

BEST SELLING AUTHOR
“DR. MYLES MUNROE”

“UNDERSTANDING the PURPOSE
and POWER OF MEN”



GOD’S DESIGN FOR MALE IDENTITY

Agape Love WPF Family Ministries

Zoom – Bible Study Series

Pastor Rudolph & Lady Zee Maybell

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THE MAN AS HE WAS MEANT TO BE.



The male is in crisis. Traditional roles once gave men stability and continuity from generation to generation. Today, the world is sending out conflicting signals about what it means to be a man. Many men are questioning who they are and what roles they fulfill in life-as a male, a husband, and a father-leaving them frustrated and causing them to live far below their potential. Best-selling author Dr. Myles Munroe examines cultural attitudes toward men and addresses critical issues such as:

- How can men gain their footing in the ever-shifting environment of cultural expectations?
- What does it mean to be male?
- What definition of masculinity should men adopt?
- What roles should men fulfill-in the workplace and in the home?
- What do gender roles have to do with the male's purpose?
- What are the differences between men and women?
- How are men and women meant to relate to one another?
- How can a man build a better life for himself, his family, and the world?

When men understand the purpose God has given them and the true design of their relationship with women, they will be free to fulfill their destiny and potential.

CHAPTER 1 –

WHAT IS A REAL MAN?

MEN NEED A GOD-GIVEN IDENTITY IF THEY ARE TO FULFILL THEIR TRUE PURPOSE

Imagine that you are watching a television show similar to “To Tell the Truth.” Several contestants try to convince you that they are the Real Man. You have to guess which one is authentic and which ones are the imposters.

Contestant #1 tells you he is the Real Man because he fills the traditional male role; he supports his family financially while his wife cares for the children and the home. As long as he provides a roof over their heads and food for them to eat, he’s fulfilling his duty as a husband and father. This man doesn’t consider his wife to be his true equal.

Contestant #2 says he is the Real Man because he has a culturally progressive role: he shares household and child-rearing responsibilities with his wife while they both pursue careers. He thinks of his wife to be his equal.

Contestant #3 explains that he is the Real Man because he has been freed from male stereotypes and has decided to take on the nurturer role of caring for the children and home while his wife goes to work. He considers his wife equal to himself-or maybe even better, since she has a more compassionate, sensitive nature than he does.

These are some of the images of manhood that are competing for men’s acceptance today. Many men feel as if they’re being asked to guess what a real man is by determining which “contestant” has the more convincing facial expressions and answers. Yet there seems to be a no clear-cut winner. In addition, society keeps mixing and matching these images until men don’t know what’s expected of them anymore. They are confused and frustrated as they try to sort through their own expectations for manhood while feeling pressure from the various segments of society that are promoting these images-or an impossible combination of them. Meanwhile, Hollywood is flooding society with intriguing icons of masculinity, such as James Bond and Rambo. Even though these images are superheroes rather than real men, it’s sometimes hard to escape their allure. It’s difficult not to start thinking that a real man should somehow imitate the power and resourcefulness they exhibit.

A CRISIS OF ROLES:

What makes our current cultural situation unsettling for men is that males have traditionally defined their manhood by their roles: the functions they perform for their families and in society. However, there’s been a major shift in the roles of both males and females. The rules of society are changing. This has happened just in the last forty years or so. We’re in the middle of a cultural transition, and competing ideas of masculinity are causing perplexing problems for men. They are being pulled in several directions at once while they try to figure out what it means to be a real man in today’s world.

In recent years, literature focusing on changes in men's lives has indicated that the male is in a state of crisis and internal conflict. An array of studies are telling us that males aren't quite sure who they are or what women expect from them. Without a clear idea of their identity, men are trying to cope with the collision of new societal expectations and traditional ideas of what a man should be, which they have internalized through family, culture, or natural inclination.

Men's basic conceptions of manhood are therefore being disrupted. They feel displaced. They are either frustrated and struggling to adapt to a new but vague concept of who they are, or they're angry and trying to reverse the flow of change.

Are traditional roles to be totally abandoned? If so, what will replace them? Many Men have unanswered questions, such as these:

1. *Is a man still supposed to be the breadwinner and protector?* Today, the woman goes out and makes her own bread and says she doesn't need protection. A man isn't sure what he's supposed to do for a woman anymore.
2. *Is a man still the leader and authority in the home?* This isn't clear anymore. The woman says, "You're not my authority. I'm not a slave. I make my own money and my own decisions. I do what I want to, I'll call you when I'm ready for you." "A man doesn't know how he's supposed to relate to a woman any longer.
3. *Should a man still show chivalry?* Should he open the door for a woman, escort her, pay for her meal on a date, and so on? A man will pull out a chair for a woman and she'll say, "That's all right. Thank you very much, but I'll pull my own chair out." Sometimes a man will open a door for a woman, and she'll be offended. "do you think I'm crippled? She'll demand. If a woman walks into a room and a man stands up out of respect, she might look at him as if he's crazy. A man isn't sure if he should be nice to a woman anymore.
4. *Is a man still the defender of his family, property, and country?* More women are entering law enforcement and the armed forces and are carrying guns. Some men don't know how to react to these changes. A woman walks into the house with her uniform on and her husband is scared to say hello to her. He'll jump up and say, "Sergeant!" Many men are thinking, "She really doesn't require me to protect her." Men don't know if women even need them anymore.

Is there anything now that marks a man as different from his female counter part? Based on the above scenarios, that's a difficult question to answer. Males and females are in a state of gender upheaval and confusion.

So what do you do in order to be a man in the twenty-first century? Who are men in relation to women? How are men to sort out the various versions of masculinity that are being promoted in the world?

If you are a male and feel that your work, your relationships, and your view of the world are being turned upside down, you're not alone. This is the most complex time in the world to be a man. Men of all ages are grappling with competing views and values of manhood.

What has happened?

THOUSANDS OF YEARS OF TRADITION SET ASIDE:

Males used to acquire their ideas of manhood from observing their fathers or from longstanding cultural traditions. There was a continuity of masculine roles from generation to generation. Things are different now. Hundreds, even thousands, of years of tradition have been set aside in just one or two generations. This shift may have started in Western and industrialized nations with the women's movement and other cultural changes, but its influence is being felt in one way or another all over the world.

For example, my life is completely different from my father's life. I can't use the way my father did things as a model for myself, and my sisters can't use the environment in which my mother functioned as an example for themselves. Our parents lived not only in a different generation, but also with different concepts of maleness and femaleness. Historically speaking, until recently, the man had certain accepted roles and the woman had certain accepted roles, and they didn't usually overlap.

HISTORICAL ROLES:

You can go back fifty, one hundred, five hundred, two thousand, four thousand years, and you'll find a fairly consistent pattern of roles for men and women that were acknowledged and valued. There were some very practical reasons for this longstanding pattern. There have always been certain exceptions to the pattern among individuals and cultures, but the following is the way most families conducted themselves for generations. This traditional pattern continues to have an influence on male-female relationships today.

THERE WAS A BIOLOGICAL DETERMINATION OF ROLES

In premodern times, biology contributed largely to the roles of men and women. Males are generally physically stronger than women, so the men were the ones who went out to hunt and provide for the family. Females are biologically equipped to have babies, so they cared for the children. In general, there were no birth control options and no abortion alternatives with which a woman could supersede biology. A man didn't have to wonder whether he or his wife would stay home and raise the children. Roles were less complicated because they were predetermined by biology.

EVERYDAY LIVING WAS A STRUGGLE FOR SURVIVAL

In addition, people lived in a more hostile physical environment in which day-to-day living was a struggle for survival. This was another reason why the man, who was physically stronger, naturally became the provider and protector of the family.

At that time, making a living was an especially precarious job. The man literally had to risk his life to take care of his family. This caused his wife and children to look to him for leadership and to value his crucial contribution to their survival. They depended on him.

When a man went out to get food for his family, there was no guarantee that he would come back alive. He might be fatally wounded by an animal or die of exposure. Therefore, the woman rejoiced to see him come home again. The same basic attitude held true in our parents' and grandparents' time when most husbands were the sole breadwinners of their families and their wives stayed at home. In the evening, the

whole family was happy that the father had returned. Why? He had been out there in a risky world to make a living. Sometimes the only job a man could get was working long hours in the fields or underground in a coal mine. When a man came home limping, his wife knew he had risked his health or even his life to keep bread on the table.

The family that I grew up in was a typical family of the not-so-distant past. I am one of eleven children. My father rose in the morning before we children got up, and he came home after we had gone to bed. He spent his whole life working, trying to feed almost a dozen children, keeping a roof over our heads and clothes on our backs. It was a twenty-four-a-day job. My mother had to stay home, and her job was as hard as his. She had to take care of all eleven of us-cooking the meals, bathing us, washing our clothes, getting us off to school, making sure we did our homework, disciplining us. It was a very hard life. It was survival.

ROLES AND SKILLS BECAME ESTABLISHED

The basic needs of survival required men and women to develop specific roles and skills, which were passed along to succeeding generations. Up until your grandparents' time or even your parents' time, everybody knew his or her role and had skills that were equal to it. The husband knew what he needed to do, and he did it; the wife knew what she had to do, and she did it.

In this way, although survival was difficult, relationships were comparatively easy because there was no confusion over gender roles. A man and a woman didn't have to wonder whether one was infringing on the other's territory. Her role was to keep the house, cook the food, and care for the children. His job was to hunt or harvest the crops and build a dwelling in order to provide food and shelter for the family. Life was straightforward and so, in that sense, relationships were less complicated.

INTERDEPENDENCE CREATED A NATURAL APPRECIATION

This partnership in survival produced an interdependence between men and women that generated a mutual appreciation. Because they both worked so hard and did their individual parts, they respected one another. It was a natural appreciation. It was natural because their roles were very clear and were accepted as necessary and important.

In many of these marriages, there wasn't the kind of relationship between husband and wife that we know today. The man was motivated by conversation and sentimental exchange, by emotional and psychological sensitivity. He came home when he wanted to meet basic needs.

For the most part, a man was honored and loved by his wife not because he was a good man or an affectionate companion, but because she knew he risked his life to take care of her and the children. She loved him because of what he did for her. He didn't earn her honor and appreciation because he was a sentimental, romantic guy. She valued his provision. If he didn't brave the elements and come back with fresh meat, she wouldn't respect him.

The woman spent time nurturing the children and creating a home, and she was respected and loved by the man for her contribution to the family. He didn't necessarily honor her because she was charming or because "the Word of God says to do so." He honored her because she bore his children and because he

knew the value of the work that she was doing. He didn't worry about who was going to feed and clean the children or who was going to wash their clothing. His wife did all that, and he respected her for it.

This means that romance was not a significant part of the lives of many of our early forefathers. They were too busy trying to survive. When you're in survival mode, there isn't much time for sentiment.

It was much the same way for many married couples up until the relatively recent past. A man spent all day working. He was occupied with providing for and protecting his family. He didn't have time for romance when he came home. All he wanted was food and sex. He wasn't concerned about taking his wife out to dinner or on shopping outings or giving her money to spend. He had money only to survive. The relationship was simply, "Look, we have to survive, and I have to protect you. Whatever I have to do to accomplish these things, that's life."

The man thought of his marriage as a partnership, but partnership didn't mean the same thing then that it does to us today. He didn't consider his wife to be equal to him or as good as he was. Instead, partnership meant that she had her part to play, and he had his part. Men and women were taught that this concept of marriage. A husband and wife honored each other because of their individual contributions to the partnership, not because they acknowledged that there is an equality between men and women.

This is where we came from as a society. However, things have changed.

CONTEMPORARY ROLES:

Life is completely different for men and women now because we are no longer utterly dependent on one another for security and survival. Our roles and strategies have really changed.

Men no longer have the job that they held almost exclusively for centuries. They used to have a role that was very clear-one they didn't share with their wives. How was manhood measured? Young men were told, "Get a job, son, so you can provide for your family, and have some babies." Being the breadwinner and having the ability to procreate was the measure of a man. But the way society views men is in transition, and these are not considered the primary marks of manhood any longer. A number of families still follow the traditional pattern of the husband holding the job while the wife stays home with the children, especially while the children are young. However, even these marriages are usually influenced by contemporary rather than traditional ideas of how men and women are to relate to one another.

BIOLOGY IS NO LONGER AS GREAT A FACTOR

Biology doesn't determine male-female roles and functions the way it used to. Today, because of the prevalence of both dual careers and birth control, a husband and wife might choose not to have children. Also, because of the widespread idea that fertility is a woman's business alone, the woman will often tell the man when or if they will have a baby. Even if they do have a child, that doesn't necessarily mean that the wife will stay home to take care of the baby all day or every day. Daycare and other childcare options enable her to work at a job outside the home part-time or full-time.

This change is bringing new kinds of stresses to the family. If daycare workers or nannies are bringing up the children, sometimes the children don't really know their parents. Also, the parents don't always know what the babysitter is doing or teaching the children while they are at work. Essentially, this means that the children are being brought up by people whom the parents cannot be sure of.

In addition, since a woman's childbearing and child-rearing was what formerly brought her respect from her husband, the man now has to find another way to honor his wife. Because of the traditional pattern, when a wife demands respect from her husband today, he sometimes thinks, "Well, what are you doing to earn it? Twenty-first-century relationships are difficult.

WE ARE NO LONGER IN SURVIVAL MODE

Most of us don't focus on survival and protection the way people used to. This is not to say that we don't face economic challenges and job-related stress, but the physical risk is not the same. We're not out hunting food and facing the elements just to stay alive. We have twenty-four-a-day grocery stores and microwave ovens. While we live in an uncertain world where there are still dangers, the physical environment is much friendlier now than it was for our forefathers. Today, a man will leave the house in the morning dressed in his three-piece suit as he drives his Lexus to work-as a doctor in a fancy office. The physical risk is gone for most people.

One of the differences between the old and the new ways is that, when people get married, they often already have most of what they need, instead of having to struggle for it. Moreover, the woman is no longer dependent on the man to provide for her after they marry. Because the traditional role of provider is ingrained in many men, this situation can be unsettling to a man.

For example, a man will meet a woman and discover that she already owns material possessions. Because she has been working for a while, she makes more money than he does and drives an expensive car. She owns a condominium, a thirty-five-inch television, a refrigerator, and the food in it. She can buy her own gas for her car. She has it all worked out, and then he says he wants to marry her and take care of her. How is she going to depend on him? She isn't looking for survival and protection; she's independent, and so her expectations in regard to men and marriage are totally different.

Some women wonder, "How am I supposed to be submissive when I make more money than my husband, and the house and furniture are mine? In other words, she's saying to the man, "You have to earn the right for me to submit to you by giving me something I haven't already given you. "That's a tough statement for a man to hear. So, the man says, "Well, I can't give you anything because you owned more than I did from the very beginning." How does a woman submit to somebody whom she believes she is supporting? It's a difficult situation for both men and women. But it's the world we live in.

Do you wonder why divorces are so common these days? One reason is that a woman can now tell a man straight and fast, "If you can't take care of this properly, I'm going to leave." My mother had eleven children. When she had a problem, she couldn't say to my father, "I'm going to leave you." Where was she going to go? She had no professional or academic training, no preparation for a job outside the home. The home was her life.

Independence is a relatively new situation for women, and men are still learning to cope with the change. In many ways, the woman has taken over not only the man's traditional role of provider, but also that of protector, but also that of protector. She has mace, she has a gun in her purse, and she has a cell phone to call the police instantly. So, what does the man do? He says, "I'm your protector," and she says, "I don't need you to protect me." It's a different world. Men don't know what they're supposed to do for women anymore.

ROLES AND SKILLS ARE LESS COMPARTMENTALIZED

Men and women used to exist in different spheres. A man's sphere was work and survival. The woman's world was the home and children. There was no confusion of roles. They knew exactly where they were supposed to be.

A woman leaving the home and entering the workplace means that the home is no longer kept by her specifically. The man isn't sure what his job in the home is, and the woman isn't sure what her job in the home is. They're confused.

Your father used to bring home the bacon, but now your wife is bringing home not only the bacon but the pig. Besides that, she owned two pigs before you married her. She doesn't want any bacon from you; she already has bacon.

If both husband and wife are now bringing home the bacon, then who's the provider? That's a problematic question for men. If both are paying the mortgage, then who's putting the roof over their heads? Your father was considered the owner of his house because he bought and paid for it. Today, the house doesn't belong to the man. It belongs to both the man and the woman.

Many couples face difficult economic situations that require both of them to work to make ends meet. However, the cultural shift of women going to college, pursuing careers, and delaying marriage has made significant changes in family life.

For example, a man may say, "Honey, you have to bring up the children," and she'll say, "No, I'm going to work." "Why?" "I want to use my education, and I want a certain standard of living that requires a double salary, so I'm going to work." He says, "But who will bring up the kids? You are the child-bearer and the child-nurturer." Her answer is, "My employer has a daycare center. I'm taking the job."

What does a man do when his wife makes more money than he does, and he believes he's supposed to be the provider and protector of the home? He's frustrated and even ashamed. That's one of the reasons why there's so much quarreling in our modern marriages. We keep arguing over who's supposed to do what.

These and other similar situations have changed our perspectives dramatically and altered our traditional roles. The man isn't sure what a man is anymore, and the female isn't sure what a woman is anymore. This change has caused tension for women as well as men.

For instance, some women actually feel guilty when they say, "I'm a homemaker." Do you think that in your parents' or grandparents' time, people asked a woman, "So, what do you do? The question never

came up. But today, almost every woman is asked what she does. In other words, we know what she doesn't do. She doesn't just stay home and bring up children-with the implication that this is something to be ashamed of.

It used to be much easier for the woman who stayed at home with her children. She had support in this role because every woman in the neighborhood was at home. Today, people think something is wrong with a woman if she is a homemaker. They think things like: "What's the matter with her? Is she lazy?" or "She's not very creative," "she must not be smart enough to have a career," or "She needs to get a life." The idea is being promoted in society that "only dumb women stay home."

The results of changing gender roles can be distressing for both men and women. People are confused about how to act in this new world. It has become a psychological dilemma for them. Many are feeling tense and displaced, and they are trying to figure out what is wrong with them. I'll tell you right now what is wrong: it's simply a different world.

INDEPENDENCE HAS CHANGED THE PARAMETERS OF APPRECIATION

Increasingly independent, self-sufficient, contemporary women no longer feel the need for men to provide for and protect them. This is a problem for men. They're trying to get along in a relationship, and they're not sure who is responsible for what. For example, a boy takes a girl out for lunch, and he looks at her says "Are you going to pay for yours?" Thirty years ago, the man automatically paid. Why? It was the man's job to be the provider. But now if a man takes a woman to dinner, and he finds he doesn't have enough money, she reaches into her purse and says, "I'll make up for it." He feels shame, but she's not ashamed, because she has the money. And guess what? She still likes him. She likes him because she feels there aren't too many good men around anyway.

The independence of women is diminishing men's traditional value to them. Historically, men have always died at an earlier age than women. Why? They had to go out into the cold and sleet in the winter, even if they were coughing with tuberculosis, in order to provide for the family. They were the sole element of survival for the family. This is why women valued them. Sometimes, when a woman reveals that her husband is abusing her, and she's asked, "Why don't you leave him?" She'll reply, "I can't do that." That's a deep answer. There are certain things about him she values.

If a man spent every day risking his life to protect you and the children and to provide for you, then how are you going to feel about him? Obviously, you are going to esteem him highly, because you know what he's doing to take care of the family. That is why it was natural for your mother, even when your father didn't always act right, to love and honor him. He was valuable to her.

Today, however, this is not necessarily the case. When a man shows interest in a woman, she may tell him, "Now, let me tell you this right up front: if you can't cut the mustard, you can leave whenever you're ready. And if we get married, I want you to sign a prenuptial agreement so that everything I bring into the marriage will stay mine if the marriage ends." Women don't value men in the way that they used to because the needs men used to supply are now being supplied by the women themselves. Some husbands are afraid of their wives because they think their wives don't need them.

Another significant change is that, for the first time in recorded history, men and women look to one another primarily for love and companionship rather than survival and protection. Our priorities as human beings have changed. People are looking for something more in their relationships. Happiness, intimacy, and lasting passion are now requirements for a relationship. Yet understanding how to provide these things often does not come easy for a man.

HAPPINESS

The males' traditional roles are not enough to make his partner happy anymore. Women want companionship and attention in order to be happy. My father couldn't take my mother for walks or out to dinner at a restaurant. There was no time for it. He made my mother happy just by making sure that the family had clothing, running water, and so on.

What can men do to make women happy today? That's the challenge. Have you ever heard a man say, "What does a woman want? In the past, men used to tell their wives, "Woman, what else do you want from me? I put a roof over your head and food in the kitchen." Remember when men said that? Those days are over.

INTIMACY

When the man risked his life to give his wife food and protection, then intimacy, sensitivity, and good communication skills were not an issue. The woman didn't say, "Honey, you have to learn the psychological and emotional instability of a woman going through menstruation." A man didn't have time to learn to get along with a woman. Again, when he arrived home, it was dark, he was tired, and all he wanted was food and sex. The house was his, the food was his, and the rationale was, "It's time to pay up."

But nowadays, women want intimacy and communication. "Talk to me. You haven't told me you love me all day." That's the way women think today. "You looked at everybody else except me. You didn't notice my dress." Listen, the caveman didn't have time to look at any dress. He was too busy trying to survive. But the world has changed.

Did your parents or grandparents ever talk about PMS? They were probably too busy to talk about it, and people-even husbands and wives-weren't as open about such topics. Now, the social atmosphere has changed, and we have more time to think about these things. These days, a woman might say, "Don't touch me now; I'm going through my cycle. My hormones are out of balance." A man now has to study what "mood" his wife is in. When you're just trying to survive, you're not thinking in terms of moods. It wasn't necessarily a better way of life, but it was definitely a different way. Men are still trying to figure out how to build intimacy and communication into their relationships.

A woman may wonder why her husband has problems talking with her. He doesn't know what to say, and she doesn't realize what he's going through. For example, suppose she has a fantastic job-a leadership job, an administrative job-and he has a lesser job. She comes home and tries to talk to him at dinner. What do they talk about? She's conversing on a highly intellectual level, and he's not there yet, because his job doesn't require him to stretch that far. So, she says a couple of sentences, and he's

intimidated. He says to himself, "Oh, that's a big word she used." He doesn't know what to do, because his leadership role seems to have diminished.

In this challenging time in our culture, women need to show understanding to the men in their lives. For example, suppose a woman marries a man, and they are settled in their house, and she says to him, "Be a man" He says, "Okay...how? His back is against the wall. He used to know what that meant, but not any longer. So, she says things like, Be my spiritual head." He looks at her blankly." My father was a caveman. He taught me that the Bible and church are for weaklings. So, I'm really not much into church. I'll go to please you, but if that makes me a man, it's going to take a while." He doesn't understand spiritual matters as well as she does because he was taught that religion is for women.

So she says, "Comfort me," and he says, "How? He didn't receive that kind of training from his father. She says, "Show me affection," and he says, "Oh no. How do you spell that? She says, "Be sentimental," and he says, "Sentamen-who? What is that? He doesn't understand what she means.

What do many women do in this situation? They become angry. "Just be a man! "How? "Provide for me! "But you make more money than I do." The man is confused. He doesn't realize she wants him to provide for her emotional needs-or if he does understand, he doesn't know how to fulfill those needs. Men need patience and understanding from their wives.

PASSION

Passion is also necessary for today's relationships.

Remember that, in the old days, the man would just ask. "Woman, are you ready or not? There were no romantic preliminaries. He'd say, "Tarzan ready for jane. Jane ready? Okay, bring it on." That was it.

Now, however, women want men to turn the lights down, bring scented candles into the room, and put flowers everywhere. The men say, "What's going on here? You have to work for it now, men. It's hard work!

These days, women want men to start romancing them in the morning-make them breakfast, run the bathwater for them, take them out to lunch, call them five times to tell them you love them, pick them up in a limousine and take them out for a nice dinner-Then they might be rewarded that night. There's no guarantee, but they won't be rewarded without working for it.

MALE-FEMALE RELATIONSHIPS HAVE BECOME A MYSTERY

In many aspects of life, therefore, the roles and relationships of men and women have completely changed in the last few decades. This putting aside of traditional male roles seems frightening and even dangerous to many men because they don't know where it leaves them. They feel there's now a great deal of mystery in the relationships between men and women, and they don't know what to expect. I can empathize with what they're going through. Studying this topic has made me realize that we're really in a cultural dilemma. I feel for men. They don't know what to do. If you are a woman, you need to understand that men are really in trouble.

I have tried to give you a picture of what changing gender roles have done to throw men off balance, so that you can see the nature of that dilemma they're facing. Some of the scenarios I've given are humorous, but the problems males are facing are serious because they have to do with purpose and identity. They are serious because confusion over purpose will sideline and even destroy people's lives.

ROLES VERSUS PURPOSE

All this ultimately comes down to what males use as a basis for their self-worth and identity. Because men have linked their identity to their roles, now that the roles have changed, they have left themselves no basis for manhood. Whatever they replace their old idea of masculinity with may or may not be a true or fulfilling role for them. What is more troubling, when men don't understand their place in the world, they will often either withdraw from it or use their influence in harmful ways, such as committing crimes.

What can men do to regain their footing and identity?

First, they must adopt an entirely new way of thinking. They need to think in terms of purpose rather than roles. The reason they are having problems today is that they have been basing their worth on the wrong thing all along. Roles have never been the true basis of a male's identity and purpose. Roles can be helpful or harmful, but ultimately, they are merely reflecting culture and traditions.

What men really need to discover is their underlying purpose, which transcends culture and tradition. A man's position and actions must flow out of his purpose, not the other way around. That is why the answer to the male's dilemma is not just to adjust to changing times-although some of this will be needed-but to discover the inherent purpose of the male. Since we live in a confused society, the knowledge of what it means to be a true man cannot be acquired by observing the culture around us. Males need an understanding of themselves that is not overly influenced by societal trends-in short, by someone else's image of them. Where, then, can we go for answers?

One of the themes we'll keep returning to in this book is that the purpose of something can be found only in the mind of its maker. Men therefore need a God-given identity if they are to fulfill their true purpose. We must learn what God originally intended for them. To do this, we must go back and rediscover the Creator's original plan for both men and women.

Once more, we must realize that when men are ignorant of their true identity, it affects not only their own callings and fulfillment, but also that of their families and of society as a whole. This is because God has given males a unique leadership influence. As the man goes, so goes the family, society, and the world. I believe that if we don't address the male's identity crisis, our whole generation is in trouble. There's no escaping this fact.

The answer for males in the twenty-first century is therefore for:

- Define their worth based on God's purpose, rather than society's roles.
- Learn God's vision for their lives.
- Continue to live in the truth of who they were created to be.

If males understand the purpose and responsibilities God has given them and the true design of their relationship with females, they can be free to fulfill their destiny and potential. They can be the men they were created to be.

If you are a man, you don't need to be confused about your identity and place in life, regardless of the conflicting signals society is currently sending out. You will find fresh vision and direction in rediscovering God's purposes for both males and females. Through this knowledge, men can be and do more than they ever imagined, and women can gain a new understanding and appreciation for men while enabling them to fulfill their calling.

What is a "real man"? Someone who knows the reality of who he is and who lives in that reality. This knowledge starts with understanding the significance of being created purposefully by GOD.

PRINCIPLES:

1. Males have traditionally defined their manhood by their roles.
2. Historically, men and women had established roles that didn't overlap.
3. Relationships are different for men and women now that we no longer depend on one another for security and survival.
4. Men are in a crisis of identity and purpose.
5. Confusion over purpose will sideline and even destroy a person's life.
6. If a man links his identity to his roles, when the roles change, he gives himself no basis for manhood.
7. A man's identity is found in his purpose, not in his role.
8. Men's underlying purpose transcends culture and tradition.
9. Knowledge of what it means to be a true man cannot be acquired by observing the confused culture around us.
10. The purpose of something can be found only in the mind of its maker.
11. Men need a God-given identity if they are to fulfill their true purpose.
12. When men are ignorant of their true identity, it affects not only their own callings and fulfillment, but also that of their families and of society as a whole. This is because, as the man goes, so goes the family, society, and the world.
13. A man is someone who knows the reality of who he is and who lives in that reality.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. How would you define a "Real Man."
2. From what or who did you derive your idea of what a man should be (family background, cultural attitudes, friends, church, the media, etc.)?
3. Do you feel any confusion or frustration about what the roles and responsibilities of a male should be? Why or why not?

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

1. How will you define a "Real Man"?

2. From what or whom did you derive your idea of what a man should be (family background, cultural attitudes, friends, church, the media, etc.)?
3. Do you feel any confusion or frustration about what the roles and responsibilities of a male should be? Why or why not?

EXPLORING GOD'S PRINCIPLES AND PURPOSES

4. How have males traditionally defined their manhood? *Their roles, the functions they perform for their families and society.*
5. Complete the following sentences:
 - a. *In the last forty years or so, the roles of males and females have undergone a major. Shift in the roles of males and females.*
 - b. *We are in the midst of a cultural. Transitions*
6. What do studies say about the state of men today? *The studies are telling us that males aren't quite sure who they are or what women expect from them.*
7. What are two ways men are reacting to this situation? *They are either frustrated and struggling to adapt to a new but vague concept of who they are, or they're angry and trying to reverse the flow of change.*
8. What are the four main reasons for the longstanding cultural patterns of males and females?
 - A. *Is a man still supposed to be the breadwinner and protector.*
 - b. *Is a man still the leader and authority in the home.*
 - c. *Should a man still show chivalry.*
 - d. *Is a man still the defender of his family, property, and country.*
9. In what four ways have the longstanding cultural patterns of males and females changed?
 - a. *We are no longer in survival mode.*
 - b. *Roles and skills are less compartmentalized.*
 - c. *Independence has changed the parameters of appreciation.*
 - d. *Happiness.*
10. Women's independence has changed their *view & expectations* in regard to men and marriage.
11. What is one of the reasons there is so much quarreling in modern marriages? *We keep arguing over who's supposed to do what.*
12. What are 3 significant requirements of a relationship today?
 - a. *Happiness*

b. Intimacy

c. Passion

13. Men feel there is a great deal of Mystery in their relationships with women.
14. Confusion over purpose will sideline and even destroy people's lives?
15. Because men have linked their identity to their roles, now that the roles have changed, what do they lack? Self-worth & Identity.
16. Where is the purpose of something to be found? Only In the Mind of its Creator!
17. How are men to fulfill their true purpose? They must go back and rediscover the Creator's original plan for both men and women.
18. What happens when men are ignorant of their true identity? It affects not only their own callings and fulfilment, but also that of their families and of society as a whole.
19. What 3 things do twenty-first century males need to focus on in regard to their purpose?
 - Define their worth based on God's purpose, rather than society's roles.
 - Learn God's vision for their lives.
 - Continue to live in the truth of who they were created to be.
20. What is a real man? Someone who knows the reality of who he is and who lives in that reality. This knowledge starts with understanding the significance of being created purposefully by God.

CONCLUSION:

If males understand the purpose and responsibilities God has given them and the true design of their relationship with females, they can be free to fulfill their destiny and potential. They can be the men they were created to be.

Regardless of the conflicting signals society is currently sending out, men can find fresh vision and direction in rediscovering God's purposes for both males and females. Through this knowledge, they can be and do more than they ever imagined, and women can gain a new understanding and appreciation for men while enabling them to fulfill their calling.

APPLYING GOD'S PRINCIPLES TO YOUR LIFE

THINKING IT OVER

- How has your life been affected by the changing roles of males and females? How have you reacted to those changes?
- Have you linked your identity to the roles you fulfill (or have fulfilled in the past?)

- In what ways, if any, has your perspective of masculinity changed as a result of reading this chapter?

PRAYING ABOUT IT

- Pray that God will begin to renew your understanding of who He created the man to be in purpose, design, needs, and roles.
- Ask God to show you a specific perspective on gender that you have accepted that is based on a false understanding of male-female roles rather than on God's Purpose.

ACTING ON GOD'S TRUTH

- If you have experienced conflict over gender roles with a member of the opposite sex, seek reconciliation with the other party and commit to learning and putting into practice God's purpose and design for males and females.
- Write down your understanding of the roles and responsibilities of males in the family and in society. Keep this list in your study guide and compare what you have written with what you learned during the course of this study.