

# STAND FIRM & ACT LIKE MEN

## Week 1: Where Have All the Good Men Gone?

Men's Group Reading Summary | Church For The ONE

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*"Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong. Let all that you do be done in love." — 1 Corinthians 16:13-14*

### Overview

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This session is rooted in 1 Corinthians 16:13-14. The big idea is simple but demanding: to stand up and act like men, we must first bow down and surrender to Jesus. True biblical manhood isn't about chest-beating or cultural toughness — it's about being the kind of man God designed us to be from the very beginning.

The teaching frames "act like men" as the hub of a wheel, with the surrounding commands — be watchful, stand firm in the faith, be strong, and let all you do be done in love — as the spokes that define what acting like a man actually looks like.

### Part 1: What God Built Into Every Man

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The message goes back to Genesis 2 to show us the original blueprint. When God forms Adam, He doesn't just speak him into being like the rest of creation. He gets face to face, nostril to nostril, and breathes His ruah — His Spirit, His breath — directly into the man. This is what every man was made for: face to face relationship with his heavenly Father.

From there, God gives every man three foundational gifts — and each one becomes a battleground after the Fall:

- **1.** Work to enjoy — Before sin, work was not a curse. It was a calling. Men were made as co-creators with God, called to subdue and cultivate. When we work with purpose and integrity, we reflect something of God Himself.
- **2.** A will to obey — God gave one prohibition and a garden full of freedom. The point wasn't restriction; it was relationship. Obedience isn't a cage — it's the design for life that goes better.
- **3.** A woman to love — God declared, "It is not good for man to be alone." Men are called to be prophet, priest, servant king, provider, and protector. Prophets tell the truth. Priests connect people with God. Servant kings create environments where those under their authority can flourish.

## Part 2: Where It All Went Wrong

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Genesis 3 is where everything breaks. The serpent approaches Eve — but Adam is right there, elbow to elbow, silent. That silence is described as perhaps the most damning commentary on masculinity in all of Scripture. When the moment called for a man to speak, lead, and protect, Adam went passive.

Eve saw the fruit through three lenses we still deal with today:

- Lust of the flesh — it looked good for food
- Lust of the eyes — it was pleasant to look at
- Pride of life — it promised wisdom and self-sufficiency

When sin entered, it didn't just affect one bad choice. It held the door open for all the pain, guilt, shame, and turmoil that followed. The three gifts God had given to every man — work, obedience, and love — were each cursed.

### The three biggest struggles in a man's life

At home. At work. In here (inside).

These are the exact three things the Fall broke. The Bible isn't just an old book — it's a timeless book that doesn't just tell you what happened. It tells you what always happens.

## Part 3: God's Pursuit and the Gospel Foreshadowed

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Even in the middle of judgment, God doesn't abandon Adam. He walks through the garden calling out: "Where are you?" That question still echoes today. The God who created the universe is walking through the garden of your life right now, calling out your name.

Adam's response is a mirror for every man — he hid, he blamed, he deflected. Sound familiar? But here's what's remarkable: God doesn't leave them in their fig-leaf religion. Before kicking them out of the garden, He does something extraordinary. He covers them.

For the very first time in Scripture, an animal's blood is shed — not just to cover sin, but as a foreshadowing of what Jesus would one day accomplish. The garments of skin God made for Adam and Eve point directly to the cross. What God did for them in the garden, what they couldn't do for themselves, He would do once and for all through Christ.

*"He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel."* — **Genesis 3:15**  
**(Protoevangelium — the first gospel)**

## Part 4: The Paradox of Real Strength

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John Eldredge (Wild at Heart) identifies the fundamental question driving most of what men do: Do I have what it takes? We spend enormous energy trying to prove we do. But the gospel turns that upside down.

The reality is: you don't have what it takes. Not on your own. That's not defeat — that's the starting line. The moment you stop trying to manufacture manhood by your own strength and admit "I need someone to do for me what I can't do for myself" — that's the moment real transformation becomes possible.

### The Central Paradox of This Series:

You will never stand up and act like men until you first bend your knee to the God-man, Jesus Christ.

Blessed are the meek — not the weak, but the strong who have surrendered the reins.

When you surrender your life to Jesus, He puts on the inside of every one of us the very Spirit of God — the same Spirit that raised Him from the dead. And if the tomb is empty, anything is possible. That means the calling isn't too heavy. His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness — everything required to accomplish everything He has called us to.

It was His idea to call you to be a man. Not yours.

## Discussion Questions

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### Opening Up

1. When you hear the phrase "act like a man," what's your gut reaction? Where did that picture of manhood come from — culture, your dad, the church, something else?
2. Of the three gifts God gave every man — work to enjoy, a will to obey, and a woman to love — which one feels most broken or most under attack in your life right now?

### Going Deeper

3. Adam was right there, silent, when the serpent came. Where in your life right now are you tempted to go passive — at home, at work, or spiritually — when God is calling you to step up and speak?
4. God called out to Adam, "Where are you?" If God asked you that question today — not physically, but spiritually and relationally — what would your honest answer be?
5. The message says the fundamental question driving most men is: "Do I have what it takes?" How has that question shaped your decisions, your relationships, or the way you lead?

## Getting Honest

6. Where in your life are you still trying to cover your own sin or inadequacy with "fig leaves" — performance, busyness, image, or religion — rather than receiving what only God can provide?
7. What would it actually look like for you to bend the knee this week — in your marriage, your parenting, your work, or your walk with God?

### **This Week's Challenge**

Identify the one area where you have been going passive. Name it. Pray over it. Then take one step this week — not in your own strength, but surrendered to the Spirit of God inside you.