

MAN'S ROLE

Shifting paradigms (the way you view the world) in gender roles.

1. Traditional patriarchal. Wives submit yourselves to your husbands.
2. Egalitarian. Submit one to the other.

Man's Role as Father

Jesus revealed God as Father

Man of Velvet and Steel

1. The traditional definition of the male role encourages toughness, inexpressiveness, and competitiveness.
 - a. Evidence that traditional definition of manhood is very costly for women, children, and men themselves.
 - b. Women invest themselves emotionally in a relationship only to find that his masculine restrictiveness does not allow him to fully love back.
 - c. Men intimidate by yelling or withdraw into angry silence.
 - d. They may switch from charm to anger without warning; belittle a woman's opinions, feelings, and accomplishments, and even humiliate her in front of others; or withhold sex, love, money, or approval as a form of punishment or control.
 - e. For women intimacy means sharing thoughts and feelings; for men it means being in the same room.
2. The cost of traditional masculinity can be equally devastating on men's relationships with their children.
 - a. Average father little more than a "phantom man" than a "family man."
 - b. Even when he is present, he is absent; he is there in body, but in every other respect he is removed from the family.
3. Men do not fare much better in their relationships with other men.
 - a. Relationships superficial, even shallow.
 - b. "If a son has learned well from his father about the importance of power, achievement, competition, and emotional inexpressiveness, he will enter relationships with other men with great caution and distrust.
4. Discouraging statement on father is Samuel Osherson's *Finding Our Fathers: The Unfinished Business of Manhood*.
 - a. "Boys grow into manhood with a wounded father within, a conflicted inner sense of masculinity rooted in men's experience of their fathers as rejecting, incompetent, or absent.
 - b. As a result of a distant relationship with their fathers, men carry around as adults a burden of vulnerability, dependency, or emptiness within themselves, still grieving, reliving a time when going to mother for help as they wanted to was inappropriate, and they wouldn't or couldn't go to father with the confusion, anger, or sadness they felt. When men are put in touch with their pain today, they

respond ambivalently--with rage or shame, attempting to prove their independence, as well as with curiosity and a desire to deal with the wounds they feel.

5. Such patterns or rules of behavior govern and are reinforced in fraternal relationships.
 - a. A boy learns from his brother that "rivalry rules. He who comes in first--who is born first, scores higher, earns more--is better.
 - b. An endless game of one-upmanship from cradle to coffin.
 - c. Lessons of competition and emotional inexpressiveness comes through the brother bond also.
6. Joining men's clubs or fraternities.
 - a. Join club to retreat from the competitive, nonnurturing society at large.
 - b. Once inside, they are faced with similar struggles and competitions for power and control.
 - c. Man comes away from his mens club and fraternity experience with mixed feelings. His need to belong is fulfilled but his need for closeness to men may not be.

Challenge to the traditional definition of manhood.

1. Hypermasculinity cripples men and keeps them from establishing essential emotional bonds with their children, wives, and male friends.

A Fatherless Society

1. David Blankenhorn, in his book, *Fatherless America*, asserts that two structural preconditions for effective fatherhood have collapsed.
 - a. The father's co-residency with his children.
 - b. The father's alliance with the children's mother.
2. The "shrinking father."
 - a. About 40 percent of American children go to sleep at night in fatherless homes.
 - b. An enormous loss of the father's roles of caregiver, moral educator, head of family, and breadwinner.
3. The diminished presence of the father is responsible for increases in a variety of social ills: Juvenile delinquency, youth violence, domestic violence against women, child sexual abuse, children in poverty and economic insecurity, adolescent childbearing, and unwed pregnancy.
4. Organizations which have put an emphasis on educating fathers:
 - a. James Dobson's *Focus on the Family*.
 - b. Promise Keepers movement.

Authentic Christian Manhood

1. Based on behaviors that:
 - a. Seek to support rather than dominate women.
 - b. Empower rather than control younger men.

- c. Mentor and complement rather than compete with other men.
- 2. Fathers need to be jointly involved in child-rearing efforts.
 - a. Contributions by fathers should be significant enough to establish deep emotional bonding with his children.
 - b. Research has shown that the more exclusively a boy is parented by his mother, the greater his need to be superior to women and eliminate any behavior which appears to be feminine
 - c. When fathers set an example of expressing their feelings, their sons also become more expressive
- 3. In order for there to be a true liberation of women, there must also be a liberation of men. When they are secure in their masculinity, they can support increased freedom for women.
 - a. Secure Christian manhood means that one is mature enough that he doesn't need to confirm his masculinity at a woman's expense.
 - b. Such a man will work with women as equals as well as under their supervision.
 - c. In the family, will be willing to be equally involved in household chores and child care.
- 4. To help achieve the ideal of true manhood and womanhood, cultures can continue to recognize the distinctions between men and women and at the same time encourage individuals to meet their potentials and goals in life through equal opportunities and responsibilities.