

ABOVE REPROACH

OUR CULTURE IS CONFUSED ABOUT MANHOOD AND OFTEN PORTRAYS MEN IN WAYS THAT ARE UNFAIR AND UNFLATTERING.

- 1. The brutish bully**
- 2. The clueless father**
- 3. The personification of anger and prejudice**
- 4. The weakling**

THERE ARE OTHER PORTRAITS OF MANHOOD THAT ARE MORE POSITIVE AND INSPIRING.

- 1. The noble _____** – who risks life and limb or reputation and standing to fight a battle that matters.
- 2. The friend and brother** – who cares deeply about the other men in his life and who can be counted on to show up and come through when the chips are down.
- 3. The sensitive artist** – who can reveal to us the feelings that most of us bury so deeply within our chests that we're not even aware they exist.
- 4. The _____** – who will go to any length and make any sacrifice to defend his family.

We have different gifts, different personalities, and different callings.
So, there's no one way to be a man.

But there are some traits we should all aspire to embody.
A way of being that transcends our different temperaments and abilities.
A way of being that glorifies God and brings good into the lives of those around us.
We find these traits in Paul's first epistle to Timothy and in his letter to Titus as the characteristics that qualify one to be a leader.

PAUL INTRODUCES THE MANY QUALITIES OF A LEADER THIS WAY:

1 Timothy 3.2: A leader, then, must be above reproach.

Titus 1.6: An elder must be blameless.

We are not expected to be perfect.

1 John 1.8: If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

Then what was Paul getting at when he wrote that leaders should be "above reproach" and "blameless."

He was talking about a man whose life is characterized by _____.

Integrity comes from the same Latin root as “integrate” which means putting together different parts so they are no longer separate and divided, but unified and one.

The man of integrity, the different parts of his life – his beliefs, his words, his actions – they are in _____; they are one.

A MAN OF CHARACTER

1. A MAN OF CHARACTER IS TRUE TO HIS _____.

Men may be driven by:

A. _____

B. _____

C. _____

D. Principles

Mike Tyson: Everybody has a plan until they get punched in the mouth.
And everyone has their principles until there’s a price to pay.

The world will always want to know your price – to remain silent, go along, cut a corner, or get ahead.

Unless you have decided to be a man of character, the world will always haggle with you over the price of your principles and the worth of your integrity.

Decide now that being blameless and above reproach in the sight of God is more important than the pleasures and the prizes and the praises of this world.

2. A MAN OF CHARACTER TAKES _____ FOR HIS LIFE.

Joan Didion: Character – the willingness to accept responsibility for one’s own life – is the source from which self-respect springs.

Many guys have a reason for their anger, their drinking, their promiscuity, their over-spending – their job is demanding and stressful; their wife isn’t understanding; their upbringing wasn’t good.

When we say or believe this, we say that something else is responsible for who we are emotionally and spiritually.

And we give ourselves _____ to be irresponsible in the areas of our lives that matter most.

When you believe you are NOT responsible for your life, not only are you believing a lie, but you are giving away your _____.

Men are often different at home than they are at work.

That’s because at work the problems and the challenges are usually rational and pragmatic.

At home the problems are relational and _____.

And most men are better equipped to handle the rational and the pragmatic than they are to deal with the relational and the emotional.

So there is a natural tendency to resign yourself to the way things are, duck for cover, _____ the problems if you can, and hope everything gets better.

But to be blameless and above reproach, we must take responsibility for our lives, for our relationships and for our families.

3. A MAN OF INTEGRITY IS WILLING TO _____ TO OVERCOME HIS SELF-CENTEREDNESS.

There's this thing that lives inside us that believes we are the _____ of the universe – it's called ego or pride.

It's first instinct is self.

It's first questions are: What will this do to me? What will this cost me? What will this take from me?

This is the part of us that Jesus said needed to be crucified.

Matthew 16.24: Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me."

Our lives are not worthy of respect because of what we receive, but because of what we give.

Our value to others is not determined by what we hold onto but by what we let go of. Our becoming a leader whom others may look up to is not created by our successes, but by our _____.

Mort Kondracke: So that's what I did. And in the process I've become a different, better person – someone I never expected to be.

Sacrificing yourself to serve another person will change you.

It will crucify that "me-first, it's all about my plans and my happiness" part of you that promises such joy but makes us so miserable.

Serving and sacrifice may not make you successful in the eyes of the world.

But they will make you pleasing to your Lord and Savior.

And living that way make you a man a man of integrity and substance that other men can respect.