

Action Man

Action Man – or Man of Action?



This talk was aimed at lads aged 11 to 18 where we treated them all as adults, listened and recognised we all had valid stuff to say. In a younger aged group, this may not work, words will need to be cut, pictures added, more activity added. You know your group. Create a space that allows everyone to feel comfortable and relaxed. Lots of content...

Thanks to Joe P for his help with this session.



What does it mean to be a real man? Brainstorm and then feed back out loud, onto PowerPoint or onto a flipchart (paper, remember that...?!)

Have 2 sections:

1. What the world thinks a man should be
2. What God thinks a man should be like.

Get someone to read through Romans 12 as this is a great guide about how to be a man or young man of God. Tell them to listen carefully to the characteristics and check themselves.

Romans 12

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you. Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is

contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.

Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.

Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. On the contrary:

"If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink.

In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head." Do

STEPPING UP TO THE PLATE

Ask the guys what they think was the first sin. Ask them about Eve who took the fruit from the tree in the Garden of Eden. Then ask what was a serpent (Satan) doing in the Garden of Eden, a perfect place? Have they ever thought about that. Do they have any explanations?

Genesis 1 is about what man was supposed to be like. Genesis 2.15 summarises man's responsibility:

The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.

The biggest failing of men is not living up to their God-given responsibilities. How did serpent get into the garden of Eden? Maybe it got there because man failed in his responsibility to look after and protect the garden? The same is so true today. the biggest problem in society is delinquent males – men who haven't or won't grow up – men who won't look after kids – men who think with the pants and not their heads.

We have to step up to the plate, take our responsibilities seriously. It makes a difference.

Our other practical arm (in addition to prayer) is to encourage family stability. The love and stability of family plays a massive part in young people waiting until they're married to have sex. Support families in your church as and when you can, encourage families and play an active part in involving young people in your church family. Be a man of God. Don't sleep around or mess with ladies. Get prepared to be a full man of God, strong in the armour of God.

Bruce Almighty Clip

This is chapter 5 (16.44 through to 20.20, though you can carry it on until he gets hit by a truck into chapter 6 if you want). In this clip we see that Bruce failed in his responsibility to his wife and has the wrong attitude, the wrong priorities.

He is caught up with getting promotion, putting one over the other news anchor, having a bigger apartment, having more money, having things all go his way. When his girlfriend tries to comfort him, he spurns her and accuses her of making him feel guilty. He's like a big baby. Too many blokes act this way.

So how do we keep it real in being a bloke? There's so much to learn but God helps us. The Bible is a good place to turn. We can look at the life of Jesus and other Biblical characters, watch on and learn from them.

Study on Jesus – his character.

Get the guys to shout out aspects of Jesus' character – humility, kind, loving, loyal, hard working, caring, had healthy friendships with men and women, got angry in a good way (people were messing with God's holy temple), he cried, he loved children etc.

Then get them to write on post-its and come forward and put them up on a wall or on a board – totally informally.

Worksheets

into groups looking at different male Bible characters and feeding back their characteristics and what we can learn from them. Here are some examples of characters they can look at. Give out pens and paper.

Examples: Life of Joseph, Moses, Abraham, David, King Josiah, Paul.

REPRESENTING THE TEAM

In the church there is a massive problem with men being under-represented. You know what? I understand. Music is often quite laid back, sermons are all very nice, people have lots of polite discussions and we all sit around having a cup of tea. Sometimes, there's not a lot happening in church so men don't feel a sense of purpose so don't go there. No wonder someone has said there's an 'insecurity of masculinity' in the church – as long as we realise that being 'masculine' is a varied thing and we're not all the same! We also need to realise that men themselves need to step up!

At my church there is lots for guys to do and a healthy culture and debate about being a man. This encourages men into the church, empowers and equips them. We should do the same at every church. Put verse below onto PowerPoint: What do you think this Bible verse means?

kingdom of heaven has been forcefully advancing, and forceful men lay hold of it.

To me it means that we need churches that are prepared to get out there, take things by the collar and do some hard work and some spiritual warfare. Church isn't for picnics, it's for discipling. We need a healthy balance of the male and female. Many would argue church is too feminine currently. But we are all in this together and we need females, women of God and girls need role models.

In Genesis 2.7 we read that God created man. In verse 18 of chapter 2, God said:

'It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper who is right for him.'

So God recognised the need and took the initiative. We also find that woman is right for man (not another man).

We also find that many times, man needs woman (his God-given best 'helper') in order to be fully satisfied and effective.

I realise that when God said 'it is not good that man is alone' he wasn't just referring to marriage. Not everyone gets married. Marriage is not for everyone – like the Apostle Paul. My view is that our priority in these matters, and our advice to young people is that our priority is Jesus, the Kingdom of God, righteousness. I also realise that this verse extends to all kinds of relationships – friends, church, house groups etc. There are many ways we can 'not be alone'.



**PLAY OF
THE DAY**

In baseball, basketball, American football – they often look at the play of the day. This is a play that goes beyond the normal. For us as Christians this relates to holiness and sexual purity. This is our 'play of the day' – but looking at women...

What's the biggest problem for guys – probably women and sexual temptation. It's usually one of these three: Sex, Money, Power. Check yourself and ask God to rid these things from your life before you get into serious work for God. Please.

Guys, you should respect women – treat them like your sister. Women deserve the respect that you would expect people to give you. If you're thinking about getting attached and married, you must remember that Jesus said about following him – you must deny yourself. Going out with a lady means respecting her, respecting yourself and putting God at the centre. And stay pure – Jesus said adultery can happen in your mind and is the same as doing adultery physically. (Matthew 5.27-30).

Da Truth – 'Moment Of Truth' album – track: "Fourplay"

Play back tracks 15/16 from the Da Truth album called 'Moment Of Truth'. The track is called 'Fourplay'. This is Christian rap talking about sex, about men behaving themselves and more. The lyrics are in the album cover or can be found online.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QOt8Z6GcG9g>

The Bible encourages us to go after purity and holiness. See Hebrews 12 and Romans 12.



**REPRESENTING
THE LIFESTYLE**

Urban D – album: 'The Immigrant'. Track – 'Our Culture'

Play back track 5 – 'Our Culture' -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aJVPRtVOcow>

Urban D (Tommy Kyllonen) is Pastor of the Crossover Community hip hop church in Tampa, Florida. It's an awesome rap talk about what's wrong with our culture. Play it, sit back and let people take in the lyrics.

Serving God in this generation – Acts 13.36 (from Quiet Times)

Amplified Bible – For David, after he had served God's will and purpose and counsel in his own generation, fell asleep [in death] and was buried among his forefathers, and he did see corruption and undergo putrefaction and dissolution [of the grave].

David was a man with many failings like all of us. In 2 Samuel 11, you'll find that David succumbed to sexual temptation (bloke's – take note and learn!) We find that David slept with Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah. Then David made sure that Uriah was killed in battle by posting him to the front line. God was not happy, understandably.

(For a different, more Godly response, go see Joseph's reaction in Genesis 39.6-8). Some of the Psalms David wrote were in response to this broken relationship with God (see Psalm 51 for example).

Anyways, we digress! Despite this indiscretion, we find David (and Joseph) listed in the heroes of the faith in Hebrews 11. Moreover, in Acts 13.36, we find that David did 2 things. First he served God. If you want to live a fulfilled life, a true life, then the life will be one of worship. And worship means serving God. This will be in different ways. Secondly, we find David served God in his own generation. Want to find a Bible verse that says use every available means to serve God?

God puts different skills and gifts in us to use for serving Him and serving other people. Your skills, interests and passion may be different to mine. But God has appointed you to serve him in your generation. Believe it, live it.

Love for Enemies – Matthew 5

“You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.



**GIVING IT
UPWARDS**

We have to put God first in all we do. Listen to this Bible verse: Matthew 6.33-34 – get someone to read it:

But seek first God’s kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

Think about the Lord’s Prayer found in Matthew 6.9-10:

‘Our Father in heaven, holy is your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.’

We are living for Christ, not for self. God gets the glory, not you. God will be lifted up. God will lift you up if you respect him, obey him, follow him, love him, live for him and keep yourself away from pride.

CLAIMING THE PRIZE

CLAIMING THE PRIZE

1 Corinthians 9.23-27: I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings. Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.

Philippians 3.13-14: Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.