

**OPEN LETTER TO ALL CHRISTIAN MEN:
IT IS IMPORTANT TO BE A REAL MAN or
*Serving Christ in a masculine way...***

Let me start by saying that I do not write this open letter against women or their role and privileges in the church. There must be no doubt in your mind that I fully and completely support women's role in the contemporary church and their right to serve in every office and that I respect, honour and appreciate their *irreplaceable feminine contribution* towards serving God's people.

But although God made men and women equal in value and honour, the Bible is clear that God made us different. Men should serve God in a masculine way, because this God's way for the guys.

Almost a 150 years ago in speaking on the challenges of being a Christian man, C.H. Spurgeon said, '*there has got abroad a notion, some how, that if you become a Christian you must sink your manliness and turn milksop*'. (Milksop is bread soaked in milk but it also means someone who is a weak and easily frightened man, a "sissy".)

One of the problems among Christian men is a lack of understanding of what it means to be 'more like Jesus', as men. We know that we are to grow to be more like Jesus (Col.1:28), and to lead like Jesus (Eph.5:25) in our relationships and responsibilities. The problem is that most Christian men see Jesus more as a feminine type than a masculine one, or as I read in a book this week (*No More Christian Nice Guy* by Paul Coughlin), the vast majority of Christian men see Jesus as a bearded woman!!!

Paul Coughlin shows how he learned to say no to the "nice guy" syndrome. After all, Christian nice guys aren't always so nice. In the name of appearing Christian by being agreeable, they can lie, keep secrets, manipulate, duck responsibility, and much more. Using the biblical model of Christ as his example of a real man, Coughlin shows men how to become both gentle and bold. This is a powerful challenge and a hopeful message that elevates the true biblical model of manhood above prevailing views in contemporary culture.

If I ask you to describe the ultimate man, what image comes to mind? For most Christian men, Jesus is not the image that comes to mind. In his book *The Heart Of A Tender Warrior*, Stu Weber writes, "*Why is it when someone says, picture the archetypal male, the image that comes to mind is not one of Jesus? For years, the picture in my mind would not have been Jesus. Every portrait of Jesus makes him look more like a pouting model for shampoo than a man*".

This is sad, but it is true. Our image of Jesus is one of a nice guy, a "milksop", a sissy, who was always gentle, meek, mild, did not defend what he knew was right, was not a highly motivated provider and would do anything not to offend anyone. This is not a biblical picture of Jesus!

When you turn to the gospels you discover a man who we're told was born to bring division, and who would be the cause of the destruction and salvation of many people (Luke 2:34; 12:51; Matt.10:34). You discover a man who spoke the truth and spoke up publicly against hypocrisy calling the religious leaders of his day snakes fit for hell, and decomposing corpses that stunk and polluted others (Matt.3:7; 23:27, 33). You discover a man who thought his disciples were too slow and let them know about it (Matt.17:17). You discover a man who threatened judgment to those who were spiritually unfruitful (Luke 13:6-9). You discover a man who got physical when he saw God's name dishonoured (Mark.11:15-17).

The Bible's picture of Jesus is one of a man who openly confronted lies and deception, who spoke the truth boldly, who spoke up against hypocrisy, who spoke judgment, who wasn't afraid to embarrass those who deserved it, who jealously acted to guard God's honour, and who wasn't trying to please everyone. Jesus was no milksop, he wasn't a sensitive new age guy, and he wasn't a bearded woman. In fact, in the last book of the Bible, Jesus is portrayed as a divine warrior who initiates God's final salvation and judgment (Rev.19:11-21)

Yes, we certainly also discover that Jesus was tender and gentle. His strength was matched by tenderness. His power was matched by gentleness. His masculinity was matched by compassion.

Jesus is portrayed as a powerful and strong warrior who came to save his people (John 3:17; Luke 19:10). He was a man who invited those tired and worn out to come and find rest in him (Matt.11:28).

He was a man who expressed a desire to gather those who were his, under his wings (Matt.23:37).
He was a man who was truly moved when he saw those who were lost (Matt.9:36).
He was a man who openly wept with others in their loss (John 11:33-35).
He was a man who got down on his knees and washed the feet of his disciples to teach them how to serve (John 13:1-15).
He was a man who forgave the sins of others (John 8:1-11; Luke 23:34).
He was a shepherd who bravely laid down his life to save his flock, his people.

Jesus was not “in touch with his feminine side”, no, he shows us that a real, strong warrior, protector and provider, a real man, also is a gentle, tender man with compassion. That it is truly masculine, to care.

To all Christian men, I want to say that God needs both real men and real women to do his work properly.

Women most of the time do not need any encouragement to be strong, nurturing mothers and daughters of the church.

But I am afraid that we guys seem to need encouragement to be strong and brave warriors, protectors and providers in God’s work.

In order to do that, we need to have a biblically balanced view of Jesus.

Unless you as a Christian man have the right picture of Jesus, your masculinity and your understanding of what it means to be a Christian man will be lacking.

Jesus was no a new age mr. Nice Guy. He certainly was no milksop or sissy.

The Bible’s picture of Jesus is that of a strong warrior whose strength was matched by tenderness, whose power was matched by gentleness, and whose masculinity was matched by compassion.

Another secret I want to share with you - your lady will find the real biblical man much more attractive than any milksop!

And in the church - a man according to the image of Jesus will be respected, loved and looked up to by everyone!

A real man loves, protects and provides for his wife as if she is his own body!

And a real man will love, protect and provide for the Bride of Christ, the church, as Jesus loves, protects and provides for us!

When it comes to taking on the challenges in the church - let’s stop being milksops!

And in the face of any evil, slackness, need or threat - be brave!! Fix it!!!