

God Affirms Powerfully With Four Simple Words

What is the most powerful thing another man has ever said to you? Think back. What words can you remember like they were spoken yesterday?

For some, the most powerful thing ever said to them may have been an extremely negative experience. I speak with young men all the time who have the condemning, disapproving words of a father haunting them. This is a sad reality. Most men that I know have never experienced powerful affirmation from other men.

Others were blessed to have great men in their lives who spoke powerful affirmation to them as men. I love meeting these guys. They tell beautiful stories of how their father, grandfather, mentor or coach sat them down and said four of the most important words a young man could ever hear: "You are a man."

The first time I ever heard a man say those words to me, I was 27 years old. This happened a few years ago, when I was blessed with the opportunity to be part of a church-planting residency in Little Rock, Ark., called Fellowship Associates.

My time in this program prepared me for life, marriage and church-planting more than I could have ever imagined. But even with all the great things I learned, there was one day in that residency that changed me forever.

I was sitting in the office of one of the leaders of the program, complaining about the pains of trying to plant a church. He waited until I was finished and then simply looked at me and said, "Matt, did you know you are a man, not a boy?"

I was completely taken aback. I didn't know what to say or do.

I just started to cry. No one had ever told me that before.

Why did this impact me so much? Why was I so shocked by those words?

We are hardwired for affirmation, and on earth we seek it from older men. However, the ultimate and decisive declaration of affirmation comes from God. When this man told me I was a man, he preached a biblical manhood sermon to me.

This message is found throughout the Bible. One of the clearest examples of this is when the apostle Paul writes to young Timothy: "But as for you, O man of God, flee these things. Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness. Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called and about which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. I charge you in the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who in his testimony before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, to keep the commandment unstained and free from reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Tim. 6:11-14, ESV).

Do you hear what Paul is saying to young Timothy here? Paul is saying, "Timothy, you are a man. I have charged you as a man of God!"

Men need to hear those four amazing words: "You are a man."

Here is the good news: If no man has ever told you that you are a man, the ultimate man, Jesus, came, lived and died so you can be adopted by God the Father. In this adoption, God the Father looks down on you and says, "This is My man."

Rest in this. Now that God has affirmed you as a man, go forth and look young men in the eye and tell them that they are now men, too, not boys.

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