

Stop Being a Spiritual Sissy!

Think back to your childhood. Most every man will be able to recall the time when he was growing from a boy to a man. The title of this book comes from that point in childhood when you were trying to assert yourself into manhood, a time when you had to man up.

Perhaps you can remember a time when you were called a sissy. It might have been from the school bully, your best friend, or even your father, but you remember it vividly. "Sissy," they said, dogging you about some situation you were in.

It might have been sports, a fight, or even just a jump over the creek. Someone challenged you by calling you a sissy. At that moment, you had a choice: you could walk away and continue to be a sissy in the eyes of the accuser, or you could puff your chest out and take the challenge. All of us have walked away at least once. It's painful, I know, but I'd like you to remember that day, that one moment in time when you were a coward by someone's reckoning.

No matter how insignificant the situation, I'm guessing that part of you still feels like a coward today for turning down the challenge.

Maybe you can also recall a time when you stood up to the challenge. But this memory is more about accomplishment or victory, not failure. It's a memory of that day you were no longer a sissy. But now you are a grown man. The days of childhood bullies and peer pressure are behind you. Or are they?

Although there aren't many people calling you a sissy to your face, it may be that you're unknowingly acting like one. Take a look at what the Apostle Paul wrote in the Bible:

"And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by

the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.”(Romans 12:2).

You may actually be allowing the world to dictate how you live, how you act, and how you don't act as a Christian man. If you are doing this, you are, in essence, a “spiritual sissy” because you are walking away from the challenge Jesus has laid out before you in the Bible.

“And He summoned the crowd with His disciples, and said to them, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it” (Mark 8:34–35).

It's a challenge that is requiring you to take a stand for God's kingdom, not the kingdom of the world, and TO be prepared for the “bullies” of the world to hate you as they hated Jesus. It's a choice to be a sissy or not to be a sissy, to ManUp! or shut up. It's a choice to be different from the world. It's the choice to be an intentional Christian.

Some of the biggest spiritual sissies are in the church today! This book is written with a concerned heart for the Christian man. He is being pulled in a million directions and losing the battle. It's time to man up and get serious about saving the modern-day Christian man—before we become extinct.

Are you or other men you know having trouble in their Christian walk? Do you want to make a difference for God's kingdom? It is my prayer and my hope that this book will open your eyes to the trouble that Christian men are in today.

The good news is that these are troubles that can be avoided if we will just Man Up and follow Jesus.

Join me on a journey through seven areas in a Christian man's

life that need major attention. Areas in which we can add some spiritual muscle and stop being 98-pound spiritual weaklings. In a minute you will read my testimony, and there you will see the 98-pound spiritual weakling I am referring to. It will give you a glimpse of the struggles I faced and the spiritual workout I used to gain the spiritual muscle I need to face life's challenges.

The courage comes from Him:

"I can do all things through Him who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13).

Jesus changed me, and that changed my family. And that enhanced my witness for Christ and allowed me to be the man He's called me to be. My hope is that someday it will change the world. Join me in this hope.

A Sissy's Testimony

When I was a young boy, my mom did the best she could in raising me. I was the oldest of five and a member of a family dealing with divorce. My mom and dad had divorced when I was four as Dad left Mom left to raise three kids by herself.

I had just turned seven when Mom remarried. My brother, sister and I were welcomed into a new family by my stepfather. He added to our family my stepbrother. A few years later, my dad married my stepmom. Within 10 months, I had a half-brother. There were five of us in all. I then had three brothers and a sister.

During my early years, my mother and stepfather were very devout in going to church. I always tell people that by the age of twelve I had a drug addiction—I was drug to church every time the doors were open. This was where I learned about the Bible and also where I learned to hate the church. By the time I was thirteen, I hated church so much I was causing problems at home just so I didn't have to go.

My hatred stemmed from many reasons, but it came mostly because I began to see the hypocrisy of the church. People saying one thing in the church and doing something different outside of it. I just couldn't take fake people. So this was my opportunity to separate myself from the church. It was also an opportunity for me to be overtaken by the world. My early years in church were spent with people telling me the rules and regulations but never why I would go to hell if I didn't follow them. Never once was I shown how to have a relationship with Christ.

But in my justification of my hatred of religion and the hypocrisy behind it, I was just being a coward. Too scared to search for myself for the real meaning of Christianity. Deep down inside, I was a sissy.

For the next few years, I lived with my dad and stepmom. I just couldn't handle living with my mom and stepdad always making me feeling guilty about church. Living with my dad and stepmom was like moving to another planet. It was completely void of guilt or shame about church. I think both of them were a lot like me, in that for them church had just become a religion and no relationship. I now had a freedom like I had never had before: freedom to express myself, to say what I wanted to say, and to do whatever I wanted to do. This is where I began to hate everything to do with God, the church, and everyone involved with church.

Although all four of my parents were great parents, throughout my life there were times they were there for me and times they were not. There were times they lifted me up and times they let me down, and vice versa. This book is not about how I was raised, but more about how the choices I made though my life were a part of God's sovereign master plan.

Jody Burkeen is founder of Man Up God's Way Ministries, birthed out of his desire to help change the way Christian men "do" Christianity.