

# How to “MAN UP!”

## (A Guide for Teens and Adults)

### “MAN UP!”

Does “macho” come to mind? How about dad? How about husband? Provider? OK, how about tough, smart, productive or responsible? What about strong or athletic? Have you thought about this at all? What is a man? And, how do you man up?

These are not questions that you should blithely pass off as physical or carnal in nature. Neither are they social. Neither are they personal. They are questions that ALL should ponder, and one which ALL should both know the answer to and then embrace! This is why I felt compelled to address the issue. It’s too important to ignore.

You gals had better learn the answers to these important questions too. They directly affect you, so you do have a say in how it all happens. Just look around you. How many men in your lives were incapable of manning up? And, in case you didn’t know it, you too must learn how to “man up”! And, you teens? If you learn this stuff, it’s very possible that you could experience happiness and joy for the rest of your lives! You’ll learn why throughout this short booklet.

I love the phrase, “MAN UP!” But, just how does one man up? How do boys become men? How does a fully-grown man – or woman -- “man up”? Believe me, to man up goes far beyond the traditional definition of accepting responsibility for one’s actions. Why? Because, after accepting responsibility for your actions, what then? Who’s going to tell you what then? What (or who) will be your guide? Your conscience? Your learning? School? Your church? Peer pressure?

Now, to some folks, “man up” means to “suck it up”. Put your feelings (or lack thereof) aside for the greater good of those around you. This is called conformity pressure. You’re being pressured into conforming to a social standard of fatherhood, machismo, responsibility or what have you. Let me tell you up front that you can conform in one of two ways. You can “play the role” of a man, structuring your behavior on what you perceive to be the will of significant others in your life. Or, you can accept and internalize a new set of socially acceptable behavioral standards by which you act out your life.

Either way, you’ve pleased others around you, and life has become a bit more tolerable to both you and those with whom you interact. That’s good. But neither of these two responses really cut to the core of your being as a man, because you’re just “sucking it up” in deference to the will of others. Not for your real “man” self. Of course, this begs the question, “What is man?”

## What is “Man”?

Woah! Really deep subject here! Let me set the ground rules for this discussion right up front. Man is, of course, a biological being with five senses (touch, sight, smell, hearing and taste). We all know that. But wait! What does the bible teach? Since God is a spirit, and since He made man in His own image, is it not reasonable to conclude that we are spirit beings too? I believe so. Man is first and foremost a SPIRIT being that is obliged to live out this earthly life imprisoned, as it were, in these flesh bodies.

I’m not going to get all religious on you, so please hear me out before you slam the book down and curse me for bringing this up. Just think about this for a few minutes. Shut your eyes and imagine yourself as the spirit being that you really are. Forget what the bible teaches (if you must) as you imagine this about yourself. You will come to know that it’s true. All of us here on earth realize intuitively that it is our spirits which dominate. All of us, if we prod deeply enough into the innermost thoughts of our hearts, KNOW that we are not meant to be slaves to our flesh selves. We have a much deeper calling here on earth than what the flesh can answer to.

Let me illustrate this point for you with something that I have experienced in my quest for world records as a powerlifter. It is something that elite athletes in all sports experience if they hang around long enough. Some athletes call it “the zone”. Whatever you call it, it consists of being at perfect balance and harmony with all of your physical and mental faculties to the extent that you are able to produce a peak performance. Some athletes get so good at getting into the zone that they are able to do it at will. There have been very few athletes so gifted in all of history. I contend that it’s because no one ever taught them HOW to achieve this harmony.

Here’s the point: there is another aspect of our being that we can tap into. It most certainly is NOT because of our training or practice! If this were the case, all athletes could get into the zone just by working hard! No, being able to enter into the zone at will is more related to what is in your HEART! If you live, eat, sleep and breathe your sport, you BECOME it, and every nuance of it guides you unerringly toward achieving the oneness with it that culminates in a peak performance. It’s called PASSION!

Here’s a primer on passion. I wrote this several years ago for the Kansas City Chiefs who were preparing to go head to head with the L.A. Raiders the following day. This short speech found its way into many NFL locker rooms over the next couple of years. It’s easy to understand why. Elite athletes are able to relate to these words to the core of their innermost being:

# **PASSION**

*...and Peak Performance!*

**NOT** commitment to excellence...

*Rather, utter disdain for anything less!*

**NOT** endless hours of practice...

*Instead, **PERFECT** practice!*

**NOT** ability to cope...

*Rather, total domination of **EVERY** situation in life!*

**NOT** setting goals...

*Goals too often prescribe performance limits!*

**NOT** doing what it takes to win...

*Instead, a burning commitment to do what no one has ever done, or will ever do again!*

**NOT** need to achieve...

*Instead, doing what it takes to **EXCEED** the bounds of mere convention*

**NOT** force of skill or muscle...

*Rather, it's the explosive, irresistible force of **WILL!***

*If you believe in and practice these things, then for you, winning is neither everything nor the only thing as the great Vince Lombardi once said. If you believe in and practice these things, then, for you, winning has become a **FOREGONE CONCLUSION!***

*But if, along the way, you somehow stumble, **PROFIT** from the experience! Then, vow, by the power of Almighty God, it'll **NEVER** happen again!*

So, what is a true man? Earlier in this booklet, I presented the notion that the real man, first and foremost, is a spirit being, fashioned in the likeness of God Himself (who is also a spirit being). Can it be that this is the man part of you that must take control in your life? But how? How can your spirit manifest "manliness"?

Has it occurred to you yet that the "passion" I described for you above is nothing less than a total and complete LOVE for what it is you're doing? Yes, LOVE! Some believe that you cannot acquire passion any more than you can acquire love. They argue, "It's something that just happens." I beg to differ. The ability to love is inherent in all of us. Your job is to allow it to flow out of you. You do this instinctively if you allow yourself to

live after the spirit within you, rather than after “lusts of the eyes, lusts of the flesh, or the pride of life” (as the disciple John so eloquently observed in 1 John 2). Sadly, few have learned how to do this because they have little or no understanding as to what love is. Therein lay their problem of being incapable of “manning up”.

## What is Love?

In its purest form, true, unselfish love is a spirit thing. As such, it is indelibly etched in your heart and mind. You do not love because you are pressured into it by a need for self-gratification or to please others around you. You love because it is who you are! As human beings, we love in several (often overlapping) ways:

**Philia** includes love towards friends, family, and community, and requires virtue, equality, and familiarity. Philia is motivated by practical reasons; one or both of the parties benefit from the relationship. It can also mean "love of the mind."

**Eros** is passionate love, with sensual desire and longing, making it an “inflowing” love. It is "love of the body."

**Storge** is natural affection, like that felt by parents for offspring, or between close friends. There is a protective element operating here, as you don't want to lose the love afforded by your children or friends.

**Xenia** refers to hospitality, or friendship between a host and his guest (who could previously have been strangers), and the guest is expected to repay the kindness of the host only with gratitude.

But as spiritual beings, a far greater form of love enters the picture.

**Agape** refers to a "pure" and “outflowing” type of love. It has also been translated as "love of the spirit."

Don't you see that it is only the pure love of the spirit – **agape** love – that is totally unselfish? That isn't to say that the other manifestations of love are bad in any sense, since outflowing love is always going to be present to some degree. There is, after all, quite a bit of overlap. But again, there is no “what's in it for me” feelings in **agape** love. There is in the others.

Let me illustrate this point with the well-known example involving the apostle Peter.

## Peter Didn't Man Up

Now, Peter was impetuous to say the least. He's the one who jumped out of the boat only to sink because of his lack of faith. He's the one who refused to allow Jesus to wash his feet. He's the one who cut off the ear of a guard coming to get Jesus in the Garden. He's the one who denied knowing Jesus, not once or twice but three times,

despite having bragged (in front of all the disciples) to Jesus that he would never do such a thing. In simple terms, because of his fear, Peter had a real problem with “manning up”. “Peter” means rock”. Does it sound like he was a rock? Not by a long shot! Not yet, anyway.

But there was yet another episode involving Peter’s inability to man up. I read the 21<sup>st</sup> chapter of John several times over the years, but it wasn’t until I compared it to the Greek translation that it made any sense to me. (You can do this yourself by going online and refer to a “Strong’s Concordance”.) Here’s what I found:

It was after Jesus reappeared to the disciples, and they were all standing by the sea eating fish and bread, that Jesus said to Peter, *“Simon, son of Jonas, lovest [agape] thou me more than these?”*

(Simon is the name which Peter had before he was found by Jesus; hence, Jesus’ use of that name was to remind Peter that he had been acting like as if he really didn’t know Jesus!)

Peter responded, *“Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love [philia] thee.*

(In humility for his previous boasts, Peter refuses to use the higher term for love which Jesus had used. He also refused to address the question regarding loving Jesus more than he loved the other disciples.)

Again, Jesus asked, *“Simon, son of Jonas, do you love [agape] me?”*

(Jesus was saying, *“Simon, your silence regarding the other disciples indicates that you no longer believe that you love me more than they do. So, forgetting the others, do you really love me?”* Jesus again uses the same verb, **agape**, which *he* had used before. He is again asking whether Simon loves him with his entire spirit (the “man” within him) as well as his soul (his intellect, will, emotions.)

He said to him, *“Indeed, Lord, thou knowest that I love [philia] thee.”*

(Peter gives the same answer as before. He still does not dare to affirm that he possesses the higher kind of love.)

Then Jesus asked him for the third time, *“Simon, son of Jonas, lovest [philia] thou me?”*

(This time Jesus used the very term for *love* which Peter had used. It’s as if Jesus doubts whether Simon really had even such humble affection as he was claiming.)

Peter, now a bit upset, responded, *“Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love [philia] thee.”*

(Think how Peter must've felt by this time in the conversation. It was as if Jesus was questioning Peter's affection for him. It most certainly didn't go unnoticed by Peter that Jesus didn't call him "Peter". And, it was as if Peter was thinking, "Since Jesus knows all things, surely he must know that I have affection for him." He didn't dare to claim the higher form of love.)

### **Peter just couldn't man up!**

(In all fairness to Peter, his life after Pentecost -- about 50 days after he had this conversation with Jesus -- was indeed filled to overflowing with **agape** love. He was, as Jesus predicted, crucified upside down for professing the gospel. Peter had learned his lesson.)

What's the take-home message in this story? There are two things that you should put in your heart and remember. First, Peter really did love Jesus. But he was tested with fear. His fear both in denying Jesus three times and in professing mere affection three times prevented him from tapping into his true manhood, his spirit. **Peter did not yet understand that true love – agape love -- casts out fear!**

The second point to remember is that Jesus had not yet given Peter this understanding! None of the disciples were given a full understanding of Jesus' teachings until that day – Pentecost – in which He filled them with the Holy Spirit (which teaches us all things).

**That, friends, is when Peter was finally able to man up! His FEAR was gone!**

### **Doubt, Fear and Unbelief**

So many people simply cannot man up because they doubt the power of the spirit that is within them. Some simply do not believe that any such spirit exists, opting instead to give full rein to their carnal "soul" nature. But fear is all too often the disabling factor in one's inability to walk in the power of their inner spirit, to truly man up! But what do such people fear?

Fear of failure	Fear of success
Fear of the unknown	Fear of rejection
Fear of ridicule	Fear of prejudice
Fear of blame	Fear of death
Fear of life	Fear of pain
Fear of truth, lies, deception, torment,	etc...

So, what is it that YOU fear? Are you so self-reliant that you have no fear of anything? Are you that cock-sure of the power of your own carnality? Make your own list of fears. Think about each of them, one at a time, and you will begin to understand how they are completely destroyed in the presence of true love, which is freely given to us as a gift from God Himself, **IF** we believe! **IF** we allow His spirit to meld with our own!

Don't reject this notion, folks! Think about it for awhile. It'll grow on you. In fact, it'll grow **IN** you! The TRUE man within you – your spirit – will experience a “rebirth” of sorts, and you will have no other choice BUT to man up.

## Overcoming the objections of your carnal mind

What is there to love? I don't know how to love. No one ever loved me. I can't forgive that person. I can't forgive myself. Why should I love that person? What have they ever done to deserve my love? Man, I could go on and on with such objections! Don't you see that they're all born from fear? They're all poor excuses. Read the list of fears (above) again! I hear one in particular over and over. That is, “I can't forgive myself.”

**Look, if the omnipotent God of this universe forgave you because He loves you, who in HELL do you think you are, refusing to forgive yourself?**

Really! Now, isn't that absurd? Clearly, you cannot give what you do not have. So, if you are not able to love yourself, how in the world are you going to love anyone else, much less accepting their love in return? Let me be ever so clear on this point. If you cannot forgive yourself you cannot love yourself. You must first love yourself – your “true” self, the spirit man within you -- before you can forgive others. And, you must be able to forgive others before it is possible for you to truly love them. And, this whole process is what transpires when you finally learn how to MAN UP!

## How do you learn to forgive yourself?

It all starts with forgiving yourself for all the miserable things you've ever done in your life. They're the things that got you into this mess in the first place, and simply “throwing them away” or “leaving them behind” is what forgiving yourself is all about. This is going to require a good portion of humility on your part. “Oh Lord, it's hard to be humble” Tom Jones crooned in one his ballads years ago. In fact, it's so hard that Jesus himself addressed the issue when He talked about the camel fitting through the eye of a needle.

Quoting Jesus' response to a rich man in Luke 18:25, *“For it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.”* Now, according to a folk legend originating in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, “the eye of a needle” was the name of a small gate on the back wall of the city of Jerusalem. A camel could not walk through it. To get through, the camel's burden had to be unloaded, and then it would have to get down on its knees and literally crawl through the small opening in the wall. The problem with this interpretation of the scripture is that there never was such a gate. The original Greek tells not of a camel, but a rope (*kamilos*). When it was translated into Latin, *kamilos* was confused with *kamelos* (camel). Luke clears this up, by using the Greek word for a surgeon's needle. Jesus referred to the eye of the needle because it was the smallest of openings, and a rope because it was an impossible task to get one through such a small opening. This mental image was meant to be a message to the rich man to relieve himself of all his baggage (not just worship of his possessions, but his worship of self), and to humble himself in order to be worthy of following Jesus.

After all, isn't that what you will have to do when you "man up"? "NO!" you may object. "I've done nothing so horribly wrong in my life! Why should I have to humble myself?" Ummm, by your very response you've shown that you are not yet ready to forgive either yourself or others. You are not yet ready to man up! Jesus was right! You're still too rich in your own conceit.

Let me give you a website to go to. It has several checklists that may help you in learning how to go about accomplishing this.

<http://www.wikihow.com/Love-Yourself>

Maybe it'll help. Really, though, if you're serious about learning how to love, all you have to do is to ASK! Ask who? Why, the one who created you!

## What can I expect once I've learned how to man up?

Have you ever heard the phrase, "You know a man by his fruit"? Of course, that means that a man is known by the things he does, by the things he says and by his general demeanor. Make no mistake about it, friends, once you get over the first hurdle of learning how to forgive yourself, then will come all sorts of fantastic changes in your life!

The first change you will notice will be that you'll spend a LOT more time walking in the spirit! As a MAN! Here is a list of the "fruits of the spirit" spoken of by Paul in the book of Galatians:

**Love – (Agape)** A pure, out-flowing love; Also, "love of the spirit"

**Joy** – Cheerfulness, calm delight

**Peace** – Prosperity, at one within, quietness, rest

**Longsuffering** – Enduring temper, patience

**Gentleness** – Gracious, of moral excellence, kindness

**Goodness** – Virtuous, fair, honest

**Faith** – Moral conviction, assurance, belief, fidelity

**Meekness** – Gentleness, humility

**Temperance** – Self control

What's striking about this list is how each succeeding characteristic ("fruit") is enabled by the preceding ones! And, LOVE is the catalyst! Only love can get this train moving! In fact, love is the locomotive for all things pertaining to man. I invite you to read the 13<sup>th</sup> chapter of 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians. You'll see what I mean.

*1 Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love [agape], I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.*

*2 And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not love [agape], I am nothing.*

- 3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not love **[agape]**, it profiteth me nothing.*
- 4 Love **[agape]** suffereth long, and is kind; love **[agape]** envieth not; love **[agape]** vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,*
- 5 Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil;*
- 6 Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;*
- 7 Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.*
- 8 Love **[agape]** never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.*
- 9 For we know in part, and we prophesy in part.*
- 10 But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.*
- 11 When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a **man**, I put away childish things.*
- 12 For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.*
- 13 And now abideth faith, hope, love **[agape]**, these three; but the greatest of these is love **[agape]**.*

When you look in the spiritual mirror of your mind (the “glass”), do you see a real man, or do you see only the outer man? If you’re seeing things clearly, you’ll see the inner man of the spirit! Seeing through the “glass darkly” just means that you are still a spiritual child, and easily swayed by your carnal nature! You are NOT yet grown fully into the image of a “MAN”!

Don’t you see that without love, you’ll remain as a spiritual child? Can’t you see that without love you cannot become the man God intended you to be?

When are you going to man up? HOW are you going to man up? Well, it’s a process. It’s a journey, folks, and one which is fraught with as many valleys as peaks. As with all journeys, it begins with the first step...

...to be continued

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