

2 Ways You Can Be Transformed, Healed and Empowered as a Man

In my previous post on Authentic Manhood, I wrote about four things that typify the story of Jesus: it is unique, beautiful, heart-centered and opposite to our fallen stories.

It is surely important to understand that story, but when Jesus asks us to follow Him, He asks us to enter that story. This is how we are transformed, healed and empowered as men. But how do we leave our stories and enter His?

There are two words that form the core of this critical movement in our lives: *surrender* and *contemplation*.

1. Surrender. *Chariots of Fire* is the epic film about Eric Liddell, the Scottish runner who took the world by storm when he refused to run the 100m prelims on Sunday in the 1924 Olympics. Instead, he ran the 400m on another day—and in world record time!

What you may not know is the rest of the story. He hung up his track spikes after that race, went to China to be a missionary, and was eventually captured by the Japanese as they occupied China. After being put in a POW camp, he ministered to adults and children, inspiring and encouraging them, but died of a brain tumor before the Allies could rescue him. His last recorded words were these: *"Surrender, absolute surrender."*

This surrender to Jesus' story is what made Eric Liddell so great, a story that would become known around the world through the award-winning movie.

The story of Eric Liddell is so parallel to the story of the

disciples. When they chose to follow Jesus, they were choosing to leave their own self-constructed stories and enter a new one. Here they would face many trials and dangers, but they would also find out who they really were and what they were supposed to be doing in this life.

By entering the story of Jesus, they both changed the world and were forever changed as well. This is what happens when we surrender to Him, a surrender that happens when we first come to Him and then must continually happen each day. Here we find out who we are as men, what we are supposed to do in this life, and end up changing the world in ways we could not have imagined. This is the resurrection power of Jesus working in us and through us.

2. Contemplation. This is the second word that helps us enter His story. When I speak about contemplation, I mean the inward motion we experience as we focus on something outside of ourselves, letting it fill our hearts and minds. It is the opposite of self-absorption, something to which we are all prone to some extent. In our fallen modes of being, shame makes us painfully self-conscious, and we easily become narcissistic, constantly brooding about ourselves. Life becomes all about us, as reality is warped around our souls, similar to the way gravity warps around the sucking power of a black hole.

So what is the route out of self-absorption? It is contemplation. This may first happen when we contemplate God's creation: We are lifted up out of ourselves and into something lofty and wondrous. It is no surprise that men often feel that longing to connect to God first out in nature.

But contemplation deepens as we come to know God through Scripture, thinking and praying through verses that change our inner habits of being. We are no longer just thinking about ourselves, but about God's kingdom, His glory and His will. But a further step happens when we begin to contemplate how

Jesus is *already* working in our lives each day, trying to pull us further into His story. Each day we can either surrender more to Him or resist Him. Each day we can live more deeply in His love or turn away.

I have been practicing a simple discipline each morning for some time now: I walk back through the previous day, calling to mind both the moments I experienced His presence and the ones when I forgot Him and went my own way. This simple practice has opened my eyes to the ways Jesus is constantly working in me and around me.

So the door into His story is opened for us today and every day, and Jesus is always asking us to enter. To choose to walk through is choosing to walk the great adventure with Him.
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