

David, the Man
1 Samuel 16:18

Introduction

Political commentator Matt Walsh made a movie titled "What is a Woman?" addressing contemporary confusion about gender identity. But there ought to be another movie – "What is a Man?"

In our current cultural moment, biblical manhood has been systematically attacked and dismantled. We're told that the only kind of masculinity that is not toxic is the kind that is exhibited by your little sister. We are told strength is brutality, that ruling is oppression, that courage is recklessness.

Despite the fact that we want it to be otherwise, the church stands downstream from the culture. Which means, that she too, has largely capitulated to society's feminization. The church has helped produce weak, passive men who refrain from leaning into their God-given design, and some even apologize for it.

Many people today have been influenced by heresies of Gnosticism – which rejects the goodness of the physical creation;

Egalitarianism, which rejects the goodness of inherent differences in that creation, namely between men and women, and elsewhere;

and Feminism, which rejects the proper gender roles of men and women. Together they have reduced masculinity to spiritual values alone, that can be attributed just as equally to your grandmother as to your grandfather.

But in our definition of masculinity, we cannot neglect the physical responsibilities and capacities that God has entrusted to men as Men.

Men bear a particular responsibility before God to provide for and protect their families, churches, neighbors, and nation – duties that often demand and require physical strength, combined with physical readiness, and courage.

Thus, the Apostle Paul commands the Corinthians to "act like men, be strong." Men need to be strong – physically.

In 1 Samuel 16:18 we encounter a litany of authentic masculine virtues in David, which include physical strength.

“¹⁸Then one of the servants answered and said, “Look, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, who is skillful in playing, a mighty man of valor, a man of war, prudent in speech, and a handsome person; and the Lord is with him.”

The attributes ascribed to David are both physical and spiritual, and they reveal a holistic vision of manhood that integrates both body and soul in service to God’s glory and the good of the nation.

David shows us that biblical masculinity encompasses skill, strength, courage, and competence. David is recognized as being an asset to the king because he is dangerous and skillful. David doesn't apologize for his abilities; instead, he uses them for God's glory and the good of the kingdom.

The world and the church desperately need strong men. And it is my hope that by looking at David’ masculine virtues today, I can inspire you men to lean into your masculinity more, that you would act like men, and be strong.

The first manly virtue we see in David is skillfulness.
Notice that Scripture doesn’t say David was naturally

“talented” or “gifted” in music. It says he was *skillful*—a word that speaks of discipline, practice, and years of refinement. Whatever natural ability he had was hammered into mastery through relentless dedication.

David was the inspiration behind Proverbs 22:29: “*Do you see a man skillful in his work? He will stand before kings.*”

Pursuing excellence and skillfulness has a way of opening doors we could never force open ourselves.

But also consider that David’s motivation for pursuing skillfulness in music was pure, and not mercenary. He did not pursue excellence in music for money, fame, or recognition. He played chiefly for the Lord. Music was first of all David’s act of worship, his joy, his offering. And because he loved the craft for its own sake, he poured himself into it with all his heart.

This kind of approach is worlds apart from how many others approach work today. Too often, people only sharpen their skill if there’s a paycheck attached or applause waiting at the end. If there’s no immediate payoff, their effort withers. But those who rise to true excellence in anything are those who labor for the love of the thing itself

in obscurity and darkness and away from peering eyes, simply for the pure joy of doing something well before God. And in time, their skill cannot remain hidden. God honors diligence, and skillful men get noticed.

Men, develop your skills. It may not be music, it may be something else, but the principle holds all the way down. How you approach anything is how you approach everything.

Ecclesiastes 9:10 says, *“Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might.”* Romans 12:11 adds, *“Do not be slothful in zeal, but fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.”* Whatever your craft, your job, your duties—approach them with an eye toward excellence. Develop your skill, not for the applause of men, but for the applause of God.

The man who aims to be indispensable in his work will not remain unnoticed. In time, God Himself will see to it that such a man stands before kings.

A Mighty Man / A Man of Good Appearance / “Form”

Besides being skillful, David excelled in physical strength and fitness. When he is called a "mighty man," it is his

physical strength that is spoken of. His good appearance speaks partially to his handsome features, but more importantly to his bodily fitness and discipline.

Proverbs 20:29 declares, "The glory of young men is their strength." God designed men to bear the burden of providing and protecting. He equipped us with greater muscle mass, denser bones, and natural resilience to fulfill this calling for our families and neighbors.

Being strong doesn't mean every man must be a bodybuilder, but neither does it mean that physical weakness is morally neutral. We insult men by calling them weaklings for good reason. Paul tells Timothy that bodily training is of some value, not no value.

David's good form contributed to his effectiveness. His appearance reflected personal and physical discipline—a visible testimony to his well-ordered life. To be a man of good form means avoiding sloth, gluttony, and drunkenness. Unlike King Eglon of Moab, whose overindulgence and excessive weight is forever etched in memory, David exemplified physical fitness, vitality, and restraint.

A godly man should honor his body as the temple of the Holy Spirit, caring for it both spiritually and physically. Neglect of fitness brings real bodily and spiritual harm. Physical strength and fitness is part of God's design for men; it undergirds our masculine responsibility to provide and protect our families, neighbors, churches, and nation.

The tragedy of our age is that this glory of young men is vanishing. Boys are softer, weaker, less resilient, and more sickly than their fathers and grandfathers. Testosterone levels have collapsed. Grip strength is down. Modern diets of plastics, seed oils, and processed foods are rewiring male physiology.

The worst culprit is Atrazine, a weed-killer sprayed on corn and soybeans, making Iowa the number one user of this toxic chemical. Atrazine forces the male body to turn testosterone into estrogen, resulting in devastating effects: men produce less testosterone, more estrogen, fewer sperm, and lose masculine development. God created testosterone to make boys into strong men, and Atrazine systematically destroys this process.

Our food, water, and environment are poisoned with chemicals that feminize males, essentially chemically castrating our sons. This is not merely environmental or biological—it is a spiritual attack against nature. Paul warns in 1 Corinthians 6 that the effeminate will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Beyond chemical assault, the root of weakness lies in lack of self-control. Proverbs 31:3 warns: "Do not give your strength to women, your ways to that which destroys kings." Men waste their strength in pornography, fornication, drunkenness, drugs, gluttony, idleness, and self-pity. Generations of men have squandered their strength and become liabilities to their families, churches, and nation.

Men, this is shameful—a disgrace to our wives, children, ancestors, and God. Repent. Recover the glory of masculine strength. Train your body. Get to the gym. Lift weights. Do push-ups and squats. Harden yourself—not for vanity, but for service. A strong body gives confidence, resilience, and usefulness to your family.

If you live in avoidable obesity, you sin against your family, putting them at risk of losing you early through negligence. Exercise self-control. Beat your body into submission so you may run the race with endurance.

The consequences of masculine weakness threaten our nation's security. Pentagon studies reveal 77% of young Americans aged 17-24 would not qualify for military service without waivers. Obesity alone disqualifies 11% of potential recruits—the leading cause of military medical rejection.

This is the bitter fruit of abandoning God's design for masculine strength and physical fitness. When three-quarters of our young people are too weak, sick, or undisciplined to defend their nation, we witness a generation embracing gluttony, sloth, and pleasure over duty.

Brothers, we must reverse this shameful statistic. The strength and fitness that characterized David is much needed today—so we can embrace our masculine duties to provide and protect our families, churches, nation, and civilization.

Take heed: eat wisely, avoid excess, exercise regularly, fast occasionally, and rest properly. Establish these habits early and build on them throughout life. A disciplined body strengthens mind and spirit, enabling you to fulfill duties with endurance and vigor. Do not mistreat what God has entrusted to you; keep it fit, trim, and strong unto the Lord.

A Man of Valor

The other trait that defined David was his valor. David's valor—his courage—reflects a profound fear of the Lord that liberates a man from the fear of men. David's courage wasn't merely suppressing fear in the face of danger, but resolute commitment to obey God regardless of cost.

True valor anchors the heart in fear of God so that opinions and threats of men hold no sway. David sings, *"The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?"* Jesus embodied this, marching unswervingly to the cross.

David risked his life for his flock, rushing lions and bears. These acts prepared him for Goliath, while Israel's armies

sat paralyzed by fear. But David, possessed with fear greater than giants, leaped into battle and prevailed.

Note: in Revelation 21:8, the cowardly are first listed among those cast into the lake of fire. God despises cowardice.

We rightly honor the valor of soldiers who fought to protect our nation, but in our own time, we have betrayed our sons by exalting safety above courage. Ours is a generation coddled and smothered by constant calls to “Safety.”

We’ve been taught to avoid risk, to censor our speech, to bite our tongues, and to not think thoughts. We are perpetually pressured to bow before the petty tyrannies of HR departments, social media mobs, and even church courts.

Our forefathers would have spat at such timidity and cowardice. They crossed oceans, defied tyrants, and built a great civilization because they knew greatness only comes through risk. Glory only comes to the brave. Fortune favors the bold.

And now? We are told to trade boldness for bureaucracy, courage for compliance, valor for victimization. But this cannot be the spirit of Christian men.

Men of God, we must recover the courage of David. We must learn again to fear God more than men, to build, to risk, and to dare, and if need be, to bleed for Christ and Kingdom.

But we are not likely to bleed for Christ and kingdom if we are so fearful of the pressures of possible social media slander campaigns such that we silence ourselves. If we equate faithfulness to the spirit of the age with the Spirit of God, we will not shed our blood for Christ. But we will be found persecuting those whose bravery and courage for Christ exceed our own.

Let us not be numbered among Saul and his trembling soldiers. Let us rise with David, with Christ, and with the holy martyrs—undaunted, relentless, and aflame with faith and free. Let us not seek safety, but glory, honor, and immortality, remembering the promise of St. Paul: “that those who do, God will give eternal life.”

Man of War – The next masculine virtue that defined David was that he was a man of war. Though not yet tested against human enemies, he had already stood against lions and bears in defense of his flock. Empowered by the Lord, these victories revealed the union of David's courage, faith, skill, and strength. He was not yet twenty, but strong enough to overpower beasts, trained enough to strike them down, and disciplined enough to perfect the sling that would one day drop Goliath with a single stone.

The sixth commandment requires us to preserve life—our own and others'—by all lawful means. That includes knowing how to fight. Men, as protectors of your families and defenders of your people, you cannot afford to be naïve or unskilled. I'm glad many of you carry firearms, but let me ask: do you train? Do you practice until drawing and firing becomes second nature? In the chaos of an active shooter, will you be steady because you've done ten thousand repetitions, or will you freeze and become a liability, or worse, hit the wrong target?

Weapons are not enough. Most fights end on the ground—do you know what to do there? Have you trained in Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu or another grappling art? Do you have

the discipline of situational awareness—the ability to anticipate threat, assess danger, and act decisively? Can you de-escalate conflict before it turns violent? These skills matter just as much as strength and courage.

Our deacons have hosted “Stop the Bleed,” CPR classes — and Lord willing more will come. But don’t wait for the church to train you. Take initiative. A man of war is a man prepared for self-defense. We do not fight because we hate what is before us, but because we love what is behind us.

Young men, start early. Build strength and skill that will serve you all your days. Older men, keep sharpening what you can, adapted to your capacity. By practicing the art of war, you honor God’s command to preserve life and reflect David’s readiness as a man of war. So get after it.

Prudent in Speech – Another hallmark of Biblical masculinity is prudence in speech. David knew what to say, when to say it, and how to say it. Also, prudence in speech means that David spoke like a man. which means, he spoke directly. Few things are more effeminate in a man than cloaking your intentions through covert in-direct speech.

Covert speech is designed to manipulate others by being vague and unclear.

1. Information Gathering

- **Covert:** “*I wonder what’s really going on with Pastor...*” (casting suspicion without asking a direct question).
- **Direct:** “*Pastor, why are you so angry?*” (precise and responsible inquiry).

2. Expressing Disagreement

- **Covert:** “*Not everyone thinks that was the best way to handle things...*” (vague critique hidden behind the cover of unnamed “others”).
- **Direct:** “*I don’t think that was the best way to handle things. Here’s why...*” (the speaker owns the concern and invites discussion).

3. Making Requests

- **Covert:** “*It sure would be nice if someone helped with the dishes once in a while...*” (hinting in hopes that guilt will move someone to act).

- **Direct:** *“Can you help me with the dishes before we go to bed?”* (clear, respectful, and gives space for an honest yes or no).

Men, reject effeminate covert speech patterns. Be direct. Your brothers will appreciate it and trust you.

The LORD Was With Him – The final and most essential virtue undergirding all others is that the LORD was with David. To embody godly masculinity, you must rely upon the Lord. As Jesus said, “Apart from me, you can do nothing.” Eph. 6:10 commands us “Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.” Masculine virtues are not sustained by mere human effort, but by daily dependence on God’s power, promises, and providence.

In 1 Samuel 30 the Amalekites attacked the city of Ziklag, taking off with the women, including David’s wives. All the people wept, and even contemplated stoning David, blaming him for the disaster. And it says, “But David strengthened himself in the Lord his God.” When facing adversity, David turned to God. He sought the will of the Lord and he was able to get all the people back that had been taken.

Men, we are doers. We are action oriented. We want to fix the thing and solve the problem. But we must learn not act or respond without prayer and considering the Lord first. We will only end up self-sabotaging, and proving ourselves to be ineffective in our masculine duties.

Christ as the Greater David

All of these masculine virtues that we see exemplified in David find their ultimate fulfillment and perfect expression in Jesus Christ himself. As the greater Son of David, Christ embodies every aspect of biblical manhood in its fullness. When we look to him, we see not just our model for masculinity, but the very source and power by which we can pursue these virtues. Let us consider how Christ perfectly displays each of these characteristics:

Christ is Skillful

Jesus “does all things well” (Mark 7:37). His skill was evident in creation, in sustaining the world by his Word, and in redemption, in every act of teaching, healing, and ultimately saving sinners on the cross. He acted with perfect care, wisdom, and alignment with the Father’s will. Men, pursue skillfulness in your work, craft, and duties—

not for fame or applause, but for God's glory. Excellence cultivated in diligence and discipline honors God and equips you to serve and lead those entrusted to your care.

Christ is Strong

Ps. 24 asks, "Who is this King of Glory? The Lord, strong and mighty, the Lord, mighty in battle." His divine strength and power and might are attributes that men are called to mirror through our physical strength. We are called to love the Lord with all our strength – which has to include physical strength as well as the strength of our wills. And since Jesus loved God perfectly, he also loved God with all his strength.

Christ is Fit

Jesus maintained a fit body. He frequently fasted, and was walked all over the land of Israel. His physical endurance was evident on Good Friday when, after receiving a brutal scourging, which left him so marred beyond human semblance, such that he had no form or comeliness that would make us desire him, he carried his heavy cross beam of his cross through the streets of Jerusalem. Pursuing

physical fitness is a way for us to deny ourselves and carry our crosses with him.

Christ is Brave

Jesus went boldly to the cross. Isa. 50 recounts his resolve – “I gave my back to those who strike, and my cheeks to those who pull out the beard; I hid not my face from disgrace and spitting. But the Lord God helps me, therefore I have set my face like a flint.” Unfazed by human opposition, and fearing only the Lord, Jesus, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross and despised the shame. Men, imitate Christ’s bravery and courage by standing firm in the fear of God, trusting him to deliver you, and do not fear what man can do to you.

Christ Can Fight

Ex. 15:3 tells us that the Lord is a Man of War. Joshua met the commander of the army of the Lord, and that was the pre-incarnate Lord Jesus. Men should learn to fight as a way of obeying the sixth commandment, which includes the preservation of life. Train yourself in combat skills such as hand to hand fighting, grappling, and firearms to

protect and defend your family, neighbors, and nation. These things are acceptable Christian disciplines that are worthy of study.

Christ is Prudent in Speech

Jesus not only told the truth, but he is the truth. He always spoke according to the Father's truth and will. So men, we must also learn to speak truthfully, and speak things that are in accordance with the will of God. Peter says that we ought to speak as those who proclaim the oracles of God. We ought to speak in such a way that Jesus himself would speak. And that might be boldly and confrontational at times. And it also might be soft words of comfort. Either way, let us speak with prudence, and speak directly as men of the Lord.

Christ is Empowered by the Lord

And finally, the Lord was with Jesus empowering him with mercy, compassion, authority, and boldness. Men, seek the Lord's empowerment, relying on God strength to live out biblical masculinity, imitating Christ's dependence on the Spirit for every task.

Conclusion

Men, and future men, you are created with both body and soul, and God requires that you imitate Christ, the Son of David in both physical and spiritual dimensions. By pursuing these masculine virtues, you will align yourself with God-Man, Jesus Christ. This imitation will deepen your love for him, but it will also enable you to provide and protect those entrusted to your care, according to your masculine nature, and for the glory of God. So, act like men, and be strong, and may the Lord of all power and might guide and defend you in your duties. Amen.