

Covenant Manhood

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Introduction

The concept of covenants and the Covenant are a necessary background.

You may be aware that the Bible mentions several different covenants: Abraham, Noah, Moses and Christ. These covenants follow a pattern. The whole concept is a formal commitment to serve some feudal master. In our case, it's about serving Christ as our Lord. All covenants are feudal and tribal, including the one in Christ.

Acting on this commitment requires a law component. In that sense, law is simply the verbal requirements of the Sovereign, manifesting something of His moral character. I realize the terminology in the Bible is fuzzy on this, but Our Savior pointed out in His teaching that the Law of Moses was not the same as the Talmud, which He referred to as the "traditions of the elders." That latter was not a valid covenant. But on top of that, Jesus referred to a divine moral law of His Father that was more demanding than Moses. He used Moses to refer back to something deeper.

Even Moses acknowledged that the code of law was not enough, that it requires a commitment from the heart. It's called a covenant because it's not simply a contract. The latter is a commitment of resources, including labor. A covenant is a commitment of persons, in which the concrete outcome is not really the point. It's the loyalty of persons that matters most. The prophets made the point that mere rote observance of the particulars was not enough.

Most Christians get hung up on the way the word "law" is used in the New Testament, particularly when the writers use "law" to refer to the Talmud as illegitimate, but then use the same word to refer to Moses, which continues to speak to us about what loyalty to the Father looks like. We can't forget what David says about Moses in Psalm 119. It's the written record of our Father's moral character. We need to study the Old Testament so we can understand the New Testament, because "testament" is another word for covenant. We need to study it from the heart so that we can discern what and how it applies to us in Christ.

Yes, there is a New Law in Christ. It tends to look a lot like the Old Law of Moses, but the particulars change with the context. Keep in mind that the Covenant is binding on Satan, too. Obeying the Covenant from your heart is spiritual warfare; it keeps our Enemy at a distance.

Faith is not a matter of what's in your head, but what's in your heart.

01

Let's refresh our view of biblical shepherd manhood.

Pray for guidance; trust God to give it. I note in passing that some of this inevitably applies to women, but the more precise details of biblical femininity need to come from a woman. Everyone's encounter with the Holy Spirit is different, but women experience a whole range of things men grasp only poorly (and vice versa). Meanwhile, if you use the term "manhood" in the search function on this blog, you'll find plenty of older reference material. By the same token, "shepherd" will produce

another big batch of references.

This is Radix Fidem; this is all based on our covenant of faith. It assumes the heart-led way, a heart filled with conviction in service to Christ. The underlying image will always be a feudal covenant; He is our Lord and we are His adopted family household. Jesus was an ancient Hebrew Messiah, and we have to understand Him on those terms. It's not the same as Judaism; Jesus wasn't exactly Jewish in that sense, but He was distinctly Israeli based on the Covenant of Moses. It's all about the Covenant. Our covenant subsumes all previous covenants because it arises from the Son of God.

Men, your whole identity rests on your mission and calling. You need not worry about constructing any other identity outside of this. You may be a lot of things to a lot of people, but in the core of your soul, you are the man whom God has called into His service. The sense of calling is who you are. If you really are lost on this, take any number of courses that help you think through such things. I can recommend Robert Lewis's Men's Fraternity¹ curriculum, as long as you understand that it is Western oriented. It's good psychology, but the values are tilted just a little away from our Christian Mysticism. Still, it's a decent place to start if you simply have no clue how to begin searching for your sense of divine calling. Lewis's stuff is one of the least problematic for us to handle.

At some point you begin to understand the need to seize the domain God has granted to you. It is uniquely yours and it waits for you. There's no telling what kind of demonic squatters you'll find as you begin to occupy your domain. But spiritual warfare is simply seizing Biblical Law and rendering your domain — your self — over to divine use. You'll be bruised and wounded in the process, but God heals and restores those who seek to be faithful. Never, ever get comfortable with your progress; yet, also recognize resting points He grants along the way. Be patient and persistent; the process begins now and ends when you die.

We talk of restoring God's design to your life. This is reality as He Created it. There are some things you need to do if you aren't doing them already. Reconnect with Creation as a living being; Creation is your ally and friend, and is eager to serve your stewardship if you'll just assert God's divine moral character over your personal domain. Satan cannot simply take control of nature; he has only so much control over you and I as we grant him. That grant arises from how often we agree with his lies. Be the man and fight the enemy within your soul; drive him out. Make him uncomfortable with your commitment.

This includes taking dominion over your own flesh. It will resist in varying ways, so there's no neat handy checklist. Part of this requires that you challenge your flesh in terms of fitness. I'm not going to tell you that you need power building or that you should emphasize aerobic fitness. Only you can know what God designed you for, but you should find something each day that challenges your fitness level. It may take awhile to find your groove. The point is to show yourself and others that you are master of your own flesh as God intended; it serves you, not the other way around.

While you are developing fitness, learn how to fight. Nobody says you have to be pugnacious, just know something about defending yourself. Develop as much accurate tactical awareness as you can handle. I can't honestly recommend military service, but it's not the worst thing you can do, either. If you have the resources, there are private training programs. However, include survival training. Gain the confidence to carry on your mission without creature comforts. Know inside yourself that you can probably handle almost anything; do it in faith.

1 <https://www.authenticmanhood.com/product-category/mens-fraternity/>

The idea is to develop your charisma, whatever it is that God has granted. You can hardly shepherd if the sheep don't know you are in charge. Being in charge is a broad complex of factors that come together to signal self-confidence and mastery in your own domain. I'm afraid there are no concrete models for you to follow unless you can absorb the good lessons from fallen humans in the Bible. There are certainly no heroes in movies or TV that correspond to what we teach here. But though our society and culture rejects the biblical model, everyone responds to it when they encounter it.

The one who needs it most is your spouse, future or present. You are her shepherd first and foremost. She needs to sense that you are strong enough and smart enough to protect her. That means being strong enough to say "no" when she needs that (you learn a lot by knowing when to say "no" to yourself). You have to understand just what she responds to in expressing your affection for her. Robert Lewis (mentioned above) suggests you give some thought to these five categories of things most women respond to:

1. Words — strong verbal affirmations of her importance and value to you
2. Acts — things you do that speak to her heart, signaling her value
3. Touch — tender physical touch and sex
4. Gifts — tokens of your love for her (need not be expensive, just appropriate)
5. Time — sometimes she just needs to be the center of your attention for awhile (pampering)

Chances are if you ask her, she'll tell you which thing really triggers her sense of fulfillment, knowing that she is loved and treasured. In our covenant domain, people are the treasure beyond all other things God might place in our hands.

02

You have to understand that, when you walk a heart-led life in full faith, Creation itself knows who you are, and will welcome you with open arms wherever you go. Your obedience to Biblical Law literally changes reality. Perhaps most often in ways you cannot perceive in the flesh, but your heart knows that power is there.

And other people are going to perceive it on one level or another. Humans will ever remain a part of Creation; it's part of the definition of "human." Their conscious awareness may never recognize their own hearts, but their hearts will surely know you represent the Creator. Don't think of it as magic, as if you are escaping the boundaries of reality. Think of it as something subtle, where the molecules around you harmonize with the glory of God shining out of your soul. Creation looks forward to having you around; everything around you rejoices that you have crawled out of the pit of Satan's lies. Spend enough time trying to sense that response and it will soon begin to register in your heart. It holds the potential for things you cannot imagine.

Be confident without the arrogance so natural to our flesh.

One of the primary effects of your presence is healing, of setting things right. This is not a question of what you are, but who you are. In most social settings, you may well be the only covenant soul there, the only divine royalty present. You represent the Creator. This is a duty impossible to bear without the divine power of the Holy Spirit. Sometimes it simply does not take much on your part except a measure of humility and patience. But there will always be moments when a decisive response from you can accomplish miracles no human eye can see. All you really have to know is who you are in

terms of what your mission and calling are.

Never, ever supplicate people. Never raise hands of obeisance to another human. God alone holds that place. Since you never know when someone present may be another divine agent, we always give room for people to demonstrate who they are and what part they play. You also never know when your presence will help someone discover who they are. In most settings you will simply humor those present and play along as expected. But it always remains in your hands to halt your participation for whatever reason. The Holy Spirit will tell you through your conscience when you can't play along, and will empower you to bear whatever consequences come from it.

Measure carefully what you give of yourself in any situation. Sometimes it's everything, but most often not. The whole point is that you are the one who decides under the guidance of your convictions. You give anything and everything to His glory, but no human has the authority to decide for you what promotes God's reputation in your life. Do not reciprocate; most people have no idea what is morally appropriate and so will follow a whole range of urges that recognize only human rewards and punishment. Others will make a nuisance of themselves for the same reason: They have no clue what is morally appropriate. Thus, they act on all sorts of impulses. Don't be suckered by something that feels comfortable to your flesh, which includes emotions and intellect.

It is impossible for them to understand what is behind who you are. Thus, you should get used to being inscrutable to them. Let them assume whatever they like until the mission demands attempts to explain. Let them put labels on you that don't fit. God in His time will change their impressions — or not, as He decides. Only those who walk the heart-led path will see you as anything less than an enigma. They will know you, though perhaps only on their own terms. Heart-led does not require faith in Christ, but a valid faith in Christ requires the heart-led way. Either way, it is virtually impossible to be someone's best friend, as if they have some claim on you, without a shared heart-led faith. Don't let people chain you that way, as if anyone outside the Covenant has a claim on you. They do not.

Apologize sincerely when it's appropriate. Try to make amends and heal what they will let you heal. This is a critical part of who you are; all of us are called to heal the breaks in cosmic moral reality. We are never so complete and mature that we would get everything right. But don't apologize when it's not appropriate. Be aware of the social protocols to which those around you adhere, but never bind yourself to them. Sometimes God will demand of you things you cannot possibly explain, so get used to hostility in all its varied forms.

Never put any human on a pedestal. Let them earn your trust, and be for them by far the most trustworthy, but do that under God's command. Never take off on your own reckoning of such things. In another sense, you don't even trust yourself; always be cynical about appearances.

By the same token, never fear your own weaknesses. What most people take for a weakness is typically a misunderstood talent from God. Almost every human capability has a light and dark side; learn to recognize the unfortunate or unpleasant truths of what God has placed in your life. His glory is strongest in our weaknesses. In that sense, be perversely proud of them. He can change them at His whim. Learn to discern when a weakness is truly your own fault, and when it's something you cannot change without His power. Be confident and proud that He has chosen you as you are, and make room for Him to change things. Never give other people that power.

Don't make plans and goals regarding social interactions. Be who you are and allow others to decide

whether they want to befriend you. Discern them and accept what they offer on their own terms; offer back what seems appropriate by your convictions. Most of your friends will come and go as they feel led. A few will be drawn to you on longer and stronger terms. Get used to that and enjoy what comes; rejoice in the Lord as He works in your life through other people. Yet always keep an eye on how this works along with your mission from God. Sometimes you are there to make a splash, and other times you'll quietly infiltrate. Do what comes natural with your calling; shift with the move of the Spirit in the moment.

Live in the moment. This world is doomed and God could decree the End at any moment. There is a balance between committing resources and being tentative. Your convictions are your sole guide on this. All of Creation is just a tool for His glory; never be surprised when He's ready to discard anything from your life, no matter how challenging it was to obtain. Your response to a challenge matters more than the goal. Meanwhile, in your social interactions, give freely what you won't miss, and be more discerning about what God says He wants you to guard. Tomorrow could change everything. It's not your plans or anyone else's plans that matter; it's divine glory that matters. Sometimes God alone understands what enhances His reputation, so be ready to play along with things you cannot and should not try to control.

While you can sometimes help people who lose control, never get entangled in their panic. By the same token, never stand on their assurances if you feel led somewhere else. Always be ready to stand alone. The pain of broken trust and friendship is real, and your mourning is not a sin. It's about the same as people dying on you. Let them go, mourn the loss, and stay on mission. What God takes away He can easily replace with something better, and this particularly applies to people who aren't heart-led like you. Yet, never cease trying to help them see the need to take that path. Their choice is always between them and God; it's always above our authority.

03

Do you understand that heart-led faith puts us far, far outside the mainstream?

Mainstream wisdom may well overlap at times, but heart-led truth is a wholly different approach to life. While in some contexts our reticence is appropriate, keeping almost everything inside, we naturally expect that in any context we will eventually show the world that what we have is radically different.

Nowhere is this more important for us to assert this difference than at home. While my book, *A Christian Guide to the Sexual Marketplace*² aims at building a good marriage, a great many men need to learn how to heal one that is already broken. If you embrace our heart-led faith covenant, there's nothing to guarantee your wife will jump on it at the same time. Indeed, she may never cross over. For as long as she is not walking in the same moral realm as you, it requires learning a lore of manhood behavior that comes awfully close to what the mainstream considers manipulative. There's no avoiding that taint; you are shepherding someone who belongs to the Kingdom of Darkness to some degree and she will not respond in heart-led faith.

Internally, remain humble. You are still learning, and without the power of the Holy Spirit, you have no advantage at all. It's heartbreaking for you because she belongs to a foreign realm, but the New Testament grants her the right to stay with you in that state if she wants to. You can never tell when

²<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/350740>

the Lord will break through and win her over. Even if she is quite faithful in church, without the heart-led consciousness, her otherwise sincere Christian religion will not put her on the same page as you. The closer she is without crossing into the heart-led realm, the harder it can be, because she will likely be quite certain that you aren't any different, and that you are obliged to treat her as an equal on her terms.

A primary principle: Equality has no meaning. Or rather, it carries false connotations in our society. Equality does not mean "interchangeable" as our social mythology declares. Since we cannot peel that word away from the lie, we simply deny that people are equal, particularly men versus women.

Now, you may be surprised to find her willing to play along, because that's how women are wired. But most of the time she will have suffered significant damage from social conditioning that even most churches will promote. It's not that you are morally superior, but the Bible states flatly in no uncertain terms that men are the moral guardians in His domain (1 Timothy 2:14). Women have a different role. It's not a matter of obeying your manly whims (another lie of Western culture), but most women will take it that way, whether they play along or not. We have an awful long way to go to restore a biblical view of these things.

While you have a wife on hand, she is your greatest treasure on this earth. She needs to know that, but there may be a lot of barriers to cross until she is in the place where she can hear it. If you forge ahead on the path of covenant manhood, she will be forced to decide whether she can bear to stay. It is your duty to place her in that position, because it was always rightly her decision in the first place.

What you need to focus on is forging ahead and trusting God to handle her response. Not cruelly ignoring her cries; it may be she's just a little slow to catch on. But your heart will show you the balance point. Sometimes you may have to be quite unfeeling, putting in place a strong emotional barrier to keep you from hearing unjustified whining. A true shepherd will learn to sense what she really needs and deliver it.

04

Cosmic moral truth says that marriage is a covenant of interdependence.

She does things you cannot, and surely the reverse is true. Whether either of you manage to do those things appropriately is another matter entirely, but be aware of the fundamental model here. You are not independent and free from caring what matters to her. Of all the people on this earth, she warrants your consideration in that sense. But your first loyalty is to Christ, and she is obliged to share that same orientation. Getting the two of you closer to that ideal is the whole point of life together as husband and wife.

What we are up against is the high probability that her expectations are quite wrong. And it is also unlikely that she will simply listen and go along with it if you try to share with her a better understanding. You owe her the effort to struggle with her sins as well as your own. That's what a moral guardian does. Like the sheep in Psalm 25, you can't demand she just accept verbal assurances; you have to put things in her reach. Be ready to walk in front of her to the green pastures, and to still the waters so she won't fear to drink. Anoint her head with that annoying fragrant oil so the snakes hiding in the bushes won't bite. There are things in her best interest that she won't like (same as for you). It's an art form to find the right mixture of making it available and making her take it, or keeping her out of trouble despite her wishes.

You'll be learning things you don't already know about her, but about yourself, as well.

Learn what God says is non-negotiable for you. In each case for such things, be prepared to accept a final break if that's what comes from refusing to compromise. There is still plenty of forbidden fruit in this world; refuse to eat it. Drain away all of your emotion about these issues when you confront her with them. If she rants and raves, stare at her with a blank look and let it blow past you. Pay attention but don't respond until you get the answer God requires of you. If she whines and cries, it's pretty much the same thing. Don't allow her to manipulate. This may be extremely hard if you have surrendered in the past.

Statistically, this kind of tension is highly likely in most marriages. Don't engage her when she's doing this. If she's more likely to get revenge later, steel yourself and don't respond. By no means should you let her pull you down. It's not a question of being better at fighting, but of refusing to fight. Leave her standing alone; stay remote and uninvolved. What you are doing here is reassuring her that you are strong enough to weather storms; it signals you are strong enough to protect her, even if only from herself. She needs to learn that you are a rock, an anchor in her life.

My favorite image here is that you act like a slate floor. She can walk, stomp and try to gouge at you, but slate floors typically last centuries with very little signs of wear. Don't respond to provocations.

On a great many lesser issues, be ready to make a decision if she can't or won't. It's good if you can cultivate a store of whims just for this purpose. This is when you can build her admiration of you through entertainment. If you know that indecision has caused conflict in the past, take the time to work through the answers beforehand. This is part of being ready for anything. You are the shepherd; take the lead. The rest of the time, be prepared to play along with her whims when there's no harm. Most men tend to be lazy and let the woman decide when she shouldn't; that's what got Adam in trouble in the Garden. Leading is a service we provide, so be professional about it.

Never allow yourself to be dragged into something that leaves you vulnerable. Sometimes you have no choice, but when you do, stay away from things you cannot master unless it genuinely amuses you. Being amused is a form of mastery in itself, to laugh at things you do poorly. Either way, master it or keep away from it. She gains bad leverage when she can demonstrate your failures. Never mind why she does it; she's looking for ammo to use against your moral resolve. When you have no choice to participate in something for which you are incompetent, make it obvious you just don't give a damn. Go through the motions and never let her forget you have no investment in the outcomes.

The idea is to build her cooperation and support for genuine vulnerabilities that you cannot change. Good women will sacrifice a lot to cover your gaps, but you may have to build whole new structures in your marriage and tear down the bad ones to get there. Then you can afford to think about failing gracefully and expressing major gratitude that builds her up. Until you can trust her in that way, be the slate floor. Offer no weak spots; don't give her any leverage at all.

Indeed, put on such a strong manly aspect that other women are attracted to you. Don't flirt dangerously, but never discourage flirtation aimed at you. This raises your value so that your wife feels the urge to compete to keep you. She needs that. She needs to take pride in being your woman. She should be ready to plump your social reputation, not tear it down. If she has the habit of picking at you in social situations, think about ways to throw it back on her so she looks like a bitch. This is not about your ego against hers, but the partnership that God intended marriages to be. She should be your stoutest defender, never agreeing with those who seek to pull you down.

Example: You are telling a funny story and your wife tries to correct you in front of everyone. Stop and suggest she go ahead and tell the story since she knows it so well. If that stops her bad behavior, you win. If she does proceed with a credible presentation, act like it's not important to listen to her and go on with a different conversation. If she's better at telling jokes, then forge into other forms of social entertainment where you are genuinely the expert. Until she's really on your side, don't give her opportunities to push back at you in front of others. Social leverage is a primary weapon against you, so master the social situations.

Don't let her shape you; American women tend to downright evil about that. She's been conditioned to believe that you are in dire need of her refinement. She will likely believe that she is the part of the core of civilization and that you are instinctively barbaric, a little boy in a man's body. She will be driven to "civilize" you. The problem is that Western Civilization is not a good pattern for civilizing people; it is inherently hostile to Biblical Law. You can't change her opinion of you, but you can make it obvious she is not in charge of you in any way.

Learn to think broadly in ways to build your prestige and influence with her. Tell yourself often that God is awesome in you. She desperately needs to see you strong and powerful. She needs that sense of security in order to operate with full attention on the things she does best. Reduce her sense of insecurity. Be consistent and wipe away her doubts. If she perceives a mixed signal about this fundamental issue, her instincts will provoke tests of your manhood. You have to weather those with grace and strength until she knows you can handle her needs.

In the long run, don't take yourself too seriously. God is powerful enough to use you at your worst; the key is being available to Him. He will supply the rest. You aren't changing her; you are giving God a chance to change her through your witness. At some point she will either come to life or finish dying completely in moral terms. Your heart will know which. If the latter, you may still need someone to succeed her position in your life. That's a decision only God can reveal to you. This is not "happy ever after" no matter what happens. It's building a situation in which shalom is sustainable.

Men, you are the anchor for *shalom* in your own domain.

05

Mystery is essential to our existence.

We are designed to live by revelation. Our God is too great and marvelous for us to understand, and this is part of what draws us to Him. Revelation necessarily includes an element of mystery so that we dare not trust our ability to know and handle ultimate truth. We are compelled to activate the heart-mind, which by its very nature requires that we commit to God in unreserved dependence. The reason people avoid the heart-led way is because the heart always and forever is about having to trust someone else. You cannot activate the heart-mind without that.

The fundamental nature of the Fall was rejecting that total dependence on God and seizing moral independence. It is the ultimate act of arrogance and rebellion to trust the mind. The intellect is inherently full of itself, loudly proclaiming that it is fully competent to handle everything that matters to our human existence. The brain will shut out the message of the heart at every opportunity, trying to ignore the enthralling moral character of God. So the mind works through the emotions to develop a store of sentiment to displace the wonder and joy of the heart, and simply calls the reservoir of sentiment "the heart." It's a pitiful replacement. Never forget that the intellect is part of the fallen

flesh.

It is frankly impossible to describe — to delineate boundaries and explain the nature of — faith and the restoration of our divine destiny. We are forced to use characterizations and imagery that never quite capture the essence of the thing. That's because faith can reside only in the heart. Whatever it is in your head, it's not faith; it's the results of faith in your heart bringing moral purpose to the mind. Faith remains beyond the grasp of our understanding. Your mind is awed, standing in silent wonder at things it cannot handle. Your conscious self-awareness isn't supposed to be confined to your brain.

The man who serves God stands within this glorious truth. He is first in awe of God himself. Then he senses the command from God to participate in making that glory shine. He can never escape the truth that he is nothing without that glory, but cannot escape the demand to be a mirror for it. He absolutely cannot absorb the blessings of that glory without obeying the command to take that glory into his world. He represents that power and glory because God Himself says He cannot come into this world without destroying it. He has chosen us to bear His glory for Him. And God alone knows why He has given one glory to males and another to females.

When a man reflects God's glory, he leads like a shepherd. When a woman reflects God's glory, she follows her man. Aside from noting that the identity of "her man" is her father-figure until marriage, we assert that, upon climbing into bed with any man, she has made him "her man," her shepherd. If she dilutes that shepherd relationship by having more than one man, chaos enters her life. As hinted in the previous lesson, a woman might seek to engage multiple shepherds in other ways using social conventions to apply leverage to her husband, using secular law as a counter-shepherd, and using any number of other things to pollute the purity of marriage.

Ladies, your only recourse when your man seems to go off path is within a covenant community of faith. All other leverage is from Satan. Encourage your man to be the kind who builds a covenant community of shalom. The temptations to use invalid leverage are burned into a woman's nature, a peculiar weakness arising from the Curse of the Fall. A part of redemption is you ladies recognizing that the one and only authority above your father/husband is God. This is the teaching about "covering" from God's wrath so popular in churches these days.

A critical means for a man establishing his authority in holiness is to create an aura of mystery and wonder borrowed from God. It's rather like a glorious mantle, a uniform issued by God alone. By this the man represents God's authority within his domain that he rules on God's behalf. Men are required by God to come across as awesome, but in their own humble and unique way in Kingdom service. They are nothing without the uniform that God issues, and all that God has placed in His life along with that uniform.

Don't confuse mystery with keeping secrets. A man of God may appear to be hiding things, but it's not his hand that hides them. It's just that, what makes the man so special is above the mind; it's in the realm only the heart can touch.

Now, a woman of God is also mysterious in her own right, so there's nothing "unfair" about this. Women cultivate their own brand of mystery to keep men interested; so it is with men drawing women. Ladies, be not dismayed when other women are drawn to your man. If he's worth having, he will be faithful to you based on his faithfulness to God.

All of this belongs in the heart-realm of moral reality. The obsession with controlling things you cannot control is widely recognized as a sign of sickness. Learn to delight in the things that God does

to surprise and delight His children. That includes making both husbands and wives a little mysterious to their spouses. Men, put on that armor of God.

06

Men, if you think of yourself in terms of a knight in shining armor, you are serving a pagan god.

I'm not going to drag this out; it will be condensed. When the German hordes invaded the Roman Empire starting around 400 AD, the Roman Church was the one strongest and most stable institution left of Roman Civilization. At that, the Roman Church leadership had long compromised with civil government and was hardly the same as the New Testament churches. But this same compromised worldly church then intentionally perverted the doctrines of the Bible so that they conformed to the expectations of the barbarian German mythology. By this means, they sought to "Christianize" the invaders and convince them to respect the Church.

A critical flaw in Germanic tribal mythology was that women were closer than men to the spooky unknown realm of things invisible to the naked eye. This superstition resulted in a whole range of social perversions so that, for example, the *weregild* (death indemnity) for a woman was twice that of a man. Men ruled, but only insofar as women permitted it for survival purposes.

The Bible has long prophesied against this, saying flatly that women are subject to men in part by design and in part as His remedy for the Curse of the Fall. Now men, this has nothing to do with how women tend to commune with the Holy Spirit as with a divine mother figure. That's a reflection of human limitations; the real truth of God's nature simply cannot be known until we die and see Him face to face. But in this world, the Father and the Son are portrayed as masculine, while the Holy Spirit is more ambiguous for a reason — male and female are incomplete without each other. But in practice, within our fallen existence, men lead in matters of moral decisions.

It's not a question of moral superiority; it's a matter of divine appointment for ineffable reasons. And if you take the time to actually let the Bible speak to you, particularly in the Old Testament, you'll see a strong undercurrent of warnings about letting women become the gateway to meeting with the divine. All priests must be male for as long as there are rainbows in the sky anywhere on earth. This business of Mariolatry arose from the Germanized religion of the European Middle Ages. It's blasphemy; God does not have a mother.

Go back and review the second part of this series; don't read into it Medieval chivalry. That was a mere myth in its own time; it's an even greater lie today. So for example, you shouldn't hold the door open for a lady, but you should walk in before her to ensure her safety — make sure there's nothing to threaten your *shalom*. She's not too holy to grab the door handle for herself. Your woman is your greatest treasure, but she is not your goddess. Granted, our society would never understand that kind of behavior, and would consider it rude. Still, this is a tiny sample of how perverted our Western society is against biblical morals.

So while you may keep on pretending outwardly, depending on the situation, inside your soul you must utterly reject the heathen society in which we live. That means you must deconstruct the Medieval knight in shining armor and replace it with the shepherd warrior of the Bible. You must move yourself closer to the Ancient Hebrew model of manhood. Love your woman; don't idolize her.

The Covenant is its own reward.

The Covenant of Christ is equivalent to the term Biblical Law; Christ Himself is the Living Law of God. Your obedience is not simply some burdensome task that grants you a certain religious identity. Your obedience is conforming to reality as God made it. So all of the stuff leading up to this lesson was part of Christ. It's not simply in your best interest; it is in everyone's best interest. All of Creation sings in celebration when one more man figures out what God intended regarding manhood.

So it is with your children. Your effort to heal and bring divine justice into your marriage brings that same healing justice to your entire household, your entire domain granted from God.

You cannot make your wife do what's right. In the final analysis, you cannot make your children do what's right, either. But you can justly apply more force to them than to your wife. She agreed to marriage; your children had no choice to be born in your household. During their minority, God demands that you guide them more tightly than the adults in your domain. You — and you alone — know from your heart the particulars of what force you should use with them. You have to take into account your own strengths and weaknesses along with theirs, the unique character of each person involved, and the cultural background in which you operate.

You will make yourself available for their demands for attention, but never as much as they want. In my case, as a playful clown, I don't spend as much time with them as I want, either. That's in their best interest. Don't ever wear out your welcome anywhere with anyone, including your children. Always leave people wanting more of you, including your children. Make plans to offer daddy-time, but by the same token, make it a treasure. In broad general terms, you don't seek them out to have time with them. Make yourself the kind of dad they come looking for, always begging for time with you. Make your children and other humans long to be with you.

The key to manhood socially is making the most of whatever natural charisma you have. One of the ways you have charisma with children is taking them seriously, while not taking yourself too seriously. Judge as little as possible verbally; you'll always have to judge one thing or another, but avoid it until your convictions demand it. Instead, talk to them using adult speech patterns, but words that children understand. Never, ever baby-talk, except when clowning. Talk to them normally and be ready to explain anything you understand. Be honest when you don't know the answer.

Give them as much freedom as the situation permits. If your reflex is to restrict first, choke yourself until you relax that grip. Only restrict when they demonstrate consistent defiance on something. Most kids will fight with you about one thing or another; don't take it personally. You have to win no matter how much it pains you, but do your best to avoid growling and howling. Avoid the terrorizing anger until those moments when it is the only thing that works. Even then, don't lose your cool; be the master. That part is theater. By the same token, never threaten what you won't actually do. A great many effective punishments take more from you than from them. The whole idea is to teach them responsible independence as early as they can handle it.

Here's the thing most Westerns choke on: You are your daughter's first romance. The playful stimulation of childhood establishes the physical response to men when she grows up. There is a healthy level you have to portray with her as she grows older, so that she is neither starved for male attention, nor is she bored with you. Observe her responses to various things so you can fit your fatherly care to her personality. She is unique even among siblings. The way you establish boundaries

can help her keep them when she's with other men.

At some point you will apprentice your son to yourself or some other worthy man, depending on your son's character and personality compared to yours. Be the man he wants to emulate in broader terms of manhood. Let him see how you handle Mom; be ready to explain the secrets that our American society hides from men.

Very early, teach them the heart-led way of communing with nature. Teach them about the madness of the world around us. Unless you expose them to secular childcare early, you'll have a few years to help them grasp our different approach to reality, and how it makes us so unlike the rest of the world. There's no guarantee they won't be seduced by what is termed "peer pressure," but you can give God a chance to work in their lives by how you grant them a sense of independence so that they aren't socially dependent, and won't feel the need to follow the herd.

Don't fall into the trap of thinking you have to be "fair" with your kids. They aren't the same person; even twins typically develop differences that you can recognize early in childhood. Our culture drums into their heads equality, so you'll have to carefully teach them that it's a lie. There are some things siblings will get from you that are the same, and plenty that should be unique to each. You can't prevent envy, but you can channel it. "I can't treat you exactly the same because you aren't the same."

All of this will be enhanced if you are in a position to isolate your domain from the fallen culture around you. How much isolation you can create is a matter of your own convictions and opportunities. The more you do it, the better. You need to establish in your covenant children that they are not like the rest of the world. They need a prime directive, a strong sense of identity, that keeps them from following the herd. The better they absorb that lesson, the more mature they will be. Your heart will know when and how much to cut them loose in steps as they mature.

Conclusion

You cannot compel anyone to follow you.

The shepherd leads by his voice, not with a leash. People have to agree to your leadership, including your children and your wife. Creation and the Holy Spirit together will call people to follow you if you are following Christ from the heart. Let them choose as they will, but make your choice clear.

In this, your very presence is a healing element. Seek to restore divine justice in every context. You will always be limited, but God's glory is not limited. This is what they will follow.

Covenant manhood means you are an agent of God's glory.