

# ACT LIKE MEN



## — FIVE IMPERATIVES FOR — BIBLICAL MANHOOD

BE WATCHFUL

STAND FIRM  
IN THE FAITH

ACT LIKE MEN

BE STRONG

LET ALL THAT  
YOU DO BE DONE  
IN LOVE

BY  
**FRANK GARCIA**

TLTF.ORG

# **Act Like Men**

## **Five Imperatives for Biblical Manhood**

**by Frank Garcia**

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# Preface

Several years ago, I was invited to attend a men-only Christian conference themed *Act Like Men!* More than 4,000 men from all walks of life gathered in Fort Worth, Texas, for two days to explore what the Bible teaches about biblical manhood. Typically, crowds of that size gather for a sporting event, not a conference devoted to studying God's Word and the role of men. Curious about both the theme and the turnout, I attended with a few friends who shared the same interest.

At the time, I was living a busy life focused on my responsibilities as a husband, father, friend, and follower of Christ. Like many men, I was pursuing career goals, meeting obligations, and navigating the demands of daily life. Yet beneath it all lingered a question that deserved serious consideration: What does God expect of a man?

Being a man, I had never really stopped to consider whether I was actually acting like one. After all, I was a husband, a father, and a provider. Wasn't that enough? As I listened to the speakers and studied God's Word, I realized something important: simply being male does not mean a person is living out biblical manhood. Many men have never been taught what God intends a man to be.

The conference was electric. There was good music, good food (always essential at a men's event), and meaningful fellowship. What especially moved me was seeing fathers and sons sitting side by side, opening their Bibles together, and discussing the privileges and responsibilities God has entrusted to men. The lead pastor, James MacDonald, challenged us to take seriously the biblical command to "act like men."

Throughout the conference, I found myself taking notes and wrestling with ideas I had never fully considered before. Some messages encouraged me; others convicted me. I began to see how often men settle for society's definition of manhood rather than

God's. Our culture often celebrates strength without character, ambition without responsibility, and authority without service. God's Word presents a very different picture.

I believe men have been entrusted with an enormous responsibility, one that is often misunderstood and too frequently neglected. The Bible teaches that men are called to provide spiritual leadership within their homes, churches, and communities. When men abdicate that responsibility, the consequences are often felt throughout families and generations.

After returning home, I could not stop thinking about what I had learned. The messages continued to challenge me long after the conference ended. Soon afterward, I began writing a series of short teachings based on the imperatives Paul gives in 1 Corinthians 16. What began as a personal effort to organize my thoughts gradually became a collection of observations about biblical manhood that I shared with the men in my fellowship.

I believe this discussion is even more important today than it was when I first attended that conference. We live in a culture that often struggles to define manhood, sometimes dismissing it altogether and other times distorting it beyond recognition. As a result, many men are uncertain of their purpose, confused about their responsibilities, and hesitant to embrace the role God has given them. Yet our families, churches, and communities desperately need godly men—men who know how to love, lead humbly, serve faithfully, and stand courageously for truth.

My hope is that this booklet will encourage men to examine their lives through the lens of Scripture. I do not claim to have mastered these principles myself. Far from it. Like every man, I remain a work in progress. Nevertheless, I have become convinced that when men embrace God's design for manhood, families are strengthened, Christian fellowships are enriched, communities are improved, and God is honored.

Whether you are a young man searching for direction, a husband seeking to lead your family well, a father striving to leave a lasting legacy, or simply someone interested in understanding what the Bible teaches about manhood, I hope these pages challenge and encourage you.

More than anything, I hope they inspire you to answer the same question that confronted me years ago in Fort Worth: What does it truly mean to act like a man?

The pages that follow represent my humble attempt to answer that question from the perspective of God's Word.

God bless you,

In Christ's name,

*Frank Garcia*

## Introduction

# The Call to Biblical Manhood

The world has never been more confused about what it means to be a man. Every day we are surrounded by competing voices offering different definitions of masculinity. Some portray manhood as dominance, self-promotion, and personal ambition. Others suggest that strength, leadership, conviction, and responsibility should be diminished or abandoned altogether. Between these competing messages, many men find themselves uncertain about their role, their purpose, and the responsibilities God has entrusted to them.

God, however, has never been confused about what a man is. From Genesis to Revelation, the Scriptures reveal a consistent pattern of biblical manhood. While cultures change, societies evolve, and popular opinions shift with every generation, God's design remains unchanged. He calls men to walk with Him, lead with humility, stand for truth, serve others sacrificially, and faithfully fulfill the responsibilities placed before them.

The good news is that God has not left us to figure these things out on our own. He has provided clear instruction in His Word. While the Bible contains much that could be said about manhood, few passages summarize God's expectations for men as clearly and concisely as Paul's closing exhortation to the Corinthians. In just a few words, he provides a practical framework for the kind of man God desires us to become.

Near the conclusion of his first letter to the Corinthians, the Apostle Paul summarized this calling in a series of brief but powerful commands:

*“Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong. Let all that you do be done in love.”* (1 Corinthians 16:13–14)

These five imperatives form the foundation of this booklet and provide a call to action for every man who desires to honor God with his life.

Together they present a balanced picture of biblical manhood. A man must be watchful, but vigilance alone is not enough. He must stand firm in the faith, but conviction without love can become harsh and ineffective. He must act like a man and be strong, yet true strength is always governed by love. Each imperative complements the others, and together they paint a compelling picture of the kind of man God desires us to become.

Above them all stands Jesus Christ, the perfect example of biblical manhood. He demonstrated strength without arrogance, authority without oppression, courage without compromise, and love without condition. He showed us what a life fully devoted to God looks like and remains the ultimate model for every man who desires to follow him. His life revealed that true manhood is not measured by power, status, or worldly success, but by faithful obedience to God and sacrificial service to others.

The pages that follow examine these five imperatives. My prayer is that they will encourage, challenge, and strengthen you in your walk with God. Whether you are a husband, a father, a young man preparing for the future, or someone simply seeking to grow in your faith, these biblical principles can help shape your thinking and deepen your commitment to God's calling.

The world needs men who are watchful, grounded in truth, strong in conviction, and governed by love. More importantly, God is still calling men to rise to that challenge today.

# Chapter 1

## Be Watchful

In 1 Corinthians 16, the Apostle Paul wrote:

*“Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong. Let all that you do be done in love.”* (1 Corinthians 16:13–14)

I love these two verses. What a powerful charge to men! While Paul’s exhortation was addressed to the entire church at Corinth, I believe these words have particular significance for men who desire to honor God and faithfully fulfill the responsibilities He has entrusted to them.

Within these two verses, Paul gives five clear imperatives:

- Be watchful.
- Stand firm in the faith.
- Act like men.
- Be strong.
- Let all that you do be done in love.

Together, these commands provide a practical framework for biblical manhood. Throughout Scripture we find examples of men whose decisions, character, courage, and faithfulness influenced not only their families but entire generations. The good news is that we do not have to search far to discover God’s perspective on what it means to be a man. These five imperatives provide an excellent starting point.

Over the next several chapters, we will examine each command individually and consider how it applies to our lives today. As we do,

we will discover timeless principles that can help us become the kind of men God has called us to be.

Before we examine the first imperative, it is helpful to understand a little about the man who wrote these words and the circumstances that prompted him to write them.

Few men have influenced Christianity more than the Apostle Paul. Following his dramatic conversion recorded in Acts 9, Paul devoted his life to proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ. He traveled throughout the Roman world establishing churches, teaching believers, and enduring tremendous hardship for the sake of the gospel. Under God's inspiration, Paul wrote many of the New Testament epistles that continue to instruct and encourage believers today.

The church at Corinth was one of the congregations Paul cared deeply about. Unfortunately, the believers there were struggling. Division had crept into the fellowship. Moral compromise was being tolerated. Believers were arguing with one another and losing sight of important spiritual truths. Throughout the letter, Paul addresses these issues and repeatedly calls the Corinthians back to faithful obedience to God's Word.

The ancient saying, "*There is nothing new under the sun,*" remains remarkably true. While technology, culture, and society have changed dramatically over the centuries, human nature has not. Men today face many of the same temptations, distractions, and struggles that men have faced throughout history. The specific circumstances may differ, but the underlying battle remains the same.

One of the greatest dangers confronting men today is distraction. We live in a world that constantly competes for our attention. Careers, hobbies, entertainment, financial pursuits, social media,

and countless other activities can consume enormous amounts of our time and energy. None of these things are necessarily wrong in themselves. The problem arises when they become more important than the relationships and responsibilities God has entrusted to us.

Another danger is the pursuit of personal gratification at the expense of spiritual growth and family leadership. Men are continually encouraged by the culture around them to focus on themselves, their desires, and their ambitions. Yet God's Word consistently calls us to something higher. Biblical manhood is not primarily about self-fulfillment; it is about faithful stewardship, sacrificial leadership, and godly service.

The choices we make every day matter. They affect not only our own lives but also the lives of those who depend upon us. Our decisions influence our wives, our children, our friends, and often future generations. Seeds planted today frequently produce a harvest that is not fully realized until years later.

In the spirit of honesty, I can remember times when meaningless football games were more important to me than moments with my wife or children. On more than a few occasions, I chose to pursue my own interests rather than listen carefully to their concerns or invest time where it was needed most. Looking back, I realize how easy it is to become distracted by things that seem important in the moment but ultimately matter very little.

Time is one of God's greatest gifts, and once it is spent, it cannot be recovered. As husbands and fathers, we are called to lead by example and invest ourselves in the people God has placed in our care. Far too many men have gradually stepped away from that responsibility, leaving their families without the leadership, guidance, and spiritual direction they desperately need.

This is why Paul's first imperative is so important.

Men who desire to honor God cannot afford to drift through life on autopilot. We must remain attentive to our relationship with God, our marriages, our families, and the responsibilities He has entrusted to us. We must be willing to recognize danger before it becomes disaster and address small problems before they become large ones.

To act like men means, first and foremost, to be watchful.

What does it mean to be watchful?

The word carries the idea of staying awake, remaining alert, and maintaining vigilance. A watchful man is attentive. He is aware of what is happening around him and understands that neglecting important responsibilities can have serious consequences. Watchfulness requires intentional effort. It does not happen automatically.

Some might hear this and think, “That sounds exhausting.” In truth, vigilance does require work. Yet the responsibilities God has entrusted to us are too important to approach casually. Husbands, fathers, leaders, and believers are called to remain engaged and attentive because the stakes are significant.

Jesus Christ emphasized this principle when he taught:

*“But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and would not have allowed his house to be broken into.” (Matthew 24:43)*

The lesson is straightforward. We do not know when challenges, temptations, difficulties, or unexpected trials will arise. Because we cannot predict their arrival, we must remain watchful at all times.

A watchful man understands his priorities. His first loyalty is to God. From that foundation, he faithfully fulfills the responsibilities God has entrusted to him. If he is married, he invests in his relationship

with his wife. If he has children, he takes an active interest in their lives, their struggles, and their spiritual growth. He understands that leadership is not something that can be delegated or ignored.

The image that comes to mind is that of a watchman standing guard over something valuable. A watchman does not become paranoid or fearful, but neither does he become careless. He remains attentive because he understands the importance of what has been entrusted to his care.

The same principle applies to our lives. There are influences constantly competing for our attention and seeking to shape our thinking. The books we read, the entertainment we consume, the conversations we engage in, and the ideas we embrace all affect us in ways that are often more significant than we realize. Watchful men pay attention to these influences because they understand that what enters the mind eventually affects the heart.

Watchfulness also extends to practical areas of life. It includes being responsible stewards of our finances, our time, and our commitments. It means paying attention to the condition of our marriages and families. It means knowing what is happening in our homes rather than assuming everything is fine. Problems are often easiest to address when they are small. Left unattended, they can become far more difficult to resolve.

Being watchful is not about controlling everything. It is about remaining engaged. God has called men to be present, attentive, and responsible. A watchful man refuses to sleepwalk through life. He remains alert to both opportunities and dangers, understanding that faithfulness often begins with simply paying attention.

Watchfulness and faithfulness are closely connected. Men who are attentive to their responsibilities are far more likely to remain faithful in fulfilling them. Conversely, when vigilance is lost, faithfulness often begins to erode.

Jesus Christ taught an important principle regarding faithfulness:

*“He who is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much, and he who is unrighteous in a very little is unrighteous also in much.”* (Luke 16:10)

Many people spend their lives hoping for greater opportunities, larger responsibilities, or more significant roles. Yet Scripture teaches that faithfulness begins with the things already before us. The man who faithfully manages small responsibilities today is preparing himself for greater responsibilities tomorrow.

This principle applies to every area of life. Faithfulness in marriage begins with daily acts of love, respect, and attention. Faithfulness as a father begins by investing time in the lives of our children. Faithfulness in our walk with God begins with consistent prayer, study of His Word, and obedience to what He reveals. Rarely are great accomplishments built in a single moment. More often, they are the result of countless small acts of faithfulness over time.

Watchful men understand this truth. They do not wait for a crisis before becoming engaged. They do not wait until relationships are broken before investing in them. They do not wait until spiritual problems become overwhelming before addressing them. Instead, they remain attentive to the small things because they understand that today’s small decisions often become tomorrow’s major outcomes.

This is one reason the Bible repeatedly calls believers to remain alert and vigilant. God desires men who are actively engaged in the lives He has given them. Men who pay attention. Men who notice when something is wrong. Men who are willing to step forward, accept responsibility, and provide leadership when leadership is needed.

Unfortunately, many men drift through life reacting to circumstances rather than intentionally shaping them. They allow days to become weeks, weeks to become months, and months to

become years without giving serious thought to the direction their lives are heading. One day they look back and wonder how they arrived where they are.

A watchful man seeks to avoid that outcome. He periodically evaluates his priorities, his relationships, and his walk with God. He understands that course corrections are much easier when made early. Like a captain making small adjustments to keep a ship on course, a wise man remains attentive and willing to make changes whenever necessary.

The first imperative Paul gives us is not complicated, but it is profoundly important. Before a man can stand firm in the faith, before he can act like a man, before he can be strong, he must first be paying attention. He must be watchful.

The Apostle Peter reinforced this same truth when he wrote:

*“Be sober, be watchful. Your adversary, the devil, walks about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.”* (1 Peter 5:8)

This is one reason God repeatedly calls His people to vigilance throughout Scripture. Watchful men are not paranoid, fearful, or constantly expecting the worst. Rather, they are spiritually aware. They understand that their choices matter, their responsibilities matter, and their relationship with God matters. They recognize that faithfulness requires intentional effort and that spiritual growth rarely occurs by accident.

As men, we have been entrusted with much. Whether we are husbands, fathers, grandfathers, mentors, employers, employees, or leaders within our churches and communities, people are influenced by our example. The way we live, the decisions we make, and the priorities we establish often affect far more people than we realize.

This is why watchfulness is such an important quality. A watchful man pays attention to his relationship with God. He guards his heart

and mind. He invests in his marriage and family. He remains attentive to the responsibilities God has entrusted to him. He seeks to be faithful not only in the major decisions of life but also in the countless small decisions that shape his character and influence his future.

The challenge before us is both simple and practical. Are we paying attention? Are we actively engaged in the responsibilities God has given us, or have we allowed distractions to pull us away from what matters most? Are we growing in our relationship with God, or merely drifting through life hoping things will somehow work out?

Every man must answer these questions for himself.

Paul's first imperative calls us to remain alert, attentive, and engaged. It calls us to reject complacency and embrace responsibility. It reminds us that faithful men do not sleepwalk through life. They stay awake. They pay attention. They remain vigilant.

To act like men begins with being watchful.

Once a man becomes watchful, he is prepared for the second imperative. Recognizing danger is important, but vigilance alone is not enough. A man must also know where he stands and what he believes. He must be anchored in truth and unwilling to abandon it when challenges arise.

This brings us to Paul's next command:

**Stand firm in the faith.**

## Chapter 2

# Stand Firm in the Faith

As we continue our study of Paul's five imperatives for biblical manhood, we come to the second command:

*“Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong. Let all that you do be done in love.”* (1 Corinthians 16:13–14)

In the previous chapter, we examined the importance of being watchful. Men who desire to honor God must remain alert, attentive, and engaged in the responsibilities God has entrusted to them. Yet watchfulness alone is not enough. A man can be vigilant, attentive, and hardworking, but if he is standing on the wrong foundation, his efforts will ultimately fall short.

This is why Paul's second imperative is so important:

### **Stand firm in the faith.**

I have always been fascinated by examples of men who refused to retreat in the face of overwhelming opposition. History is filled with accounts of individuals who stood their ground when others fled. The three hundred Spartans at Thermopylae are often remembered for their determination against impossible odds. In Texas, the defenders of the Alamo remain symbols of courage and perseverance. Such examples capture our attention because there is something admirable about people who refuse to compromise when the pressure to surrender is greatest.

Most men want to believe they would stand firm when challenged. We want to think of ourselves as men of conviction, men who stand for something greater than ourselves. The question, however, is not

simply whether we stand firm. The more important question is: What are we standing on?

Paul does not simply tell the Corinthians to stand firm. He tells them where to stand. They are to stand firm **in the faith**.

This distinction is important. Paul is not speaking primarily about personal faith in the sense of individual trust or confidence. Rather, he is referring to *the faith*—the body of truth revealed in God’s Word. The Corinthians had begun drifting away from that truth. Division, confusion, and compromise had found their way into the church. Instead of remaining anchored in what God had revealed, some were embracing ideas and behaviors that were pulling them away from the truth.

As a result, Paul repeatedly calls them back to a firm foundation. His message is straightforward: Do not compromise. Do not drift. Do not abandon the truth you have received. Stand firm in it.

The same exhortation applies to us today. We live in a world filled with competing voices, conflicting opinions, and constantly changing ideas. What is celebrated today may be rejected tomorrow. Cultural values shift. Public opinion changes. Yet God’s truth remains unchanged.

Men who desire to honor God must be firmly rooted in something more stable than personal opinion, popular culture, or the latest trend. We must be rooted in God’s Word. Only then can we withstand the pressures and challenges that inevitably come our way.

Standing firm in the faith means holding firmly to the truth without compromise. We are not slouching, leaning, wavering, or retreating. We are standing firm.

The phrase translated “stand firm” comes from a Greek word that carries the idea of remaining steadfast, standing one’s ground, and

refusing to be moved. The picture is that of a deeply rooted tree that withstands fierce winds and violent storms because its roots extend far beneath the surface. The storm may rage around it, but the tree remains standing.

This is the kind of steadfastness Paul is urging upon the Corinthians. They were facing pressures from within and without. False ideas were creeping into the church. Divisions were weakening the fellowship. Moral compromise was threatening their spiritual health. In the midst of these challenges, Paul calls them to remain anchored in the truth they had received.

Paul himself provided an extraordinary example of what it means to stand firm in the faith. Near the end of his life, writing to Timothy, one of his closest companions in the ministry, Paul reflected on his life's work with these words:

*"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith."* (2 Timothy 4:7)

What a remarkable statement. Paul fought the good fight. He finished the race God had set before him. Most importantly, he kept the faith. Through hardship, persecution, imprisonment, opposition, and countless challenges, Paul remained faithful to the truth God had entrusted to him.

What greater legacy could a man leave behind?

Notice again that Scripture does not tell us to stand firm in *a* faith, as though there were many equally valid paths. Nor are we told merely to stand firm *for* the faith. Rather, we are commanded to stand firm *in* the faith—the body of truth revealed by God in His Word.

Truth is not determined by popular opinion, cultural trends, or personal preference. Truth remains truth regardless of what any

generation chooses to believe about it. Peter emphasized this reality when he wrote:

*“...but the word of the Lord remains forever.”* (1 Peter 1:25)

Because God’s Word endures, our responsibility is not to reinvent the truth but to preserve it, understand it, live it, and pass it on to others. This is why Paul later exhorted Timothy:

*“Guard the good deposit entrusted to you...”* (2 Timothy 1:14)

To guard something is to protect it, preserve it, and keep it safe from corruption or loss. The same responsibility belongs to us. We preserve the faith by learning God’s Word, applying it in our lives, and teaching it faithfully to those who follow after us.

Standing firm in the faith is not something we do for an hour on Sunday morning. It is not merely attending church, listening to a sermon, or occasionally reading the Bible. Standing firm in the faith is a way of life. It shapes how we think, how we make decisions, how we treat others, how we lead our families, and how we respond to life’s challenges.

What a man believes about God is the most important thing about him. His beliefs will ultimately shape his values, influence his decisions, and determine the direction of his life. This is why every man should periodically ask himself some important questions: What do I believe? What do I stand for? Is my life rooted in God’s truth or merely influenced by the opinions of the world around me?

Life is often messy. Men face challenges related to marriage, family, children, finances, work, health, and the future. Difficult decisions must be made. Unexpected hardships arise. During such times, we need a foundation that is strong enough to support us. We need something more substantial than emotions, circumstances, or human wisdom. We need the solid foundation of God’s truth.

Someone once said that instead of praying for easier paths, we should pray for stronger shoes. The stronger shoes of a Christian man's life are built upon the truth of God's Word.

At this point, a question naturally arises: What does God expect from us as men?

The answer is remarkably straightforward. Near the conclusion of the book of Ecclesiastes, Solomon summarized the matter this way:

*"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter. Fear God, and keep His commandments. For this is the whole duty of man."* (Ecclesiastes 12:13)

As is often the case, God does not complicate matters. He speaks directly and plainly. Our responsibility is to reverence God and obey His Word. This is the foundation upon which a godly life is built.

Standing firm in the faith can be challenging because there is often pressure to compromise. The world continually encourages us to adopt its values, embrace its priorities, and conform to its thinking. Remaining faithful to God's truth requires conviction, discipline, and perseverance.

Paul experienced this throughout his ministry. He was opposed, criticized, imprisoned, beaten, and misunderstood, yet he continued to stand firm. Jesus Christ faced rejection, hostility, and opposition throughout his life and ministry, yet he never compromised the truth. If we choose to stand firmly upon God's Word, we should not be surprised when we encounter resistance as well.

At this point, some men may be thinking, "Frank, I do not know God's Word well enough. How can I stand firm in something I do not fully understand?"

That is an honest question, and the good news is that God has already provided the answer.

Consider the words recorded in Proverbs:

*“My son, if you receive my words, and treasure up my commandments within you, making your ear attentive to wisdom and inclining your heart to understanding; yes, if you call out for insight and raise your voice for understanding; if you seek it like silver and search for it as hidden treasures, then you will understand the fear of Yahweh and find the knowledge of God.”* (Proverbs 2:1–5)

Notice the repeated use of the word *if*.

If you receive God’s words.

If you incline your ear to wisdom.

If you seek understanding.

If you search for it as hidden treasure.

The responsibility is placed squarely upon us. God does not force knowledge, wisdom, or understanding upon anyone. He invites us to seek them. The choice is ours.

This principle runs throughout Scripture. God has given mankind free will. He does not compel obedience or force belief. He places truth before us and invites us to respond. Every man must decide for himself whether he will pursue God’s wisdom or rely upon his own understanding.

Our attitude matters as much as our effort. When we come to God’s Word, we should come with humility, teachability, and a genuine desire to learn. James encourages believers to receive the implanted Word with meekness because it is able to save our lives. A proud heart struggles to learn. A humble heart remains teachable.

The promise found in Proverbs is extraordinary. God promises knowledge, understanding, wisdom, discretion, and sound

judgment to those who diligently seek Him. These are treasures far more valuable than silver or gold. They help us navigate life's challenges, avoid unnecessary pitfalls, make wise decisions, and lead our families with confidence and conviction.

Imagine learning the location of a hidden treasure buried somewhere nearby. Most people would spare no effort searching for it. They would gladly invest their time and energy because they believe the reward would be worth the effort.

God's Word presents us with an even greater treasure. The wisdom, understanding, and knowledge that come from God have the power to transform lives, strengthen families, guide decisions, and shape our character. The question is not whether the treasure exists. The question is whether we value it enough to seek it.

Another important element in standing firm in the faith is the influence of godly relationships.

The Christian life was never intended to be lived in isolation. Throughout Scripture, we see believers encouraging, supporting, and strengthening one another. Men, in particular, need other godly men in their lives. We need people who will encourage us when we are discouraged, challenge us when we are drifting, and remind us of God's truth when we begin to lose perspective.

The book of Proverbs states:

*"Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another."*  
(Proverbs 27:17)

Iron does not sharpen itself. It requires contact with something else. In the same way, we grow stronger when we surround ourselves with men who share our desire to honor God and live according to His Word.

Every man should have a trusted friend, mentor, or spiritual companion—someone with whom he can discuss the things of God openly and honestly. We need people who will celebrate our victories, help carry our burdens, and, when necessary, lovingly confront us when we begin to lose our way. Accountability is not a sign of weakness. It is often one of God’s greatest tools for helping us remain strong and faithful.

The bonds formed between men who share common challenges and common convictions can be powerful. We often admire the loyalty and brotherhood displayed by those who have served together in the military, endured hardships together, or worked toward a common purpose. The same principle applies in the spiritual realm. Men who stand together are often stronger than men who stand alone.

Yet even with the support of others, each man must ultimately make his own decision regarding whom he will serve. No one can make that choice for us.

One of the greatest examples of this truth is found in the life of Joshua.

After the death of Moses, God chose Joshua to lead the children of Israel into the Promised Land. Throughout his life, Joshua witnessed God’s faithfulness firsthand. He saw God’s power displayed in Egypt. He watched the Red Sea part. He experienced God’s provision in the wilderness and His victories in battle. Joshua knew who God was because he had walked with Him and trusted Him.

As Joshua neared the end of his life, he gathered the leaders of Israel and challenged them to make a decision. His words remain among the most powerful declarations found in Scripture:

*“And if it seems evil to you to serve Yahweh, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve Yahweh.”* (Joshua 24:15)

Joshua understood that faith is not passive. It requires commitment. It requires action. It requires a deliberate decision to follow God regardless of what others may choose to do.

The same choice confronts every man today.

Will we stand firm in the faith, or will we allow the pressures of the world to shape our thinking and determine our direction? Will we build our lives upon God's truth, or will we trust in the ever-changing opinions of the culture around us? Will we lead our families toward God, or will we leave those decisions to someone else?

These are not merely theological questions. They are practical questions that affect the way we live every day.

To stand firm in the faith is more than attending church once a week. It is more than possessing biblical knowledge. It is a lifestyle. It is choosing day after day to believe God's Word, obey God's Word, and build our lives upon God's Word.

Joshua made his choice. Paul made his choice. Jesus Christ made his choice and remained faithful unto death. The choice now belongs to us.

Men who desire to act like men must first be watchful. Then they must stand firm in the faith. They must become men of conviction, men of truth, and men who refuse to compromise what God has revealed.

This is the second imperative.

The third imperative moves from vigilance and conviction to the very heart of biblical masculinity itself:

**Act like men.**

# Chapter 3

## Act Like Men

When you look in the mirror, who do you see?

Are you impressed with the man looking back at you? Is he a man of character and integrity? What does he stand for? Is he worthy of respect? Would you want him as a friend? Is he a man of faith? Does he act like a man?

I try to ask myself these questions from time to time when I look in the mirror. If I am being completely honest, I do not always like the answers. The good news is that God is still working on the man in the mirror, and I am committed to cooperating with Him in that process.

How about you?

By now, our theme verses should be becoming familiar:

*“Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong. Let all that you do be done in love.”* (1 Corinthians 16:13–14)

Of all five imperatives, this one may be my favorite:

**Act like men.**

What a powerful challenge.

Recently, I decided to conduct a little informal survey. I began asking random men of all ages what the phrase “*act like a man*” meant to them. I asked men at Walmart, at the gym, at

Starbucks, and even at a local movie theater. After initially giving me a puzzled look, every one of them was willing to share his thoughts.

Their responses were surprisingly consistent.

Some said:

- Be honorable.
- Provide for your family.
- Be responsible and do what you say you are going to do.
- Do the right thing.
- Be strong for the people who depend on you.

Honestly, I was encouraged by their answers. The men I spoke with took the question seriously and offered thoughtful responses. I suspect many of us would answer in much the same way.

There is certainly a great deal that could be said about what it means to act like a man. The phrase carries ideas of character, responsibility, courage, faithfulness, leadership, and integrity. Yet before we explore some of those deeper truths, it is important to begin with a basic observation.

Most men instinctively understand what it means to act like a man.

The challenge is not usually understanding the concept. The challenge is living it.

Knowing what a man ought to be and consistently becoming that man are often two very different things.

This is where God's Word becomes so valuable. Scripture does not leave us guessing about what biblical manhood looks like. God has provided both instruction and examples to help us understand the kind of men He desires us to become.

As we examine this third imperative, we will discover that acting like a man is not primarily about physical strength, social status, or personal achievement. It is about embracing God's design, fulfilling God-given responsibilities, and faithfully trusting Him in every area of life.

For the sake of simplicity, let us change Paul's imperative from the plural to the singular and consider it personally:

### **Act like a man.**

I believe most men have a basic understanding of what that means. As we saw from the responses previously, concepts such as responsibility, integrity, provision, courage, and faithfulness seem to resonate naturally with us. In many ways, God has wired these desires into us.

The difficulty arises when we attempt to apply those principles in everyday life. What does acting like a man actually look like? How should a godly man conduct himself in his home, his marriage, his work, and his relationship with God?

One helpful way to answer that question is to begin by considering God's design.

From the opening chapters of Genesis, God establishes both the value and the distinct responsibilities of men and women. Scripture teaches that men and women are equally valuable before God, both created in His image and both recipients of His love, grace, and redemption. At the same time, God designed men and women to complement one another rather than compete with one another.

In our culture, discussions about the roles of men and women often generate strong opinions. Yet our responsibility as believers is not to

conform our thinking to cultural trends but to seek God's perspective as revealed in His Word.

This is especially important in the home.

Many of the struggles we see in families today can be traced to confusion regarding responsibility and leadership. God has entrusted husbands and wives with different but complementary roles. When those roles are understood and embraced, families are strengthened and relationships flourish.

Genesis provides the foundation:

*“And Yahweh God said, ‘It is not good that the man should be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.’”* (Genesis 2:18)

God created woman as a suitable helper for man. This role should never be viewed as inferior. In Scripture, the concept of helping is frequently associated with strength, support, and partnership. God's design was never for men and women to compete for authority or significance, but to work together in unity, each contributing unique strengths to the relationship.

The biblical picture of marriage is one of partnership, mutual respect, and shared purpose. Husband and wife are intended to complement one another, helping each other become all that God desires them to be.

I have been blessed to experience this truth firsthand in my own marriage.

My wife, Ana Maria, is my helper, and she fulfills that role beautifully. Being a helper does not mean she is less important, less capable, or less valuable. Quite the opposite. God has blessed her with strengths, insights, and abilities that enrich my life every day.

As a wife, mother, friend, and confidant, she has been a tremendous blessing to me and to our family. She helps me see things I might otherwise overlook. She encourages me when I need encouragement, challenges me when I need correction, and supports me in ways that are difficult to fully express. Quite simply, I am a better man because she is in my life.

In fact, she is the person I trust more than anyone else on earth.

I suspect many married men would say something similar about their wives. When a husband and wife are walking together according to God's design, they become stronger together than either could be alone. They support one another emotionally, spiritually, and practically as they navigate life's challenges side by side.

This is part of the beauty of God's design for marriage.

Men and women fit together in remarkable ways. Not merely physically, but emotionally, relationally, and spiritually as well. God's design has always been one man and one woman united in a covenant relationship, building a life together and serving Him together.

Scripture captures this truth beautifully:

*"He who finds a wife finds a good thing and obtains favor from Yahweh."* (Proverbs 18:22)

Men, if you have been blessed with a God-fearing wife, thank God for her. She is one of His greatest gifts to you. Cherish her, honor her, and never take her for granted. Never!

If you are not yet married, make it a priority to seek a woman who loves God and desires to walk with Him. Physical beauty may

capture a man's attention, but godly character is what sustains a marriage for a lifetime.

Just as a husband is strengthened by a godly wife, a wife benefits from a husband who embraces his God-given responsibilities. A woman needs a man who will provide leadership, stability, protection, and spiritual direction for the family. She needs a husband who is willing to take responsibility for the welfare of the home and who understands that leadership is ultimately an act of service.

This brings us to an important aspect of acting like a man.

God's Word teaches that husbands bear a unique responsibility within the home.

This responsibility should never be confused with domination, control, or self-importance. Biblical leadership is not about demanding privileges. It is about accepting responsibility. God has entrusted husbands with the stewardship of their marriages and families, and He expects them to lead with wisdom, humility, and love.

As men, we are called to provide direction for our families. We are called to help create an environment where our wives and children can flourish spiritually, emotionally, and physically. This does not mean we possess all the answers or that we never need counsel. In fact, wise husbands recognize how much they need the insight and perspective of their wives.

A good husband listens carefully to his wife. He values her counsel and respects her perspective. He understands that God often provides wisdom, encouragement, and correction through the woman standing beside him. Ignoring that gift is neither wise nor biblical.

At the same time, God places the ultimate responsibility for leadership upon the husband. The major decisions, spiritual direction, and overall well-being of the family are matters for which he will ultimately answer before God. Leadership, therefore, is not a privilege to be enjoyed but a responsibility to be embraced.

Unfortunately, many men have become passive in this area. Some have stepped away from responsibilities God intended them to fulfill. Others have become content to let someone else take the lead while they remain on the sidelines. Acting like a man requires more than simply being present. It requires engagement. It requires initiative. It requires a willingness to step forward and accept responsibility.

Yet there is another danger that must also be avoided.

Some men misunderstand leadership and assume it gives them the right to dominate their homes, control their families, or demand constant service from others. Nothing could be further from the biblical model. A husband who is harsh, selfish, arrogant, or overbearing is not demonstrating biblical manhood. He is abusing the very responsibility God entrusted to him.

Scripture calls husbands to a far higher standard.

A godly husband leads through love, service, sacrifice, patience, and example. He seeks the well-being of his wife and children above his own comfort. He understands that leadership is earned through character and faithfulness, not demanded through position alone.

The Apostle Paul commands husbands:

*“Husbands, love your wives...”* (Ephesians 5:25)

We will examine this command more fully in Chapter 5, but it is worth noting here that God places tremendous responsibility upon husbands. We are called to love, serve, nurture, protect, and care for our wives. When a husband fulfills that responsibility faithfully, he creates an environment in which trust, respect, and unity can flourish.

Acting like a man is not about exercising power over others. It is about using the strength God has given us to serve those He has entrusted to our care.

Jesus Christ provided the ultimate example of this kind of leadership when he taught:

*“And whoever desires to be first among you shall be servant of all.”* (Mark 10:44)

What a remarkable paradox.

The world often associates leadership with power, position, status, and authority. God’s Word presents a very different picture. According to Jesus, true greatness is found in service. The man who desires to lead must first learn how to serve. The man who desires influence must first learn humility. The man who desires to act like a man must learn to place the needs of others ahead of his own.

This principle stands in sharp contrast to much of what our culture promotes. Yet it remains one of the defining characteristics of biblical manhood.

A godly man understands when to be strong and when to be gentle. He knows when to stand firm and when to extend grace. He is courageous without being reckless, confident without being arrogant, and humble without being weak. His strength is not

measured by how many people serve him but by how faithfully he serves others.

These qualities are not developed overnight. They are cultivated through a lifetime of walking with God and learning to trust Him.

This is why I would encourage every man to spend time studying the lives of the great men of faith recorded in Scripture. Consider Noah, Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, David, Peter, Paul, and many others. Each faced enormous challenges. Each experienced failures and setbacks. Yet each learned an essential lesson: God is faithful and can be trusted.

Their lives changed the course of history not because they were extraordinary men, but because they trusted an extraordinary God.

At its core, acting like a man is not merely about leadership, provision, courage, or responsibility, important as those things are. It is about faith. It is about trusting God enough to follow Him when the path is difficult, obey Him when His instructions challenge us, and depend upon Him when our own strength is insufficient.

The most fundamental characteristic of a godly man is that he trusts the Lord.

As I bring this chapter to a close, I find myself returning to the questions we considered at the beginning.

When you look in the mirror, who do you see?

Are you pleased with the man looking back at you? Is he growing in character and integrity? Is he becoming a man of faith? Is his life a blessing to his wife, his children, his friends, and those around him?

None of us has arrived. We are all works in progress. Yet by God's grace, each of us can continue becoming the man He has called us to be.

As husbands, we have the privilege of leading our wives toward a deeper relationship with God. As fathers, we have the opportunity to influence future generations. As men, we have the responsibility to model faithfulness, integrity, courage, and love.

A wife is a gift from God, a treasure to be cherished and protected. A family is a stewardship entrusted to our care. A godly reputation is earned through years of faithful living. These things should never be taken lightly.

When I look in the mirror, I want to see a man who trusts God. I want to see a man who strives to honor Him in every area of life. I want to see a man whose faith influences the people around him for good.

How about you?

Acting like a man begins by trusting God and faithfully fulfilling the responsibilities He has entrusted to us.

This is the third imperative.

Having examined watchfulness, conviction, and biblical manhood, we now come to the fourth command:

**Be strong.**

## Chapter 4

# Be Strong

We now come to the fourth imperative in Paul's challenge to biblical manhood:

*“Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong. Let all that you do be done in love.”* (1 Corinthians 16:13–14)

Of all the imperatives we have examined thus far, this may be the one that initially feels most natural to men because men have always admired strength. Whether it is the athlete who pushes his body to extraordinary limits, the laborer who works long hours performing difficult physical tasks, the soldier who endures hardship in service to his country, or the first responder who rushes into danger when others flee, strength has always captured our attention and admiration.

I have occasionally watched competitions featuring some of the strongest athletes in the world. It is amazing to see men lift enormous stones, pull massive loads, and perform feats of strength that seem almost impossible. Watching those events from the comfort of my couch, usually with a bowl of chips and salsa nearby, I am reminded that there are some very strong people in this world.

There is certainly nothing wrong with physical strength. The problem is that physical strength is not the kind of strength Paul is talking about. When Paul commands men to "be strong," he is not urging us to spend more time in the weight room or develop greater physical power. He is speaking about a different kind of strength altogether—a strength that comes from God and is sustained by God.

This distinction is important because physical strength is limited. No matter how strong a person may be, there are limits to what the human body can endure. Age, illness, injury, fatigue, and circumstances eventually affect us all. Physical strength comes and goes. The strength Paul describes is different. It is a strength that enables a man to remain faithful during adversity, steadfast during temptation, courageous during uncertainty, and committed to God when circumstances become difficult. It is the strength that allows a man to continue trusting God when his own resources are exhausted.

This is why Paul later wrote to Timothy:

*“Therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.”* (2 Timothy 2:1)

Notice the source of the strength. Paul does not tell Timothy to be strong in himself. He does not tell him to rely upon his own abilities, intelligence, experience, or determination. He points Timothy to a strength that exists outside of himself—a strength found in God and made available through Christ. This is the kind of strength every man needs.

The Bible contains many examples of men who demonstrated extraordinary strength through God’s power. One of the most famous is Samson.

At the time of Samson’s birth, Israel was living under Philistine oppression. The Philistines were a pagan people who repeatedly opposed God’s people and sought to dominate them. Into this difficult situation, God raised up a man who would begin to deliver Israel from their enemies.

The story begins before Samson was born. His parents had been unable to have children when an angel appeared to his mother with remarkable news:

*“...you will conceive and bear a son.”* (Judges 13:3)

This child would be set apart for God’s purposes from birth. He was to live as a Nazarite, a person dedicated to God through a special vow. As part of that commitment, Samson was not to cut his hair.

The angel declared:

*“For behold, you will conceive and bear a son. No razor will come upon his head, for the child will be a Nazarite to God from the womb. And he will begin to save Israel out of the hand of the Philistines.”* (Judges 13:5)

God had a purpose for Samson’s life, and God blessed him in extraordinary ways. Throughout the record of Judges, we see Samson accomplishing incredible feats of strength. He killed a lion with his bare hands. He defeated large numbers of Israel’s enemies. Time and again, God’s power was evident in his life.

Yet Samson’s story is also a cautionary tale. For all his physical strength, Samson struggled with self-discipline. He was often drawn toward things that distracted him from God’s calling and repeatedly placed himself in situations that compromised his walk with God and weakened his ability to fulfill the purpose for which he had been chosen. In many ways, Samson’s greatest battles were not with the Philistines. His greatest battles were with himself.

That lesson remains relevant today because many men possess considerable ability, talent, intelligence, influence, or physical strength, yet none of those qualities can compensate for a lack of self-control or spiritual discipline. A man may appear strong on the outside while becoming increasingly weak on the inside.

Eventually Samson became involved with Delilah, and through a series of poor decisions he gradually surrendered the very things that had distinguished his life. Little by little, he moved away from

faithful obedience to God. The tragedy of Samson's story is captured in one of the saddest verses in Scripture:

*“And she said, ‘The Philistines are upon you, Samson!’ And he awoke from his sleep and said, ‘I will go out as at other times before and shake myself free.’ But he did not know that Yahweh had departed from him.”* (Judges 16:20)

Notice what happened. Samson assumed he could continue living as he always had. He assumed that yesterday's strength would automatically be available today and that repeated compromise carried no lasting consequences. He was wrong. Long before Samson lost his physical strength, he had lost his spiritual focus.

This is one of the great dangers facing men today. We can become so confident in our abilities, accomplishments, resources, or experiences that we slowly stop depending upon God. We begin trusting ourselves rather than trusting Him. We neglect the disciplines that once kept us close to Him and assume everything will somehow work out. Strength that is not rooted in God eventually fails. The lesson of Samson is not merely that God can make a man strong. The lesson is that a man remains truly strong only when he continues to depend upon God.

If strength ultimately comes from God, then an important question naturally follows: How do we become strong in the Lord?

The Apostle Paul provides the answer:

*“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might.”* (Ephesians 6:10)

Notice once again the source of strength. Paul does not tell us to be strong in ourselves. He does not tell us to trust in our abilities, accomplishments, education, resources, or experience. He points us directly to the Lord. The strength God desires to develop in us is spiritual strength. It is the strength to remain faithful when life

becomes difficult. It is the strength to resist temptation when compromise appears attractive. It is the strength to continue trusting God when circumstances do not make sense. It is the strength to persevere when others quit.

One of the primary ways God strengthens His people is through His Word. Just as physical strength develops through proper nourishment and exercise, spiritual strength develops as we consistently expose our minds and hearts to God's truth. We cannot think God's thoughts if we do not know God's thoughts. We cannot follow His wisdom if we do not understand His wisdom.

This places a responsibility upon each of us because no one can build our relationship with God for us. Our spouse cannot do it for us. Our pastor cannot do it for us. Our friends cannot do it for us. We must personally choose to spend time in God's Word and allow it to shape our thinking.

This is one reason I appreciate the example found in the book of Acts:

*“Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so.” (Acts 17:11)*

The Bereans provide a tremendous example. They were eager to learn, but they did not simply accept what they were told without examination. They searched the Scriptures for themselves because they wanted to know whether what they were hearing was truly consistent with God's Word.

Every believer should have that same attitude. I certainly hope you are not accepting what I write merely because I wrote it. I hope you are opening your Bible, reading the verses, examining the context, and allowing God's Word to speak for itself. Truth welcomes examination.

Strong men know God's Word because they consistently spend time studying it. As we fill our minds with Scripture, our thinking begins to change. We learn to view life through God's perspective rather than through the constantly shifting opinions of the world around us. We become better equipped to make wise decisions, resist deception, and remain faithful when challenges arise. Strength in the Lord does not happen accidentally. It develops over time as we consistently seek God, study His Word, and apply its truths to our lives.

Jesus Christ gave us another important key to spiritual strength when he said:

*"But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you."* (Matthew 6:33)

Throughout Scripture, He repeatedly invites us to seek Him, trust Him, and rely upon Him. He desires a relationship with us and stands ready to help those who turn to Him.

As men, our responsibility is straightforward. We are to seek God first. We are to pursue His wisdom, learn His Word, and align our lives with His will. When we do, we discover that the strength we need is already available through Him.

One of the greatest misconceptions about strength is the belief that strong men never struggle. Scripture teaches the opposite. The Apostle Paul was keenly aware of his own limitations. He experienced opposition, hardship, persecution, disappointment, and physical suffering. Yet despite these challenges, he became one of the most influential servants of God in history because he learned a profound truth: God's strength is often most evident when our own strength is insufficient.

Paul wrote:

*“And He has said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.’ Most gladly therefore I will rather boast in my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. Therefore I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, and difficulties for Christ’s sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.”*  
(2 Corinthians 12:9–10)

Most people spend their lives trying to conceal their weaknesses. Paul learned to bring his weaknesses before God and allow God’s strength to fill the gap. He understood that true strength does not come from pretending we have everything under control. True strength comes from recognizing our need for God and depending upon Him daily.

This is why spiritual strength is available to every believer. Not everyone possesses exceptional physical strength. Not everyone is gifted with extraordinary talents. Not everyone has influence, wealth, or natural abilities. But every believer can become strong in the Lord. Every believer can learn God’s Word. Every believer can seek God’s wisdom. Every believer can trust God more deeply. Every believer can grow stronger spiritually.

As we bring this chapter to a close, I want to return to an illustration that has always resonated with me. Your mind is prime real estate. You do not find junkyards in the most valuable business districts of major cities, nor do you find abandoned lots occupying the most desirable properties on earth. Valuable real estate is carefully protected because people understand its worth. Your mind deserves the same attention.

What occupies the real estate of your mind? What thoughts are you allowing to take up residence there? What voices are influencing your thinking? What are you reading, watching, listening to, and dwelling upon?

The answers to those questions matter because our thoughts ultimately shape our beliefs, our decisions, and our actions. Strong

men guard the real estate of their minds. They intentionally fill their thoughts with God's truth and allow His Word to influence the way they think and live.

No man grows strong alone. This is one reason godly friendships are so important. The men we choose to spend time with often influence our character, convictions, and spiritual growth. Surround yourself with men who love God, respect His Word, and desire to grow in their faith. Encourage one another. Challenge one another. Learn from one another. Strong men help make other men stronger.

Then take that strength and use it for the benefit of others. Serve your family, serve your church, serve your community, and invest in the lives of those around you. Look for opportunities to encourage, teach, mentor, and help others. God never intended spiritual strength to be hoarded. He intended it to be used.

Our families need strong men. Our churches need strong men. Our communities need strong men. Most importantly, God is still calling men to be strong in Him.

Physical strength has value, but spiritual strength has eternal significance. To act like a man requires more than strong muscles. It requires a strong mind, a strong faith, and a strong commitment to God and His Word.

This is the fourth imperative.

The fifth and final imperative provides the balance that holds all the others together:

**Let all that you do be done in love.**

## Chapter 5

# Let All That You Do Be Done in Love

As we come to the final chapter of this booklet, I would like to share a little of my own journey and how I came to know God and His Word.

Many years ago, while serving in the United States Army in Germany, my life changed forever. Becoming a Christian was the single most important event of my life. Looking back, I can honestly say that God saved me in more ways than I understood at the time.

I was stationed in Pirmasens, a small town in what was then West Germany. I was far from home, far from Chicago, and not actively searching for God. At least I did not think I was. Yet through a series of unexpected circumstances, I found myself attending a Bible class focused on the Scriptures, biblical research, and Christian fellowship.

One of the first verses I ever studied was spoken by Jesus Christ:

*“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.”* (John 10:10)

That verse immediately captured my attention. A more than abundant life? Who would not want that? Most people would gladly settle for a good life, yet Jesus promised something far greater.

That decision to pursue God changed the course of my life. After my military service, I attended Bible college and became involved in ministry and missionary work. I spent a year in Colombia, South America, helping lead outreach efforts and sharing God’s Word with people who were hungry to know Him. It was through ministry that

I eventually met my wife, and together we have been blessed with a wonderful family and the privilege of serving God side by side for many years.

More than four decades later, I remain amazed by God, His Son, and the truth of His Word. The more I learn, the more convinced I become that God's Word provides the answers men are searching for.

This brings us to the fifth and final imperative in our study:

*"Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong. Let all that you do be done in love."* (1 Corinthians 16:13–14)

In many ways, this final imperative serves as the foundation for all the others. Watchfulness without love can become harsh. Standing firm in the faith without love can become prideful. Strength without love can become intimidating. Leadership without love can become self-serving. Love is the quality that gives proper direction to everything else.

Paul's instruction is remarkably simple: **Let all that you do be done in love.** Yet simple does not always mean easy.

Paul's instruction begins with a very important word: **let**. The word implies choice, permission, and personal responsibility. Paul does not say that love will automatically govern everything we do. Nor does he suggest that love is merely an emotion that appears when circumstances are favorable. Rather, he places the responsibility squarely upon us.

We are to let all that we do be done in love. In other words, we decide how we will respond to the people and situations we encounter every day. We may not control every circumstance, but we do have a choice regarding our attitudes, actions, and responses.

This truth reflects one of the great realities woven throughout Scripture: God created us with free will. He does not force us to obey Him, trust Him, or love others. He invites us to do so. The choice remains ours.

As we have seen throughout this study, we are called to be watchful. We are called to stand firm in the faith. We are called to act like men. We are called to be strong. Yet all of these imperatives must be governed by love. Without love, watchfulness can become criticism. Without love, strength can become intimidation. Without love, leadership can become control. Without love, standing firm in the faith can become arrogance. Love keeps all the other imperatives properly balanced.

At this point, it is helpful to understand what Paul means by the word *love*. The Greek language uses several different words that are translated as "love" in English. Some describe friendship, others describe family affection, and still others describe romantic love. Each has its place and value.

The word used in 1 Corinthians 16:14 is different. It is the Greek word *agapē*, the word most often used to describe God's love. This is not merely an emotional response. It is not based upon feelings, convenience, or whether someone deserves it. God's love is a deliberate choice to seek the good of another person. It is selfless, sacrificial, and giving.

Most believers are familiar with Paul's magnificent description of love in 1 Corinthians 13. It is frequently read at weddings:

*"Love is patient and kind; love does not envy; love does not boast; it is not arrogant..."* (1 Corinthians 13:4)

The list continues, painting a picture of love that is both beautiful and challenging. If we are honest, many of us have read those verses and thought, "That is a high standard." And it is. In fact, it is a standard that cannot be consistently lived apart from God. Human

love often rises and falls with circumstances. God's love remains steadfast because its source is God Himself.

The encouraging news is that God has not merely commanded us to love. Through Christ, He has made His love available to us. As we grow in our relationship with Him, we learn to love others more fully and more faithfully.

Over the years, I have often summarized God's love with a simple phrase: **You before me.** That is the essence of biblical love. It is choosing the good of another person before insisting on our own way. It is putting the needs of others ahead of our own comfort. It is serving rather than demanding to be served. It is giving rather than merely taking.

The principle is simple to understand but far more difficult to practice. Yet this is precisely the kind of love Paul calls us to demonstrate in every area of life. When Paul says, "*Let all that you do be done in love,*" he leaves no room for exceptions. At home, at work, at church, among friends, in moments of joy, and in moments of disappointment, the standard remains the same. Everything we do is to be governed by love.

At this point, an important question arises: How do we develop this kind of love?

The answer may be simpler than many people realize. The Apostle John wrote:

*"For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments..."*  
(1 John 5:3)

Once again, we find ourselves returning to a familiar theme. Throughout this study we have repeatedly seen the importance of God's Word. Whether discussing watchfulness, standing firm in the faith, acting like men, or being strong, the conversation continually

returns to knowing and applying what God has revealed in Scripture.

Love is no different. God's love grows in our lives as we learn His Word, believe His Word, and practice His Word. This is one reason the Scriptures repeatedly encourage believers to treasure God's commandments, seek His wisdom, and meditate upon His truth. God knows that His Word shapes our thinking, influences our choices, and ultimately transforms our character.

As we spend time in His Word, we begin to see people differently. We become more patient, more understanding, more forgiving, and more willing to serve others. Little by little, God's perspective begins to replace our own. This process takes time. It does not happen overnight, but it does happen. The more closely we walk with God, the more His love becomes evident in our lives.

One misunderstanding should be addressed here. Loving people does not mean approving of everything they say, believe, or do. Many people assume that love requires silence in the face of error or compromise. Scripture teaches otherwise.

Jesus Christ was the greatest example of love the world has ever known. Yet he was never afraid to speak the truth. He challenged hypocrisy. He confronted error. He exposed false teaching. He corrected those who needed correction. At times his words were direct, uncomfortable, and even confrontational. Was he being unloving? Not at all. In fact, speaking truth is often one of the most loving things a person can do.

Truth and love are not enemies but partners. Love without truth can become mere sentimentality, while truth without love can become harsh and ineffective. God calls us to hold both together. Paul captured this balance beautifully when he instructed believers to speak "*the truth in love*" (Ephesians 4:15).

Our goal is not merely to win arguments or prove that we are right. Our goal is to help people. Sometimes that requires encouragement. Sometimes it requires correction. Sometimes it requires difficult conversations. Whatever the situation, however, the motivation must always be love.

Jesus demonstrated this balance perfectly. He loved people deeply, yet he never compromised the truth. As men, we are called to follow his example. We are to love people enough to tell them the truth, and we are to tell the truth in a manner that reflects God's love. That is not always easy, but it is always right. When love and truth work together, lives are changed.

Community among men is also an important part of living out this command to love. None of us can become all that God intends us to be in isolation. We need other godly men in our lives to encourage us, challenge us, sharpen us, and occasionally correct us. We need men who will speak truth to us when we need to hear it and who will receive truth from us when they need encouragement or direction.

The principle that men sharpen one another remains just as true today as it was when Solomon first wrote it. God never intended us to walk this journey alone. Strong Christian men help make other men stronger. They encourage faithfulness, promote accountability, and provide support during difficult seasons of life. The relationships we build with other godly men often become one of God's most valuable tools for helping us grow in character, wisdom, and spiritual maturity.

Love is especially important in the context of marriage. Husbands are given a profound responsibility in God's Word:

*"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it."* (Ephesians 5:25)

Men, this is one of the highest standards found anywhere in Scripture. How did Christ love the church? He gave himself for it.

He sacrificed for it. He served it. He placed its welfare above his own. God calls husbands to demonstrate that same kind of selfless love toward their wives.

This brings us back to the principle we discussed earlier:

**You before me.**

A husband who consistently places his wife's well-being ahead of his own preferences is demonstrating biblical love. A husband who honors his wife, serves her, protects her, encourages her, and values her contribution to the family is acting like a man. A husband who provides spiritual leadership while treating his wife with dignity and respect is fulfilling one of God's highest callings.

Scripture also instructs wives to respect their husbands and to support the leadership structure God established within the home. When both husband and wife embrace their God-given responsibilities, the result is a relationship marked by unity, trust, mutual respect, and love.

Biblical manhood is never passive. Neither is it harsh or self-centered. Godly men are men of action. They lead when leadership is required. They protect when protection is needed. They provide when provision is necessary. They serve when service is called for. They know when to be strong and when to be gentle. They know when to stand firm and when to extend grace. Above all, they seek to reflect the character of God in the way they treat others.

As we conclude this chapter, let us review the five imperatives Paul gives in 1 Corinthians 16:13–14:

1. Be watchful.
2. Stand firm in the faith.
3. Act like men.
4. Be strong.
5. Let all that you do be done in love.

I believe Christian men have been entrusted with enormous responsibility. God continues to call men to rise up and fulfill their roles as husbands, fathers, leaders, servants, and examples of faith. We cannot abdicate those responsibilities and expect others to carry them for us. We must embrace the calling God has placed upon our lives and faithfully run the race set before us.

The good news is that God has not left us unequipped. Through His Word, through the example of His Son, through the gift of holy spirit, and through the fellowship of other believers, He has provided everything necessary for us to live as the men He has called us to be.

Continue learning God's Word. Continue trusting God. Continue growing in faith. Continue striving to become the man God desires you to be. As you do, you will discover that His strength is sufficient, His wisdom is available, and His love is capable of transforming both your life and the lives of those around you.

The psalmist expressed this truth beautifully:

*“Commit your way to Yahweh; trust also in Him, and He will bring it to pass. He will bring forth your righteousness as the light, and your justice as the noonday.”* (Psalm 37:5–6)

My prayer is that each of us will commit our way to the Lord, trust Him fully, and faithfully apply these five imperatives in our daily lives. If we do, we will not only become better husbands, fathers, friends, and leaders, but we will also become the kind of men who bring honor and glory to God.

May God richly bless you as you continue your walk with Him.



# The Living Truth Fellowship

MAGNIFYING JESUS CHRIST, THE LIVING TRUTH

*“Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”*

— John 8:32

The Living Truth Fellowship is a worldwide community of believers dedicated to helping people understand God’s Word with clarity, accuracy, and integrity. Through biblical teaching, genuine fellowship, and free resources, we seek to help believers grow in their understanding of God and His Son, Jesus Christ, and walk confidently in the truth of Scripture.

Our website contains hundreds of free biblical resources, including articles, teachings, seminars, classes, podcasts, videos, books, booklets, and downloadable resources designed to help believers deepen their understanding of Scripture and strengthen their walk with God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Whether you are searching, questioning, rebuilding, or growing in your faith, we invite you to explore the many free resources available on our website at:

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