

Free From Porn: 4 Keys to Godly Manhood in Christ

We live in a society of mounting pressure from all sides. Regardless of who you are, every individual is faced with the worldly task of proving yourself through the work you do, the clothes you wear, the income you provide for your family, and so much more.

News headlines are constantly discussing gender equality or neutrality. As people buy into this argument, they are breaking out of the mold that God has designed for family structure. As pressure mounts, men are pursuing more things that will define them in the world instead of pursuing their identity in Christ and leading their families.

God designed men to lead, and they are encouraged to lead well.

As you read on, ask the Holy Spirit to show you areas of your life that you can improve upon to become the husband and father that your family needs you to be.

1. Relationship With God.

God designed you for a purpose. Despite all that God made, he recognized that something was missing. Over and over throughout Genesis 1, the Bible tells us, "And God saw that it was good." It was not until God created man that the Bible records in verse 31, "God saw all that He had had made, and indeed it was *very* good."

When God created Adam, He didn't abandon him. Instead, he conversed with him, blessing him, assigning work for him to do and encouraging him to enjoy the land and all that God provided for him. In Genesis 3:8, Adam and Eve hear God taking his afternoon stroll through the garden. And we know that God

is looking for them, because He cries out to them, "Where are you?" (Gen. 3:9b).

As the story goes, Adam and Eve, because of sin, got kicked out of the Garden of Eden. They were forced to live in the fallen world, the same world that you and I inhabit today. But that doesn't mean that God quit loving them. In fact, the Lord initially told them that to eat from the tree would mean death but he spared their lives. God still desired to talk with them and their children, and He desires to continually hear from you.

If you want to reach your full potential, you have to set aside time daily to commune with God. Your relationship cannot be one that is put to the side and only picked up when it is convenient for you. When you do this, you're hurting yourself, as you are closing off your ears from the ability to be full tuned in to all that God wants you to know. God is always talking. The question is, are you always listening?

2. Financial Provider.

Before God blessed Adam with a wife, he was blessed with a job. Genesis 2:15 (NIV) states, "The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it."

In many of today's families, roles are getting reversed. Wives are taking on the role of head of household. While there is nothing wrong with a wife having a job, she should not be under constant pressure to solely provide for the needs of her family. Instead, a successful marriage is one that both husband and wife feel as if they are equally responsible for provision. Remember, Eve was created because no suitable helper for Adam was found (Gen. 2:20).

Neither person should feel taken advantage of. Nor should they be left to feel like what they do goes unnoticed. There will be unexpected times in life that the husband or wife may have to carry the financial torch more than the other. This does

not mean that one partner should have to cover up for the lack of the other.

In a statistical article compiled by Washington Area Coalition of Men's Ministries (WACMM), 62 percent of people surveyed said that the best kind of marriage is one in which both husband and wife work and both equally care for the children and household.

Addiction Robs Your Family

As a person committed to providing for the needs of your family, this doesn't just include bringing home a paycheck. This also ensures that you're making financial decisions to benefit your family rather than causing them harm. Spending money to feed an addiction of any kind; gambling, alcohol, drugs or sex is financially robbing your family.

Those addicted to pornography may not have spent money to feed their addiction, but there is always a financial cost. As the addiction progresses, they could risk losing their jobs, especially if they seek out pornography while on company time.

3. Spiritual Leader

Men are called to be the spiritual leader of their homes. Think back to the days of the TV series, *Little House on the Prairie*. Every evening after dinner, Pa would sit in his chair reading the Bible to his family. The kids were gathered at his feet. Typically, Ma would be found in her rocking chair with a quiet smile on her face. She basked in the presence of her family while busying her hands with mending someone's garments.

American culture can make it difficult for this same scenario to play out in your home, especially if one of the parents works in a position that requires availability throughout the evening and overnight hours. But men are still under obligation to lead their homes spiritually, as the Bible has

remained unchanged even though society has been shifting.

Children are guided more by what they see instead of what they hear. And kids are looking to their dads, grandfathers, or other father-type figures to lead them. Their priorities as they become adults will mirror the priorities that they witnessed in their family structure.

Don't Be Deceived!

Kids have an innate ability to recognize when someone is being genuine or phony. Your kids will recognize whether you skip church, attend out of obligation or have a full-on, passionate pursuit of Christ.

If you're allowing something from your past to silently control you and drive you into the dark depths of pornography, you're missing out on spiritually leading your family well.

As a man, when you make the choice to fully surrender your life to Christ, your family will benefit significantly. WACMM reports that:

When a mother comes to Christ, her family will join her at church approximately 17 percent of the time. In comparison, when a dad surrenders his life to Jesus, his family will join him 93 percent of the time.

4. Leave a Legacy Worth Remembering.

The expectation to always be in control is something most men grapple with. They struggle with friendships, and many report that they do not have a close, trusted male friend who knows everything about them. Men are commonly raised to believe that showing emotion indicates weakness. They feel the only way is to bottle their fears, doubts, trauma, disappointments and failures up within themselves. Most men will struggle with the idea of getting in touch with their feelings, assessing their wounds, or talking about traumatic events. But it's not

healthy to keep it all in!

Recently I heard a pastor say, "If you don't allow your eyes to leak every now and then, your head will explode."

And you can rest assured that when it happens, your family will not be left unscathed.

How many areas of your life have you identified that need some work? Where are you lacking? Where are you succeeding? Take some time now to write the answers to these questions.

There is still hope for you to find your way back to the man whom God created you to be!

You were created on purpose for a purpose. You have been appointed, anointed and called! But you have to let go of the baggage you are holding to take hold of your full Christ-given potential. If you have been struggling with pornography, now is the time to reach out for freedom. {eoa}

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