

To Be a Man

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When I was a child, I wanted to be a “grown-up.” During adolescence, the idea of being mature came to my attention. Accompanying this was the notion of being able to take care of myself. Later, I wanted to live in a responsible, productive way. I wanted to be a man and not a child. It took time and self-examination. To this day, absolute achievement of maturity has not been attained. Self-examination, correction, and action are ever-present companions for being a man in this world.

This sense of being a man is outside of biological status, as it encompasses the gender of male and female.

Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." So, God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them (Genesis 1:26-27).

In verse twenty-six, “man” is the antecedent of “them,” as in “let them.” In verse twenty-seven, the pronoun for man is “him,” subdivided into “male and female.” Thus, “He created them,” man.

“Man” was made in the image and likeness of God, two characteristics. These are almost synonymous. It is like the difference between a shadow and its shape. In the twenty-seventh verse, it is stated twice that man was created in God’s image. Four times in these two verses, our similarity to God is stated. It is as if God wants us to know how much we are like Him and how much we mean to Him. In **Psalms**, it is written, *“I said, ‘You are gods (elohim), And all of you are children of the Most High’” (82:6).*

Being in the likeness of God is shown in **Genesis 1:26**. Man was given the responsibility of dominion over the earth and all things created in the earth. **Genesis 2:15** chronicled how he was put in a garden eastward in Eden to tend and keep. The gift of personal choice was evident. God commanded that all things in the garden were available to eat except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Included was the warning of death if they disobeyed. Here is a threefold manifestation of similarities with God: the gift of rule (having dominion), the ability to appreciate the truth (understanding God’s commands), and to act (obedience or disobedience).

“Have you considered My servant, Job?” the LORD asked Satan (**Job 1:8**). Here was a man. Job was upright before God. This was the important thing. Also, he was blessed with material success. We would say he had everything going for him. When his children, prosperity, and health were taken from him, he held fast to God. However, when his personal integrity was attacked by his friends, his pride got the better of him. The Lord rebuked Job. This was after a lengthy conversation between Job, his three friends, and Elihu’s observations.

Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind and said, “Who is this who darkens counsel by words without knowledge? Now prepare yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer Me. Where were you when I laid the foundations of

the earth? Tell Me, if you have understanding” (Job 38:1-4).

He reproved Job by calling on this quality of manhood — *“Prepare yourself like a man.”*

Then the LORD laid into Job with humbling questions which Job could not answer. Job admitted, *“Behold, I am vile; What shall I answer You? I lay my hand over my mouth. Once I have spoken, but I will not answer; Yes, twice, but I will proceed no further” (Job 40:4-5).* But the LORD didn’t stop there. *“Now prepare yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer Me: Would you indeed annul My judgment? Would you condemn Me that you may be justified?” (Job 40:7-8).* Again, the LORD called on Job to be a man.

By Job’s example, we can see the telling points of manhood. Instead of retreating into excuses or lamenting further about his condition, he took the LORD’s words to heart. Even after admitting he was wrong the first time, the LORD took him to task even further. Job held fast. Thus, we come to the point of Job accepting the truth and acting on it. Then Job answered the LORD and said:

“I know that You can do everything, and that no purpose of Yours can be withheld from You. You asked, ‘Who is this who hides counsel without knowledge?’ Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know. Listen, please, and let me speak; You said, ‘I will question you, and you shall answer Me.’ I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees You. Therefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes” (Job 42:1-6).

This was not just a matter of accepting he was wrong; he abhorred himself and threw himself on the LORD’s mercy.

The LORD commended Job as His servant. Unlike Job, his friends had not spoken what was right about God. They were commanded to go to Job with burnt offerings. It seems Job acted as a priest for them. They brought the offerings, and Job prayed for them. Job went from arguing with his friends and justifying himself to acknowledging sin and repenting. So, he gained a measure of dominion over his own life. Then he did something productive – he made intercession for his friends.

Even though we are on the other side of Adam’s fall, the gift of being men hasn’t changed. Now that we are on the other side of Calvary, the path to success is clear. The first field of action is responsibility for our own life – to assess the truth, repent, and obey God. *For if by the one man’s offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ (Romans 5:17)..*