinstein and comedian Bill Cosby have been exposed and convicted of serial sexual assaults, where USA Gymnastics team Dr. Larry Nassar betrayed hundreds of young girls who entrusted their health and their bodies to him, and then he sexually abused them.

In March 28, 2020, if you guys are boxing fans, you may remember the champion boxer, Billy Joe Saunders, came under fire because a video surfaced of him instructing men how to punch their wives, saying, if, quote, if your old woman is giving you mouth, hit her on the chin and finish her off.

[7 : 57] And he demonstrates it as a boxer. I think it's poetic justice that soon after that, I think his next bout, he got dominated and lost to Canelo and lost his championship.

But toxic masculinity is real. And the church, unfortunately, has not been exempt from this. We can see this in the Church Too movement. The Houston Chronicle published reports detailing more than 700 counts of sexual abuse in Southern Baptist churches over a period of 20 years by pastors, deacons, and Sunday school teachers and church members who are volunteering for various roles. And many of us, I think, were shocked to learn about famous apologist Ravi Zacharias, who had sexually harassed women at massage parlors and had solicited and kept hundreds of pictures of young women on his phone, including some naked photos.

This is deplorable. And that these things were perpetrated by professing Christians is unconscionable. You know, and I want to, before I go in further, I want to give you guys some time to talk about this and just answer this question honestly as you can, maybe in groups of three or four around you.

Do you think that traditional gender roles taught in conservative, complementarian churches exacerbates the abuse of women?

[9 : 24] Now, if you guys could not answer by thinking, well, I think this is what I should think because we're in a complementarian church, but how you actually think based on what and how you actually feel based on what you have heard and what you have seen and what you have taught.

Like, if you guys could just discuss that for a few minutes, just three to four. All right, guys, let's bring it back together. As you guys are having, it sounds like you guys are having a great discussion.

You guys can continue that after as well. So because we are a theologically conservative, complementarian church that often gets lumped into these kinds of categories and criticized, I do want to say explicitly that I am not on that church to, hashtag church to bandwagon for a number of reasons.

And because it perpetuates erroneous presuppositions that Christians are no better than non-Christians, on the one hand, in these ethical regards. And two, that traditional Christian gender roles exacerbates these realities.

I think both of those are demonstrably false. And I'm not going to, you know, ask for a show of hands because, I mean, I know that you guys are all over the spectrum on this. But I want you to mentally note which should, how many of these statements you would actually be tempted to agree with or agree with wholeheartedly.

[10:42] The American Psychological Association's guidelines for psychological practice with boys and men says this, heterosexual men's adherence to traditional sexist aspects of masculinity has been connected to sexual assault perpetration.

They say, and by sexist, they, I think, are describing traditional roles as we were talking about. As it, at its core, complementarian theology is one of inequality and hierarchy.

And inequality breeds abuse. This is Huffington Post. The seeds of wife-beating lie in the subordination of females and their subjection to male authority and control.

And conservative religion makes such relationships seem natural, morally just, and sacred. This is from a book called *The Violence Against Wives, The Case Against the Patriarchy*.

Complementarian theology, this says, is a breeding ground for abusive marriages.

And this is not a case of an occasional rotten apple, but a rotten theological tree that produces sexism and misogyny. This is Diana Anderson writing in *Religion Dispatches*.

[11:49] Now, these are unbelievers, so maybe it's a little bit understandable. But now here's what some Christians have to say about this issue. This is friendly fire. It's no secret that abuse is prevalent in conservative churches that embrace headship theory.

This is an article in *The Adventist Today*. Beth Allison Barr, a Christian author, says in her book, *The Making of Biblical Womanhood*, quote, we can no longer deny a link between complementarianism and abuse.

These are Christians saying that. The trouble with these accusations is that they have no facts to back them up. The most comprehensive research on this has been done by University of Virginia sociologist named W. Bradley Wilcox, who has been featured in the *Los Angeles Times*, the *New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, the *Washington Post*, *USA Today*, *Slate*, the *Huffington Post*, *National Review Online*, *National Journal*, *National Public Radio*, CBS with Katie Couric, NBC, *The Today Show*, and numerous academic publications.

And most of his research is published in a book that I do recommend. And it's called *Soft Patriarchs, New Men, How Christianity Shapes Fathers and Husbands*. And he's not doing his own surveys.

He's drawing his data from three large surveys, which are objective databases used by scholars, journalists, and policymakers all throughout the country. The *National Survey of Families and Households*, which represents American adults across the entire country, 3,366 respondents.

[13:14] The *General Social Survey*, 24,099 respondents. And the *Survey of Adults and Youth*, 2,309 respondents. This man's not even a Christian. But this is what he discovered in his research.

When you distinguish, and this is the key, nominal Christians, people who are Christian in name only, people who say, Mark on the survey, I'm Christian because they come from an Irish Catholic family, for example, but they don't ever step inside a church for worship.

People who are Christians in name only, when you separate out those people, from people that he would call devout Christians, and his definition is that they go to church at least three times a month. The results are, there's a vast chasm.

So now, this is wild. If you look at this. The devout Christians are 35% less likely to divorce than secular men, while nominal Christians are 20% more likely to divorce than secular men.

The devout Christians report the lowest rate of domestic abuse of any group, 2.8%, while nominal Christians report the highest rate of domestic violence of any group, 7.2%, even higher than their

secular counterpart.

[14 : 28] And the heritage, it's the fake Christians then who have picked up some crumbs of theology about headship and have some vague notions of what marriage is supposed to look like, who have not actually been affected by the gospel of Jesus Christ and his sacrificial love and that what we're supposed to show to our wives who give true Christians a bad name.

So according to this research, guess which men do the most positive, quote, emotional work? Conversing with their wives, expressing appreciation for and building relationships with their wives. It's the theologically conservative Christian men. Guess which dads praise and hug their children the most and on average spend 3.5 more hours per week with their children than other dads? Theologically conservative men. Guess whose wives report being the happiest? Theologically conservative men. In the New York Times, Wilcox reports, it turns out that the happiest of all wives in America are religious conservatives.

Fully 73% of wives who hold conservative gender values and attend religious services regularly with their husbands have high quality marriages.

[15 : 45] Isn't that amazing? But if you believe in the power of the gospel to save us and transform us, if you believe that the word of God really is truth, why should this be surprising to us?

This should not be surprising to us. So while we should condemn and correct toxic masculinity, we also don't want to swing the pendulum to the other extreme and denounce everything that is traditional or masculine as toxic, which often is happening in our culture.

As many have observed, when masculinity in and of itself is pinned as the problem, then the only solution left is emasculation to make men less like men. And unfortunately, our culture is at the moment swinging in that direction.

So it is increasingly acceptable nowadays to express open hostility against men. So for example, in the Washington Post ran an article by Susanna Denuda-Walters. She's a women's gender and sexuality studies director at Northeastern right here in Boston.

And her article was entitled Why Can't We Hate Men? Similarly, the New Statesman published an article that's a British magazine by Susan Moore, where she says of men, you can't hate them all, can you?

[17 : 04] Actually, I can. As a class, I hate men. I want to see this class broken. It's not uncommon now to see those kinds of headlines and articles.

Misogyny, which is the hatred and mistrust of women, is sinful. But misandry, which is the hatred and mistrust of men, is also sinful. A media researcher named Jim McNamara looked at 650 newspapers, more than 100 magazines, and more than 330 hours of television.

That's a lot of wasted time, I think. And analyzed in total 2,000 media articles portraying men. And he found that men were predominantly reported or portrayed in mass media as deadbeat dads, like useless, bumbling dads, villains, aggressors, perverts, and philanderers, with more than 75% of all mass media representations of men and male identity categorizing into those profiles.

Kathy Young writes for the Los Angeles Times, despite occasional lip service to the idea that feminism can liberate men, too, from patriarchal confines, most feminist discourse spends far more time bashing men.

Contemporary feminism's main message to men is not one of equal partnership. Rather, it's repent, abase yourself, and be an obedient feminist ally. Now, this is a very outspoken feminist academic who says this, Camille Paglia.

[18 : 31] She says, she objects to this aspect of feminism. She says, peevish, grudging rancor against men has been one of the most unpalatable and unjust features of second and third wave feminism. Men's faults, failings, and foibles have been seized on and magnified into gruesome bills of indictment.

She continues, when an educated culture routinely denigrates masculinity and manhood, then women will be perpetually stuck with boys who have no incentive to mature or to honor their commitments.

I think that's really insightful. What she's saying is that the way boys and men are portrayed and talked about, it shapes their self-perception. And the way the society communicates its expectations for men, it shapes how they live because, like every other human being, men also tend to live up to or down to what they believe themselves to be and what others expect them to be.

And so, it's no wonder that the boys and men are struggling in unprecedented ways. Bookstores are filling up with titles like this, *The Boy Crisis*, *The Boys Adrift*, *The Trouble with Boys*, *War Against Boys*, *Why Boys Fail*, and they're selling like hotcakes.

Many of these are best sellers. Sure, there are still more men than women who are presidents, CEOs, and Fortune 500 board members, but that's the top 1%. That's the tiny fraction of the population.

[19 : 55] What about the 99%? Generally speaking, girls outnumber boys about 60 to 40% on university campuses. This discrepancy is reflected also in church attendance. A typical local church in the U.S.

is made up of 61% female and 39% male. Women are more likely than men to earn degrees at every educational level, bachelor's, master's, professional, doctoral.

Men are more likely than women to become homeless, suffer mental illness, be addicted to drugs or alcohol, end up in prison, or commit suicide. Men are leaving the workforce permanently at record levels, and life expectancy for men have gone down while women have stayed the same.

so that an article in the *New Scientist* asserts that, quote, being male is now the single largest demographic factor for early death. So men are increasingly feeling like they're getting the short end of the stick, and they resent that, and the way, they resent the way they're perceived and portrayed, and this has given rise to, swinging back to the other extreme, the manosphere.

Have you guys heard of the manosphere? Anybody? Yeah, okay. The manosphere, it includes, it's a collection of online men's rights groups. It includes men's rights activists, MRA pickup artists, PUA, involuntary celibates incels, men going their own way, MG, is that wrong?

[21 : 19] Is that? No, it's just so funny. Yeah. Yeah, I mean, they may be some of the worst. I mean, involuntary celibates, they actually committed some mass, like, murders because some men were so angry that women were not giving them sex that they went and started shooting them up.

I think it happened at least twice. And men going their own way, MGTOW, and the red pill. There are Christian variations of some of these groups as well, but I think there's some issues with those as well because they uncritically adopt some unbiblical presuppositions, which I will talk about shortly.

And I know that some of you have been in these things already or feel drawn to them because they talk about things that other people don't seem to be talking about and because there's some truth in what they teach.

However, it's the semblance of truth, the half-truth, that makes the deception more subtle and more powerful. And so I want to urge you to stay away from these groups if you can.

So Pastor Mark Batterson says in his book, *Play the Man*, that, oh man, that the image of God is the software and that these mutations, so to speak, are the virus.

[22 : 30] And so we need to try to carefully tease out what's the software, original software, and what's the virus. And that's what I'm going to try to do in these coming, over the next few minutes.

So the first thing I want to say is the Manosphere subscribes to philosophical naturalism, which teaches the primacy of the physical world and the physical body at the expense of spiritual realities.

So for example, many of the red pills claims are rooted in evolutionary biology, which explains human behavior in naturalistic terms as an expression of physical impulses.

So that's why they have phrases or terms like, they say that all women are like that. That's their argument that women are always hypergamists, or they believe that they're always instinctually gravitating toward men who offer the highest sexual market value.

It's as if, you know, everything is genetically programmed and they can't resist it. It's irresistible. And so this worldview denies the sanctifying power of the grace of God and the spirit of God. And this functional naturalism naturally leads to an obsession with sex.

Since the rule of evolutionary biology is the survival of the fittest and reproduction ensures your survival, this is why the Manosphere's chief obsession is helping men get more sex.

[23 : 48] So in this worldview, the manliest men are the ones who are most virile and sexually active. The true measure of a man is how much women want him in this kind of worldview.

So this kind of view owes its intellectual foundation, underpinnings, to social Darwinism. After Charles Darwin published *The Origin of Species*, his evolutionary theory inspired the belief that men are, in their core nature, animals.

animals. And therefore, recovering their masculinity requires getting back in touch with their inner animal, inner beast. So to give you an example of this, the Boy Scout movement was originally founded to do this, to be reminiscent of the struggle for survival, of the hunt, of the chase, of war. Now, to books like Jack London's *The Call of the Wild* and Edgar Rice Burroughs popular Tarzan series are all playing to that evolutionary psychology and desire. Get in touch with your inner animal and you will be more manly or masculine.

And I'm not making this up. So sociologist David Popeno writes, quote, men are not biologically attuned to being committed fathers. Left culturally unregulated, men's sexual behavior can be promiscuous, their paternity casual, their commitment to family is weak.

[25 : 03] This is a respected sociologist saying that about men. Blanket statement. A cover story for Time magazine. An evolutionary psychologist, Robert Wright, claims that infidelity is in our genes, in men's genes.

He says that lifelong monogamous devotion just isn't natural. In the New Yorker, Harvard psychologist Steven Pinker spreads the same theory that evolution prefers promiscuity since it enables men to spread more of their seed to future descendants.

So biologists and anthropologists is probably the most extreme. They're biologists and anthropologists Randy Thornhill and Craig Palmer. They go so far as to argue that rape is a quote, natural, biological phenomenon that is a product of the human evolutionary heritage.

And they take it for granted that rape will occur wherever the necessary environmental factors are present. So all of these presuppositions are giving men an excuse for sexual sin.

It's anti-Christian. Whatever your belief in evolution might be in a scientific sense, whether you believe in the literal six-day creation or the day-age view or theistic evolution, like that's beside the point.

[26 : 16] Social Darwinism like this is profoundly atheistic and unbiblical. So we are not created as men in the image of animals.

We are created in the image of God. And what I think some of these manuscripts is teaching us to do is actually to reflect the image of animals, be more like them, to live down to their behavior and their expectations instead of trying to live up to be like God and live according to his image and in self-control and holiness.

So that's, I think, one kind of underlying critique of a lot of manosphere presuppositions. And I think another one is just the way the manosphere's value and class system I think is unbiblical.

So for example, there's a largely subscribed to prescription like a classification of men as being either alpha or beta. Have you guys heard that before? Yeah. There's also sigma too.

Sigma? Okay. Yeah. And so alpha is defined as a socially dominant man who displays traits that are sexually attractive to women and do not sublimate.

[27 : 25] Sublimate is a social Darwinistic term. It's an evolutionary psychology term where it refers to diverting the expression of sexual energy or some other biological impulse from its unacceptable form to one that is considered more socially acceptable or culturally acceptable.

So an alpha is, according to their definition, is basically someone who gives unrestrained expression to his sexual drive. Now, he does not channel his sexual drive or other animal instincts he has into more socially acceptable forms.

He doesn't do that. People who do that are betas, according to this. But that's not a biblical worldview. 1 Thessalonians 4, 3-6 says, For this is the will of God, your sanctification, that you abstain from sexual immorality, that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God.

So a godly man controls his body in holiness and honor, not in the passions of the flesh, lust like the Gentiles. So what does it mean to be a godly man? It's not passions and lust.

It's holiness and honor. A beta is defined as a man who exhibits traits of sublimation and provision. They said, either providing resources or advantage to others allows them to be defined by others, they say.

[28 : 42] But, Bible commands us, commands men to provide for the women in their lives, for their wives and for their children. 1 Timothy 5, 8 says, If anyone does not provide for his relatives and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

Working to provide for your wife is part of God's design for manhood. And providing well for another does not make you less of a man. And I think the alpha beta system also fails to account for the fact

that God has made people to be different.

And God has made men to have different gifts and strength. And so, you know, a man's, one man's temperament and gifting might not make him naturally charismatic or driven or a decisive leader. But because he takes the command from God to lead his family seriously, he might make strenuous effort to lead and to take initiative even though it goes against his temperament and nature. And I think such a man is far more godly and far more manly and sanctified than a man who effortlessly takes initiative and makes decisions but is prideful and domineering.

[29 : 51] There are many men who are very good at being masculine in a worldly sense, being the real man, but who are bad at being Christ-like, being a good man. And Christ, Matthew 11, 29, says, with gentle and lowly in heart.

I think related to this is the overemphasis and overvaluing of strength of body over strength of character. They emphasize physical training like lifting weights and learning martial arts, et cetera. There is something that natural theology has something, there is something that natural theology can teach us here and natural theology is just observing how God's created things and learning what God's intention and design is in that.

So if you look at that, because of testosterone, men are physically, typically larger, stronger, and faster than women. In general, they're also more physical, more competitive, and more risk-taking and I think these are God-given traits that we need to recognize and not to shame.

And so that's why I think in the Bible, when women and children are going to war to fight, to defend themselves, rather than men going out to fight for them, it cites that as an example of a degenerate culture, of a fallen society, because men are not stepping up to do what God designed them to do.

[31 : 13] Right? And men are designed to be strong. But I think there's a misplaced emphasis here. So on his deathbed, this is where I think the phrase, be a man, is first taken from.

King David exhorts his son Solomon, 1 Kings 2-3, on his deathbed, I'm about to go to the way of all the earth. Be strong and show yourself a man, or be a man, literally, and keep the charge of the Lord your God, walking in his ways and keeping his statutes, his commandments, his rules, and his testimonies, as it is written in the law of Moses, that you may prosper in all that you do and wherever you turn.

So in that context, just looking at, listening to what I've read, what does it mean to be strong and be a man in that situation, in that context? What does David emphasize?

Jeffrey, go ahead. Life. Life. Life. Like, leadership, mentorship, discipleship, like, leading, and especially awards. Yeah, in particular, in what way?

What did he follow that up with after saying? Like, obeying God. Obeying God. So being strong and being a man in this context is being firm in your biblical convictions, what God has taught, right?

[32 : 30] So I'm going to take you to another place. 1 Corinthians 16-13. Be watchful. Stand firm in the faith. Act like men.

Be strong. In that context, what does it mean to be strong and act like men? Yeah, standing in the Lord, standing firm in the faith.

Once again, it's got something to do with your character and your conviction and less to do with how physically strong you are, right? Even when you are going into battle, in 1 Samuel 4-9, the Philistines are afraid and then they start to exhort their men, take courage and be men.

Be men and fight. But in that situation, being men has to do with taking courage and standing up and not cowering and running and retreating, right?

In that context. So, I don't want to tell you guys to not work out. I think that's good for you, you know? And physical training has some value, right?

[33 : 40] So, 1 Timothy 4-7-8, have nothing to do with irreverency limits. Rather, train yourself for godliness. For while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.

So, I don't want to tell you not to go exercise and not to be strong. I don't think those things are bad, but the emphasis should be in strength of character, not in strength of your body because that's how the Bible primarily perceives what it means to act like a man and to be strong, right?

And this is, and I think that's really important because you guys have all, this is kind of a cliché, but like, you guys have heard of big, burly men who are like teddy bears, right?

I mean, it's like, it's not just how physically strong you are that makes you stand up and fight for your convictions even under persecution and even when people are coming after you. It's not your

physical strength, it's your convictions.

It's your strength of character and do you actually love God and do you actually love the people who are in your charge? That's what makes man truly manly. That's what makes them truly able to fight. So, I think the emphasis has to shift, I think, from that physical strength to strength of character.

[34 : 52] I think we're going to have a rightly biblical view of masculinity. And finally, I think the, well, actually, one more thing before I go to the final thing is the, I think, get rich idea of the real man, you know, your economic success also being linked to what it means to be a true man.

So, I'm getting, there's another book that I can recommend. A lot of the ideas that I'm getting here have been, I've taken from this, Nancy Pierce's research in her book, *The War, The Toxic War on Masculinity*.

It just came out like a month ago. And, and it's, she is excellent in cultural and, you know, I guess, sociological analysis.

I think her weakest point in the book is biblical exegesis. So, if you read that with that kind of caveat, I think it could be a really helpful resource for you. She's a philosopher who trained under Francis Schaeffer.

And, and I think the, and, and she actually attributes this kind of idea to have its root in the industrial revolution where men were taken out of their home and where work was taken outside of their home and their work and the socialization at work became detached from their primary relationships.

[36 : 09] And in that environment where, I mean, there's a lot of testosterone, there's a lot of competition and there's a lot of worldly materialistic value being pushed down and, and down men's throats.

And, and so that, again, so that idea of you're more of a man when you make more money, that's, that's profoundly unbiblical. And, and, and that's, so I think the, that's another one.

She spent several chapters actually talking about that. The final thing is, is the, is the way men view women and to treat women. I think this is the primary, one of the main problems with the, the manosphere.

It's the, because there's this idea that women are kind of like accessories who exist to help, you know, help men in whatever they are wanting to accomplish.

Now, there is a biblical idea that, that wives are called to be the men's helpers. But the, they're called to be helpers in a mission that God has given to both men and women to, to go and subdue the earth, right?

[37 : 08] To exercise dominion over the earth together. That's given to both man and woman. And, and it's, and, and, and I think the, the call, especially for husbands to love their wives, Ephesians 5, 25, 26, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, right?

You could say all you want that Christ's mission, you know, wasn't maybe directly related to, to this. I think, I think it was connected. It's, his mission was to obey the father, to glorify the father, to redeem humankind, right?

And, and to redeem the people that God has chosen for himself, right? But here, but he did that by loving his bride, the church, and giving himself up for her, right?

And so I think married men are supposed to, to do that. And that should be a fundamental part of how men view themselves and what they're supposed to do in life if you are married. That's why 1 Corinthians 7, 32-35, Paul says that it is right for the married man to be concerned about pleasing his wife.

Married men should be concerned about pleasing his wife, biblically speaking, right? That doesn't mean that you are, you know, losing or forsaking your God-given mission. Now, and I think the, I said this, I think a few years ago when I first did the men's ministry session, the first session that we launched it with, the book of Ruth is actually a great place to go to learn about what it looks, what it means to be a biblical woman and a biblical man.

[38 : 45] And it's very interesting because, you know, Ruth 3.11 says that Ruth was a worthy woman and then Ruth 2.1 says that Boaz was a worthy man. So there's already an intentional comparison between the two and connection of the two.

And then if you read it, it's, I think it's intentional. the narrator often refers to them as the man and the woman instead of calling them Boaz or Ruth.

And I think because there are these archetypes of what men and women should aspire to be. And so this is what we find about Boaz, this worthy man.

First, he's working the ground like God commanded him to do in Genesis, right? And he's providing for those who are under his charge. And then, so Naomi sends Ruth to go out glean in the field and then when Boaz notices her, he charges the young men not to touch her and then gives her food and drink.

And he tells her, lets her even glean among the sheaves, not the stuff that's fallen on the ground, leftovers, but from the main harvest. He lets her to pick up from there.

[39 : 52] And he commands the men not to reproach her. And then, you know, Ruth asks him, why have I found favor in your eyes? You know, and then this is what he says, all that you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband has been fully told me and how you left your father and mother in your native land and came to a people that you did not know before the Lord.

The Lord repay you for what you have done and the full reward be given to you by the Lord God, the Lord, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge. So, he's acknowledging that Ruth has come to take refuge in the Lord, to under his wings and now he wants to provide for her and protect her.

And then later on when it turns out that, you know, Boaz is a kinsman redeemer, the family protector or redeemer, he's supposed to marry Ruth to basically continue the line of her deceased husband.

And this is what Ruth says to him, I am Ruth, your servant. Spread your wings over your servant for you are a redeemer.

You guys notice the parallel between what Boaz said earlier that Ruth had come to take refuge under the wings of God. And now, Boaz is saying, you, as the kinsman redeemer, you, as the man in my life, is your call to extend your wings over me and to provide for me and protect me.

[41 : 19] And that's exactly what Boaz does. You know, this lesser man in that context would have attacked Ruth, taken advantage of her, socially disadvantaged and vulnerable position, but he protects her from that.

The lesser kinsman redeemer does not redeem the property and marry Ruth because he doesn't want to damage his own financial standing, but instead, Boaz sacrifices that and marries her.

So he is a refuge provider and he is a rest giver par excellence. He's a protector and a provider.

And that's exactly what we see in the exhortation to married men in Ephesians 5.

It calls husbands to nourish and cherish his wife. The word nourish literally means to provide food.

And the word cherish literally means to provide warmth.

I think that could apply physically and emotionally. So that's like you're providing home and hearth. Figuratively and literally you're providing and securing your wife, providing for her and protecting her.

[42 : 26] I think that's what biblical masculine should look like. And so I was reading this totally unexpected to find this in Isaiah 32 during our family worship yesterday.

I was so moved by it. It's describing what it's like when you have a godly leader, when you have a righteous king in a country or I think in this concept when you have a godly man who is leading his household.

It says it's like a hiding place from the wind, a shelter from the storm, like streams of water in a dry place, like the shade of a great rock in a weary land.

Isn't that such an amazing and beautiful vision for manhood? That's what godly men when they're exercising their god-given leadership and authority, that's what people who are under their care and in their responsibilities should feel like.

A shade in a scorching sun, a refreshing water, or a hiding place in the midst of a fierce storm. And so I want to really exhort you to aspire to that as men.

[43 : 30] Thank you. Thank you.