

The Church Needs Real Men

Wherever discouragement comes in, it is dreadfully weakening. I am sure it is weakening, because the prophet was bidden to say three times to the governor, high priest, and people: "Be strong." This proves that they had become weak. Being discouraged, their hands hung down, and their knees were feeble.

Faith girds us with omnipotence, but unbelief makes everything hang loose and limp about us. Distrust and you will fail in everything; believe, and according to your faith so shall it be unto you.

To lead a discouraged people to the Holy War is as difficult as for Xerxes' commanders to conduct the Persian troops to battle against the Greeks. The vassals (servants) of the great king were driven to the conflict by whips and sticks, for they were afraid to fight: Do you wonder that they were defeated?

A church that needs constant exhorting and compelling accomplishes nothing. The Greeks had no need of blows and threats, for each man was a lion, and courted the encounter, however great the odds against him. Each Spartan fought *con amore* (with devotion); he was never more at home than when contending for the altars and the hearths of his country.

We want Christian men of this same sort, who have faith in their principles, faith in the doctrines of grace, faith in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost; and who therefore contend earnestly for the faith in these days when piety is mocked at from the pulpit, and the gospel is sneered at by professional preachers. We need men who love the truth, to whom it is dear as their lives; men into whose hearts the old doctrine is burned by the hand of God's Spirit through a deep experience of its necessity and of its power. We need no more of those who will parrot what they are taught, but we want men who will speak what they know.

Oh, for a troop of men like John Knox, heroes of the martyr and covenanter stock! Then would Jehovah of hosts have a people to serve Him who would be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.

-- Charles H. Spurgeon (Sermon 1918)

A man's identity is influenced by the values that are impressed upon him during his childhood and his identity influences others.

*1 My son, do not forget my teaching, but keep my commands in your heart,
2 for they will prolong your life many years and bring you prosperity.
3 Let love and faithfulness never leave you;
bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart.
4 Then you will win favor and a good name in the sight of God and man.
5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding;
6 in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.*

(Proverbs 3:1-6)

- What does this passage say about the values we are to pursue in our lives?
- What were your thoughts about the identity of a Christian man?
- What is your present view or understanding of Christian (biblical) men?
- What should we do to reflect biblical manhood?