

How to Answer the Tough Questions About Your Identity

Every man has unanswered questions. Questions about his value, his skill or his usefulness. Whether debilitating or just nagging annoyances, these questions persist unless resolved.

Past generations had it better, I think, when society understood that it took deliberate, focused effort to turn boys into men, when mastery mattered, and when men needed to prove themselves. Now we're several generations into the "whatever feels good" nonsense that doesn't challenge anyone to grow or improve and we've got a generation of males with a paralyzing identity crisis.

The Boy Becomes a Hero

As a boy, I stared down the major league's most feared hitters. It was always the bottom of the ninth. The bases were always loaded and there were always two outs. My team—the Murphy-era Atlanta Braves—was always up by three runs. Everyone in the stadium understood what was about to happen: either I was going to strike out the most feared hitter in baseball, or he was going to go deep and steal a victory from my team.

And night after night my teammates hoisted me on their shoulders and carried me off the field victorious—at least until my parents tired of the constant banging of the tennis ball against the bricks.

That's how boys have always answered questions about themselves. They create scenarios which require them to become heroes, and then they triumph.

Too many men are still answering questions the same way they did when they were ten. They're still slinging tennis balls at

brick walls. They're *imagining* themselves as heroes instead of becoming men capable of heroics.

There are infinite reasons for this. The failure of fathers, society's ambivalence towards traditional masculine traits, the church's sanitizing of biblical characters, among many, many others. But regardless of the reason, we have men imagining their ideal selves instead of becoming their ideal selves.

Men, do not assume the search for wholeness is that simple; you can't wish away brokenness.

Jesus is the Answer

But one answer is fundamental. It's foundational. The answer to the incompleteness and imperfection we see in ourselves is the completeness and perfection of Jesus.

Every conversation you and I have about manhood—or anything else, whether it's said explicitly or not—is rooted in this absolute, unshakable premise: my only hope—and yours—is Jesus. He is our perfection. He is our strength. He is our significance. He is the context in which all other answers make sense.

There are real perils that require heroic men. But they're not found in fantasy or denial. They're found in an Authentic Manhood dedicated to Jesus. They're found in the action that follows the encounter with Jesus. They're found in the chaos of the battle fought for Jesus.

Manly is finding the answers.

For the original article, visit

Josh Wood *is on a crusade to become an irritant to a culture that mocks true masculinity and tries to replace it with a bearded femininity. When he's not challenging the destructive norms of culture, he enjoys a fine cigar or riding his*

motorcycle or collecting knives or firing off a box of ammo at the range. He's married, and his wife is awesome.