

Healthy Masculinity

Reading and Sharing

Community

Technology in today's world informs us, entertains us, distracts us, but it also isolates us.

Men in particular experience significant loneliness, and healthy masculinity requires we find a community to belong to and be a part of.

The house of God is all about community and connection. We gather together and build each other up.

HEBREWS 10:24-25 *New Testament for Everyone (NTE)*

Let us, as well, stir up one another's minds to energetic effort in love and good works. We mustn't do what some people have got into the habit of doing, neglecting to meet together. Instead, we must encourage one another, and all the more as you can see the great day coming closer.

Men especially benefit from having other men in their lives.

PROVERBS 27:17 *New International Version - UK (NIVUK)*

As iron sharpens iron,
so one person sharpens another.

John Eldredge in his book *Wild at Heart* points out that masculinity is bestowed by men to boys. In the best scenario, a healthy masculinity is passed on from father to son, but it is also something that men in communities can do for boys growing into young men.

For many teenagers the church environment can be the first where they are not seen as a "student", or a "child", but can assert their place in the world and be acknowledged by older men as belonging – as being a real man.

As a man you have an opportunity to affirm and encourage boys in their development into young men.

Our identity is revealed as we relate to others, indeed our destiny is found in our relationships with other Christians.

Unity

In the New Testament the word used to describe how Christians are to live with each other is *koinonia*, which represents:

- Fellowship
- Joint participation
- United in purpose

ROMANS 12:16 *New International Version - UK (NIVUK)*

Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.

1 CORINTHIANS 1:10 *New Testament for Everyone (NTE)*

Now I must appeal to you, my brothers and sisters, through the name of King Jesus our Lord, that you should all be in agreement, and that there should be no divisions among you. Instead, you should be fully equipped with the same mind and the same opinion.

Being planted in a church means we commit to being taught, challenged, and led together to serve God and proclaim the good news of Jesus in unity with other believers.

Connect Groups

Sometimes you just need to be intentional about making male friends at church. Doing this course you've found a men's connect group and a bunch of guys you can do life with. Making time to hang out with other men builds friendships and beats loneliness.

Connect groups are a great place to:

- Discuss scripture and spirituality.
- Learn from each other how to better live as a Christian.
- Share our doubts and insecurities in a safe place.
- Give and receive encouragement.
- Get accountability and discipleship.
- Learn to minister spiritually.
- Develop leadership.

What has connect group done for your Christian walk?

Serve in a Team

Part of being a Christian is ministering God's love to others. The church is a fishing boat, not a cruise ship!

Better yet, find a way to serve at church in a team with others. Men often connect most easily with those they work alongside.

A team that works together will build more community than one that works separately, but perhaps at the same time. It adds to connect group relationships, but it probably won't replace the need for them.

Discussion Starters

What do you like about your community of faith?

How do you think you could help other men discover their community of faith?

In Summary

Congratulations! You have reached the end of **Real Men Essentials**.

Keep the notes from this course handy and review them from time to time.

Remind yourself of the key points:

- Vision for Manhood – Jesus as our model and the four faces of manhood.
- Vision for Marriage – God’s purposes for marriage, marriage for life.
- Sexual Purity – living and growing in purity.
- Identity – finding who God made us to be, our unique purpose.
- Healthy Masculinity – we find our best life in community with others.

Realistic Expectations

You might have learned some things in this course that have challenged you.

It’s important we have the right expectations about how those challenges can be faced.

As men we can sometimes tackle change head-on, with noise and passion. But when you are dealing with character issues or relationships, it can be self-defeating to act like a bull in a china shop.

Change gently, change forever, change with grace, change with love.

Know God’s grace for us. That helps us have grace for others who are struggling, and for ourselves.

Four Faces of Manhood

Finally, the four faces of manhood is a reminder that balance is important. As men we are kings, *and* servants, connected in relationship to other people *and* connected to God himself.

Lion



Book of Matthew

King

Ox



Book of Mark

Servant

Man



Book of Luke

Son of Man

Eagle



Book of John

Son of God

Prayer

Finish the course with a prayer time. Pray over any specific issues anyone in the group might want help dealing with.

Discover More

There are lots of great books out there for Christian men. Two of the better ones are:

Wild at Heart, John Eldredge

Valiant Man, Allan Meyer

Scripture References

1 PETER 2:4-5 *New International Version - UK (NIVUK)*

As you come to him, the living Stone – rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him – you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

PROVERBS 27:17 *New International Version - UK (NIVUK)*

As iron sharpens iron,
so one person sharpens another.

PSALM 133 *New International Version (NIV)*

How good and pleasant it is
when God's people live together in unity!
It is like precious oil poured on the head,
running down on the beard,
running down on Aaron's beard,

down on the collar of his robe.

It is as if the dew of Hermon

were falling on Mount Zion.

For there the Lord bestows his blessing,

even life forevermore.

HEBREWS 10:24-25 *New Testament for Everyone (NTE)*

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ROMANS 12:16 *New International Version - UK (NIVUK)*

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JOEL 3:9-10 *New International Version (NIV)*

Proclaim this among the nations:

Prepare for war!

Rouse the warriors!

Let all the fighting men draw near and attack.

Beat your plowshares into swords

and your pruning hooks into spears.

Let the weakling say,

"I am strong!"

1 CORINTHIANS 1:10 *New Testament for Everyone (NTE)*

Now I must appeal to you, my brothers and sisters, through the name of King Jesus our Lord, that you should all be in agreement, and that there should be no divisions among you. Instead, you should be fully equipped with the same mind and the same opinion.

EPHESIANS 4:11-16 *New Testament for Everyone (NTE)*

So these were the gifts that he gave. Some were to be apostles, others prophets, others evangelists, and others pastors and teachers. Their job is to give God's people the equipment they need for their work of service, and so to build up the king's body. The purpose of this is that we should all reach unity in our belief and loyalty, and in knowing God's son. Then we shall reach the stature of the mature Man measured by the standards of the king's fullness.

As a result, we won't be babies any longer! We won't be thrown this way and that on a stormy sea, blown about by every gust of teaching, by human tricksters, by their cunning and deceitful scheming. Instead, we must speak the truth in love, and so grow up in everything into him – that is, into the king, who is the head. He supplies the growth that the whole body needs, linked as it is and held together by every joint which supports it, with each member doing its own proper work. Then the body builds itself up in love.

ECCLESIASTES 4:8-12 *New International Version (NIV)*

There was a man all alone;

 he had neither son nor brother.

There was no end to his toil,

 yet his eyes were not content with his wealth.

“For whom am I toiling,” he asked,

 “and why am I depriving myself of enjoyment?”

This too is meaningless—

 a miserable business!

Two are better than one,

 because they have a good return for their labor:

If either of them falls down,

 one can help the other up.

But pity anyone who falls

 and has no one to help them up.

Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm.

 But how can one keep warm alone?

Though one may be overpowered,

 two can defend themselves.

A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.
