

“I Sought for a Man among Them...”

By Paul R. Blake

What makes a real man? Is it a handsome face, perfect teeth, and well-defined muscles? Is it a high level of income, a prestigious car, and higher education? Is it local fame, bold personality, and a respected name? Is it the right clothes, the right hair, and the right aftershave? Nonsense! Real men are the ordinary looking guys who get up every day and go to work at a job that wears them out before their time. They shield their wives, not from imagined burglars and sociopaths, but from the harsher realities of day to day difficulties and protect their wives from their own fears and frustrations as responsible family men. They spend time with their children, playing with them when they would rather go play with their grownup friends. And most important of all, real men make time to be the spiritual leaders and teachers in their homes. Real men do their “ought to’s” before they do their “want to’s.” They do not make excuses for themselves, they do not pass their duties onto their wives, or parents, or the brethren. They go to all of the services and show their children how real men humbly and honorably worship God.

Jehovah looked for a real man. He looked all through Israel and found priests that profaned the Holy Law, princes that preyed upon their subjects, prophets who whitewashed lies to look like truth, and the population in general who abused the poor and oppressed the vulnerable. God wanted a real man to stand up and be a wall to protect them from the destruction they were bringing on themselves, and He found no one.

God said to Israel through Ezekiel: “Her priests have violated My law and profaned My holy things; they have not distinguished between the holy and unholy, nor have they made known the difference between the unclean and the clean; and they have hidden their eyes from My Sabbaths, so that I am profaned among them. Her princes in her midst are like wolves tearing the prey, to shed blood, to destroy people, and to get dishonest gain. Her prophets plastered them with un-tempered mortar, seeing false visions, and divining lies for them, saying, 'Thus says the Lord GOD,' when the LORD had not spoken. The people of the land have used oppressions, committed robbery, and mistreated the poor and needy; and they wrongfully oppress the stranger. So I sought for a man among them who would make a wall, and stand in the gap before Me on behalf of the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found no one” (Ez. 22:26-30).

It's not that hard to find a man who dreams of being a hero: saving his platoon, or rescuing a family, or protecting a busload of children, or subduing a terrorist. And I believe that most men that dream of this would probably do those things were they thrust into those circumstances. But very few of us will ever be called on to do that. The arena of our service to humanity will likely be in the workplace rather than the battlefield, in the home instead of in a hostage situation, or in the church building rather than on a tenth story ledge. Many of the men who would stand up in the crisis go on to fall down in their day to day duties. This tendency among men leads me to ask: Why is it easier for some men to die for Christ that it is for them to live for Him?

The Roman statesman and philosopher Marcus Aurelius wrote: “Let men see, let them know, a real man, who lives as he was meant to live.” The secular world understands this. Consider what others have said about what everyone has a right to expect from men:

--Real men stay faithful. They don't have time to look around for other women because they're too busy looking for new ways to love their own.

--The real man smiles in trouble, gathers strength from distress, and grows brave by reflection.

--A real man excuses others before he excuses himself.

--You can't relate to a superhero, to a superman, but you can identify with a real man who in times of crisis draws forth some extraordinary quality from within himself and triumphs but only after a struggle.

It is past time for those men who wear the name of Jesus to comport themselves as men created in the image of God: holy and humble before God and man, hardworking and happy to be so, ardently in love with their wives and eager to spend time with their children. They must become Christians who please God and their families before they please themselves. May it never be said of us what God said of Israel: "I sought for a man among them who would make a wall, and stand in the gap before Me on behalf of the land... but I found no one."

In God's Eyes
By Heather Blake

Amazing deceptions
Or little "white lies"-
They all are the same
In God's judging eyes.

Men who are admired
Or those who're despised-
They all are the same
In God's loving eyes.

The poor woman's mite
Or a gift of great price-
They're both worth the same
In God's thankful eyes.

Stony or good ground,
Packed loosely or tight-
They both deserve sowing
In the true Gardener's eyes.

The eleventh hour workers
Or those who give their whole lives-
They all worked the same
In the Master's kind eyes.

But those who are sinners
And those with pure minds
Are never the same
In Jehovah's just eyes.

So we all must have faith
And live Christian lives,
If we would be accepted
In our Savior's eyes.

A Moments Wisdom

--The spiritual eyesight improves as the physical eyesight declines.

--At twenty we worry about what others think of us; at forty we don't care about what others think of us; at sixty we discover they haven't been thinking about us at all.

--There is only one part of the universe you can be certain of improving, and that's your own self.

--There are two ways of spreading light: to be the candle or the mirror that reflects it.

--Until you make peace with who you are, you'll never be content with what you have.

--It's not true that nice guys finish last. Nice guys are winners before the game even starts.

--You cannot shake hands with a clenched fist.

--English is the perfect language for politicians because it allows them to talk until they think of something to say.

--It takes less time to do a thing right than to explain why you did it wrong.

--I resolve to be wise when I cannot be merry, easy when I cannot be glad, content with what cannot be mended and patient when there is no remedy.

--Obstacles are those frightful things you see when you take your focus off your goals.