

## The Measure of a Man

Martin Luther King Jr. and Sidney Poitier each wrote a book titled *The Measure of a Man*. Most actors' biographies focus on their path to stardom, like their first big break or casting stories, struggles with the pressures of fame, and reflections on fame's cost, rewards, or regrets. In contrast, Sidney Poitier's *The Measure of a Man* is introspective and spiritual. It was less about his stardom, and more about his values, identity, and life philosophy that was founded in his upbringing. Rather than centering around celebrity moments, he wrestled with questions of integrity, manhood, and character. In Martin Luther King, Jr.'s book, he wrote, "The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy." The 18<sup>th</sup> century writer Samuel Johnson was critical of corruption and hypocrisy. He wrote "The true measure of a man is how he treats someone who can do him absolutely no good." The ancient philosopher and statesman Pittacus said, "The measure of a man is what he does with power." So much has been said about the measure of a man, or in other words how is a *real* man to be measured. In 2003, Clay Aiken sang *The Measure of the Man* that was known for being about character, courage, and compassion, not external validation or superficial markers of success.

God in the Bible gives us an even *greater* challenge. In Ephesians 4 we are told about how the Lord has provided a number of different kinds of people for a church with a very distinct goal.

Eph 4:11-13 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

<sup>12</sup>For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

<sup>13</sup>Till we all come in the unity of

the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

The challenge that Paul lays down for us is nothing short of perfection: the stature of the fulness of Christ is how we should be measured. As we come to a faith that is based on knowing Jesus Christ, we strive to become a perfect man. We do not measure ourselves *by* our selves. We are supposed to measure up to the stature of the fulness of Christ.

## 1. The natural man: short of the glory of God -

Many times as I talk to people about getting saved and whether they think they are going to heaven, they will tell me about how they are not so bad and all the ways they are so good. We know this is a problem because Rom 3:23 says

Rom 3:23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

When we measure ourselves by Christ, then we come up short.

2Cor 10:12 For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.

Solomon summed up the problem in Pro. 20:6

Prov 20:6 Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness: but a faithful man who can find?

## 2. The measure of a man -

Although all of these Scriptures are applicable to all of us, I would like to particularly apply them to fathers as we

consider what is fundamental to the measure of a man. Coaches have often refreshed their players about the fundamentals of their sport. The men who have been pastoral interns here would be able to tell you that my concern was about what they believe and know for the ministry. If they had to paint something, I wanted them to know about the fundamentals of painting and not just slop any old paint on. When it came to doctrine, I wanted them to know the fundamentals of Bible interpretation and preaching. Whether we were talking about Bible doctrines or paint drying, it is important to understand the fundamentals. When we understand the building materials we can then combine and recombine them to build a ministry for the glory of God.

The fundamental principle that I would like to lay down for fathers today is faithfulness. We gag at the concept of a successful man as one who has gotten the house, the hummer, and has more than one woman hanging on him. That's disgusting. In today's world how could any intelligent lady tolerate a guy who thinks he's worth sharing with another woman?

God does not judge us by our worldly notions of success. God will judge us on our faithfulness to Him.

1Cor 4:1-5 Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.

2 Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.

3 But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self.

4 For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord.

5 Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every

man have praise of God.

Even in Joshua 1, the only place in the Bible where success is mentioned, that success is dependent on being faithful to God.

Josh 1:8,9 This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

9 Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God *is* with thee whithersoever thou goest.

There are three ways I would like to challenge men in their faithfulness:

- Faithful to God

Finally, and most foundationally, a man must be faithful to God.

Col 1:9,10 For this cause we also, since the day we heard *it*, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be **filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;**

10 **That ye might walk worthy of the Lord** unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;

A man is measured by God even when no one else sees, even when the culture mocks, even when trials come. A faithful man doesn't measure himself by earthly applause but by divine approval. He doesn't follow God for blessings alone but because God is worthy. He labors to be fruitful in every good work (v.10), not for merit, but because he knows he's been shown mercy.

A faithful man seeks to know God's will and then do it. Faithfulness to God is not a Sunday-only religion. It is daily obedience, unseen prayer, quiet repentance, and consistent devotion. It is seeking first the kingdom of God.

Matt 6:33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

The measure of a man is not how many people serve him, but how faithfully he serves his Savior.

- Faithful to his wife

Ephesians 5:25-29 gives us a lofty vision of manhood – one that reflects the sacrificial, purifying love of Christ for His bride, the Church.

Eph 5:25-29 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;

26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,

27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

28 So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.

29 For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church:

The next test of a man's faithfulness is not in the public eye, but in the privacy of his home. It's in his relationship with his wife and in the private covenant of marriage. Ephesians 5:25 challenges husbands to love their wives "even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it." That is a sacrificial love, a sanctifying love, a faithful love. The way a man treats his wife reveals

whether he understands the heart of Christ. God doesn't measure a man by how many people respect him at work, how many followers he has online, or how physically strong he is, but by how he sacrificially, consistently, and tenderly loves one woman.

This love is not passive or indifferent. It doesn't show up only on anniversaries or in emergencies. Paul says a husband is to nourish and cherish his wife as he would his own body (v. 29). That means feeding her spirit with encouragement, protecting her heart with integrity, and covering her flaws with grace. It means leading her not with dominance, but with devotion.

Prov 31:11 The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil.

He does not cause her to question her worth. Instead, by the way he loves her, she grows in confidence and peace. This is the measure of a man. A man of God makes his wife feel safe, not insecure. He makes her feel valuable, not invisible. He makes her flourish, not fear. And here's something profound: in doing so, she also civilizes him.

Left to themselves, so many men would live reckless, rough, and self-centered lives. Like iron sharpeneth iron, a godly wife sharpens her husband – not into passivity, but into purpose. She gives him someone to protect, a home to build, a reason to come home instead of wandering. She refines his raw energy and channels it toward honor, stability, and legacy.

A wife gives her husband something noble to aspire to: to be a provider not just of things, but of peace; to be a protector not just from enemies, but from emotional wounds; to be a man not just of strength, but of sacrificial love. Without the influence of godly women, men often drift into selfishness, ambition without direction, and adventure without accountability. But when a man chooses to faithfully love one woman for life, he embraces the refining fire of covenant, a

fire that melts pride and forges character.

So let it be said of the godly man: his wife safely trusts in him, and because of his faithfulness, he becomes more of a man than he ever could have been on his own.

- Faithful to children

The next sphere of faithfulness is toward one's children.

Deu 6:6-14 And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart:

7 And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.

8 And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes.

9 And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.

10 And it shall be, when the LORD thy God shall have brought thee into the land which he sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give thee great and goodly cities, which thou buildedst not,

11 And houses full of all good *things*, which thou filledst not, and wells digged, which thou diggedst not, vineyards and olive trees, which thou plantedst not; when thou shalt have eaten and be full; **[In other words, as they conquered the cities and land and did not have to build their own cities]**

12 *Then* beware lest thou forget the LORD, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.

13 Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear by his name.

14 Ye shall not go after other

gods, of the gods of the people  
which *are* round about you;

Deuteronomy 6 commands that "these words...shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children." The godly man does not outsource discipleship to Sunday School or youth group alone. He is the priest of his home. He talks of God when he walks, when he rests, when he rises. He weaves the Word of God into the fabric of daily life.

Faithfulness to children is not just providing food and a roof. It is giving them a spiritual foundation that cannot be shaken. It means teaching them not only what to believe but why to believe it. It is answering hard questions, modeling integrity, and showing what repentance looks like when you fail.

The passage warns that when prosperity comes – when they enjoy homes they didn't build and wells they didn't dig — they must not forget God (v.12). Fathers must raise children with gratitude, not entitlement; with discernment, not apathy; with convictions, not just rules.

And fathers, your children are watching you. Your faithfulness is not only in what you teach them but how you live. Will they grow up seeing you passionate about God or passive? Humble or hypocritical? Present or preoccupied? They will imitate what you love. So be faithful to love God, and they may follow in your steps.

You have heard today about the measure of a man – about being faithful to your wife, your children, and your God. But the truth is, none of us can measure up on our own. Romans 3:23 says, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." And the ultimate measure of a man isn't about how strong or moral he is – it's about whether he knows the One who is perfect: Jesus Christ.

You cannot be the man – or even the woman – God wants you to be until you belong to Him. Salvation is not about self-improvement; it is about new life.



Christ gave Himself for you. He died for your sin and rose again. He alone can forgive, restore, and empower you to live the life He intended.

So I ask you: Have you come to Christ? Have you received Him as your Savior? If not, today is the day of salvation (2 Cor. 6:2). Lay down your pride. Come humbly. Come honestly. Come now.

And to those who are already saved — men, fathers, husbands — are you measuring your life by Christ? Or by the world? Are you being faithful with what God has entrusted to you? Maybe you've drifted. Maybe you've dropped the baton. Maybe you feel overwhelmed by failure.

But here is the good news: God is not calling you to perfection without Him — He is calling you to faithfulness through Him. Return to the Word. Recommit to your calling. Begin again in His grace. And if you're a wife, a mother, or a child here today, pray for the men in your life. Encourage them. Point them to Christ. Let your life be a testimony of grace, too. Let us not leave this place the same. Let us measure ourselves, not by one another, but by Christ — and let us grow together into the measure of the stature of the fullness of Him.

Eph 4:11-13

1. The natural man: short of the glory of God - Rom 3:23 , 2Cor 10:12, Prov 20:6
2. The measure of a man - 1Cor 4:1-5, Josh 1:8,9 , Col 1:9,10, Matt 6:33, Eph 5:25-29, Prov 31:11, Deu 6:6-14