

# MAN

CELEBRATING AND DECLARING WHAT GOD SAYS ABOUT MEN



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# GOD CREATED MAN

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In the beginning, God created man, but before that, He created everything else – space, time, matter, all of it. It was vast and it was amazing.

And it was unique with its endless stars, galaxies, and solar systems that light up our skies. It was incredible. He went on to create everything that we see on Earth, all the different species of plants, trees, vegetation, all with their own unique elements. And then there's the animals with their own unique designs to navigate the land, the air and the water, all of it created to glorify God. And after God created all of those things in His most impressive creation ever, God created mankind and everything was good. In the beginning, God created man. Genesis 1, "Then God said, 'Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness.' So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them, male and female he created them." God scraped man out of the dust from the earth and breathed His own breath into him giving him His life.

This was the pinnacle of all things created, the image bearer, the crown of all creation, the first man, the first son, created with divine design, above all creation to have will, emotions, intellect, relationships, and God called him Adam. God placed man in the middle of all of it, surrounded by joy, peace, and goodness. God placed man at the epicenter of His kingdom, a place not even the angels were given. In fact, even the angels in all of their glory do not carry the image in the likeness of God, not the way that Adam would, the greatest privilege in all of creation, to bear the image of God Himself, the creator of all things. You see, every man was made in the image of God, regardless of color, size, stature, or background, because man was created to reveal God's goodness to the world.

Man, everything we love and respect about men is a direct reflection of the image and likeness of God, because man was God's dream. Every man was created to reflect His goodness; that when the world interacted with man, they would know that God exists and He is good, that it's His nature to be good. The world would take notice of man, because man walked in the image of God and demonstrated the attributes of God like courage, boldness, strength, power, honor, love, kindness, and humility, a reflection of God's heart, God's dream. The very idea of man was born in the heart of God. It was His idea. Man was God's desire. You see, it has always been God's desire to walk in relationship with man. Every man was created to be loved for who he is, not for what he could do.

It was always about relationship. And yes, man was created to climb mountains, explore the unknown, defeat giants, conquer things with God, but every man was

created to be known by God first, find his value and worth in God first, then go do those things with God, in relationship with God. He is fully known and fully loved, with no fear of rejection. And that relationship screams to the world around him that God exists and He is good. And God invites every man into this relationship because He wants to. It's here that man experiences life to the full, walking in full freedom, fulfilling his purpose, revealing God's goodness to the world. And everything about man was fully designed by God. Man was designed by God with all of His uniqueness and full masculinity. Every man was designed to rule and reign, not with authoritarian behavior but by living in submission to God and serving others, releasing life into everything that he would put his hands, his heart, his mind, and his life to do.

This was God's created design. God created everything we know in our universe, and when He created man, it was His design that man too would create, that every man would create environments for people to experience God, to create an atmosphere to experience His presence. And this reflected His goodness. See, man operated under God's authority in the Garden to serve and to steward all of creation. Before the fall ever happened, man was given a garden to steward, a good work to give his life to, a mandate to speak identity and to reflect the Father's heart in everything. Dominion was given to man, not to dominate, but to serve, to create, and to move forward the plans of God. Man created to build up, not to tear down, and to release strength to the weak, to give courage to the fearful, to demonstrate honor and use every attribute of God he's been given to serve others.

Like leading his family and having integrity at work; inviting in the outcast and carrying hope to others. And in humility, this demonstrates God's goodness to the world. But humanity fell and it broke. And it broke relationship with God. The first Adam rejected God and broke everything in the process and ever since then, man has been struggling to find his way back. Sin has been distorting everything we think man was created for. For years, we've had this broken view of who man is, like, where he came from and what he was designed for. So we think man is only a provider, but not a loving parent, able to speak identity and life, or that man only beats his chest but he's unable to humbly serve and elevate others, or that man is absent and lacks the ability to contribute to relationships in his life.

But every man was designed to cultivate and grow and expand every relationship in the garden of his life. And this is why Jesus came to earth in the form of a man to restore man. "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life a ransom for many." Showing us what it means to be a man, restoring what it means to be a man, Jesus, the Son of God, became a Son of Man so the sons of men could become sons of God once again. Jesus came to restore it all, everything.



Jesus was born into the world a man, courageous, strong, powerful, humble, servant to all, to reflect the image and likeness of God to get back what Adam lost. Jesus, Son of Man, the second Adam, showed us with His life and even gave His life to make things right once again and redeem man for all time, to restore what it means to be a man in His original design, so that every man once again could climb mountains, explore the unknown, defeat giants, and conquer things with God; so that man could live life to its fullest expression with God.

Man – God’s dream, God’s design, God’s desire – was created to reveal that God exists and He is good. In the beginning, God created man.

## MEN ARE DESIGNED TO LIVE AS SONS

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So God not only created man, He designed him to live as a son. In the beginning it says, “The Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground.” The Creator stepped into his creation to fashion man with His own hands. And as He shaped him and formed him into His image it says, “He breathed into his nostrils the breath of life.”

In that moment, man came alive. And as man’s eyes were open and they adjusted to the light of the day, the first thing he saw was the Father, the face of love Himself. You see, in the beginning, man first saw God, and came to know God as a son. God made Adam the first son, not because He had to, but because He wanted to. Man was birthed from His heart, he was God’s dream, God’s desire, and God’s design, someone God could reveal Himself to and someone who would reflect His glory to the world. And as God rested on that seventh day with the full extent of His creation complete, you could almost picture Him gazing at the man He created and speaking over him the words He would one day speak over Jesus Himself, that “this is My beloved Son in whom I’m well pleased.” You see, God saw man and declared that he was very good. Before Adam had done anything to earn it, the Father declared his identity and in doing so, He established his worth. It was God’s heart that man would forever be known as a beloved son, the very thing that every man longs to hear, that they’re beloved.

Meaning that man is designed to be loved deeply in an extravagant way. And that they’re a son, meaning that man is to be known primarily in relation to his Father. And it goes on to say that the Lord God took His son Adam and placed him in the Garden, where they walked together in the cool of the day. See, we learned right away that man was never intended to know God from a distance, they communed together, and conversed together, where the full depths of the son’s heart were laid bare. See, man was fully known, fully loved, and he had no fear of rejection. There was no need to

strive, no need to perform, no need to prove his worth, and there was no need to get from others, for everything man needed, the Father freely gave in Himself. And when a son is secure in his Father's love, it's then that he's able to live free. In fact, it says when God breathed into man's nostrils, He imparted within him the Spirit of life. See, God's heart was never that man would be lukewarm or idle, but that he'd be filled with passion and purpose and a destiny.

That he would carry with him a desire to worship God, not because he had to, but by choice. And when God placed Adam in the Garden, He commissioned him to be free. See, man was free to live without guilt and without fear and without shame. He was free to thank and free to speak life and free to call forth identity. Man was free to steward God's creation and expand the boundaries of his kingdom. See, beloved sons live free. And isn't it fascinating that God created Adam to be known primarily as a son? Why not leader, or boss, or provider, or worker? It wasn't athlete, or brother, not even father, but son. You see, before man can be any of those things, he has to be a son first. And while men race to grow up and establish significance and kingdoms of their own, we learn from creation that sonship is what the Father's kingdom values most. Where the world says maturity is found in experience and age, the Father's kingdom says it's found in a childlike heart. And while a man may and often does grow into a father, he's never meant to stop first and foremost being a son.

See, beloved sons become great fathers. But if we're honest, that's often not how we see men live today nor is it how they're portrayed. You see, within the Garden was everything the heart of a son could ever need, yet when Adam sinned, he rejected the identity of the son and he traded it for orphan living. In other words, he chose to say, "I want to go my way and do my own thing. I don't want to be under a father." And in making that choice, he released the orphan spirit into the world and into the heart of every man. See, in Adam, man's relationship with the Father was broken and his identity was wrecked. See, rooted in orphan thinking is man's belief that he's no longer worthy to be a son. And that's why, for centuries, men have been living as if they have no home, no father, and no one to provide for their needs. It's why they think they have to take care of themselves and make their own way in the world. But no matter how bad men may have managed to mess things up, God has never been ashamed to be called dad and He has never been ashamed to call any man son.

See, instead, He promises that He will be a Father to the fatherless. In the Scriptures, we see a Father who initiates, one that pursues, and who longs to forgive and bring all men home. And in Jesus, the Father has given them the right to be adopted as sons. For it says, "The Son of Man has come to seek and save that which was lost." See in Jesus, sonship, the very thing that was lost, has now been restored. Where Adam

chose rebellion, Jesus chose to live as a son. It's why He always referred to Himself as either the Son of Man, or the Son of God. See, He was never embarrassed to be called Son because He knew it was the primary way that man was to be known. Son is the core identity of man. And in Jesus, we see that sons were meant to live a life of surrender. See, Jesus delighted in doing the Father's work. And while the world wants to tell men that surrender is weak, we would never say that about Jesus.

See, Jesus not only showed us what true strength looks like, He was the freest person who ever lived. He showed men that freedom isn't found in independence, but in complete and total dependence upon God. And in modeling the life of sonship, Jesus has finally made the Father's heart known. See, for many, it's difficult to relate to God as Father because no earthly father is perfect. For many, just the concept of father can be uncomfortable and bring about pain. And even when growing up with the best of dads, one can still feel lost and rejected. But in Jesus, we come to know a Father whose very essence and nature is love. In Jesus, men come to know a Father whose love is unconditional and who longs for them to hear that in them He is well pleased. And until a man hears that, he'll never live free. You see, men spend their whole lives trying to define who they are when God has already told them, "You're to be known as My son." The primary identity of man is not orphan, not slave, not servant, not boss, it's not provider, not brother, again not even dad, but son.

And in Jesus, all men can once again hear that, "You are My beloved son in whom I am well pleased."

## MEN ARE MADE FOR RELATIONSHIP

Not only did God create man and design him to live as a son, He also made him for relationship. Man was made by God to be in relationship with God, created to be with the Creator, knowing God even as he was fully known by God. That first relationship between man and God was pure, was true, was free. Walking together, working together, communing together in the Garden, they had deep connection with no fear of judgment, no fear of shame, no fear of fear. Adam would walk in the cool of the day with God and they would ponder and they'd converse about what to name the animals.

And God would speak to Adam face-to-face, heart-to-heart. God knew man and man knew God. And that was the whole point. God created man, because He desired to be with him, to be with was the primary reason that man came to be in the first place. Man was wanted. Man was seen and he was loved. And man is still wanted. Man is still seen and man is still loved. First came identity. Man was born as a son of God, and then God named His man Adam. And next came intimacy. God wanted to have a connection with

man. He wanted to give Adam His heart so Adam could know His heart and together they could share His heart. Intimacy, connection, and relationship, they all reflect God's essence. They reflect His heart. And we often think of woman being naturally gifted in relationship, but it was actually man who was first invited to be in relationship.

Yet even in all that, something was missing. Connection with another. And woman was not just another. You see, man was clearly different than woman. Woman was the other that God knew was missing. And in Genesis 2:18, the Lord God said, "It is not good for man to be alone." With that declaration, God declared isolation is not good. Isolation is in opposition to His goodness. Now think about that. In the perfection, in the beauty of the Garden, one thing was not good, being alone. So God did something about it. He gave man another to walk with and to work with and to commune with – woman. Her name was Eve. Man was made to relate in love through the very love in which God had related to him. You see, God's love is meant to flow, not only in, but also out, into man and out of man into the lives of others. So with the creation of another, Adam had another to love, and Adam could now give to Eve out of the overflow of love he'd receive from the Father.

Eve's creation not only created marriage, it created something that was missing – intimacy with another. In marriage, the two were to become one flesh. But you see, God created two because one cannot reflect His fullness. And one alone cannot experience intimacy, and man was made for intimacy, created to courageously declare to another intimacy, see me, know me, value, intimacy. But Satan hates intimacy. He hates connection. Satan wants to break all of man's relationships with God, with wife, with others. You see, without Jesus, all of man's relationships will ultimately end up broken. Co-workers, children, best friends, wives, every relationship strains without Jesus at the center. Simply put, Satan hates relationships, because they remind him of God, and because of this he, Satan, whispers in men's ears, "It's okay, trade relationship for achievement." And instead of guarding relationships, man is too often discarding relationships for the sake of self-interest or to make a better name for himself. And ironically, in Jesus, man already has a better name for himself. Sometimes, men sacrifice marriage and fatherhood and friendship on the altar of career advancement or in an attempt to gain significance or to just advance overall. But in Jesus, man is already advancing in every area of life. Adam, the first man, he did exactly this. He was quick to discard Eve, blaming "the woman you put here with me" instead of covering her, and protection of persona overtook protection of relationship, something that still happens today.

But man was not designed to protect his persona, he was designed to protect what matters most to God – people. Designed to love them the way that he is loved. And

this is also why man found himself hiding from God, desiring to be hidden, seeing himself as naked and ashamed. You see, Adam hid and then God came looking to restore the relationship. And God said to Adam, "Where are you?" Adam replied, "I was naked and I was afraid and so I hid." Hear that again. "I felt vulnerable, and that led to fear, so I decided to stay covered up from you." You see, sin caused the first man to hide, and this is why man still hides today. This is why man often works to control the narrative in order to save public face or to keep the unflattering details hidden behind walls of accomplishment, walls of control, walls of partial knowledge. And that very first wall came in the form of a fig leaf and a shrub.

You see, sin broke the world, and sin broke man's relationships. And even now, man struggles to relate to others. And when man hides, man struggles. Because to be vulnerable with another human is to be vulnerable with the very image of God. And this is why the image of the invisible God, Jesus, came in the first place. Jesus came to restore man's relationships with God, with woman, with all of creation, and that's why He declares in John 10, "I am the good shepherd. I know my own sheep and they know me, just as my father knows me and I know the father. So I sacrifice my life." Jesus came for relationships, in relationship, to restore relationships. And instead of hiding, Jesus came to show Himself, to know and be known. Instead of leaving us behind, Jesus came to guide us as a shepherd. Instead of judging, Jesus came to pour out compassion. And instead of bringing a list of expectations, Jesus came to offer His life as a sacrifice.

Jesus showed man how to be a man. And this is why Jesus is the second Adam. Where Adam failed, Jesus fully and completely exemplified that man was made for relationship, through the life He lived, the death He died, and even now how He, the resurrected King, relates to all of mankind in love, in intimacy, in vulnerability, in compassion, in gentleness. So now man can relate in love, in intimacy, in vulnerability, in compassion, in gentleness. You see, man was made for relationship to relate to others, to walk humbly, engaging with gentle words, having a gentle heart, being patient with family and co-workers and friends, making allowances for others' faults, not counting their sins against them, choosing unity over opinions and preferences, and being bound together with others through a spirit of peace.

You see, a renewed man is a man of peace, because Jesus is a man of peace. And only Jesus, the Word of God, gets to define how man relates to others, not pop culture, not the news, not society. And we must reject any stereotype that declares men unable to cultivate life-giving, loving relationships. You see, man's ability to receive the love of the Father in heaven now enables him to give love to those on Earth. Man is now fully empowered to carry out that original command to love as we have been loved.

And where Adam failed relationally, Jesus succeeded. Fully known, fully loved, with no fear of rejection. Now, man can receive and can live and can relate to others from the Father's love. In the beginning, man was made for relationship. And today, because of Jesus, man has been remade for relationship.

## MEN ARE CREATED TO WORK WITH GOD

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Not only did God create man and design him to live as a son and make him for relationships, He also created him to work with God. In the six days of creation, God made everything that existed and He said it was very good. Then on the seventh day, we're told He rested from all His work. That means God, by His very nature, is a worker, and everything He works is very good. And then God observed that there was no one to work the ground. You see, God was longing for a partner, someone to work with Him to oversee the Garden He had just made. So what did God do? He created man.

Adam was made on purpose for a purpose, to work with God. He was not made to work for God, but he was made to work with God and doing very good work. In fact, the very first work that God gave Adam to do was to name the animals. Just as God had spoken identity over Adam, He now empowers Adam to speak identity over creation. Eve, the mother of life, was designed to be a life-giver, but Adam, the beloved son, man, he was designed to be an identity declarer. He was made to speak things into existence, to proclaim hope, and worth, and peace over every living creature, but especially over his wife and children.

Let that sink in. God hand-picked Adam to be His co-worker. It was not a chore or a grind, it was an honor and a privilege. But notice, God didn't give man a job, He gave him work, and there's a big difference. A job is what a man does to take care of himself, but work is what a man does to live out his created purpose. A job is about personal success, but working with God, that's about generational significance. So Adam's purpose was to work with God. Genesis 2:15 tells us, "The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden, to work it and take care of it." To work it, to cultivate it, to develop it, to bring it to its fullest potential. This is why men love to build things.

They love to tweak things, and tune things, and fix things and make them better. It's just how men are wired. And then God adds, "and to take care of it," to value it, to manage it, and guard it for the next generation. Adam was never intended to be the master of the Garden, he was only directed to be its steward, making it better for everyone. In other words, Adam was commissioned to lead like his Creator. He was never to dominate, but only to serve. He was never to dictate, but only to love. And Genesis 1:28 gives us the blueprint for how he was to do this. "And God blessed them



and said to them, 'Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth and subdue it using all its vast resources in the service of God and man.'" Adam was to be fruitful and multiply, to take the spiritual inheritance he received, his time, his gifts, his passion, his identity, and to reproduce that into others.

He was also to fill the earth, to saturate every sphere with the goodness of God. And Adam was to subdue the earth, to bring order out of chaos and alignment with the kingdom of God. Last of all, Adam was to use his vast resources to respond to the generosity and grace in his own life by releasing generosity into the world. This was the purpose for which man was made to work with God. But of course, all of that was broken when sin entered the world. Adam put personal preferences above his divine purpose and the consequences were devastating. No longer was work man's created purpose a blessing, it became a curse.

And God told Adam, "Because of your sin, by the sweat of your brow you will eat your food." For the first time, sweat and thorns and thistles entered into the world, things that would bite and prick and fight against all of man's partnership with God. This is why so many men today are chasing after jobs, and money, and toys, and 401(k)s, thinking that when they have enough that they can retire from their purpose and live a life of idleness. But men were never made to live a life of idleness; men were made to partner with God, to build His kingdom, not their own. But here's the really good news, what Satan destroyed in the Garden, Jesus restored at the cross.

By His finished work, Jesus reversed the curse of thorns and thistles and He made men's work sacred again. By the grace of Jesus, men can now fully live out their purpose. This is why the Bible says, "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart. as working for the Lord." Men will never be content until they do what they do with all their heart, because that's their divine purpose. This is why men living outside of their design, men living for themselves, will always carry a discontented soul. And while men today no longer live in the Garden of Eden, every man has a garden to steward, every man has a name to carry, a family to serve, a home to protect, a neighbor to bless, and a world to change.

Every man has a kingdom sphere of influence to speak identity over, and to call forth the purposes of God. In the beginning, God created man, and He had designed him to live as a beloved son and He invited him to the most intimate of relationships, but then He gave him His divine purpose, to work with God. It was never a job, it was his life's work and it was very good.