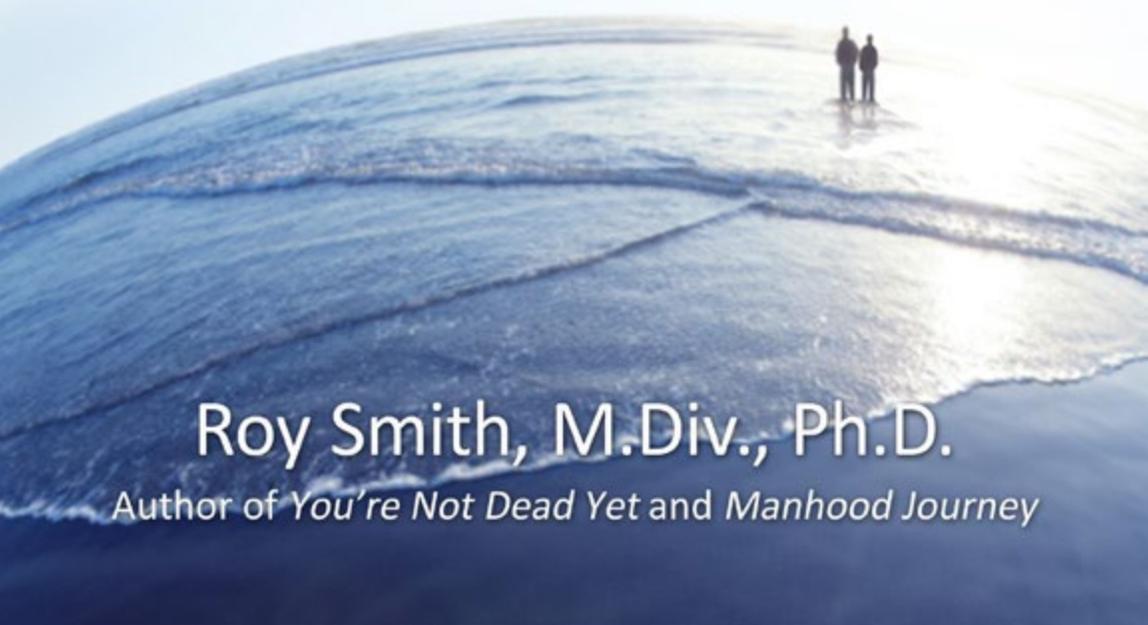


BEING GOD'S MAN

Manhood doesn't happen by accident.

Learn to have courage, strength, integrity and purpose.

Be the man God called you to be.



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

Author of You're Not Dead Yet and Manhood Journey

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Introduction

Being God's Man—can you imagine how important this calling is? Our world suffers from the effects of violence, apathy and a lack of values. The definition of a true man has been compromised; the challenges of his everyday reality are avoided and ignored, while time is often spent pursuing mindless and destructive pastimes like video games, drugs and a life of ease. A lack of manly leaders has caused our culture to create and accept a simplified definition of manhood.

This book will help you understand what manhood really means. Through the study and discussion of the ideas that are presented, the immature thoughts and feelings that challenge each of us can be resisted and changed. You have great potential, but unless you work hard to develop yourself, you will waste this potential and be someone who “could have been.”

To develop yourself fully, you must leave your immature male state and become a man. Manhood is a process which requires you to confront the negative aspects of yourself, exhibit self-control and establish new thought patterns and behaviors. You have been designed for manhood—excuses are not an option. Each chapter in this book focuses on a specific manhood attribute; as these manhood concepts and ideas are internalized, you will step toward your manhood calling in amazing ways. Discussing these concepts with others will help you remember them and increase your ability to apply them to every aspect of your life.

Although manhood is a significant part of God's plan, He has called you for even more. He wants a relationship with you; through His relationship with you, He will empower you to be a role model, friend, worker, cultural warrior and spiritual leader to others. Your life will gain meaning as you walk with Him daily, experiencing His comfort, confrontation and guidance. Take your manhood to the next step by submitting to God's will for your life. God has called you to take part in an adventure through which you will discover your full potential, experience great life satisfaction and reflect His purpose and love to the world. In short, you never will be bored—discovering the depth of who you are in Christ will amaze you!

For some of you, this journey toward manhood began when you started reading *Bull*. Welcome back! You understand the tendency of males to want to be isolated from others and act in immature ways; you also have already recognized the power that a manhood team can have in your life and the ways they can help you counteract these tendencies. This book will be more challenging and more thought-provoking, and it will prepare you to pursue manhood and develop your potential with even more vigor. Our hope is that this book will stretch you to think, feel and act in even more manly ways—get ready to grow!

If you are discovering the journey to manhood for the first time, welcome! Your first task is to start spending time with your father, a mentor or a group of men; this will help you benefit more fully from this program. The world needs you to be part of the solution, rather than contributing to the problem. The world needs heroes, and being God's man is a heroic act. God will help you on this journey as you seek him with all your heart. May God bless us as we work together toward being God's men.



Be God's Man—The Time Is *Now*

If you are reading this, it probably means that you want to be God's man. Congratulations! Your decision will gradually transform your life. *Being God's Man* will teach you how to apply your God-given design to your life and live fully within His will. You can push your manhood to new levels and learn to be God's man. The pace at which you are expected to understand these concepts may sometimes be challenging. God created us to be sophisticated and complex creatures, but the achievement of your great potential requires effort. As you practice your manhood, you will be challenged and tested. Over time, this is what will bring out your best. You must learn to discipline yourself, which builds tenacity and helps you keep working toward manhood, even when you want to quit. Pushing past what you think is your best builds your strength, making you even more like the man God created you to be.

Some of you may have read *Bull*, a book designed to bring fathers and sons together, as they encourage each other in their quest for manhood. If you haven't read *Bull*—it's okay! We will review some of the more important concepts that are explained, as they will have significant meaning to young men and their mentors, who are each on their own manhood journeys.

Bull concludes with a chapter titled "The Talk," which encourages fathers and sons (or mentors and young men) to discuss their relationship and evaluate the areas of their lives that need work. "The talk" refers to a significant man-to-man conversation that can be used as

a foundation for studying *Being God's Man*. As men, we need to push each other to be our best. Sometimes, that means we must confront our differences, make decisions about right and wrong, and leave our self-defined comfort zones. "The talk" was designed to help men get more comfortable with having tough conversations with other men, whether in a group setting or one-to-one conversation. Historically, and in our present culture, it is evident that most males live in isolation; they seldom experience deep, meaningful conversations. Although they have friends, they don't often talk about serious issues with each other. When you talk regularly with other men, you can't deceive each other for long. They will see through your attempts to "pose." In-depth conversations with other men allow you to be supported, challenged, confronted and comforted. These kinds of interactions help you become more of what God has called you to be. Spending time with other men and focusing on life's issues takes courage; but, as you do it, you will leave your passivity behind and learn to live with intention.

Perfection is not expected, nor is it possible. What *is* expected is personal growth, an increased sense of responsibility, forgiveness and change. Tough manly discussion creates the foundation for managing future tough conversations: discussing boundaries with peers, getting feedback from employers, confronting loved ones, forming new relationships and having conversations that are related to achieving your goals. Preparing for the future by developing your relationship skills is more important than creating plans that lead you toward success. Relationships, especially your relationship with God, are the foundation on which life is built. By being God's man and developing your ability to communicate about significant issues, you will strengthen your leadership, no matter where life takes you.

You and your dad are not yet peers; he will have authority over you for as long as you need him to survive in life. However, “the talk” is a starting point because it gives you a framework for beginning to take more responsibility for your decisions and who you will become. It allows the responsibility for your well-being to gradually shift from your dad to you. Sometimes, he may have some really good life lessons to share with you; other times, his thoughts and opinions may be totally wrong. What you decide to do with the guidance he offers, whether good or bad, is *your* manly choice. The outcome of your life no longer belongs to him, nor is it his fault; your success is also not his. Although “the talk” focuses on your evaluation of your dad, you also need to regularly evaluate yourself.

One thing we all have in common is that we have a father and a mother. It took two individuals to create us. Whether or not we live with them or they have treated us well, somewhere, we all have a mom and a dad. The Old Testament in the Bible ends with Malachi 4:6, a verse which stresses the importance of “peace between parents and their children” and “peace between children and their parents.” A goal of manhood is to become worthy of honor, which happens as we practice peace and honor with others. Honoring your parents does not mean always agreeing with them—doing that means that you also would imitate their imperfections. Honoring your parents means to respect their role in your life and consider, with a positive heart, what they share with you. As you honor them and expect them to live up to high standards, you must expect the same high standards from yourself. If you expect your dad to be wise, demonstrate self-control, meet the needs of others, make mature decisions and provide for your family, you must take responsibility in these same areas. Choosing to take on the responsibilities of manhood only after reaching some arbitrary age is unacceptable. You must begin to live honorably now; as you grow, responsible living will become more and

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Manhood Discussion

You need to talk to other men to fully learn and understand the concepts and ideas that are presented in this book. This is challenging for most males, because it's easier to be quiet and believe you are right than, as a man, share your ideas with each other and allow yourself to be challenged.

1. Discuss how the level of personal responsibility shifts as you mature and accept manhood. Identify the responsibilities that are part of your role within your family. How do you strengthen yourself, so that you can live up to your responsibilities as a man and complete the tasks that come with manhood?
2. How do you think this culture encourages you to be less of a man? In what ways have you compromised your standards? In what ways are others dishonored by our culture?
3. Prayer, reading the Bible, attending church and confessing your sins to God are a few examples of spiritual disciplines. How important are these spiritual disciplines to your manhood journey? Discuss how they help you stay focused on your manhood walk.
4. We have been talking about the importance of learning how to act in honorable ways which are consistent with who God created us to be. Proverbs 20:11 states, "Even small children are known by their actions. So is their conduct really pure and right?" Discuss how this Bible verse applies to your manhood journey.



Something We All Have To Do

Guess what? You have to work. Unless you inherit unlimited wealth (which isn't good for you anyway) or find a goose that lays golden eggs, you simply *have to work*. This means showing up on time, following someone else's instructions and putting effort into using your brain, your muscles or both. Much of your future will be spent working because, my guess is, you like to eat. In 2 Thessalonians 3:10, Saint Paul writes, "Anyone who won't work shouldn't be allowed to eat." So, whether it's a big cheeseburger (with or without onions) or a pepperoni pizza, you must work to be able to pay for what you want. Get ready!

The secret to working well is figuring out what you like about your job and learning to appreciate it. Paul also writes about this idea, saying, "Work at everything you do with all your heart. Work as if you were working for the Lord, not for human masters" (Colossians 3:23). Paul had learned to look beyond the basic definition of work and focus on how it can be integrated with the will of God. When you work, learn to find the good in what you're doing; always do the best work that you can, but don't brag about it. You can motivate yourself even more by developing your skills and choosing a career that fits with the skills and God-given gifts that are part of who you are. The stronger your work ethic is, the more occupational opportunities you will have. People who work hard and are trusted by their employers are often treated well. Good employers know how rare it is to find hard-working, trustworthy employees, who maximize the efforts of others, and they value the contributions this kind of person

makes to the success of their business. You give your employer peace of mind when you treat their customers like they would, which will in turn contribute to your job security. This is the type of employee that an employer wants long-term.

There are two types of employees: one who simply punches a clock, does what they were hired to do and takes the paycheck; or the more valuable employee, who takes ownership of their job, considers the bigger picture and works above and beyond what their job requires. Which type of employee are you? Even if you have the misfortune of working temporarily for a bad employer who negatively uses you and doesn't treat you well, you can continue to build the skills that will be valued by other employers. You can use the experience in the future as you look for a job with a company that has more to offer you. Each job can be used as a stepping stone for the next one.

I have lived and studied life for more than 60 years—nowhere in life does something come from nothing. If you want something from an employer, you have to put effort into giving them something in return. Every job includes tasks that you don't necessarily like, but must be done to do the job well; *this is true, even when you are the owner of a business!* In fact, the higher up you are in leadership, the more responsibility you have and the greater number of people you are accountable to. Being someone's boss does not give you the right to be "bossy." A leader has a responsibility to live with integrity, to do what is best for the people who experience their leadership and to model a good work ethic. As a leader, you accept these obligations as the price of success. You are accountable not only to your employees, but also to government regulations and your customers. Learning to prioritize what you don't like to do and developing strategies to accomplish these tasks as painlessly as possible is what a hard worker does. Don't delay completing the tasks you define as difficult or the

ones you don't like; procrastination is not a habit of a hard worker and only makes life at work worse. Get it done—then you can move on to doing what you like.

A primary characteristic of a productive worker is the positive influence their work ethic has on the work ethics of their co-workers. As they lead by example and contribute to the completion of difficult tasks, their effects are magnified because others are encouraged to do the same. Getting along with your co-workers, supporting their success and demonstrating your willingness to go the extra mile add to your value as an employee. Don't join in the grumbling that occurs when things inevitably go wrong; instead, willingly contribute your ideas on how to improve the product or the work process.

Most tasks are completed because of a team effort. Positive work relationships not only help the workday go faster, but the work is also completed more quickly and effectively, which makes everyone more productive. The best employees learn to think from their employer's perspective, which allows them to anticipate the challenges that may hinder the completion of a task. They work smarter—not just harder. They understand the reasoning that is behind workplace rules and accept the authority of their employer.

Once you've learned to think about work from your employer's perspective and have chosen to make their business the best it can be, your focus needs to shift to how you can get a fair wage for your efforts. As you learn to value yourself and your abilities, and possibly have a family, you need to develop a plan for improving your financial status. This is a normal progression as you move into adulthood. This may mean getting more education, taking advantage of leadership opportunities at your present job or looking for a new job. You have worked hard to become an asset to your employer and contribute to the growth of the company you work for. You deserve to

Manhood Discussion

1. Identify some chores that need to be done in your home. How have these responsibilities been divided up between the people living in your home? Which tasks do you wish you could avoid?
2. Discuss your previous jobs. What made each job enjoyable? Which parts of these jobs did you dislike? What strategies helped you successfully complete the more unpleasant parts of your job?
3. Identify a future work goal, either at your job or at your home. What specific skills do you need to develop in order to be able to achieve this goal?
4. John 6:27 states, "Do not work for food that spoils. Work for food that lasts forever. That is the food the Son of Man will give you. For God the Father has put his seal of approval on him." Does this Bible verse focus on the internal or the external benefits of work? Discuss how it applies to your manhood journey.

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Our world suffers from the effects of violence, apathy and a lack of values. The definition of a true man has been compromised; the challenges of his everyday reality are avoided and ignored.

***The only way to change the world
is to step up and be God's man!***

Young men can use this book to spend time with their father, a mentor or a group of men, and discover their own journey toward manhood.

