

Shew Thyself a Man

by Billy Sunday

To be a man means to be strong in purpose and self-control, to be prudent and make good decisions, and to have a high aim and strive for greatness.

Scripture: 1 Kings 2:2, Job 1:1, Proverbs 20:7, Daniel 1:8, 1 Corinthians 16:13, Ephesians 6:10, Philippians 4:13, 1 Timothy 6:12, 2 Timothy 1:7, Hebrews 12:1-2

Topics: "Manhood", "Strength of Character"

Description

Billy Sunday emphasizes the significance of true manhood, urging men to strive for strength of character and purpose, as exemplified by biblical figures like David, Abraham, and Job. He highlights that manhood is not defined by physical stature but by self-control, moral integrity, and a commitment to noble aims. Sunday encourages young men to avoid aimlessness and instead pursue high aspirations, drawing inspiration from the life of Christ as the ultimate model of manhood. He stresses the importance of making deliberate choices that align with one's values and the necessity of education and self-discipline in achieving true greatness. Ultimately, he calls for men to embody the qualities of strength, purpose, and integrity that God admires.

Transcript

"Be thou strong therefore, and shew thyself a man" -- 1 Kings 2:2

No one can read the Bible in a thoughtful way without being impressed with the fact that it makes much of manhood, and holds it up as something that should be sought after with diligence and perseverance.

In fact the Bible exalts and emphasizes manhood in a remarkable way, and shows that real manhood is a great thing in the world. The book of Genesis contains sixty chapters and covers 2,300 years of human history, and yet one half of it is devoted to telling us about the colossal manhood of Abraham, and a third to that of Joseph.

The story of creation is told in 800 words, but a great deal more space is given to the story of Caleb's rugged manhood. A whole book is occupied with the story of Job, and another with that of Daniel, while long chapters here and there tell us of other men who are safe examples to follow.

God has thus shown very plainly what He considered important by where He has put the italics. The Lord is not a respecter of persons, but He is a respecter of character, and a very good respecter of it, too.

Indeed, He does more than respect it. He admires it.

Hear his admiration of the character of Job, in the strongest language that even God can use, in declaring, "He is perfect!"

Abraham towers like mountains above molehills when he pushes aside the spoils of the unrighteous king of Sodom, lest he should say that Abraham was depending on him. Look at Daniel keeping himself pure in that pestilential palace. Look at David.

We are also told that the steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, and that he delighteth in his way, and this, I take it, means in plain English, that God loves to watch a real man go out and grow.

Let me ask you to note, first of all, that David wanted Solomon to be anchored to a noble purpose. He didn't want the young man to drift along in an aimless way, like a log in a whirlpool, but he wanted him to have, his eye set on something for which it would be worth his while to spend every energy to reach.

And so with his dying breath he said, "Don't be a mere floater, my son. Don't be a drifter on the stream of time, but stem the current that would carry you down, but be a man".

David himself had been a man of high and lofty purpose. His own life must have been greatly influenced by the character of Moses and the other mighty men of God who had preceded him. That his aim was high and his purpose lofty is clearly evident from his life and his writings.

It is not an accident that he went from the sheep fold to the throne. Success like that never comes about by mere chance. One reason why there are so many bones bleaching along the highway of life is those who once started out with bright and shining faces never expect to go anywhere in particular.

David was faithful to all his duties as a shepherd, but he looked higher than that humble calling, and made it a stepping stone. While a shepherd he improved his opportunities, trained his powers and qualified himself to be a king.

David was anxious that Solomon should have a high aim. He wanted him to reach out for the top of the mountain. He didn't want him to be content with a summer house in the valley. He wanted him to own the very best estate in the country where the giants were.

He didn't want him to be an old woman or a sissy sort of a fellow, but a man with knotted muscles on his arms, a big heart in his body and plenty of matter in his head. He wanted him to aim high, as a king's son should, knowing that if his aim was high his endeavor would not be wasted.

He wanted his son to raise his chin high enough to look the sun in the face, and so he said, "Solomon, be a man"!

Manhood - true manhood - princely manhood, like that of David, is one of the grandest things in the world, and it is something that counts as nothing else does.

It does not depend upon the size of the body. There are men of small stature, like St. Paul and Napoleon, who tower above other men as the mountains above the plain, and there are physical giants who are middle weights in manhood.

Samson was a giant in stature and a baby in self-control. It was not the Philistines who destroyed Samson. It was Samson himself.

The man who is able to say "no" whenever it should be said is walking in a way that will lead straight to his own good.

Strive to be strong in self-control by making timely decisions about what you are going to do about such important matters as temperance, morality and religion.

Settle the question very early that your life shall be directed by principles and not by impulse.

If you are not willing to deliberately take the risk of becoming a good-for-nothing sot, settle the question at once and finally that you will never take your first drink. Not to do this is to have about half decided that you will yield when the temptation comes. It means that you have concluded that you may yield, and so the probability is great that you will.

If you are not willing to take the risk of becoming a social outcast, decide as Joseph did long before he reached Potiphar's house that you will have a white life.

Boys take an example from their father. Every man's some boy's hero. Some fathers are woefully deficient, their sparker and gasoline don't work either. They can't make the grade. If every man lived light today, no boy would go to hell tomorrow.

To be a man means to be strong in purpose and self-control. If your manhood is buried under doubt, dig it out. There's a Gettysburg in every man's life which he has to fight. To be ready is half the secret of success.

Having oil or no oil in your lamp is the difference between light and darkness, between happiness and despair.

If you are not willing to run the risk of losing your soul take the only step that can make it safe by taking Christ into your heart and life at once. Join the church of your choice and commit yourself to a religious life.

Decision determines what life is to become for every man in this world, and also decides it for eternity. If you do not want to deliberately build your house on the sand, where it is but a question of time as to when destruction will come, decide that you will never go in bad company, for no other one thing will have more to do with your weal or woe than the company you keep.

The man who lets the devil choose his company for him will soon do anything the devil wants him to do.

Strive for self control by forming good habits before bad ones fasten themselves upon you. A thread can be broken, but a rope will hang you.

Before you get into the hopper take a look at the grist that is coming out.

Be prudent by learning your own strength and weakness, as a wise general knows his army. Be prudent in speech, for many a fine career has been cut short by a long tongue. Be prudent in making the best possible preparation for the thing you set out to accomplish.

Start out in life as you would set out for the North Pole. First make sure that you are ready and then go straight on with confidence.

Be prudent by keeping as far from the edge of every precipice as you can. Don't fool with temptation or trifle with sin, for the man who keeps on putting his head in the lion's mouth every day is certain to have his breathing interfered with sooner or later.

Get the best training and culture possible. Remember that knowledge is power, and try to obtain your share of it. There is no excuse for ignorance in this day, when colleges are everywhere, and books seem to almost grow on trees.

If you are a young man get a college education if you have to live on oatmeal and sorghum molasses to do it. First get understanding and you may have everything else you want.

The life of the uneducated man is like that of a mole living in the dark, while that of the man with culture is like the eagle, mounting above the clouds and soaring towards the sun.

Take the great men of the Bible and stand before them long enough to realize how great they were, and then ask yourself what there was in them that you ought to have in you, and then spend some time every day in considering the man who had in himself the great and manly qualities of them all in a superlative degree - the divine man - the God man - the man of Galilee.

Learn how to behold as in a glass His glory and so be changed into His likeness from glory to glory even as by the spirit of the Lord. Let your soul go out to Him and be filled with Him, and you will soon begin to see that everything that is not like Him is unmanly and mean. As Solomon studied and meditated upon the beautiful life of David, his father, so give time and thought and prayer in striving to be like the divine pattern that is shown to you in the perfect Man. Spend three months in studying His life on its man ward side, and you will have a more exalted knowledge of what it means to be a man than you ever before possessed. A knowledge that will quicken and inspire you to live for God and man as you never lived before.

Study the purpose of Christ and notice that He never once swerved from the business for which He came into the world, although Gethsemane and Calvary lay directly in His way. By a very little veering to one side He could have missed them both, but He set His face like a flint and went up to Jerusalem when He knew that to go would mean suffering and death.

Study His prudence and courage and you will also find it true of His self control, faithfulness, charity, unselfishness, benevolence and sympathy. Find anything in any man anywhere that everybody considers noble and manly, and then look for the same thing in Jesus, and see how it shines out in Him as the day above the twilight. He never shows the white feather, and never in his whole life does He speak one single unmanly word, think an unmanly thought or do an unmanly deed.

Surely this man was the Son of God and the most glorious promise for us ever given that when He shall appear we shall be like Him. "Be thou strong, therefore, and show thyself a man."

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