

MANHOOD JOURNEY

Choose Right—Act Right



Roy Smith, M.Div., Ph.D.

Volume 4

Manhood Journey

Choose Right—Act Right

Contents

Introduction: The Adventure Continues

1. [The Mind's Lover](#)
2. Loving Better
3. The Warrior Within You
4. Friendship: The Art Of Being One
5. Friendship: The Art Of Finding One
6. Facing Your Shadow
7. You're Still Ugly
8. Finding Meaning: Being A Soulful Man

Appendices:

- A. A Manhood Story: The Campfire Members
- B. Supportive Resources To Deal With Sexual Struggle
- C. Our Team
- D. Manhood Journey Series

Introduction

The Adventure Continues

So many aspects of life are good. Despite the struggle we have with our own sin, a difficult environment, imperfect people and a hostile culture, God continues to bless us. His presence in our lives comforts us during moments of hardship as we are guided to fulfill all of the potential He has created us with.

God wants us to be our best. He promises victory in overcoming the obstacles that challenge us—all we need to do is walk in His steps. Awareness of God, combined with our own self-awareness, is the key to transforming from a male into a man of God. Ongoing self-monitoring must occur continually as we assess whether our actions are aligned with God's guidance. It is so easy for us to fool ourselves. We need to ask God to help us discover the internal elements that make us who we are and invite Him into these areas to transform us. Understanding our design helps us intentionally apply the Word of God as we walk through life's many challenges. Our awareness of God and willingness to let Him do the miraculous within us leads to a mature spiritual awareness, merging who God wants us to be with who we are. Life takes on more meaning, and the will of God in our lives is clarified.

Conscious living assists a man in completing his responsibilities. When a man does not know how to accurately label the processes within him or the experiences that occur outside of him, it is difficult for him to fully hear God's guidance. If a male ignores part of

his God-given design, he lives in a haphazard or unfocused way. Mature spirituality is not based on works, but rather demands our active involvement. God does not force himself on us (Luke 1:26-38). As men, we recognize how our choice to sin limits us from being fully present and capable in a variety of life circumstances. We can never fully escape the negative effects of sin (or our shadow) on our lives. We can see this self-destructive aspect of life more clearly as we walk closer to the Son, Jesus. Understanding the way our sin nature attacks us allows us to pray more clearly regarding what we need God to forgive us for and what Holy Spirit-empowered interventions are essential to our life.

For some of you, this is the first *Manhood Journey* volume that you are reading. We want to welcome you to our spiritual quest to be the men of God we are called to be. Welcome back to those of you who are ready to be challenged again to walk with God daily. In this volume, we will look at three out of four aspects of a man's mind and how his mind's lover, warrior and friend pragmatically affect him, his relationship with God and his interactions with others. A man with a well-developed mind has created an important resource that God can use for His purpose.

This book will also explore relationship issues and how we can use our mind to enhance our responses to others. Sin and its negative power will be discussed, as well as how the human soul tries to find meaning and significance in a world that feels chaotic. You will benefit from understanding the elements that make up who you are and contribute to your manhood. May God help you recognize the amazing potential He has created you with. As you apply all of who you are to God's will for you, "May the only wise God receive glory forever through Jesus Christ. Amen" (Romans 16:27). Let the adventure continue!

THIS IS A SAMPLE. SOME PAGES HAVE BEEN OMITTED.

Chapter 1

The Mind's Lover

Step 13

The lover aspect of a man's mind is essential to his quest to contribute to the lives of others. The mind's lover contains an important set of responses that are often ignored by males; instead, they choose to pursue a counterfeit form of love which emphasizes what a person can do for them rather than who that person is. Many males express this immature form of "love" by connecting their love to sexual performance. Life, without the expression of true love, is not really life. Childish males often emphasize their love in word only because, in reality, they do not understand what true love looks like, in action. Their lack of understanding keeps them from fully experiencing life. God designed us to love Him, love others and love ourselves (Luke 10:27). When a male does not develop the lover part of his mind, he chooses to be alone, no matter how many people are around him, because he is unable to access or develop the richness of who God created him to be.¹ He remains unaware of his ability to have a positive effect on others.

What Is Love?

Many immature males use the word *love* indiscriminately (often by the second date), in order to achieve a sexual conquest. Others never willingly state it at all, in some cases even after 25 years of marriage. Love, and what it represents for someone who is immature, is a hot potato that can burn, if not handled properly. It

1 Proverbs 18:1

takes integrity to truly express love through our actions.¹ Claiming to love someone, and yet not taking care of their needs, is what males do best. It would be more accurate to say that males want to view themselves as loving someone, while at the same time, they are unable and unwilling to show this love through their actions.

Love can be described as the passion that is felt within a relationship which causes us to invest in and sacrifice for another person. It takes a man to be willing to sacrifice his needs for the good of another.² Males who have not developed their core cannot deal with the intense energy that occurs when two people merge their innermost beings to form a deep relationship. They do not have the character structure and stability to give to another person and still feel okay about themselves. As they get close to the strong core of another person, the weakness of their own core becomes apparent. They create distance between themselves and the person they want to love in order to feel safe.

Love can be described as the passion that is felt within a relationship which causes us to invest in and sacrifice for another person.

A male will naturally try to form a dependent relationship with someone whose core is stronger than his. This creates instability, which threatens the weaker person—which is often the male. When the cores of two people connect via their relationship, the differences in their respective core development determines the level of intimacy they can achieve. Their relational skills, emotional intelligence (EQ) and ability to make wise decisions affects the outcome of the relationship and the level of relational intimacy they can achieve.

1 1 John 3:18

2 John 15:13; Philippians 2:4

A weaker individual is not willing to experience the level of vulnerability and emotional risk that is needed to create a strong relationship bond with another person. Establishing intimacy within a relationship requires a person to have an understanding of what their boundaries are and to accept another person's boundaries. A man's inner core must be developed in order to be capable of achieving relational intimacy; he must have the ability to be comfortable with another person knowing who he truly is. Two people with equally strong cores are able to create a positive love bond; if two people with unequal core strength try to establish a relationship, the relationship must allow for more distance to ensure the interpersonal safety of each person.

The manly structure that supports mature love allows for vulnerability that is beyond the normal level of sharing in a relationship. This vulnerability is increased by the recognition that the choice to love someone romantically for life often ends prematurely when one of the participants chooses to stop loving the other person. This often occurs while one person is continuing to pursue a love bond with the other person. Most people have experienced the ending of a relationship, either during their dating years or during a divorce. The pain is very intense.

A man with a strong core chooses to face the emotional pain of ending a romantic relationship prior to a marital commitment, rather than moving the relationship forward based on pretense or falsehood. A man also has enough healthy presence to nurture himself when he is rejected; he tries again by searching for another relationship that will be more compatible. A male, however, tries to diminish the importance of love by denying its true definition. He is often unwilling to sacrifice himself enough for another person to create a true love bond with them. He may, out of fear, avoid dealing directly with the problems in the relationship. In this way, he attempts to cling to the strengths of the other person without making any changes in himself. He may

also mistakenly gain a sense of power and control when another person is dependent on him.

The love process, including knowing the other person and allowing yourself to be known, requires commitment and effort from both people in the relationship. This kind of emotional work is beyond the capabilities of the average male; he is able to practice intimacy skills only up to the level of his accomplishments during his manhood journey. The mature expression of love can only be done by a man.

Strength And Maturity

You may want to unload a tractor-trailer full of 50-pound bags of potatoes, but just wishing for it does not get it done. Strength, determination and commitment are what it takes. The spandex male always looks for shortcuts, which is seen in his failure to accept and step toward what he needs to do to achieve his love goals. He cares about very little beyond himself, which contributes to his inability to make another person feel important.³ His self-centered work ethic limits his productivity throughout life, as his focus is often on “what’s in it for me?” He sees himself as the center in any “caring” relationship. Love, as many women have learned the hard way, is a word that is only as good as the integrity, character and emotional aptitude of the person saying it. If a woman hears she is loved by this type of strong man, she is fortunate. If, instead, it is simply a male’s empty promises, *Mr. Toad’s Wild Ride* is what comes next.

Love is hard work, and only the strongest people can both participate in and create it. Love requires more maturity than simply forming a bond; there are some long-term relationships with bonds that have been anything but loving. I have seen people married for 50 years who seem to have based their marital relationship solely on telling the other person how wrong they are.

3 1 Corinthians 13:1-7; Philippians 2:4

What a male feels as love is often a disguised dependency. A male who expresses his love dependently needs the person he “loves” to treat him in certain ways to feel okay about himself. He is unwilling to develop specific personal strengths and expects others to provide what he lacks. He fails to recognize that his choice to be dependent competes with his ability to express and experience true love. His need to use others grows into a life of long-term manipulation. He constantly questions his sense of security and his personal value because it is based on another person’s actions toward him.

Volatile Relationships

There is a type of volatile fight that can be called symbiotic in nature; it occurs when two immature individuals merge. Their strong dependency needs threaten each other’s emotional existence if either one of them develops too much independence or too much intimacy. Neither person can walk away, no matter how bad a fight gets, because the emotional well-being of each is at stake. If either one would develop the strength to walk away, from the relationship, even temporarily, the level of emotional violence would decrease dramatically. The explanation for this type of relationship is that each person is too scared to live without the other. They cannot walk away and rely on their own core strength as a separate individual because they have defined the other person as essential. They each need to learn how to sustain their own separate identities to deal with life apart from each other.

In these relationships, the need to create the perfect bond, as each person demands 100% loyalty from the other, creates an emotional intensity. These types of demands restrict them from being different from each other in any way. It is like two animals being tied together in a fight to the death. The rope does not allow either person to run away, quit or choose to stop the pain. Dependency is one of the most common types of bonds that males

establish. It is often masked as love, and people are often fooled by it. This false form of love keeps both people in the relationship from growing and learning ways to reduce their deficits. Instead, they expect the other person to fix them. They confuse mature love with the type of love a mother shows a young child as she takes care of their needs.

Love Versus Sex

When males evaluate their mind's lover, many falsely believe they are doing well. Sex is overvalued; it becomes an immature replacement for a strong core and is seen as being synonymous with love. Sexual performance becomes a primary focus of the immature male's definition of love. When his sense of emptiness becomes apparent, his mood is low or his powerlessness is undeniable, he uses sexual fantasy to rescue himself. A pornography industry worth billions of dollars has been built, all on the whims, moods and desires of this type of male. Sexual images abound via magazines, movies, computers, strip shows, phone lines and street corners, all promising satisfaction for at least a minute. Males spend unbelievable amounts of income that could have been used for good on these temporary and destructive forms of escape. Along with the tremendous loss of financial resources, they also ante up hours and hours of time that could have been used to invest positive energy in a true love relationship.

The emotional constitution of some males moves from periodic immature sexuality to full-fledged sex addiction. As with a drug addict's progression into "harder stuff," some males (not all) progress past pornography to voyeurism, prostitution, exhibitionism, child porn, rape or molestation. As a result of his choice to highly sexualize much of his life, he finds that he has less energy for his love relationships. He is unable to express himself emotionally and finds the journey toward manhood almost impossible. When stressed by life, he continues to choose the easiest route, using sexual fantasy or other sexual activities to temporarily excuse

himself from using life's challenges as opportunities to develop himself and strengthen his core.

A spandex male often trades his focus on work, dedication to his family, loyalty to his wife, self-development and walk with God for the pursuit of his sexuality. The culture feeds into the male's shallow image of himself, and sexual stimulation is sold as a major source of power that encourages him to think he is a man. Males can become so involved in their own self-centered power, often through the unwise use of their sexuality, that their thinking becomes distorted. Unfortunately, some immature males try to increase this sense of power by pursuing girls under the age of 18; through their distorted perspective they see nothing wrong with their attempt to dominate young girls in order to feel okay about themselves.

Our courts are filled with males who have met the FBI instead of their "dream child." Their future has now been permanently damaged because of the power and significance they have given to their penis. Their future kingship is likely flushed down the toilet by this destructive act. It is hard to get something back after it is flushed down the toilet, and for them, life after this point is fairly limited. If you are in this type of situation as you read this book, get help! There is additional information in Appendix B—contact someone for help. Should you have images of young girls or boys on your computer, burn the computer. Federal law makes this offense a mandatory five-year prison term, and the FBI is better at finding what is on your computer than you are at erasing it. This is the world of the sex addict, not the world of a manly lover; addiction leads either to recovery or death. The lover is the image that is sold to the immature male by a culture that likes the words "making love." The sex addict never makes love; he gratifies himself by taking advantage of someone else.¹

1 1 Thessalonians 4:5-6

THIS IS A SAMPLE. SOME PAGES HAVE BEEN OMITTED.

A Manhood Story

Every Tuesday, a group of men meet to learn about manhood through the Knights21 curriculum series, *The Heroic Man's Journey*. After listening to each lesson, these men (Joe, Chris, Bob, Chuck, José, Jim, Paul, George and Harry) gather in their campfire discussion group to talk about the lesson and how it can be applied to their lives. They use this time to explore the parts of themselves they may need to change and to discuss life in general. Throughout *A Manhood Story*, we can see how their relationships with each other have progressed and new relationships have formed. These relationships give each man opportunities for new experiences, encouragement to develop his character and the motivation to step toward manhood.

* * *

The most powerful connection in any relationship is shown when two individuals describe their bond using the word *love*. The significance of this word is shown in 1 John 4:8: "...God is love." Because of who God is, He loves us wherever we're at in our manhood journey and wants us to fulfill His design by becoming men. Like many other parts of today's culture, the concept of love has been defined negatively by focusing it solely on the immature male's drive for sex, rather than an intimate connection that is intertwined throughout with the feelings and actions that create a love relationship as God defines it. In our culture, women and children are told that they are loved, only to be deserted when a male moves on to his next conquest. The definition of love is dependent on whether it is being said by a man or by a male. A man follows through on the promises he makes when using the word *love*, and through that it is given its true meaning. True love is

-
- Appendix A provides a description of each campfire member in *A Manhood Story*.

sacrificial. Only a man is able to put his needs aside to reach out to someone else.¹

Love is an emotion that a man displays by choosing to demonstrate the passion of his heart for the good of someone else. At its purest level, love is not sexual, since it is linked with a desire to give rather than to receive. Immature males often separate sex and love, which ends up harming others because of their lack of self-control and their self-centered definition of love. One of the common misuses of sexuality is dependency, which is often confused with love. True love does not have strings attached, but if it is connected to a male's need to be taken care of, it is a selfish act. It can also be misused when a father chooses to be more emotionally close to his child than to his wife. This is called emotional incest. True love is not forced or used to manipulate others—it can only be given by choice.

Love can be expressed through a set of skills, and when a man chooses to practice these skills, an emotional bond is formed.² This bond affects the way his brain functions. There are chemical changes in his brain which can be directly observed when love is present. To love someone well, you must express your commitment to them in ways that they can hear. There are five different “love languages” that can be used to do this: words of affirmation, quality time, receiving gifts, acts of service and physical touch.³ As a leader, a man learns to love others in ways that help them feel loved.

* * *

1 John 15:13; Philippians 2:4

2 1 John 3:18; 4:7; Romans 12:3-11

3 Gary Chapman, *The 5 Love Languages: The Secret to Love that Lasts* (Chicago: Northfield Publishing, 2015).

Jim began the campfire discussion by telling the men that George had called to say his mother-in-law had fallen, and he and his wife Elsa were at the nursing home tonight helping with her care.

Chris, who couldn't make last week's meeting, asked what he had missed.

Paul replied, "We talked about how a man follows his mind's king when he takes responsibility for solving his own problems. Taking personal responsibility makes us more open to the changes we need to make in ourselves, and that helps us become better men."

Chuck added, "A king doesn't use excuses to keep doing things he shouldn't be doing. I told the group that I'm working on drinking less beer."

"We all agreed we would encourage Chuck with his goal," said Joe. "How did you do this week, Chuck?"

"Well, for the first couple days after our meeting, I didn't drink at all. But every day after that I drank a little more, until last night when I remembered that I said I was going to work on it—so then I only had one."

Joe replied, "Well, that was better than the week before. Keep it up!"

"Another thing we talked about last week was that if we want to be a king, we have to have a positive attitude," said Harry. "If we can look at a crisis as an opportunity to grow, it can give us an edge."

THIS IS A SAMPLE. SOME PAGES HAVE BEEN OMITTED.

Bricks

1. It takes integrity to truly express love through our actions.
2. Love can be described as the passion that is felt within a relationship which causes us to invest in and sacrifice for another person.
3. A spandex male often trades his focus on work, dedication to his family, loyalty to his wife, self-development and walk with God for the pursuit of his sexuality.
4. Love is something you choose to give; you choose when to give it, and you choose how long you will give it.
5. Whatever the reasons are for a relationship to start, the presence of love in the relationships is directly connected to whether or not love skills are practiced.
6. When a person forms a relationship with their child that competes with the relationship with their mate, it can be emotionally confusing and potentially abusive to the child.
7. A love bond is not created simply through the use of words. A love bond is always about putting love skills into action.

Campfire Discussion

Share your answers with your group.

1. Briefly talk about your week, sharing the highlights or the concerns you may have. You may also want to give an update on what you shared last week.
2. Share a thought or an idea from this chapter that caught your attention. How does it relate to your life?
3. How do you define the word *love*? Is it easy or difficult for you to tell someone that you love them? Identify someone you tell regularly that you love them.
4. How does a person's strength of identity affect their ability to love? Is there anyone you love, but there are strings attached?
5. How have you dealt with your physical attraction to females and to the female figure in general? Which sexual images in popular culture challenge you the most?
6. Which skills do you think help deepen your love for another person? Give an example of a romantic moment you created for someone you love, and an example of a loving, non-romantic gesture that you made for someone in your life.
7. 1 John 4:8-10 states, "Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. Here is how God showed his love among us. He sent his one and only Son into the world. He sent him so we could receive life through him. Here is what love is. It is not that we loved God. It is that he loved us and sent his Son to give his life to pay for our sins." How do these Bible verses apply to your manhood journey?

THIS IS A SAMPLE. SOME PAGES HAVE BEEN OMITTED.

Despite a man's constant struggle with his sin,
a difficult world, imperfect people and a hostile culture,
God continues to bless him. God wants you to be your best.
He promises victory in overcoming the obstacles that
challenge us—all we have to do is walk in His steps.

Keep moving forward!