

A VISION OF BIBLICAL COMPLEMENTARITY

Manhood and Womanhood Defined According to the Bible

John Piper

A STUDY GUIDE

This study is based on John Piper's fine essay on biblical manhood and womanhood. The way small groups are to use this material is quite simple: Read it aloud as a group, stopping for discussion as you go.

Some groups may be less talkative than others and may benefit from using the discussion questions provided. Others may not need the discussion questions at all. The study will be less effective if there is little or no discussion, so do not rush. It should take at least ten study sessions to get through the material, though the original test group met each week for three months!

STUDY GROUP FORMAT

1. **Begin with a season of prayer.** You might want to follow the ACTS pattern for prayer. See APPENDIX ONE. Be careful not to spend so much time in prayer that you do not get to the material.
2. **Go over Memory Verses.** Introduce a new verse every two or three weeks. Read the verse together and work on getting it word-perfect. Discuss the meaning of the verses. Don't forget to review the previous verses when you go on to new ones.
3. **Read the material aloud in your group.** A great way to do this is to go around the circle, each man taking a turn at reading one paragraph aloud. If anyone does not feel comfortable reading aloud, reading in a small group of men committed to helping each other grow is a great way to become comfortable.
4. **Discuss the material as you go.** Everyone is free to contribute to the discussion. The leader will be responsible to see that the discussion stays on topic, and that the group moves along at a reasonable pace.
5. **Look up and read the scripture references as you go.**
6. **Refer to APPENDIX TWO when the subject of men as "providers" arises.** Our culture has largely lost this concept. This Appendix provides explanation.
7. **Refer to and discuss pertinent footnotes as you go.** The numerals scattered throughout the document refer to footnotes found at the end of the document. Some are only source citations while others offer valuable additional insights.
8. **When your time is nearly spent, stop.** Have someone pray for the group. Dismiss. It is important that the group meeting end on time out of respect for people's other commitments.

IF YOU WANT SOME DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Section One:

Memory Verse: 1 Corinthians 11:3 "But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman *is* man, and the head of Christ *is* God."

Discuss how just as Christ is subject to the Father, but is still equal to the Father, man is not superior to woman, though man is called to lead. Discuss how the man has to be in subjection to Christ before he can lead the woman.

Read and Discuss the Introduction, pages 25-29, ending before "*The Meaning of Masculinity*."

Discussion Questions:

1. What was the one or two key points that spoke to you?
2. Were there any points that you have a hard time with? Why is that?
3. Is there anything you need to do to put into practice what you were challenged with in this section?

Section Two:

Memory Verses: Matthew 20:25-26 "...You know that the rulers of the gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to be great among you, let him be your servant."

Discuss the concept of servant-leadership. Give examples.

Read and Discuss “*The Meaning of Masculinity*,” (part one) pages 29-33, ending before number 7 on page 33.

Discussion Questions:

1. Which of the first six points was the easiest for you to affirm? Why? Which was the hardest for you to affirm? Why?
2. Has your understanding of masculinity changed? How?

Section Three:

Memory Verse: Ephesians 6:4 “And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.”

Discuss the man’s responsibility to lead in the home. Discuss the fact that Paul says the opposite of provoking is training. Children are more often provoked by a lack of discipline than too much. See Prov. 13:24.

Read and Discuss “*The Meaning of Masculinity*,” (part two) pages 33-37, ending before “*The Meaning of Femininity*.”

Discussion Questions:

1. Which of the last three points was the easiest for you to affirm the most? Which was the hardest for you to affirm?
2. When we think of leadership we might naturally think of privilege. The words “protect” and “provide” don’t speak so much about privilege as responsibility. How do you feel about your responsibility to be a provider/protector?
3. Has your understanding of masculinity changed? How?

Section Four:

Memory Verse: Genesis 2:18 And the LORD God said, “*It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him.*”

Discuss the woman’s role in light of the reason God created her. What responsibility does that give you as a man?

Read and Discuss “*The Meaning of Femininity*,” pages 37-43, ending before “*The Biblical Vision of Complementarity*.”

Discussion Questions:

1. What kind of man is a man who is “worthy” to be “helped.”?
2. Are there any points that you have a hard time with? Why is that?
3. Is there anything you need to do to put into practice what you were challenged with in this section?

Section Five:

Memory Verse: Titus 2:1–2 ¹But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine: ²that the older men be sober, reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love, in patience;

Titus 2:6 ⁶Likewise, exhort the young men to be sober-minded,

Discuss some of the characteristics of godly men described here and why it is so important that men be this way.

Read and Discuss “*The Biblical Vision of Complementarity*,” through the end of the document, pages 43-50.

Discussion Questions:

1. Note the items on the men’s and women’s lists that are the same. What can you learn from that?
2. Note the items on the men’s and women’s lists that are different. What can you learn from these differences?
3. If you were telling someone about what you read in this document, what would you say? In other words, summarize the most important points in this document.
4. What challenges does this make to your own life and how you live as a man?