

# MESSAGE TRANSCRIPT //

**ACT LIKE MEN | REAL MAN. GOOD MAN. GOD'S MAN.**

**AARON BROCKETT | JUNE 23, 2024**

Well, it's good to be with everybody today across all of our locations and those of you joining us online as we wrap up a series that we have been in this summer called Real Man, Good Man, God's Man.

If you have a Bible go ahead and meet me in 1 Corinthians, chapter 16. That's the passage that we are going to walk through and unpack together in just a moment—1 Corinthians, chapter 16.

As you're turning there and getting settled in, fellas and ladies who have a fella in your life whether that's your husband, boyfriend, or dad, a son or a brother, mark on your calendars Friday night, October 4. Hold the date. That's going to be our next Men's Night.

Registration is not quite open yet, but I want you to hold the date. Don't schedule anything on that evening. Be thinking about some men who you want to invite to come.

If you've never been to a Men's Night, man, you're looking forward to something really, really special because God shows up in big, big ways at Men's Night.

Our team is already planning the details. We've got some incredible things planned. We've got an amazing guest speaker coming from out of town who is going to be with us. Can't wait to share that with all of you—so plan to be here on October the 4th.

Ladies, we are planning Women's Night as well. It's likely going to come the first part of 2025, which I know is a bummer. It's a little bit longer to wait. But the reason why is because yours is better. And you think that I'm joking about that but I'm not joking. It just takes much, much longer to plan. So, we've got yours scheduled for early 2025.

Men's and Women's Night, something just shifts in the room—it's just a really powerful encounter. So we want you to be a part of them.

I don't know if you're just now joining us for this series, but if you are you're kind of coming in on the tail end of a four-part series of messages that we've been in over the last few weeks, really discussing biblical manhood.

But included in that is womanhood. And I've tried to stress this every week, the primary recipients of a series like this isn't just men but it is women and children.



I've been getting all kinds of feedback over the last several weeks, just so much good response both from men and women. But there was an email that came in; actually it came in to Marshall Hawn who is our northwest campus pastor.

He passed it on to me. I read it. I was so moved that I said, "Hey, man. Can you get permission for me to be able to share at least parts of that email? And this person graciously granted us permission. So, I just want to read to you this response we got a couple of weeks ago.

This person works with incarcerated prisoners at a base. There are 320 inmates that apparently listen to these messages every week. And this person writes that these inmates are placed on crews who maintain the base. Here are her words:

These are the forgotten men in our society. Inmates that are often considered the throw-aways. As a retired State Trooper, things have come full circle for me. I've worked very hard for many years to put people in jail. Now, I work with them as they are transitioning to get out of jail.

While I do not work for the prison, I pick up a crew of inmates every morning. Oftentimes on Mondays during our morning huddle, I play the Sunday message from Traders Point. This series on men in crisis is very pertinent to the men that are incarcerated.

As I watched one of the offenders listen to the message this morning, his body language went from arms folded, not really convinced he was going to get anything from it, to leaned in, chin in his hand, intent on every word.

He would often nod his head in agreement. This man has been incarcerated more than once. He has not known God up to this point in his life. After the message he said that he had recently prayed.

I love this. Get this.

He recently prayed that the Lord would open his eyes as to what his purpose is. And then he heard this message. And it was an answer to his prayer. He identified with Pastor Aaron's words about young men having no real example of what it means to be a godly man.

He's in his 40s and feels as though he is just now finding God. He cannot wait for the next sermon. So, thank you.

And then she writes this.

If we expect these offenders to be contributing, productive members of society, we have to educate them about what is good for their mental health, their families, and their



communities. I love what this series is telling our men and our women. You are inspiring men who have never had a role model.

One of my offenders stole his first car at age nine with his cousins. A life of criminal activity with no good example of how to be a real, godly man will just lead men down a destructive path. So, thank you again for addressing the hard things.

Man, that is so, so good. And really, right now, what I just want to do is I just want to look right into the camera because if that group of men happens to be listening to this message—first of all I just want to thank you for being willing and vulnerable enough to share your story.

The second thing I just want you to know is that we see you. And as a church family we love you, we believe in what God is doing and working in your life. And that all of us are in just as much need of God's grace as any one of you. And God is in the restoration business.

You are not what you've done. You are not what has been done to you. You are who God says you are in Jesus. And, man, we're so grateful to have you here. You've got a church family in us.

And I love that last sentence of that email because she says, "Thank you for addressing the hard things." And it has been hard. I knew that coming into this series. I knew I was asking for it. It's like, "Hey, when's the next series on masculinity?" And I'm like, "Really?"

I know I've been tip toeing through a minefield because there are a lot of tensions there. But I'm not afraid of the tensions, because the tension is where the transformation is. And if you look through the Scriptures, you actually see that Scripture is filled with tensions: grace and truth; mercy and justice; the sovereignty of God and our free will.

I've used this analogy before of a rubber band. The rubber band isn't really useful for much of anything unless tension is applied. And the same thing is true with this subject.

Right now we live in such a polarized, divided society that we feel like we can't talk about some of these things because we're going to get cancelled or whatever. But I just kind of felt like... My wife says this all of the time, "You don't pick fights, but you meet them."

I just want to go hard on the pain in this—not to try to make a point or say some sort of political thing, but to actually recognize that every single one of us, when it comes to subjects like this, we're all in pain. We're all in pain. There is woundedness that has happened, there is trauma that has happened, there are issues that are in front of us.

And every single one of us are reading off of some kind of script, whether we realize it or not, that informs the way we think, that informs the way that we feel, that then

informs the way that we live and treat other people. And it's so important that we understand what script we're reading off of and whether or not it's trustworthy.

I don't want to be really simplistic, but here are the three scripts: there is the secular script; the moral script; and then what I would say is the biblical or the gospel script.

Now, the secular script is really just kind of dressed up humanism. It just kind of makes... We've said that we've been created in God's image. Well the secular script says, "No, we need to recreate God in our image."

"I want to be my own person. I want to find my identity in what I do and who I'm attracted to and my bank account and my career."

Now, the secular script says that I'm kind of ultimate. The moral script sounds better; it's maybe a tad better. But it still just leads to really destructive ends. The moral script—maybe this is the reason why many of you walked away from church, it's because you didn't get a biblical script, you got a moral script.

What I mean by that is maybe you were told, or you kind of felt that the preacher was saying you need to be better. You need to be good. That's religion. Religion is our effort to get to God. But there is no way that we can do it. The gospel is God's effort to get to us, which is utterly transformational. You can never work your way to God.

Oftentimes we hear the moral script—you just need to be good. But the problem is that it doesn't go far enough. There are no good apps that justify us. The Bible says that all of our righteous acts are like filthy rags.

So, if you manage to live off of the moral script, here's what will end up happening. You'll end up turning into a legalistic Pharisee and become prideful in your morals. And by the way, when it comes to morals, we always compare down. We never compare up.

Or, we'll impose our morality toward other people in the world and hold them to a standard that they never agreed to, which they interpret as self-righteous, hypocritical religion. And we wonder why the church has an issue.

Or, we'll just become so crushed and ashamed that we can't ever live up to our own standards and we walk away from God.

The biblical script, the gospel script, is our only hope and our only answer. And right now, more than ever, in a divided, pluralistic, dumpster fire of a society we need Christians who are not saying that they are Christians reading off of the secular or the moral scripts. We need Christians who are taking their cues and reading off of the gospel.

So, the secular script—here's what the secular script has done. It's given us an image of what a man or a woman is. You fill in the blank with any number of things. It oversexualizes woman and it's also done, just an equally damaging thing with man.

I'm going to date myself a little bit. But when I was growing up, I just felt like the epitome of a man was that Marlboro man on those billboards. You know? It was just like this cowboy hat, cigarette thing going out of his mouth, riding a horse. Oh, man. That's a real man. And then we figured out that cigarettes were bad for you. Well, maybe not so much.

Or, maybe it's James Bond. This good looking, kind of a womanizer, you know?

So, as a generation of men we kind of followed after that. The secular script is saying, "Be a man." And Hollywood kind of threw up these images of what they think a man is. And that led to really poor, destructive, abusive behavior.

So, then the secular script switched. And here's what it says now. It's going to diminish what a man is in order to elevate the cause of women, which only creates more tension among the sexes, putting young men in crisis because now they don't know who they are, or what is even allowed.

And then, as I said on week one, women and children are further in danger because there is nothing more dangerous than a frustrated, unmotivated, angry young man with no prospects. They are the biggest threat to society.

So elevating the crisis of manhood, that's a tension. We're not trying to diminish the plight of women. We're trying to hold both of them up and recognize the secular script has failed us, the moral script doesn't go far enough, we need a better script.

And Jesus has given that to us. In Matthew, chapter 6, He prayed that we, as the redeemed... If you've placed your trust in Jesus, not just as Savior but as Lord, and you're following after Him, you are the redeemed. And He says to the redeemed, "You've been saved from something for something."

And this kingdom is not your home. You are a resident of another kingdom, the kingdom of God. And you are ambassadors of that kingdom, which means that you live off of a different script.

So, Jesus said... The first inauguration of His kingdom coming was when he defeated the grave and walked out of it and defeated death on our behalf. And now the kingdom of God is coming. And He says to us as ambassadors, "Live a kingdom life."

That should be true of your relationships, that should be true in the marketplace, that should be true of your finances, that should be true in your marriages, and your sexuality. It's that, "I have kingdom lenses and I'm ushering in, through my behavior and the way that I treat others, the kingdom of God that will be consummated in the future but is already in the present, coming in."

The biblical script offers a much better description of what God intended for men and women, what went wrong, and how He is redeeming and ultimately will one day restore things.

So, on week number one I just said this, “We’ve all got to have this framework of Creation, Fall, Redemption.” When you read through the Scriptures, you’ve got to look at them through that framework. Creation: What did God intend? The Fall: What happened? And Redemption: What has God done to make things right and is making things right?

We said on week one that God made man and woman (He had both of us in mind at the time of creation) in His image, meaning that both genders are different but equal and equally reflect who God is.

And God continued to use that plural pronoun them all throughout the creation account. He created them in His image. He gave them dominion over all of creation. So, God made us in His image.

Here’s what we try to do. We try to recreate God in ours. And the original temptation was not a piece of fruit. First of all it was to get us to focus on what we lack and overlook the abundance that God had provided, because there was only one tree that we couldn’t have. Every single other tree we could.

I don’t know about you guys, that is super convicting because I have a tendency to focus on the things that I lack rather than on all of the things that God has given me.

The second temptation is to recognize that instead of being content to image God, Satan said, “Oh, you can be like God.” So, the software is image bearers, the sin is the virus. And the virus has invaded the software. And what it has done is it has created a bunch of fallen, broken men and fallen, broken women and we keep hurting each other. See:

When men don’t know who they are or what it means to be a man, it hurts everyone

And that would be true of women too.

But as we’re talking about men and the affect that they have on themselves, the people that they are in relationship with, and society—when men are confused and they just don’t know who they are or what it means to be a man, it just hurts everybody. However, when God can capture the heart of a man, it changes things.

It certainly changes things when He captures the heart of a woman as well, but as we said a couple of weeks ago, when a man comes to Christ a large percentage of the family will follow because there is something that God has placed upon that man. It’s a sense of responsibility.

Once again, going back to Adam, the core root of the sin issue in a man’s life is bouncing back and forth between abdication and aggression.

And so when God can get ahold of a man's heart—I'm talking about transformation—that changes things. And men cannot be lectured, shamed, manipulated, or guilted into it. They have to be (and this is the key word) they've got to be transformed. And that's what we are after.

I just want to encourage you today, right now, I don't want you to play religion, I don't want you to try to pull yourself up by your boot straps and to be as good as you possibly can be, I want you to be transformed.

And here's the posture of transformation: it's vulnerability, it's humility, it's recognizing how far I have to go, it's recognizing that I can't get myself there. That is so hard for many men to do—to recognize that they are in need of a Savior. They need transformation.

We live in this society (I was talking about this with somebody today) where right now none of us feel safe to be vulnerable or real because here's what ends up happening. Maybe somebody gets vulnerable or he gets caught and then maybe we sweep that sin under the rug, we look the other way; we sort of empower him to continue abusing people, which is totally wrong. Or, somebody comes clean, gets caught and you cancel and obliterate him.

For the rest of us, we're just like, "Uh, can I be vulnerable? Or am I just going to get cancelled or am I going to get vaporized?"

And, as a church, we've got to have a better way of recognizing... Just like Jesus' conversation with a woman at a well and a thief on a cross, Jesus didn't look the other way and accommodate, and He did not cancel them. He restored them. He redeemed them. He forgave them. He transformed them.

So, Paul is writing a letter to a really, really messed up church in 1 Corinthians. 1 Corinthians is one of my favorite letters. It is so real and raw. When we go to God and we're like, "Why can't we be like the church in the New Testament?" And I'm like, "Which one?" Because all of them are really, really messed up.

And the church in Corinth, I think there is so much for us to relate to, because the church in Corinth was filled with men and women who really wanted to follow God, but they didn't grow up in church so they came to Jesus later in life and they brought all of their addictions and their baggage with them. It was a big, beautiful mess.

And Paul is writing to address some things that were going on in this church in the midst of this really pluralistic society.

By the way, we're going to launch a series next weekend in 1 Corinthians, we're just going to go verse by verse, chapter by chapter as far as we can get in the letter all the way up through November.



I was trying to figure out, “What do I preach on as we ramp up into the election?” And I was like, “Ah, let’s just go verse by verse through the Bible.” Here’s what I’m hoping will happen. There will be some things that we’ll actually come across in the text—I’m just praying that this will happen, I’ve seen God do this—where it’s like, “Wow, Aaron. Did you plan that?”

“No, we just preach what was next in the text.”

So, we’re just going to get as far as we can. And that’s going to start up next weekend. Let me just give you a little bit of a feel for the flavor for this letter in 1 Corinthians.

Here’s what Paul writes as he’s trying to bring some concluding thoughts in the letter. He’s addressing some interpersonal dynamics. And he says some things that I think are really helpful for us. He says:

“Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, act like men,” and then he qualifies it immediately, “be strong.” I’ll unpack that in a minute, “Let all that you do be done in love.” Corinthians 16:13-14 (ESV)

Now, I love that passage. I don’t even know how much explanation it really needs. But Paul is writing to both men and women, they both apply, and he says, “Hey, I want you to be watchful.”

This is this idea that we need to be very cognizant of the battle that we are all in. One of our elders says it so well. He’s like, “Hey, guys. We’ve got to be really careful. All of us are one decision away from stupid.” Isn’t that so true? We can blow up our lives with just one decision.

So, we’ve got to recognize that we are in a battle that is not a passive one. It is a very aggressive one. The Bible says, really clearly, who our enemy is. It says he is prowling around, on the hunt, like a roaring lion looking for someone...

He doesn’t say tempt or looking for someone to deceive—even though that is true, that is not what it says. He uses a much stronger word devour. He wants to devour, which means that we have to be watchful.

I was in Wyoming a couple of weeks ago. And if you’ve ever been out west away from the city you notice a couple of things. Number one: how brilliant the stars can be in the western sky at night. Number two: how dark it can really get when you don’t have city lights illuminating anything.

I was walking back to my cabin every night and the ground was uneven, filled with rocks. Luckily I had a little flashlight on my watch, so I would illuminate that. And I’m so thankful that I did because it illuminated my path and immediately I was brought to this passage and what the Scripture says; The Bible is a light unto my path. We have got to be watchful for the path that we are on.



And then Paul goes on and he says, “Hey, listen. I want you to stand firm.” How? “In the faith.”

This is this idea of recognizing that whatever your personal time with God looks like, the five, 10, or 15 minutes a day or whatever it is, Daily Bible Ready, devotions, spiritual disciplines—those are not things that you do to be a good little Christian. Those aren’t things you do to re-up your salvation. God’s not like, “Well they paid their dues today. They did their quiet time.” No, this is you standing firm in your faith. This is that you recognized, “I’ve got to have stable feet for the path and the battle that is in front of me.”

And then Paul gets right at it. He actually says the same thing, very similar to what we’ve seen David say to his son Solomon in 1 Kings over the last couple of weeks. He says, “I want you to act like men.”

Now, he’s writing to a mixed group here. He’s talking to men and women. But this is one of those where he’s kind of talking to everybody, but he’s looking at the dudes. And he’s like, “I want you to act like men.”

And then immediately he knows they are going to have questions in their mind—is that Marlboro man? It’s it James Bond? Who is it?

And he goes, “Be strong,” which means that it’s not a bad thing to be strong, but he’s not talking about biceps and six-pack abs. He’s talking about maturity.

Actually, women are strong as well. You’d be foolish to say that they are not. But it’s a different kind of strength that is displayed in the genders.

And it says, “I want you to be strong,” which means endurance and grit and maturity.” And in case you might misinterpret the passage he says, “Let all that you do be done in love.”

This brings me back to my favorite definition of manhood. I addressed it a couple of weeks ago when we were talking about the word meek. Here it is right here: Strength under control.

Society says: Be a real man. And we’re kind of going, “Well, what does that mean?” And oftentimes it has been reduced to suck up your emotions, don’t cry, be a stud, drink a lot of beer, hook up with as many women as you can. And it’s gone way wrong.

Here’s the equation of what that looks like:

All STRENGTH and no CONTROL = abuse and manipulation

The moral script comes along and says: Hey, be a good man. And we can reduce that to—and this is the reason why the church has not been able to capture the attention of a lot of men, because they are not interested in this—be nice. Be tame. Be milk toast. Go



to church. Follow the rules. Suppression—be boring and just come and sing love songs to Jesus.

Here's the equation;

All CONTROL and no STRENGTH = passivity and abdication

And no man is interested in that. I think that there are a lot of men right now who have a false understanding of what it is... The very nature of God and who Jesus is and what it is that He's called you to because every man wants an adventure to go on, and a battle to fight, and a purpose to fulfill.

And the only way that we can fulfill that is by looking to the example of Jesus and be God's man. Oftentimes we have kind of painted Jesus as sort of in an effeminate way. Jesus was a man in all of the best ways. Jesus was kind with broken and hurting people. And He was aggressive with unholy spirits.

We have a tendency to flip it. We have a tendency to be aggressive with people who need our kindness and we are overly accommodating to unholy spirits.

You are like, "What are you talking about?" Well, if you're a man and you're passive in your home and you're not fighting a spiritual battle, you are allowing unholy spirits to actually wreck your home. You need to be aggressive with unholy spirits and kind and tender toward your wife and your children and the people who are around you.

Jesus was the kind of man women felt safe around.

So, what was Jesus' version of masculinity? I am really grateful for Old Testament scholar Walter Brueggemann who points out that Jesus' behavior toward women was a scandalous breach of decorum and a challenge to the gender boundaries of the first century.

Here's what I mean. Let me give you a few examples. In first century Judaism, men occupied the public sphere while women were confined, almost entirely, to the private. Jesus subverted the cultural paradigm by allowing women to travel with Him—Luke, chapter 8. That had never been done before.

A Jewish woman was rarely seen outside her home. And if she did venture out into the streets she was to wear a heavy veil and was prohibited from talking to men. But Jesus was not afraid to talk to a foreign, Samaritan woman in public at a well, alone, which explains when the disciples came back from wherever they were, they were baffled.

Jesus not only talked to women, but He touched them appropriately. When Jesus laid hands on the crowds to heal them, clearly many of them were women. When He put His hands on a crippled woman who was bent over due to her condition, she immediately straightened up and Jesus referred to her as a daughter of Abraham—Luke 13.

Now, that may not mean anything to you, but here's what was so significant about that. The term son of Abraham had been used to indicate that a Jewish male was recognized as bound by covenant to God. And women had never before been referred to as daughter, but that's a title that Jesus gave for the very first time to a woman, recognizing her status as equal with men.

A Jewish woman could go to the Temple, but they were confronted to the women's court. By contrast, Jesus taught men and women together at the feeding of the 5,000. That text mentions that women and children were mingled among the men—Matthew, chapter 14.

Jesus commended Mary of Bethany for sitting at His feet alongside of his male disciples.

Jesus highlighted women as positive examples for male disciples to follow. He praised an impoverished widow for giving to the Temple all that she had to live on—Luke 21.

Many of His parables featured fictionalized women as positive object lessons for His male disciples: the woman who lost a coin—Luke 15; a woman who kneaded yeast into her dough—Luke 13; the five wise virgins—Matthew 25; and the persistent widow—Luke 18.

And maybe most astonishingly of all, Jesus entrusted the message of His resurrection, the most important gospel declaration ever, to women.

In a world where the testimony of a woman was not allowed in court... In fact, the pagan thinkers of the time guys by the names of Celsus and Porphyry tried to discredit the resurrection accounts because the first eye witnesses were women.

That just leads to the question that if this was made up, or if Jesus really wanted this to stick, to be air tight, why not entrust the announcement of His resurrection to high-powered men like Pilot or Herod or the Jewish High Priest or at least to some men who were with the women at the tomb when He entrusted that to them?

I say all of that to say this. Jesus demonstrated in every way what it means to be a real man, a good man, and God's man in a way that subverts the secular and the moral scripts of today, because His kingdom is not of this world. Therefore, we should not expect what we code as masculine to be pressed upon us by a fallen world.

If I can summarize all four weeks of this series into a sentence, this might be my best stab at it: Jesus is the ultimate man, the image of God. And as men, we can be confident that His version of masculinity is the one and the only one that we should emulate.

I love how Pastor Clayton King puts it. I'm just going to read his words. I couldn't have said it any better myself. He said this,

Man, I love being a man. It seems to me to be way easier than being a woman. I saw my wife give birth twice. And that is feat is on par with summiting Mount Everest barefoot.

Male is my gender, but I've been thinking about some manly things lately. As a Christian the Scriptures anchor me to my God, my beliefs, and my identity in Christ. As a man, I'm serious about loving my family, protecting, providing, defending them.

But there is way more beneath the surface. As a man I can also connect emotionally with my wife. My sons see me cry openly and often when I express my love to them. I'm physically affectionate with my family and friends.

I participate in tasks that some, unfortunately, call feminine like cooking, laundry, and grocery shopping.

My personality isn't defined by traditional or progressive cultural expectations of what I should be like as a man. God gave me my personality and I'm comfortable with all of the ways that He created me uniquely to be a dad, a husband, and an evangelist, and a pastor.

I drive a truck. Amen. I've hunted legally and ethically. I'm at home on a tractor or an ATV or running a chainsaw all day. So, that makes me a man's man. And I agree. But there is more to me than power tools and work boots.

I listen to classical music. I love reading fiction. I enjoy love stories in books and in movies. I'm mesmerized by sun rises and sun sets. Downton Abby consistently made me cry. I'm not sorry about that or embarrassed.

I'm saying this to somebody right now. So, for the guy who feels like less than a man because you don't own any guns, you don't do CrossFit, you would rather watch The Queen's Gambit rather than the Super Bowl, you can still be God's man: tough and tender; strong and sensitive; loving and leading; faithful to Jesus and those in your life.

Here's how I would say it. I would just simply say that a real man is:

**STRENGTH** submitted under His **CONTROL**

Strength submitted under the Lordship of King Jesus.

And right now, we have a lot of pain and a lot of hurt. That's the challenge of preaching a series like this. I just know that you've all got a lens by which you are hearing all of this.

And preaching... I can't go around and fix everyone's issues. But I can simply say this is where I invite the Holy Spirit in to take my words and contextualize them to what I know you need to hear.

I know we've got a lot of young women who are looking for this kind of man. We've got a lot of young men who've said, "You know what? I'm trying to be this kind of a man, but it seems all the girls I date, they don't want me to be this man."

This is the result of the fall. And we don't need to victimize or blame. We need surrendered men and women saying, "You know what? I'm going to submit my strength, I'm going to submit my gifts, I'm going to submit my personality under the Lordship of Jesus."

We need men who are not afraid to cry. We need men who are not afraid to seek counsel or counseling. Men who are willing to hear and receive what they'd really rather not hear; men who are not afraid to own their junk; men who make apologies and amends; men who fight predators instead of becoming one.

Men who are tender and kind; men who expose the poser within themselves—and it's there—who refuse to pretend any longer; men who recognize their failures and faults and they own them instead of pointing the fingers of blame at others; men who make women feel safe, directing their strength for them instead of against them.

Men who use their position to serve and promote others; men who understand that if they are going to stand like a man, they have first got to kneel before their God, and men are not...

Don't get drug into the silly, petty arguments of society and culture that wants to say: who's better? Men or women. That's just a silly, silly argument. We've been made in the image of God, different but equal.

I would say God has placed upon a man to go first sacrificially. Why? Well, I think it goes back to Adam: abdication or aggression.

And God is saying, "I just want you to be the first one to just step out and be a servant, to be sacrificial because leadership is not about being smart or knowing all of the answers or giving commands. Leadership is about laying down your life and taking responsibility."

Some of us are going, "Man, that's a lot of weight on my shoulders." Yes, it is. God gave you broader shoulders for a reason.

And Paul puts it this way in 1 Peter, chapter 3. He's writing to this to married couples. I know not everybody is married who is here today and you've got a different scenario, but I want you to contextualize what it he's saying, find out the principle. Right? This is what he is saying in this passage. He's writing to husbands and he's being pretty direct. He says:

"In the same way, you husbands must give honor to your wives." This is a key word here. He says, "Treat your wife with," oh, man, "understanding..."

I'm preaching to myself here. I've got to have understanding. I've got to be willing to ask questions and be curious about, "Hey, what's it like to be married to me? What's it like to

be on the other side of me?" I want to become a student of my wife. And I've got a long way to go in this, to continue to mine out the depths of her emotional and spiritual soul.

Be understanding, fellas. Don't always be defensive. Lay down your weapons. Be understanding:

"as you live together. She may be," oh, man an inflammatory word, "weaker..."

That does not mean inferior. Ladies, biologically... We could look at it and go, "Men just have a tendency to be a little bit physically bigger, taller, more skeletal muscle— that doesn't mean superior. It just means that you're probably going to win in an arm wrestling contest with him—maybe. Not everybody.

So, understand. Hold on to that:

"but she is your equal partner in God's gift of new life."

So, he keeps going back to this word again, he keeps going back to treat:

"Treat her as you should," this is so, so great, "so your prayers will not be hindered." 1 Peter 3:7-8 (NLT)

Now, I've used this analogy before to try to help us understand what Peter just said. I've brought two of my favorite glasses. These came right out of my kitchen cupboard; I brought them with me this morning. These are my two go tos. And if you were to say, "Aaron, which one is better?" I'd be like, "What are you talking about?"

In my mind they are equal. They are just made from different things. So, here's what I mean. Early in the morning I'll want my coffee to stay warm through the day, or, if I want to stay hydrated at a camping site—the Yeti is the way to go. I'd never put coffee in this [a glass goblet].

My wife and my twenty-fifth wedding is this Wednesday. And I have... So shameless for me to throw that out. Thank you so much. Be clapping for her. I married a saint, that woman.

So, I mortgaged my house to take her to a really nice dinner this Wednesday and we're probably going to have a steak and we're probably going to order a really nice bottle of cab and I ain't bring this [the Yeti]. You get what I'm talking about? Aren't you glad that we have both?

God has created both and they are different. That's what he's driving at, but they are equal.

The primary thing that I want you to see in that very last sentence is that he's really going hard after a guy and he says, "Hey, I want you to treat her as you should, honoring and cherishing, valuing and protecting her. And if you don't treat her as you should, then don't expect Me to listen to you."

It's a prayer blocker. He's like, "I'm not going to be listening to your prayers if you are not treating your wife as you should." So, can I just say to the guys here...

Listen, man. I know that the virus of sin has infected both men and women. And we've got some really earnest men who are trying to follow after Jesus. And maybe you've been hurt by a woman.

And we've got a lot of women who are trying to follow after Jesus and they've been hurt by a man.

The only way that we get out of this is not by pointing fingers at each other, but we recognize that primarily we've got to go vertical with God.

And I just want to say to the guys in the room right now, especially those of you who have a family, the most important thing that your family can see you do is lead out—not because you have all of the answers, not because you're superior, or you're the general in charge, but lead out because you going to go sacrificially.

And here's what I meant by lead out. They need to see your relationship with Jesus. And they need to see consistency in your behavior between public dad and private dad.

I've got to tell you, this lays really heavily on me because this is true for all Christian men, but I've got more at stake because I'm the dude on the platform. And I've got immediate accountability every single week because I've got a wife and three daughters who listen to me preach on this platform and then they also see me at home. And I...

Listen. There will come a day when I will not be your pastor. I hope that that is not anytime soon. I'd like to think I've got another 20 years to make.

However, however, my identity first and foremost cannot be what you think of me on this platform because long after you all stop calling me pastor because you've moved on to somebody younger or better, I'll still be their father and her husband.

I never want, and I've got a long way to go in this and I am still in process making progress—I never, ever want my wife and my son and my daughters to look at me on the stage preaching and not recognize who this is, "He's pretending. He's being somebody that he is not."

So, fellas, can I just say this to you? One of the most important things that your family can see in you—let's just start with this. They need to see you worship God. They need to see you be expressive.

Now, I'm talking to those of you who say that you are following after Jesus. I'm not talking to the religion in name only nominals. I'm talking to those of you men who say, "I want to follow after God with all of my heart." They need to see you worship God.

You may say, "I'm not a very expressive person." That's legit. If I go with you to a ball game and you stand there in a gruesome pose and you're bored out of your mind, it's okay to stand here bored out of your mind in a gruesome pose because you're being consistent.

But if I see you here being bored out of your mind and looking at your watch, then I see you down at the ball game and you're losing your mind—you've got a problem.

So, here's the deal. Your family needs to see you worship God. And here's why this is so important. When they see you worship, here's what they think, "Okay, I may not be stronger than you are physically, but God is. I can't control him, but God can. And if he's worshipping God, and controlled by God, then I'm safe."

And where are we supposed to learn this as men? We're supposed to learn this from our dads. The most formational thing in your life is your relationship with your father. I'm not trying to discredit your relationship with your mother, but I'm saying, specifically for guys, the most formational thing in your life is your relationship with your dad.

Some of you may immediately push back and say, "Well, I didn't have a father." Or, "He was emotionally checked out." Or, "He cheated on my mom." Or, "He walked out on me." And I would say, "Precisely. That is the most formative thing. And you need healing from that."

This image right here [of a son standing opposite of his father with holes in their silhouettes] every time I look at it, I tear up because that's so many of our stories.

And I know this is true for a lot of young women. I know that there are a lot of young women who have a hard time referring to God as their heavenly Father because their relationship with their earthly father was so abusive.

And I know a lot of young men who were looking for the affirmation of their dad and they never got it. And likely if you can look into your father's soul you would see a bunch of holes like that because they never got it from their dads and their dads never got it from their dads, all the way back to Adam.

I talked about this a couple of weeks ago. This is what is called generational sin. And at some point we have to be a generational sin blocker.

Both of my great grandfathers on both my mom and dad's side—I never met them—but I know their names and I know what they did. I don't know their family of origin, but it can't be good because both of them, when they were roughly my age blew their lives up, cheated on my great grandmothers, and the shrapnel of that went in to the men who would become my grandfathers.



And then you just see the generational sin and tension get passed down through the line. And one time my grandfather told me, when I was in college, that he had a lot of wounding from his dad, my Great Grandpa Brockett.

And he said, "You know, Aaron. The last time I ever saw that man alive... He lived in the same town but he had abandoned our family. In fact, my great grandmother sold her body a number of times to put food on the table.

And he said, "The last time I ever set down with your great grandfather, it was in a café, and he looked me and he said, "Why don't you ever call me dad?" And I looked back at him and I said, "Because you're not." And then he walked out. He said, "It's the last time I ever saw him ever again."

I'm telling you, that has been passed down through the generations to the point that I can even feel it now in my relationship with my son. My son will be 22 in September. He is so much like me it is scary. In fact, my wife says that she feels like she's raising me.

And I'm like, "You're welcome. And I am so sorry."

But I can feel this with my son. We're really close. I love him to death. He lives eight-and-a-half hours away. I don't get to see him that much. But, when I'm around him I can feel the generational sin. It's almost like two sides of magnet that are opposing each other.

I sat down with him a few years ago and I said, "Son, listen. Here's what has happened in our family. Here's the sin that has been passed down through the men in our family. Can you feel it?" And he said, "Yeah." And I'm like, "In order for us to break that cycle we've got to be intentional about our pain and we've got to stay close together."

He wrote me a letter a few years ago on Father's Day and he said, "Dad, I choose to fight for us."

I am so far over my time that I've got to land the plane. So, here's why this is so important. Listen. Listen to me. Look right at me:

Pain that is not transformed gets transmitted

I know that you've got pain in your life.

Now, some of you had great dads. Man, we celebrate that with you. If you had a great earthly dad that's awesome. But he probably wasn't perfect. And there is probably some wounding and there is probably some pain.

And, man. Hurting people, it is true, they hurt people. That's what is going on in the world. We've all got wounding and we're lashing out at each other with our wounding and our pain.

And pain that doesn't get transformed by laying it at the foot of the cross and asking God to do the impossible by healing and transforming that pain—you will just transmit it, either to your family, your spouse, or to other people. We repeat what we don't repair.

So, right now I just want to ask you to have this openhanded posture of vulnerability and humility and confession and repentance to say, "God, I just want to come to You right now. In that image, I've just got holes all over me. I've been wounded. I've been abused. I'm bitter. And I don't want to be enslaved to that pain any longer. And I don't want to transmit it. I want to be transformed by it."

And that can only come through the power of the Holy Spirit. Man, if we had a few men who would just stand up and start punching holes in darkness, if we just had a few men who said, "You know what? I've got a really crummy foundation to build my life on." Well, you know what? It's never too late to dig new footers and lay a new foundation.

I wonder if we just have a whole army of men who are known in heaven and feared in hell, not because of our own behavior but because of what Jesus has done to transform us from the inside out.

So, let me just pray this prayer of blessing for you, because I am way over time.

Father, we come to You right now and we love You. We thank You and we need You. We're a mess. And so, Father, I pray that You would raise up godly men and women.

God, I pray for that man who has recently been exposed due to his secret sin and he feels shame and he feels like he's being canceled and obliterated and maybe he's lost everything.

God, I pray that single lady right now who is just looking for that kind of godly man and she's about to lose hope.

God, I pray for the man who may be stuck in a marriage and maybe all of his efforts to try to be sacrificial just aren't met with receptivity, possibly because of her wounds from her past.

God, we need You right now because there is no amount of good behavior, there is no amount of self-care, there is no amount of emotional intelligence that will get us out of this mess that we are in. We need You.

And it's not that those tools are unimportant or that we can't lean on them. It's that we've first got to start with You and ask that You would bring healing to our pain, that You would bring transformation from within.

And that begins with fully surrendered hearts, and we surrender our hearts to You today. And we ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

