

Biblical Manhood and Womanhood

Numbers 30, 1 Corinthians 16:1–13

Our text this afternoon is 1 Corinthians 16:13—actually, just one word of the verse, translated by the phrase “be brave.” The KJV has, “Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, *quit you like men*, be strong.” I will be generally following this translation this afternoon. What is the meaning of “quit you like men” or “be brave”?

I have three points this afternoon: (1) How we are to conduct ourselves; (2) Our true identity; and (3) Application; first,

1. How we are to conduct ourselves

The KJV is the most literal. Once again, it is “Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, *quit you like men*, be strong.”

Note first of all that these commands are *plural*: “Watch *ye*.” In the idiom of the KJV, “ye” is plural, “thou” is singular. Here are commands—imperatives—given to the whole church. It is best to see these commands in context. Look for a moment at verse 1 of our chapter, “Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the *churches* of Galatia, even so do *ye*.” Here are commands given to the whole church. The church at Corinth was made up of men, women and children. This might sound obvious, but it is important to realize this. Churches are not made up of men only, but of both men and women. No church on earth consists entirely of men. The roles of men and women are complementary. Men can do things that women cannot do, and women can do things that men cannot do. Men need women, and women need men. God has given complementary roles to men and women. Another way to say this is to say that the Bible teaches *complementarianism*, understanding that men and women have different but complementary roles and responsibilities in marriage, family, and the church.

In our Old Testament text we learn that the husband is to be the head of his wife and the father the head of his family. If the wife takes makes a vow, and the husband overrules it, then the LORD will release her from her vow; none of her vows by which she bound herself shall stand. Same with a daughter who lives in her father’s house. If her father overrules it, then the LORD will release her from her vow. The husband is the head of the house, and the father is the head of the family.

Norma and I attended a funeral yesterday where several of the people we talked to spoke of churches that had women pastors. They spoke of this as though such a thing is obviously normal, and to be expected. They have imbibed Satan’s lie that women can do anything that men can do, and that there are no real differences between men and women. On our way up north we stopped at a rest area that had some metal sculptures—paid for by taxpayers to promote the worldview of the state. These sculptures depicted workers constructing roads. Now I am glad for roads, and glad that workers have worked and sacrificed to construct them. Every

resident of Michigan—even those who don’t drive—profits from our roads. But these sculptures depicting workers involved in road construction had both men and women in hardhats, doing the rough, physical work of road construction. The unspoken message was that there are no differences between men and women—women can do anything a man can do. But the church the Lord Jesus Christ is ruled by *men*—not women—called to the offices of minister of the Word, ruling elder and deacon (cf. 1 Tim. 5:17). These offices are held by men who ordinarily are to be the “husband of one wife” (1 Tim. 3:2). Women are to keep silent in the church—that is, not teach the church, during the biblically-commanded Lord’s day worship services, in the official capacity of pastors and ruling elders representing Christ (1 Cor. 14:34).

Moreover, churches also include covenant children, as the text “Children, obey your parents in the Lord” (Eph. 6:1, cf. Col. 3:20—both letters to *churches*) implies.

The reason I go to some length is that the text we are considering: “quit you like men” (remember, plural in form) applies to *all* church members. The bottom line: churches include men, women and children, so a plural command written to the church: “quit you like men,” is for *all* church members. *Men* are to quit themselves like men; *women* are to quit themselves like men, and *children* are to quit themselves like men. Make no mistake: Paul is not writing a command to men only: “Men, quit yourselves like men”—be he-men, with calloused hands and big biceps, running roughshod over people’s feelings in the quest to get the job done. There are those who espouse a so-called “muscular Christianity.” That is not what Paul is talking about here. That is not a biblical worldview.

How are *we*—men, women and children—to quit ourselves as men? We need to understand this important command in its biblical context.

The KJV’s “quit you like men” is short for “*acquit yourselves* like men.” The dictionary gives one definition of “quit” as “conduct, acquit,” using the example “the youths *quit* themselves like men”¹; it gives the definition of “acquit” as “conduct oneself satisfactorily . . . especially under stress.” So the phrase “quit you” is still a part of our English language.

But what is it in the Greek? The phrase “quit you like men” is a translation in paraphrastic language of the single Greek word ἀνδρίζομαι (1 Cor. 16:13; 2 Sam. 10:12 LXX). There are two words for *man* in the Greek: ἄνθρωπος (human being, man) and ἀνὴρ (man, husband). The genitive form of ἀνὴρ is ἀνδρός, which comes into English as *android*, *androgynous* and *androgyny*. The Greek word ἀνδρίζομαι is derived from ἀνὴρ (man, male, husband), not ἄνθρωπος (human being). It means “be a male” in some sense. The lexicon defines it as “conduct oneself in a manly or courageous way” (BAGD).² The NKJV has “be brave.” That is fine as far as it

¹ <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/quit> accessed 5-24-25

² Bauer, Arndt and Gingrich lexicon, ἀνδρίζομαι (Logos Bible Software)

goes, but it doesn't show its connection to the word *man*. The word ἀνδρίζομαι is used in the New Testament only in this one text, 1 Corinthians 16:13. As we mentioned a moment ago, it is specifically written to the church in Corinth, which included men, women and children. There is similar language in Ephesians 6:1, "Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be *men*," but there the Greek word is τέλειοι (*mature*).

So what does the word ἀνδρίζομαι (conduct yourselves like men) mean, and how should men, women and children conduct themselves like men? How are we to determine this? Fortunately, the context gives us clues. Consider the whole verse: "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, *quit you like men*, be strong." *All* of us are to do all these things.

"Watch ye" (γρηγορεῖτε, literally, *keep awake*). Here is an exhortation to watchfulness. Christians are to keep watch over themselves—over their hearts, thoughts, affections, words, actions, and their whole manner of life. They are to watch over one another as brothers and sisters in Christ. They are to watch particularly against the first motions of sin. In the words of Charles Wesley, "I want a principle within of *watchful*, godly fear, a sensibility of sin, a pain to feel it near. I want the first approach to feel of pride or wrong desire, to catch the wandering of my will, and quench the kindling fire."³

"Stand fast in the faith." Hold fast to Christ and his gospel, without wavering, even in the face of opposition.

"Be strong." These words bring to mind the exhortation of Moses, "Be strong and of good courage, do not fear nor be afraid of them; for the LORD your God, He is the One who goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you" (Deut. 31:6). We do not live the Christian life in our own strength but strengthened by Christ, through his Spirit.

The bottom line: We are to conduct ourselves like Christian men in the best sense, being watchful, steadfast and strengthened in the grace of Christ. The church has been far too influenced by Sallman's famous portrait of Jesus—a feminized Jesus. We are to be brave as we fight against the world, the flesh and the devil, knowing that we are kept by the grace of Christ. It is he who will give us the victory. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (1 John 5:4). We are to conduct ourselves like Christian men in the strength of Christ, not in our own strength. This is how we are to conduct ourselves.

Second, consider

2. Our true identity

The Christian's true identity is "in *Christ*," not "in *manhood*" or "in *womanhood*."⁴ If you are a Christian, you are first of all a believer in Jesus Christ,

³ https://hymnary.org/text/i_want_a_principle_within accessed 5-24-25

⁴ <https://www.modernreformation.org/resources/articles/muscular-christianity> accessed 5-23-25

then secondarily a man or a woman. For me to live is *Christ* (Phil. 1:21)—not the inner resources of my masculinity.

Paul writes, “Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God, who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee” (2 Cor. 1:21–22). The word translated “guarantee” is ἀρραβών. It can mean *down-payment*. It is God’s seal of ownership. The anointing—a spiritual act—is represented by water baptism. In the Old Testament people were anointing by the pouring of oil on the head. In the New Testament the pouring or sprinkling of water symbolizes the pouring out of the Holy Spirit upon Christ’s church on the day of Pentecost. Our baptism, thus, is God’s putting his mark or seal of ownership upon us. Our identity is in *Christ*, not in our manhood.

Oh, dear brothers and sisters, think of what it means for you to say, “I am a Christian.” In the words of the Heidelberg Catechism, “I am not my own, but belong—body and soul, in life and in death—to my faithful Savior, Jesus Christ.”⁵

The Christian life is *Christ*, not the unique perspectives of one’s masculinity or femininity. Our focus must always be on our Savior, Jesus Christ. *Christ* is the one whose life teaches us the meaning of “quit you like men.”

Our Lord Jesus Christ is the perfect example of manhood. Jesus, the supreme man, “wept” (John 11:35). If Jesus could weep, then his spiritual sons can weep as well. God created us as emotional creatures. We gain nothing by suppressing our emotions in a vain attempt to appear manly.

The Christian’s true identity is in Christ. Hallelujah! This is liberating. We do not need to appear different than we are. Amen!

We have considered (1) How we are to conduct ourselves; and (2) Our true identity. Third, let’s consider

3. Application

Paul is not writing to Christian men, exhorting them to be more manly, he is writing to the whole Christian church, exhorting us to be mature disciples of Christ, standing up for the faith in spite of opposition.

It would be a misapplication of this verse to tell a man: “You must be a he-man, insisting on your own way, refusing to listen to you wife, mindless of her needs as a woman.

It would be a misapplication of this verse to tell a child, “Be a man, work for a living, support yourself, make adult decisions; I hereby kick you out of my house and will never support you again; the apostle Paul said so.”

By the same token it would be a misapplication of this verse to tell a boy, “Don’t cry. Be a man. The Bible says, ‘Quit you like men.’” Again we must

⁵ <https://all-of-grace.org/resources/heidelberg-catechism>

remember that this apostolic command was not written to Christian *men* but to the whole church.

Moreover, it would be a misapplication of this verse to tell a woman, “Christianity’s about virility and manhood; you have no place in the church. The church is for men only.” To state such would be ludicrous. Though the Lord Jesus chose only male apostles, he had many disciples—some female.

In the crucifixion story we read that there were “many women were there beholding afar off, which followed Jesus from Galilee, *ministering* unto him: Among which was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee’s children” (Matt. 27:55–56; cf. Luke 23:49, 55). The word for “ministering” is literally “deaconing.” Moreover, in Romans 16:1 the apostle says, “I commend to you Phoebe our sister, who is a *servant* of the church in Cenchrea.” The word “servant” is δῆακονος, deacon (with a small “d”).

The church is *ruled* by elders, not by heads of families (1 Tim. 5:17 KJV). *Communion is served* by elders, not by heads of families.

The family and the church are separate institutions. The New Testament is very clear that the church is to be ruled by elders and pastors who meet the biblical qualifications, are called by Christ, and are ordained by the church. The offices of minister, ruling elder and deacon open to males only.

A husband (father) is to rule his own house (1 Tim. 3:4), but that does not mean that he has automatic rule in the church.

The only ones who should speak and instruct the church during Lord’s-day services are duly-ordained ministers and elders—not women, not children, not unordained men. If, in the providence of God, there are no ordained ministers and elders available, unordained men may lead worship, read Scripture, and read an approved sermon, but they should not preach, administer the Lord’s supper or offer the benediction, as these are functions that are to be performed by ordained men on behalf of Christ.