

8 Myths About Male Authority

God has given men a unique role as leaders of our homes and families. But how do we reconcile this in a culture that has become reactionary against men exercising biblical authority?

We live in a society that is pushing for male sensitivity and female strength. That's fine. But much of the current societal norms are a reaction to a perverted idea of God-given male authority. If men could understand the authority God gives to them, they would not have to surrender to the culture's emasculation of their role. If wives could understand their husbands' roles, they would see that support of their husbands' leadership would make themselves more free and secure, not less.

Many Christian men today are wimps. They hate themselves for it, and women do not respect them because of it. So, let me remind you of eight ways that our culture perverts the biblical understanding of male authority ... then we will see the list of how a "real man" exercises his authority.

Myth #1: Male authority means male dominance. Men must understand that mature masculinity in Scripture has to do with our strength to serve and sacrifice for the good of the woman. Luke 22:26 gives the general servant-leadership paradigm: "'But among you, those who are the greatest should take the lowest rank, and the leader should be like a servant'" (NLT). Ephesians 5:25 gives the home version of it: "And you husbands must love your wives with the same love Christ showed the church."

Myth #2: Exercising strength leads to abuse. The strength that is shaped to provide and protect will not turn to hinder and hurt. They are two different mentalities. Just like muscle does not turn to fat (though sometimes it appears like that), they are two different types of body tissues. When we don't

exercise strength in the right way, we will lapse into throwing our weight around in the wrong way. "If you give encouraging guidance, be careful that you don't get bossy; if you're put in charge, don't manipulate; if you're called to give aid to people in distress, keep your eyes open and be quick to respond; if you work with the disadvantaged, don't let yourself get irritated with them or depressed by them. Keep a smile on your face" (Rom. 12:8, The Message).

Myth #3: Men need to be more feminine to be sensitive. Was Jesus being more feminine when He sensed the woman who touched His garment being healed? Or when He commanded the disciples to let the children come to Him? Do not men have their own way of sensing the needs around them? If you stand in between my grandchildren and me, I'll guarantee you that I will not become more "feminine," precisely because I am sensitive to them.

Myth #4: For women to be empowered, men must be disempowered. Paul did not need to become less powerful for Lydia to host the first church. Aquila did not need to be written out of Scripture for us to appreciate Priscilla. Indeed, one of the ways women are most empowered (like the woman at the well in John 4) is for a man (Jesus in that case) to use his strength to respect her. We insult women to think that they cannot deal with strong men. Indeed, we underestimate women when we think that they would rather control men than be the recipient of a strong man's love and respect. Strong women can "talk back" (that's what "helper" means in Gen. 2:18) and work right alongside a strong man.

Myth #5: We shouldn't raise our boys to enjoy "manly" activities. Not too many decades ago boys could play cowboys and Indians, army or contact sports without us worrying that they were growing up to be racist or right-winged warmongers or violent. Boys were taught to hunt in case they needed to survive in the wild. It made them more confident and more appreciative of nature, not more dangerous. The Scripture does

not forbid those “adversarial” activities (soldiers, hunters, athletes) that build in strength or teamwork.

Myth #6: We need to feminize God in order to not favor men. The whole “God is a she” movement is ridiculous. Spirit has no gender, but we do not need to hide the fact that the biblical terms for God are masculine ones. We do not need to feminize “Our Father” in order to be brothers and sisters of equal value, standing and usefulness to Him.

Myth #7: If men lead in the home, then they will be free to boss women around in all society. Actually, male servant-leadership is not about “bossing” anyone around anywhere. The servant-leadership that a man is given in the home does not extend beyond it into society. So male responsibility for leadership in the Christian home (see Eph. 5:23) cannot be projected into business or government or any other societal institution.

Myth #8: Authority is about making declarations, not taking personal responsibility to see them through to a beneficial end. Wrong! Men have a terrible reputation for being opinionated without being responsible.

If there is anything clear about the Holy Spirit following the life of Jesus, it is that God follows through. God did not just issue commandments and leave us on our own. He came to help us practice them. The God who came to live with us and in us, the God who said “Lo, I am with you always” is our model for leadership. We can follow that example by staying close to those we lead and assisting them.

READ: 8 truths about male authority.

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