

## **Behold the Man**

John 18:28-19:11

June 15, 2003

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Several years ago, late at night, Susan woke up startled by noises downstairs. (I was out of town on a trip.) Cautiously she descended the stairs, and five-year-old Elizabeth stumbled into Susan. She was sleepwalking, and in a frantic voice she cried, "Get out of my way! I'm looking for Daddy!" While I was gone, almost every night in her sleep, she would frantically roam the house in the dark, looking for Daddy.

"Where's Daddy?" "Where's my man?" It's a common quest, a common longing. [Singing] "Stand by your man, give him two arms to cling to, and something warm to come to, when nights are cold and lonely . . ." My daughters used to sing that in the back of our van as we listened to our Sleepless in Seattle tape. They'd sing it and look at me, their man. That's thrilling and terrifying . . . because I could hurt them bad.

A few years ago a woman shared her story in the Girl Scout magazine American Girl.

When I was ten, my parents got a divorce. Naturally, my father told me about it, because he was my favorite.

"Honey, I know it's been kind of bad for you these past few days, and I don't want to make it worse. But there's something I have to tell you. Honey, your mother and I got a divorce."

"But, Daddy--"

"I know you don't want this, but it has to be done. Your mother and I just don't get along like we used to. I'm already packed and my plane is leaving in half an hour."

"But, Daddy, why do you have to leave?"

“Well, honey, your mother and I can't live together any more.”

“I know that, but I mean why do you have to leave town?”

“Oh. Well, I got someone waiting for me in New Jersey.”

“But, Daddy, will I ever see you again?”

“Sure you will, honey. We'll work something out.”

“But what? I mean, you'll be living in New Jersey, and I'll be living here in Washington.”

“Maybe your mother will agree to you spending two weeks in the summer and two in the winter with me.”

“Why not more often?”

“I don't think she'll agree to two weeks in the summer and two weeks in the winter, much less more.”

“Well, it can't hurt to try.”

“I know, honey, but we'll have to work it out later. My plane leaves in twenty minutes and I've got to get to the airport. Now I'm going to get my luggage, and I want you to go to your room so you don't have to watch me. And no long goodbyes either.”

“Okay, Daddy. Goodbye. Don't forget to write.”

“I won't. Goodbye. Now go to your room.”

“Okay, Daddy. I don't want you to go!”

“I know, honey. But I have to.”

“Why?”

“You wouldn't understand, honey.”

“Yes, I would.”

“No, you wouldn't.”

“Oh well. Goodbye.”

“Goodbye. Now go to your room. Hurry up.”

“Okay. Well, I guess that's the way life goes sometimes.”

“Yes honey. That's the way life goes sometimes.”

After my father walked out that door, I never heard from him again.

James Ryle's father left him when he was two. By age seven, James was orphaned. By 19, James Ryle was in prison. Years later he met his father. His father had been a welder, and he asked James which prison he'd been in. When James told his father, his father said, "Why, I helped build that prison." At the 1994 Promise Keepers rally in Texas, Pastor James Ryle concluded his message by saying, "I was in the prison my father built."

Well, an awful lot of people are. They are enslaved to an absence left by men who abdicate physically or emotionally . . .  
 passive men, too sensitive to their own pain;  
 weak men;  
 men who leave.

Yet men who *stay* can be worse: strong men, powerful men, dictators.

I have a friend in another state who I talk with on the phone. When I talk to her, she's 40 years old . . . but sometimes she's other ages like seven, five, or three. They are her "little girls," parts of herself imprisoned in fear through her father's abuse. I think they talk to me because they feel safe, and I like them. We even pray to Jesus together for courage. They call out to Him for help, and Jesus is healing them, romancing them, making my friend whole.

Brennan Manning tells of an elderly nun named Sister Genevieve who came to him in tears, confiding that at the age of five she'd been molested by her father. She'd never told anyone. She confessed through tears that she would only take communion, she would only receive the body and blood of Jesus, when she *had* to. She gave her life to Jesus but was terrified to receive Him . . . in a prison her father built.

[Singing] “Stand by your man, give him two arms to cling to . . .” My wife takes pleasure in reminding me that the whole time Tammy Wynette was singing that song, her husband was beating her mercilessly. Yet she still sang it.

We live in a society incredibly ambivalent about masculinity, scared of men, husbands, and fathers, yet *starving* for men, husbands, and fathers.

To the woman God said, “In pain shall you bring forth children, yet your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.” That’s part of the curse.

So are men a blessing or a curse?

Sigmund Freud once confided to a friend, “The great question that has never been answered, and which I have not yet been able to answer, despite my thirty years of research into the feminine soul, is: What does a woman want?” He should have read his Bible. The woman wants—“desires”—a *man*. It’s just that every man she meets feels like he’s been cursed or is part of a curse.

Men really are frightening to everyone, including men. So many think masculinity is too much of a risk. It would be better to have an entire world named Pat. (Like the Saturday Night Live skit . . . “It’s time for androgyny, here comes Pat.”) Then your gender is just the optional package you come equipped with. Feel free to change attachments, if you don’t like them, for your gender is only biology. And have sex with a man or a woman, homo or hetero, it’s really no different.

Yet even male homosexuality seems to be a craving for masculinity, not a denial of it. And female homosexuality is a rejection of it, not a denial of it.

*Masculinity:*

We don't know what to do with it . . .  
or even *what* it is or *if* it is.

What is man?

Growing up in the 60's and early 70's, it was the *strong man* — John Wayne or James Bond. And I was weak, uncoordinated, and scared of the kids up the street who picked on me. I'd cry sometimes after school . . . sensitive. I didn't feel like much of a man.

But along about the late 70's, I started to get tough. Puberty hit — that was a positive. I got bigger, I got stronger; I met Gary Reddish and got wilder; I felt more like a man. Then I got accused of being “insensitive” . . . especially at church. A Christian man was to be sensitive, quick to cry, kind of *wimpy*, and we called that “humility” (a way to get chicks.)

Something happened in the 70's. Women didn't want macho pigs, but “men of sensitivity.” But then in the 80's they got tired of weak, sensitive men and decided to date the John Rambo types and *call* them macho pigs in private and in women's magazines. Desiring men and frightened by men.

What is a man?

Well, Jesus was a man . . . circumcised, Bar Mitzvah, testosterone . . . and he went potty standing up. That may surprise you, for I suspect that in fear the Church makes Him rather androgynous.

But Jesus was a man and *is* a man . . . actually, the “perfect man,” the “uttermost Adam,” wrote Paul in I Corinthians 15:45. As the perfect model of masculinity, He defines masculinity.

And I suspect that as the perfect complement of femininity, He defines femininity, like a mold defines a statue.

But Paul also wrote, “In Christ there is neither male nor female.” That’s confusing, for when a person becomes a Christian, they don’t lose their genitals . . . and I doubt they’re supposed to lose their gender. However, in Christ we are all equally valuable, for we are all one. And every curse becomes a blessing.

And I believe that if you are in Christ, you will one day forever praise God for your gender. It tells the greatest story, of curse turned into blessing. “In Christ there is neither male nor female.” Yet *in* Christ and relative to Christ, we’re all female together: one female, the Bride of Christ. “And the two shall become one flesh.” And then we are His body, the body of the Adam—the Man.

“So God created Adam [singular] in His own image, in the image of God He created him: male and female He created them [plural].”

“It is no longer I who live but Christ in me”—the Man in me, in all of us.

Well, I can’t entirely understand that. But I do know your gender is a gift, a way to tell the greatest story: the Gospel. Paul wrote in Ephesians 5 that God made us male and female. He invented the whole gender and sex thing to teach us of Christ and the Church, that is, to show us how much He loves each of us. So then, What is man? Well, Jesus is the Man.

Behold the Man.

In John 18, the leaders of Israel bring Jesus to Pilate. Pilate is scared of Jesus, because his wife has had a dream about Jesus. But He's also scared of the crowd of Jews outside . . . scared of Israel. (God referred to Israel as a woman—a whore and a bride—and also as children.)

Well, trying to abdicate responsibility, Pilate offers to free a prisoner. The crowd chants for Barabbas (the robber) rather than Jesus. Pilate pleads with the crowd, but they chant, "Crucify him!"

John 19:1 . . .

*Then Pilate took Jesus and scourged him. And the soldiers plaited a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and arrayed him in a purple robe; they came up to him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" and struck him with their hands. Pilate went out again, and said to them, "See, I am bringing him out to you, that you may know that I find no crime in him." So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, "Behold the man!"*

*When the chief priests and the officers saw him, they cried out, "Crucify him, crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and crucify him, for I find no crime in him." The Jews answered him, "We have a law, and by that law he ought to die, because he has made himself the Son of God." When Pilate heard these words, he was the more afraid; he entered the praetorium again and said to Jesus, "Where are you from?" But Jesus gave no answer. Pilate therefore said to him, "You will not speak to me? Do you not know that I have power to release you, and power to crucify you?" Jesus answered him, "You would have no power over*

*me unless it had been given you from above; therefore he who delivered me to you has the greater sin.”*

*Upon this Pilate sought to release him, but the Jews cried out, “If you release this man, you are not Caesar’s friend; every one who makes himself a king sets himself against Caesar.” When Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus out and sat down on the judgment seat at a place called The Pavement, and in Hebrew, Gabbatha. Now it was the day of Preparation of the Passover; it was about the sixth hour. He said to the Jews, “Behold your King!” They cried out, “Away with him, away with him, crucify him!” Pilate said to them, “Shall I crucify your King?” The chief priests answered, “We have no king but Caesar.” Then he handed him over to them to be crucified.*

The chief priest, spokesman for Israel, answers, “We have no king but Caesar.” “Barabbas is our man, Pilate is our man, Caesar is our man . . .” Caesar was Israel’s abuser. He raped her, abused her, imprisoned her. But she’d rather have the oppression of Caesar, like her old bondage to Pharaoh, than the intimate, incarnate, penetrating presence of Jesus. Does that sentiment make sense to you, Israel of God? “Control us, abuse us, ignore us . . . just leave our hearts alone.”

Well, what is it to be a man? Is it to seize control like Barabbas or Caesar or Pilate the dictator? Such strength! yet such weakness. Pilate is awfully afraid. He does a lot of whining, and he won’t stand for truth. Then there’s Jesus—The Truth—beat near death, mocked, scourged, standing before a screaming crowd, drenched in His own blood . . . yet *so strong* and *so sensitive*, even to Pilate. And Pilate yells, “Behold the man!”

Well, if ever there was “the man,” the epitome of masculinity, the uttermost Adam, He was defined in space and time on that Friday.

Behold the Son of God,  
Behold the King,  
Behold the Man.

What was happening? What was happening *really*? The Bridegroom was redeeming His Bride, and the Father was saving His children.

Even though it was the Bride who inflicted pain on the Groom, even though it was the children who made the Father suffer, the pain was chosen by the Groom and chosen by the Father in love. The King of Glory—the Adam—entered our world to know us, bear our burdens; to be sensitive *to* us and strong *for* us.

Masculinity is penetration with sensitivity and strength. And if you think that sounds sexual, you are right. In the covenant of marriage, sexuality is like a sacrament to demonstrate the love of Christ in the covenant of grace for His Bride. It’s a visible expression of spiritual realities. And fruit is the result: children.

Emil Brunner wrote, “The physical differences between the man and woman are a parable of the psychical and spiritual differences of a more ultimate nature.” Masculinity is expressed in sexual intercourse in marriage. But outside of marriage, that sexuality is a wretched lie. Yet masculinity is still to be expressed outside the covenant of marriage. Men, your masculinity is to be a gift to everyone you meet, not just your wife.

Masculinity is incarnation, initiation, with sensitivity and strength.

Masculinity is leadership in love.

We ask, “Why isn’t there more of that? What’s the problem?” Well, behold the Man. True masculinity *hurts*. To love like Jesus—The Man—is called sacrifice, and it hurts. And to receive love like that of Jesus’ is terrifying.

It makes sense that the penetrating presence of Jesus was more terrifying than the negligence of Pilate or bondage to Caesar or Pharaoh. The Lord Jesus was too intimate, too dangerous, too good, too masculine to be safe. He was too masculine, requiring too much of the feminine. To receive Jesus would be to surrender your heart.

Jesus penetrates to the depth of our being, and what woman, what child, could ever trust a man that much?

So the woman (Israel)—the children (Israel)— the crowd— chanted for Barabbas, for Caesar, for bondage in Egypt. Satan led the chant, and he still does today. Satan distorts masculinity. Men, he wants to turn you into a lie about God the Father and God the Son, so that no one will receive love.

Satan distorts masculinity in at least two directions, which are really one direction: self-flesh. He temps masculinity to:

- aggression or passivity
- strength without sensitivity or sensitivity without strength
- strength for self or sensitivity for self
- the Dictator or the Whiner

And it's amazing how we can be both at once. Just look at Pilate. He was the Whining Dictator, wasn't he? When dictating won't work, I often try whining. And when whining doesn't work, I try dictating: the Whining Dictator.

So beware, men. On the other hand, the Enemy wants us to think masculinity is *just* strength (the Dictator), and it's tempting. It's a way for you to hide from what's really painful: love.

Some men are strong men and control the world—dominate the world—but don't even know their wives and children, and their wives and children don't know them. By controlling everything, they hide from the danger of love.

You love your wife intimately,  
and she can hurt you.  
You love your children thoroughly,  
and they can tear your heart out, and visa versa.

That's why many wives and children chant for Caesar and Barabbas . . . wives who want a husband that provides for them but is not intimate with them (frigid) . . . children who want a father that provides for them but does not know them (spoiled) . . . wives and children perhaps enslaved but safe from the dangers of love.

On the other hand, Satan can tempt us with sensitivity. Some men are sensitive without strength. They're passive; they see the pain but do nothing about it, afraid to enter in for fear of feeling the pain. They abdicate leadership, don't speak truth, and leave a void. And that's tempting to wives and children as well (an illusion of control), but it enslaves them to lies and robs them of the gifts of femininity and childhood.

So, men, it's tempting to be the Dictator, and it's tempting to be the Whiner. It's very tempting to be the Whining Dictator. The Whining Dictator seeks to control everything he has access to, but he has lost access to the hearts of his bride and his children. And that's what *he* was made to desire most.

When Mike was four, he wanted a sandbox. His father said, "There goes the yard. It'll kill the grass." Mike's mother smiled and said, "The grass will grow back."

When Mike was six, he wanted a jungle gym to climb to the sky, swing in the air. Mike's father said, "Every kid in the neighborhood will be here, and it'll kill the grass. It'll kill the grass." Mike's mother smiled and said, "The grass will grow back."

Between breaths blowing up the plastic swimming pool Mike's father said, "They'll condemn this place. It'll kill the grass." And Mike's mother said, "The grass will grow back."

The basketball hoop on the side of the house drew a larger crowd than the Olympics. The bare spot got bigger and bigger. Just when it looked like the grass would grow back, winter came and sled runners beat it back in the ground.

Mike volunteered his yard for the neighborhood campout. They drove tent stakes in the yard. Mike's father said, "God, I've never asked for much; just a few lousy blades of grass."

This year the grass was beautiful. It rolled out like a lush, green carpet. It rolled out along the drive where little boys once played with spoons, digging in the dirt. It rolled out where bicycles fell and wagons were parked. But Mike's father never saw the grass, only looked off in the distance and said with a

catch in his voice, “He will come back. He will come back. Won't he?” And Mike’s mother wasn’t smiling.

Men, don’t control the world and lose your kids, your wife, your life. God gives you a sensitivity in order to know another’s heart, and he gives you a strength to bear their burdens. And that is Jesus, the Jesus standing before the mob drenched in blood.

### Behold the Man.

I made a chart to help [Exhibit A]. If masculinity is strength and sensitivity, Satan tempts us to one or the other in selfishness and fear, making us dictators and whiners. But God calls us to *both* in love, and that looks like a cross [Exhibit B]. It defines “The Man.” Jesus was the Lion and the Lamb. I don’t think he was the Lion one day and all "lamby" the next. He was the Lion and the Lamb always.

So then:

- Instead of isolation, masculinity is incarnation, penetration, engagement.
- Instead of a safe self, it’s a crucified self.
- Instead of control through power or weakness, it’s romance and authority.
- Instead of enslaving others through aggression or passivity, it’s liberating others through bearing burdens.
- Instead of losing hearts, giving nothing, and producing death, masculinity captures hearts, giving life and producing fruit.

So, men, enter in and bear the burdens of your children. Enter in and bear the burdens of your bride. And if you say, “I don’t have a bride or children,” the world is full of orphans and

widows. Jesus didn't have a wife or kids, did He? Actually . . . He did. I'm looking at them.

Men, enter another's world and bear their burdens. Dictators don't know another's burden. They are insensitive. Whiners won't bear another's burden. They don't have the strength. And if you say, "You don't know my wife!" or "You don't know my children!" or "I don't have the ability to love them like Jesus does," well, you're *absolutely right*. You'll only be able to love like Jesus if you receive your Father's love for you in Jesus.

Masculinity comes from your father. That thought fills some with anguish. But listen closely: In Christ you have a new Father.

Masculinity comes from your Father in Jesus. And Jesus bears your burden of guilt and fills you with Himself, and He is able *in you* to love your wife and kids.

Just look at the Bride He loves and the children He saves: a Bride who mocks Him and children who crucify Him. That's the heart of the Good Father—the Good Groom. It's called forgiveness, and it's called grace. It's the cross, and with it "He draws [romances] all men and women to Himself."

*Dictators* enslave with shame,  
     *Whiners* enslave with guilt, but  
         *The Man* liberates us by capturing our hearts  
             and giving us His.

So, Dr. Freud, what does the woman want? She wants the Man. That is, What does the Church want? *Jesus*. What do we all really want, Bride of Christ—children of God? *Jesus the Man*. Look at Him. You can trust Him. Don't believe the lie. He's no dictator and He's no whiner.

“Where’s Daddy? Where’s my man?” Here He is: body broken and blood shed for the love of you.

Sister Genevieve broke down in front of Brennan Manning, crying for shame that she could barely bring herself to take communion. But Brennan reminded her heart that her Father—her Man—was no longer the father who raped her. So she promised she’d pray 40 minutes a day in the Spirit, “Abba Father.” Three weeks later she sent Brennan a note. She ended it this way: “Not long ago I would have signed this Sister Genevieve. But now I’m just Daddy’s Little Girl.”

My friend with all the little girls inside her — she has forgiven her father, for Jesus has given her His Father. She calls Him “My Sweet Holy Abba.” That’s the Father’s Day gift God desires.

So, men who are called to be a picture of God’s love in Christ, and women who are called to be a picture of the Church receiving God’s love in Christ and giving birth to Christ, and children who are called to trust the Father like your Big Brother the Christ does, all of you—Bride of Christ, uttermost Eve . . .

Behold the Man.

For on the night He was betrayed, having entered our world from Paradise, at supper He took bread and broke it saying, “This is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” In the same way after supper, He took the cup and said, “This is the cup of the new covenant in my blood, shed for the forgiveness of sins. Drink of it, all of you, in remembrance of me.”

If you desire Him, worship Him, receive Him, say, “Come, Lord Jesus. I do want you.” Trust Him. He’s good.

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Check your heart. If your heart is angry, scared, or full of shame; if you're mad at me for what I said, I believe one of two things is true:

1. I misrepresented the Gospel, which is always a possibility,  
or
2. You're still believing the lies of the Evil One.

I don't think I misrepresented the Gospel, but I know what some of you are thinking:

“You don't understand. I'm single. I've wanted to be married to a man all my life, and it hasn't happened.”

Some of you are thinking:

“I *hate* my father! How could you say God is a father?”

Some of you are thinking:

“All my life I've wanted children, and I haven't had *any!*”

Some of you are thinking:

“This is all really great, but I'm confused about my own gender. I'm attracted in the wrong ways. I don't know what's going on!”

All of that is about something so much greater. When we surrender our desires and longings to the Lord, He shows us that they're all telling a story (in fulfillment or in longing) about

something better. In fact, God is so good that He writes His story into our very bodies.

So guys, when you were 16 or 17 and wanted to just *hit* something because of all the testosterone flowing in your blood, that was about Him and His passion for His Bride and what He will endure for His Bride.

Women, that longing to have a child . . . that's about so much more than just a baby. Maybe you've just ached for a child and are barren. Well, "The children of the desolate one are more than her that is married."

Maybe you're gay with a hunger for masculinity. I think the Lord wants to show you your Father—*the* masculine.

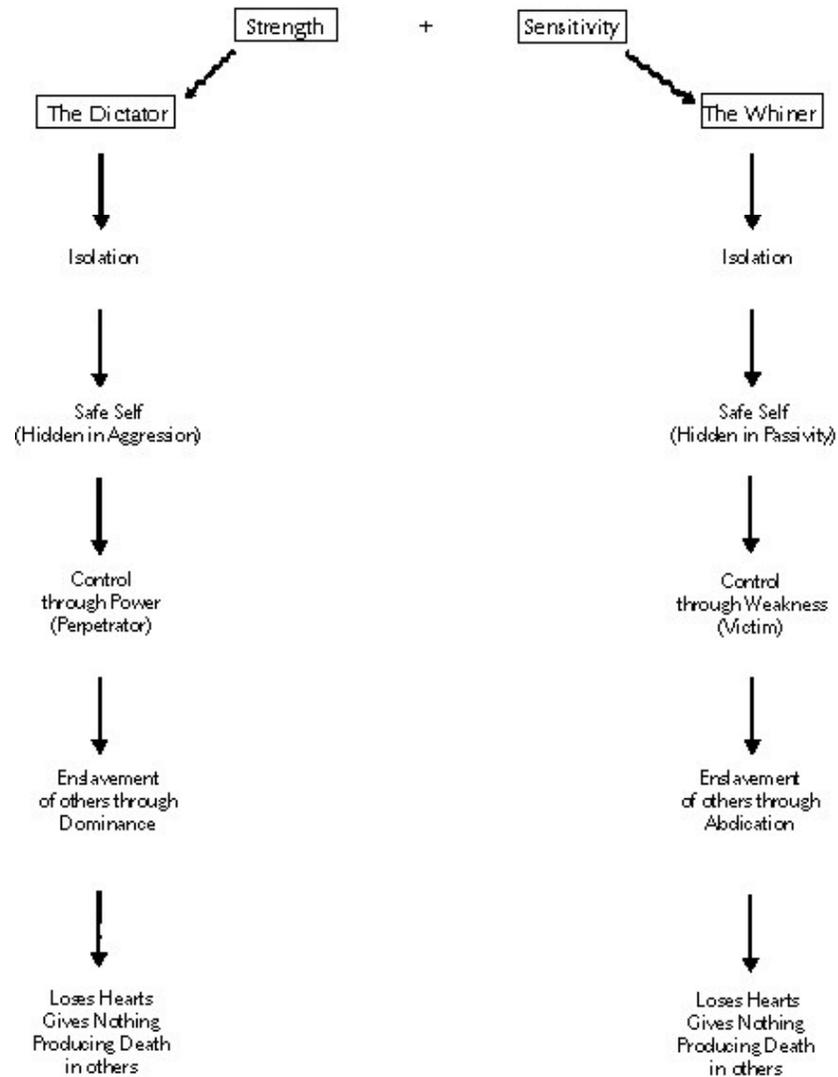
These are all ways the Lord helps us feel things in His story of love. I think we were born dead, and God is bringing us to life. Through fulfillment or through longing He's creating desires within us, for we *are* the Bride of Christ, and we *are* the children of God. One day, with all of our hearts, we will say, "Yes, Jesus! I want you! Maranatha! Come, Lord Jesus. I want *the* Man."

At the end of Revelation, the Spirit in the Bride says, "Come." That's the end of the book. I believe He does. Then not just in Spirit but in all of His glory we see the Lord. And we are His forever more. And I believe you will thank God with all that you have for the story He's written in your life. His love story. Your story.

Don't believe the lie of the Enemy. Believe your Father, the Bridegroom. God is good. In Jesus, amen.

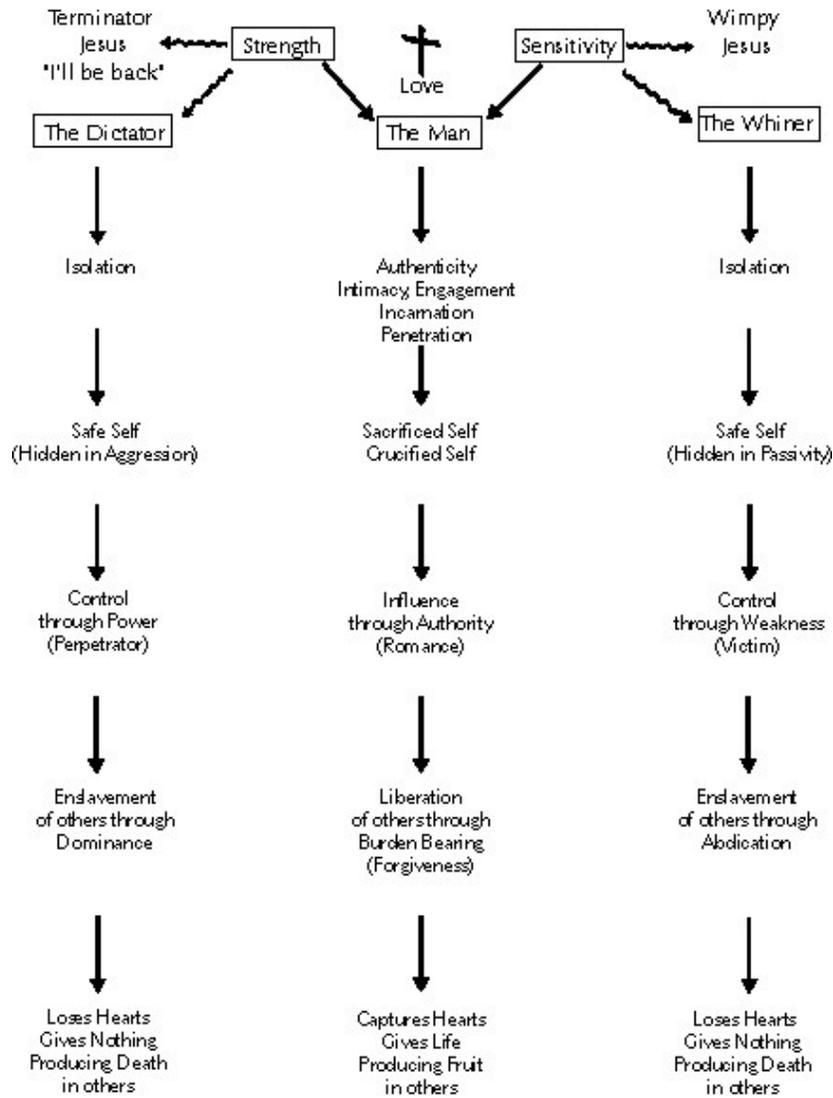
## MASCULINITY

( = Satanic Distortion Rays)



# MASCULINITY

( = Satanic Distortion Rays)



### Further Reading

Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and yet you do not know me, Philip? He who has seen me has seen the Father; how can you say, ‘Show us the Father’?”

John 14:9

For no man ever hates his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body. “For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” This mystery is a profound one, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church; however, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband. Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. “Honor your father and mother” (this is the first commandment with a promise), “that it may be well with you and that you may live long on the earth.” Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

Ephesians 5:29-6:4

The differences are real and deep. Men are designed to enter their worlds of people and responsibilities with the confident and unthreatened strength of an advocate. Women are designed to invite other people into a non-manipulative attachment that encourages the enjoyment of intimate relationship.

Larry Crabb, Men and Women

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