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Thank God for Testosterone? Confusion About Christian Manhood

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The Christian church is experiencing a crisis with men. The statistics tell the story. The church has been feminized in style and the manly virtues are depreciated. Christianity — a faith predicated on truths for which brave men were willing to die — has been transformed into a spirituality of mere feeling. Men are leaving in droves.

In many liberal Protestant churches the pews are filled with females, many of them aging. Sermons are vapid and boring. Feminist ideologies have taken hold and the context is ideologically hostile to the XY chromosome. Men stay away and boys see the church as something men avoid.

Among the evangelicals, the picture is often only slightly healthier. Even as many (but not all) of the ideological strains are attenuated or opposed, the mood of latent hostility to manly virtues often remains. Even among the evangelicals, ministries to men often look more like invitations to play than invitations to get serious about taking up the challenge of biblical manhood.

Then comes the report in *The Los Angeles Times* about “GodMen,” a ministry that seeks to introduce men to rugged Christianity. Nevertheless, the movement looks more rugged than Christian when it comes to a vision of manhood.

“Thank you, Lord, for our testosterone!” So shouts Brad Stine, “a stand-up comic by trade” who leads the GodMen movement. As the *Times* explains, “he’s here today as an evangelist, on a mission to build up a new Christian man — one profanity at a time.”

Well, I do not know of a man who is not thankful for testosterone, but what Christian men need is a robust and challenging theology of manhood, not a profanity-fest of adolescent immaturity. If thanking God for testosterone means behaving like teenage show-offs, some adult men had better show up fast.

The movement is largely correct in its identification of contemporary Christianity as feminized and feminine. The problem is their apparent adoption of a cartoonish distortion of masculinity as the answer.

The GodMen movement’s use of profanity is supposed to draw men — but to what? The men sing songs about wanting “my testosterone high.” What about actually *doing* what men are called in the Bible to do?

Take a look at this section of the paper’s report:

In fact, men taking charge is a big theme of the GodMen revival. At what he hopes will be the first of many such conferences, in a warehouse-turned-nightclub in downtown Nashville, Stine asks the men: “Are you ready to grab your sword and say, ‘OK, family, I’m going to lead you?’” He also distributes a list of a real man’s rules for his woman. No. 1: “Learn to work the toilet seat. You’re a big girl. If it’s up, put it down.”

Stine’s wife, Desiree, says she supports manly leadership; it seems to her the natural and God-ordained order of

things. As she puts it: “When the rubber hits the bat, I want to know my husband will protect me.” But some men at the conference run into trouble when they debut their new attitudes at home.

Eric Miller, a construction worker, admits his wife is none too pleased when he takes off, alone, on a weekend camping trip a few weeks after the GodMen conference this fall. “She was a little bit leery of it, as we have an infant,” he reports. “She said, ‘I need your help around here.’” Miller, 26, refuses to yield: “I am supposed to be the leader of the family.”

He’s pretty sure his wife will come around once she recognizes he’s modeling his life after Jesus’, like a good Christian should. It’ll just take a little explaining, because the Jesus he has in mind is the guy on the wanted poster: “confrontational and sarcastic when he needed to be,” Miller says, and determined to use “whatever means was necessary to achieve his goal.”

Are these guys serious? A real man honors women — especially his wife. Real manhood is shown in chivalry and the code of the gentleman, not in crude “rules for real men” that should be an embarrassment to all concerned.

And what of the man who wants to be “the leader of the family” by leaving his family to go on a camping trip with the guys when his family needs him? Is he a husband and father or a Boy Scout?

Christian manhood is not about beating chests and celebrating testosterone — it is about showing up and doing what real Christian men do. Real manhood is demonstrated in the fulfillment of a man’s assigned roles as husband, father, leader, servant, teacher, protector, and provider. Real manhood is in doing what men *do*, not endless talk about how great it is to be a man. Real Christian manhood is evident in taking up leadership in the home and in the church, not in crude and facile talk about Jesus using profanity when he called Herod “that fox.”

In other words, real Christian men are those who have grown up to *be* men, not those who embarrass the church and confuse the Gospel with displays of adolescent misbehavior. Let’s hope this movement grows up before it blows up.

We discussed this issue on Friday’s edition of *The Albert Mohler Program* [listen [here](#)].

