

LETTERS FROM GRANDPA # 142

Dearest grandchild,

Today's letter will focus on this Bible verse: **“Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be men of courage; be strong. Do everything in love.” (1 Cor 16:13-14)** Since last week's letter dealt with women, today's letter will deal with men.

Symbols have a unique way of communicating ideas. Symbols can communicate without even being interpreted. For example, if a kingdom is symbolized by a lion, a leopard, or a bear certain emotions are immediately communicated. If you opened the door and faced a lion, a leopard, or a bear you would not need to consult a commentary to experience profound emotions. There is something about confronting a lion, a leopard, or a bear that transcends the need for explanation. Consequently, using this symbolism to describe a kingdom immediately communicates what kind of a kingdom it is. In the same way the Bible makes reference to an earth quake, a tempest, and a swelling sea. These symbols also convey thoughts and emotions that are immediately understood. Such eloquent symbols do not need lengthy explanations for they make an immediate connection with our mind and emotions. So also does the Biblical admonition to “be men”. This too is an straight forward way of communicating that is easily understood. The Scripture before us is translated in a variety of ways, but each translation has the same emphasis on manhood. (KJV - “quit you like men”, NAS - “act like men”, NIV - “be men”, NKJ “be brave”, RSV “be courageous”, etc.) Being a man is something that Paul understood and which he felt his readers would also understand.

The symbol of a woman conveys a totally different idea. We expect a man to calloused and rough, and a women to be delicate and soft. There is something about being “masculine” or “feminine” that transcends ethnicity and culture. Yes, there are “tame lions” that perform in the circus, but this is not normal for lions. Yes, there are delicate men and rugged women, but this not an accurate picture of the sexes as a whole. So the Word of God admonishes men to “be men”!

While these inspired words were written almost 2,000 years ago they are especially relevant in our own day and age. Today the distinction between the sexes is being blurred. Society now accepts the absurd idea that men and women can arbitrarily identify as the opposite sex. Masculinity is under attack as never before. Now is the time, as never before in my lifetime, when men need to be “be men”. We need to be “on guard”, to “stand firm in the faith” to be “men of courage” and to “be strong”. Yes, all of these manly qualities must be done in love, but still they must be done.

The late Archie Word came out of W.W I the light heavy weight boxing champion of the Navy. In those days he described himself as an “unconverted hellian”. He was in jail 21 days out of the first 23 days he was out of the service. He, and three other friends from Visalia, California, bragged that they could whip anybody, no matter how many there were. Praise God, Archie became a Christian and led thousands to Christ. As a follower of Christ, however, he did not lose his manhood. He continued to display a bold and fearless approach to life. Victor Knowles has written a 600 page biography of his remarkable life. The following story will help you to understand what

kind of a man Archie was. During one of his many “protracted revivals”, some of which lasted several months, someone dared to invite him to a Saturday night dance. After revival services that night he showed up with his written invitation. Since the person who invited him knew he was a preacher, Archie said that he figured that they wanted to hear him preach. So he boldly asked the band for a drum roll, climbed to the platform, and began to tell them about Jesus.

Who can deny that he was a “man of courage”? At the time Paul wrote 1 Corinthians he was in Ephesus. It was here that he fought with wild beasts (1 Cor. 15:32). It was here that many opposed him (1 Cor. 16:8). It was here that the people rioted and wanted to kill him (Acts 19:23 - 41). But it was also here that God did extraordinary miracles through Paul and that everyone in Asia came to hear the word of the Lord (Acts 19:10 - 11). So, “be men of courage”. Don’t let the devil turn you into a limp wristed sissy. Develop some back bone and be a man. When Gideon went to battle God told him to send home all who were fearful and afraid. Perhaps we need to do the same in our own day and age. Let the fainthearted flee from the conflict for the Lord can deliver with many or with few. One man with God is actually a majority, for if God be for us, who can be against us? So, “Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be men of courage; be strong. Do everything in love!

In our last letter I appealed to all our grandsons to treat women with respect like Jesus did. In this letter I appeal to all our granddaughters to encourage the men you know to behave like a man.

I love you,

Grandpa Boyce