

# THE DECONSTRUCTION OF BIBLICAL MASCULINITY

## GOLDEN TEXT

“The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it”. (Genesis 2:15)

## USEFUL PRACTICE

Man was created with qualities that express virility, responsibility and leadership.

## SCRIPTURE READING

### Ruth 4:7-12

**7** (Now in earlier times in Israel, for the redemption and transfer of property to become final, one party took off his sandal and gave it to the other. This was the method of legalizing transactions in Israel.)

**8** So the guardian-redeemer said to Boaz, “Buy it yourself.” And he removed his sandal.

**9** Then Boaz announced to the elders and all the people, “Today you are witnesses that I have bought from Naomi all the property of Elimelek, Kilion and Mahlon.

**10** I have also acquired Ruth the Moabite, Mahlon’s widow, as my wife, in order to maintain the name of the dead with his property, so that his name

will not disappear from among his family or from his hometown. Today you are witnesses!”

**11** Then the elders and all the people at the gate said, “We are witnesses. May the Lord make the woman who is coming into your home like Rachel and Leah, who together built up the family of Israel. May you have standing in Ephrathah and be famous in Bethlehem.

**12** Through the offspring the Lord gives you by this young woman, may your family be like that of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah.”

## LESSON OBJECTIVES

- I) To show** that biblical masculinity comes from divine creation and that its characteristics encompass the provision and protection of the family;
- II) To highlight** that the erosion of masculinity has to do with the apology for homosexuality and the neglect of man’s responsibility;
- III) To emphasize** the image of Boaz as a symbol of biblical and balanced masculinity.

## INTRODUCTION

The progressive concept of breaking with biblical standards works to deconstruct masculinity. Thus, the Judeo-Christian patterns for the role of man are called into question. In this context, masculinity is considered to be relative and the biblical model of man is deconstructed. In this lesson, we will present the divine mandate for man, the attempts to remove man’s masculine character, and the example of biblical masculinity that God requires of Christian men.

### I - BIBLICAL MASCULINITY

**1. The divine creation of man.** God is the Creator of all things in heaven, on earth and in the sea (Gen 1:1; Acts 4:24). Scripture records that He created human beings and defined them by sex: male and female, man and woman (Gen. 1:27). This differentiation is aimed at the mutual complement in marriage and the performance of the roles divinely assigned to each of them (1 Cor. 11:11, 12). Thus, it can be said that no other creature was made like human beings. Fish, birds and all other animals

were produced “according to their kind” (Gen 1:21, 24, 25). However, when creating human beings, God made them looking at himself, that is, in his image, in his likeness (Gen. 1:26). Therefore, human beings are considered the crown of Creation.

**2. Characteristics of masculinity.** The Scriptures reveal a set of characteristics of man's role in history, as well as of his biological constitution. When creating man, God entrusted him with two primary and essential tasks: to work and to take care (Gen. 2:15). These two terms sum up the divine mandate for male behavior. It means that the roles of provider and protector are inherent in man's nature. In this sense, Paul ratifies that it is up to man to protect his wife and family, as well as to provide them with a decent life (Eph. 5:28-30). It is emphasized that “biblical masculinity” praises love and care for women and that “male chauvinism” demeans and dishonors them. In this regard, the Bible teaches men to honor women with all dignity (1 Peter 3:7).

**3. Male leadership.** God entrusted man with the duty of leadership (Gen. 1:26; 3:16). In the Bible, God is the head of Christ; Christ is the head of man; and man is the head of the woman (1 Corinthians 11:3). The feminist movement, with a neo-Marxist bias, considers this model as an oppressive sexist system towards women. Contrary to this fallacy, the Apostle Paul reveals that man must lead his household in the same way that Christ leads the Church (Eph. 5:29). Since Christ gave himself up for the welfare of the Church, male leadership requires the practice of some kind of sacrifice for the woman (Eph. 5:25b). In this sense, in the exercise of leadership, man must demonstrate virtues, such as: strength, wisdom, courage, love and respect (Judg. 6:14; 2 Chr. 1:10; Neh. 6:11; John 15:12, 13).

## **II – THE EROSION OF MASCULINITY**

**1. Apology for homosexuality.** In postmodern times, “gender ideology” makes continuous attempts to legitimize homosexuality. This concept ignores physical and biological characteristics, claiming that human beings are born sexually neutral. This conception invalidates the divine creation of the human race as a binary “male” and “female” being (Gen. 1:27). It teaches that gender identity and sexual orientation are independent of the anatomy of the body. Thus, it does not accept that the organs of the human reproductive system serve as a parameter for sexuality. Consequently, unnatural sexuality is encouraged (Rom. 1:26, 27). A crisis of male behavior emerges from this currently (1 Cor. 6:10).

**2. Neglected responsibility.** Because masculinity is being considered to be relative, the biblical model has been abandoned. The masculine identity,

which should be associated with virility, with the ability to provide for and protect the family, is replaced with double-minded, hesitant and reckless individuals (James 1:8). Many of them are unable to provide for their own house, not because of unemployment, but for being averse to work (Prov. 21:25). The effects of this behavior result in countless cases of family disagreements and divorce.

**3. Leadership crisis.** The masculinity crisis has produced men incapable of exercising leadership. A society without effective leaders turns into anarchy. In the period of the prophet Ezekiel, Jerusalem was immersed in corruption, fraud, lies, oppression, extortion, immorality, injustice and violence (Ez. 22:2-13). God revealed to the prophet that one of the causes of the imminent judgment was a leadership crisis and that he was looking for someone to reverse the situation (Ez. 22:30). In this sense, God is still looking for that kind of man today (1 Kings 2:2).

### **III – BOAZ: BIBLICAL SYMBOL OF MASCULINITY**

**1. Model of generosity.** Boaz is a great symbol of biblical manhood. He was a relative of Elimelek, Naomi's late husband (Ruth 2:1). She had lost her husband, her children and was left with only the Moabite Ruth, one of her daughters-in-law, who was also a widow without any children (Ruth 1:3, 5, 16). In order to survive, Ruth went to work in Boaz's field (Ruth 2:3, 5, 6). Upon learning that Ruth had left her land to support her mother-in-law, Boaz treated her generously (Ruth 2:11, 12). He addressed her with tenderness (Ruth 2:8); he protected her from being molested (Ruth 2:9); he fed her (Ruth 2:14); and he ordered his men to favor her in the harvest (Ruth 2:15, 16). However, according to the Law, a childless widow could only be redeemed by marrying a close relative of the deceased (Deut. 25:5, 6; Ruth 4:9, 10). So, despite Boaz's compassion, Naomi and Ruth were still in trouble.

**2. Model of responsibility.** By promising to redeem Ruth and Elimelek's inheritance, Boaz was aware that the right belonged to a closer relative, not to him (Ruth 3:12, 13). Thus, moved by a sense of responsibility, leadership and honor, Boaz took the case to the elders (Ruth 4:1, 2). At the hearing, he explained that the land was for sale and that whoever bought it should marry Ruth (Ruth 4:4, 5). The relative who was the guardian-redeemer authorized Boaz to buy the land and marry the Moabite (Ruth 4:6, 9, 10). By acquiring the property and taking Ruth as his wife, Boaz became the provider and protector of that family (Ruth 4:13-16). The couple begot Obed, the grandfather of King David, from whose lineage Christ was born (Ruth 4:22, Matt. 1:5, 6, 16). Boaz is a symbol of masculinity as a

husband, father and exemplary leader.

## **CONCLUSION**

God created human beings with two genders: male and female (Gen. 1:27). Therefore, the differentiation of sexes is a principle determined by divine creation (Gen. 2:23). In this sense, masculinity is a set of attributes and functions inherent in men. *Demasculinization*, on the other hand, results from the reversal of men's roles in sexuality, leadership and the practice of their duties. Biblical manhood demands self-control, sacrifice and firmness of character in carrying out their tasks. In this regard, society, the family and the church expect to have men who honor their masculinity and play the role that God has called them to play.