

port, not nagging, will encourage your man to be a Christ-like king.

Beware of Ruling as the Gentiles

The rulers of the Gentiles, “Lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them” (Mark 10:42). In God’s eyes, the best leaders lead without being oppressive. They don’t holler and pound their chest, making sure that everyone knows they are the Papa (like Tevya from *Fiddler on the Roof*). Instead they are kind and respectful, open to new ideas, and willing to be wrong. The uncaring king is aloof, failing to meaningfully enter the lives of his dependents. The benevolent king truly knows those he is called to lead (John 10:14).

Honor Your Wife

Adam was created as the first prophet, priest and king of this world. After receiving Eve as a wife he speaks of her with the utmost appreciation and admiration, as if she were his queen (Gen. 2:23). The godly man’s wife *is* his queen. We sin when we treat our wives as children, servants, or worse.

The gospel calls men to the office of Christian man. The gospel also equips us for this calling. But until we are brought home to glory we will fail in our mission. Our success in faithfully discharging the office of Christian man depends on our closeness to the chief prophet, priest and king.

It’s no special distinction to become a father; all you have to do is sire a child. The true honor is to reflect Christ by living out the office of Christian man.

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THE OFFICE OF CHRISTIAN MAN

APPLYING CHRIST’S THREE-FOLD OFFICE TO MEN

BY WILLIAM BOEKESTEIN

If modern television sitcoms were the litmus test for masculinity, our expectations of men would be minimal. It’s no secret that for most of the last half century television has depicted fathers as incompetent buffoons often only featured to keep the laugh-track greased. Besides bringing home a paycheck (sometimes), TV dads mainly try to stay out of the way of their much better half. The negative influence such portrayal has had on the men that God intends to lead the home, the church, and to an extent, society, is hard to overstress.

In contrast to cultural expectations, the Bible calls men to reflect Christ’s three-fold office of prophet, priest, and king. In fact, this is true of all believers.

The protestant reformation laid the ax to the root of the notion that only kings and clergy discharged an important office. The reformers understood the profound implications of Christ’s anointing by the Spirit to be God’s officer, fulfilling the three Old Testament offices. Beginning at Pentecost, Christ poured out this same Spirit upon his people (Acts 2:17), calling and equipping them to continue on earth his prophetic (Matt. 10:22), priestly (1 Pet. 2:5) and kingly work (Eph. 6:11).

By living out the three-fold office of Christ, our fathers, future fathers, and other single men will distinguish themselves from those who wrongly call themselves men, and inspire the respect and reverence of those they are called to lead.



The Christian Man as Prophet

The prophet of Israel was a man (or occasionally a woman) chosen and equipped by God to speak on his behalf to the people. The prophets couldn't say anything unless it was God's will. Even ungodly Balaam knew this. "...Balaam said to Balak, 'Look, I have come to you! Now, have I any power at all to say anything? The word that God puts in my mouth, that I must speak'" (Num 22:38). "Thus says the Lord" was their most basic and sacred motto.

Christ came as the ultimate prophet. "God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son..." (Heb. 1:1,2a). Christ "Fully reveals to us the secret counsel and will of God concerning our redemption." (Heidelberg Catechism, Q&A 31) God calls men to follow Christ's lead as prophets.

Strive to Communicate

At a most basic level, the prophets were communicators. Fulfilling this role can be challenging for the gender for whom actions often come easier than words. Thankfully, Jesus and the prophets communicated in a variety of ways. They spoke publicly and privately. They preached sermons and told stories. But theirs was a word-based calling. Godly men discipline themselves to communicate especially when they feel like retreating.

Teach the Bible

In most cases God calls men to be the leader in family worship. Not every

family wants to worship at home. The family schedule may not be conducive to collective worship. Both scenarios have always existed. But as God's prophets to their families, fathers must be sure that they have a church in the home and that what they teach in the home is biblical, not just an expression of personal whim.

Model an Evangelistic Lifestyle

For all our talk about the importance of witnessing it remains the case that too few believers have ever had a positive example of what it actually looks like. The best way to equip the next generation to propagate the faith is to show them how; the bravery of others is emboldening. Families need fathers to model evangelistic zeal.

The Christian Man as Priest

The priests were the regular spiritual leaders of Israel. They served in the tabernacle and later in the temple. As counterparts to the prophets, the priests spoke to God on behalf of the people and offered sacrifices on behalf of the peoples' sins.

In fulfillment of the testimony of all the other sacrifices of the law Christ offered up himself once for all for our sins (Heb. 7:27). After paying our penalty he ascended into heaven where he labors as our sympathetic high priest. God calls men to reflect Christ's work as priest.

Be Involved in Your Church

The priests were regular fixtures in the Jewish church. They weren't "Sunday Christians" (or "Saturday Jews"). Instead they invested their

lives in the service of God for the benefit of his people. Not all men will be as involved in the church as the ministers and elders. Still, God expects men and fathers to play a vital role in the spiritual life of the covenant community (1 John 2:12-14). God has laid on men the responsibility of leading his church (1 Tim. 3:1,2). But until a new generation of young men sees older men invest in the church inadequate male leadership may remain the norm. Men, those around us, especially our families, need to know that we prize and prioritize our relationship to the local church.

Pray for Your People

Paul identifies men, especially, as the intercessors of the church and family (1 Tim. 2:8). Godly men learn to pray for their families, and not just during scheduled, traditional times (e.g. before or after meals). Instead, maintain an ongoing ministry of intercession on their behalf. Pray for their salvation. Pray for their holiness. Your pleadings will find an audience in God's ears as they also change your attitude toward your family.

Be Approachable

Jesus is a sympathetic high priest (Heb. 4:15). He understands our weaknesses and sins. He also invites us to come to him (Matt. 11:29) promising that he will not turn us away when we do. "All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out" (John 6:37). Some wives and children are scared to ap-

proach their husbands and fathers with their failures. While there may be multiple reasons for this communication breakdown the responsibility always falls at the leader's feet. Of course, it's possible to become so approachable that your children feel comfortable mocking and contradicting, but the opposite is no better.

The Christian Man as King

The kings of Israel, too often contrary to appearances, were God's gift to his people to provide them with security, protection and order. The king was to be a benevolent dictator under God. His authority was real but it was to be married to love and compassion.

Jesus Christ, our eternal king, perfectly balances strength and tenderness. He "governs us by his word and Spirit and defends and preserves us in the salvation he obtained for us." (H.C. Q&A 31) From his heavenly throne he subjects his enemies and protects his people. God calls men to rule under Christ as kings.

Be Decisive

When it comes to biblical leadership, men are as tempted to abdicate as women are to usurp. Men must resist caving in under the pressures of leadership and capitulating to the winds of egalitarianism and pure democracy. Men must not shrink back in response to past failures.

It's an important fact that many women are not satisfied with the level of their husband's spiritual decisiveness, often rightly so. The best way to nurture spiritual leadership is to receive and affirm it. Prayer and sup-