

An Introduction to Masculine Christianity

Introduction

a. objectives

1. subject – An introduction to the book “Masculine Christianity” and its importance to men in the church
2. aim – To cause us to reflect upon masculinity in our relation to the church, home, and society

b. outline

1. The Thesis of the Book
2. The Outline of the Book
3. The Importance of the Book

c. overview

1. a **personal note** to begin Men’s Bible Study
 - a. I have long felt that the church in America has been “feminized” = that much of the way we go about “doing church” lends itself more towards *women*, and men are often not fully engaged
 - b. **e.g.** the music in typical churches geared towards the “emotional” rather than the “theological”
 1. **i.e.** from Fanny Crosby = how we “feel” about Jesus “our friend” (**e.g.** In the Garden)
 2. **i.e.** CCM music (3-7-11 music) = songs about *us* – our feelings, our needs, our “worship”
 - c. **e.g.** the preaching in typical churches geared towards an emotional response (to the “gospel”?)
 1. **i.e.** “playing” on emotions through humor, illustrations, fear-mongering, and even “informality”
 - d. **thus:** many Baptist churches are overly-attended by women (men staying home), and women becoming the *de facto* leadership “under” a weak male leadership (often just a figurehead)
 1. **e.g.** the loss of the office of elder, replaced by a *single* pastor (and staff!) who’s primary job is to “comfort” people through their “crises” (as a counselor) rather than *teach* sound doctrine
 - e. and ... this change corresponds *identically* to the same *radical* change in the culture around us ...
2. a new **approach** to Men’s Bible Study
 - a. **from:** a discussion amongst the elders of how to more *practically* approach some of the issues relating to men’s (and women’s) issues in the church – some of the issues *facing men* in our time
 - b. **note:** not that biblical study is unimportant or *impractical* – all biblical study is useful (of course!)
 1. rather, something that would more *specifically* address issues facing men in the world – a study that flows from a “popular” book, but **one that seriously addresses the issue biblically**
 - c. so ... a new series based on the book **Masculine Christianity** by Zachary M. Garris
 1. © 2020 Zachary M. Garris, Zion Press, Ann Arbor, Michigan
 2. **my thanks:** Jake Conway, who introduced me to this book just after the elders had that conversation – and it seemed *immediately* to me to be the subject *du jour*
 3. **Fair Use Doctrine:** our study will be made under the assumption that we can quote freely from the book, given that we have purchased copies of it
3. a similar **methodology** in Men’s Bible Study
 - a. the goal will be to study the *entirety* of this book over the course of the school year (Sep-May)
 1. **LOW:** enough time in it to properly engage the point of the book without “glossing over” important elements – **i.e.** enough time to be sure that we “get it” and can “sustain it”
 2. **note:** there will be some “time off” on Sundays during the holiday period and **randomly**
 - b. another goal will be to *personally engage* this book over that period of time
 1. **LOW:** not for you to just “listen” to a lecture, but to be *personally engaged* with its content
 2. **i.e.** we will use a two-week-per-lesson approach: a set of *take-home* questions for you to answer in preparation for week one, a discussion group; a second week in which I will lecture over the material to make sure that we all get the “the point” of the lesson
 - a. questions will be printed here ... Zoom users will need to retrieve them from www.thbg.org
→ Studies → Select Series: Masculine Christianity (scroll to bottom)
 - c. **caution:** the book is not *inspired* = it does *not* qualify as “scripture” and it is *not* subject to the same level of “qualification” that the Bible does (**i.e.** there are many things with which we are *free to disagree*, recognizing that the book attempts to *interpret* Scripture through the lens of the author)
 1. **true:** the book is *very biblical* in its approach, and we will study the relevant Scriptures ...
 2. **however:** there will be things you (**we!**) *may* disagree with, and that is **perfectly okay!** – however, allow the author the “freedom” to make his case, and (hopefully!) we will learn something, *even from areas that we disagree with his conclusions*

I. The Thesis of the Book

Content

a. the thesis of the book

"The *point of this book* is that Christianity is a masculine religion. Men have authority, and as go the men, so go the women and children. Yet we are facing a crisis of masculinity in the church. Men have failed to lead, including our pastors, and now our women are acting like men and our men like women ... we have an effeminate church preaching an effeminate gospel, proclaiming Jesus as Savior while ignoring His command for male rule in His kingdom." (pg. 27; emphasis mine)

1. **i.e.** Christianity is based on a **masculine model**: the revelation in Scripture of God as *Father* flowing into a picture of his *Son* as a "husband who laid down his life for his bride"; (ibid.) the church
2. **i.e.** a picture of **male headship (authority)**: the Father sending the Son to rescue a people from sin, and then *gathering* them *metaphorically* as a bride; **picture**: a *woman* being led by her husband
 - a. the nature of the church being utterly ruled by Christ, loved by him as a *husband*, **not an "equal"**
3. but ... feminism in the culture has "infected" the church; it has come to "equalize" the sexes (and their roles), with women failing to follow their *natural role*, and "guilting" men into abandoning theirs
4. so, Garris blames *the men* (not the women): men have failed *in their natural role* (**i.e.** "giving over" their role of leadership to women, or allowing this "equalization" to minimize their roles)
 - a. and, the "feeble" attempt at (soft) **complementarianism** has not helped: the idea that the sexes are perfectly equal *in value* with one another, but have *different roles* assigned to them, particularly (peculiarly) in the church, has only helped to *foster* this "feminization" *in the church*
 - b. **IOW**: the attempt to "equalize" the sexes as a *response to the culture*, has only *exacerbated* the problem *in the church* – **i.e.** it has left the complementarian to "defend" only *one aspect* of male leadership, **having abandoned the tenet entirely of male authority over everything**
 - c. thus, many churches, *while ascribing to complementarianism*, have (in fact) succumbed to a *de facto egalitarianism* – they have so removed the idea of *male headship* that they cannot weather the attack upon the *single office* still left to men
 - d. and, many churches are *capitulating* to the culture in "accepting" that women are perfectly able to trade babies for careers (in general), and that there is no "call" for women to act *other than men*
 1. **i.e.** no clarion call for women *to be women* and for men *to be men* (in *both nature and role*)
5. **IOW**: what the church needs is to recover its *masculine calling*, where men embrace their God-given authority – and responsibility – in the home, church, and society (back cover)
 - a. **i.e.** that the church (and the Christian) needs to recapture the idea of a **biblical patriarchy**

II. The Outline of the Book

Content

a. the outline of the book

1. **a survey of the problem (chaps. 1-3)**
 - a. **chap. 1**: a survey of the rise of feminism and the erosion of masculinity – what is feminism (in its various "waves"), how has feminism attacked the family (historically), the anti-Christian nature of *all forms* of feminism, the sexual revolution and the ingrained nature of feminism into law, and how feminism invaded the church through complementarianism
 - b. **chap. 2**: sexual rebellion and repentance – the rebellion against God's design for the sexes, the rise of the "effeminate" man, the call for men to act like men, and women acting like women, particularly in the area of childbearing
 - c. **chap. 3**: complementarianism's compromise – the definition of complementarianism and its inconsistencies, including its discomfort with the idea of "hierarchy", its failure to root gender roles in the very nature of male and female, and how it actually *embraces* elements of egalitarianism, failing (ultimately) in just "limiting" itself to the world of the "church"
2. **a statement of the truth (chap. 4)**
 - a. **chap. 4**: the argument that Christianity is **patriarchal** – that Christianity has, *at its core*, the doctrine of "father rule"; with God as patriarch, the story of redemptive history is one of patriarchy – it is contained throughout the OT (in the patriarchs, elders, prophets, judges, priests, and kings), even into the Israelite household, and continues into the NT, with Jesus as our *ultimate* patriarch, delegated down to apostles, elders, deacons, prophets, and into the Christian household through husbands leading their wives as *Christ loves and leads the church*

3. **a summary of the truth (chaps. 5-6)**
 - a. **chap. 5:** gender roles in the creation order – the foundational story of Adam and Eve demonstrating the glory of the sexes *as decreed by God*, defining *by virtue of their sex* the role of each of the original pair: Adam as provider and protector (even after the Fall); Eve bearing children and caring for the home (*i.e.* as a *help-meet* to Adam)
 - b. **chap. 6:** hierarchy and authority in the creation order – the foundational story of Adam and Eve demonstrating the inherent nature of hierarchy, with Adam’s authority over Eve (before *and* after the Fall), and that the Fall itself does “introduce” the idea of hierarchy, but (rather) speaks to the corruption that entered it via sin
4. **a synopsis of what is assumed (chaps. 7-11)**
 - a. **chap. 7:** masculine authority starts in the home – God’s design for the family is for male headship and authority; not “mutual submission” nor cultural appropriations, but biblically-based ideas of the household, from the OT and the NT, with the man being the spiritual leader of the family to protect and provide, taking the responsibility God has assigned to the man
 - b. **chap. 8:** pastors and elders must be men – an examination of 1 Timothy 2 & 3, where God’s call for leaders is for elders to be men, women are not to teach or exercise authority over men (as gleaned from Eve’s deception) in either the private *or* public gatherings of the church
 - c. **chap. 9:** women should keep silent in church – an examination of 1 Corinthians 11 & 14, where women are instructed by the Apostle to remain silent in the public gatherings of the church, over against a number of objections raised either from the culture or from “interpretations” of Paul
 - d. **chap. 10:** masculine authority in the church – addressing the objections to the conclusions of chaps. 7-9: can women do anything in the church *other* than serve as elders, including teaching, praying, preaching, etc., and how does this *affect* the nature of pastoring as a *masculine task*?
 - e. **chap. 11:** masculine authority beyond the home and church – extending the patriarchal argument beyond the home and the church to all of society, under the assumption that the creation order applies *everywhere*, in contrast to the “two kingdoms” thinking of some reformed Christians, with civil government modeled on the home, civil authority as masculine in nature, and a general condemnation of women serving in positions of rule or in combat as soldiers
5. **a siren-call to what is needed (chap. 12)**
 - a. **chap 12:** leaving a manly legacy – a call to (Christian) men to “accept responsibility, exercise godly authority, and develop abilities that aid us in the tasks God has set before us” (pg. 270), and (in doing so) the women will follow, doing what their nature inclines them to do, with both sexes raising godly children and ordering their lives around their offspring, working hard for Christ

III. The Importance of the Book

Content

a. the audience of the book

1. **question: who does this book apply to;** are *all men* called to be patriarchs, or only those who are young enough to raise children; are men *excluded* from this call if they are not elders or deacons; does the book apply only to “certain kind” or *ages* of men in the church?
2. **answer:** feminism has so “invaded” the thinking of the modern church that it is likely that we *all* have been affected by it *in some way*, probably unconsciously and in ways we’ve never even noticed
3. **thus:** the study of this book will (for some) codify what they already understand to be true and *extend* the understanding in new and better ways; for others, it may be a *watershed* moment, helping them to see how they have (in many ways) *voluntarily* given over certain assumptions to complementarianism (or even egalitarianism)
 - a. **e.g.** I have always struggled with complementarianism’s assumption that the roles of men/women were “limited” to within *the church* (and home!; **see Lidija Novakovic**), but had never really grasped just how “compromised” most complementarianism really is in regards to **patriarchy**
 - b. **i.e.** there may be many things in this book that you may struggle to accept, and you are free to do with it as you will – the goal *of the class* will be to see if the biblical support for the arguments made are *consistent* and *hermeneutically accurate* – and (if so!), apply the arguments to how we choose to modify our thinking (and, thus, our actions)
 - c. **and ... if this book does make a biblical case for male authority in the home, church, and society, and if that case is consistent with God’s revelation, even if it “threatens” our preconceptions, then we better be prepared to amend our thinking and our practices**