

Pastor: Fathers, Be a Man for Jesus

One of the names of God is El Gibor, which is translated "Mighty God" in Isaiah 9:6: "For unto us a child is born ... And his name shall be called ... The Mighty God." It can as well be translated as "God is our hero."

The word "gibor" can also be applied to men who are heroes, champions, mighty men of valor, strong, brave, valiant. "Gibors" are men who serve the El Gibor, who is God of the champions and the heroes. He is God of the valiant.

Paul Cole, president of the Christian Men's Network, says, "The fate of every society is determined by the character of its heroes and the strength of its warriors." True, godly, biblical manhood is exemplified through men who are champions of the El Gibor, the God of the Champions. They are not hindered by the obstacles they are confronted with, but determined to overcome them.

Henry Varley once wrote to D.L. Moody, "The world has yet to see what God will do with a man fully consecrated to him."

I want to make the choice every day to be godly, to be Christlike, so others can see what a true man, a true champion for God, can be—not in the ways the world defines manhood, but in the ways in which God establishes His character, nature and Spirit in us so we can be the men He calls us to be in our roles of father, husband, ambassador, heroes.

The apostle Paul said, "Follow me as I follow Christ" (1 Cor. 11:1). We don't want to follow the examples of the world; we need to reflect Christ and let people follow Christ in us.

Be a Man for Jesus

Back in the 1980s, I was ministering one evening in a homeless shelter where I met a man named James. He was going through a lot and was very confrontational with me. I said to him, "James, if you have the courage to be a man and get help, I challenge you to call me tomorrow morning. I'll pick you up and take you to church."

I really didn't expect him to call me, but sure enough, early the next morning I got a phone call. "Doug, you said if I called you that you would pick me up and take me to church."

I did not feel like going to church in that moment! It was early in the morning, and I'd been up all night, I was exhausted. But I was committed to what I confessed, so I picked him up, brought him back to my apartment to shower, then took him to church. That morning, James experienced a beautiful encounter with the Lord and gave his life to Jesus.

I took him to lunch, then asked if he wanted me to take him back to the shelter. He said, "No, take me to the streets because I need to tell some people what happened to me."

I had invited James to a large Christian event in downtown Houston that night, where I was volunteering as a counselor, and he told me he would come. While I was there, some of the counselors came and told me, "Doug, there's a group of homeless people here looking for you." James had told others what happened to him and brought them to the meeting with him! He wanted to be a man who was obligated to what he confessed, as I had been. The words he said, in fact, were: "I want to be a man for Doug because he was a man for me."

Those words resonated in my spirit and filled me with a revelation: I want to be a man for *Jesus*, because Jesus became a man for me! While I was still yet in my sin, Jesus, the exalted one, left His highest place to pursue me and to pursue you. That revelation is at the core of biblical manhood.

Buddy Up

The first two weekends of June, I was scheduled to speak at men's events in Houston and Tampa Bay. One afternoon I took a break from my preparation to go to the gym. When I do my chest sets, I normally finish off with 225 pounds on the flat bench, which I can usually do on my own. But I decided that day to add a little more weight, so I needed a spotter to help me.

The same is true in life! There are times that we all go through heavy lifting, and sometimes we can do it alone. But other times we're confronted with obstacles and challenges that are overwhelming. We feel like our backs are up against the wall and the wind has been knocked out of us. We feel the heaviness of the pressure, the fears, the anxieties and the stresses of life. In those times, we need a spotter.

We need buddies to help us stay accountable. We need those who can encourage us and motivate us to stay the course and be the godly men we're called to be. But first and foremost, we need to keep our eyes and our gaze fixed on the Lord Himself.

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