

ACT LIKE MEN

“Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong . . . “ (1 Cor 16:13-14 NAS)

Adam was created in the image of God. Evidently, that’s why God commanded him to “subdue” the earth and to rule over fish, birds, livestock, and every living creature that moved along the ground (Gen. 1:28) He was also in charge of the garden and even gave names to all living creatures (Gen. 2:15 - 20). The original sin occurred when Adam failed to “act like a man”. His wife encouraged him to do something that he knew was wrong. The Scriptures are explicit: “Adam was not deceived” (1 Tim. 2:14). For some inexplicable reason the man whom God created to be in charge relinquished his responsibility. Certainly the world would be much different if Adam had only acted like a man and taken charge like God created him to do.

The sin of Adam has been repeated many times throughout the course of human history. Men, who should stand up for what is right, sometimes waver and become weak kneed. Invariably, when good men “go along to get along” bad things happen. The Hebrew people, for example, became slaves to their enemies when their men refused to act like men (See Deut. 28). God did not create men to be a slaves, or to have some cruel dictator put a ring in his nose. Man was created to be in charge, so that’s why it is important for men to act like men.

The expression to “act like men” was not just used and understood by Jews and Christians. Even the pagan Philistines knew how men ought to behave. When they were at war with Israel they faced the choice of slavery or fighting for freedom. They chose to “be men and fight” (1 Sam. 4:9). Paul’s affirmation to act like men and be strong is alloyed by the following verse “*do everything in love*” (1 Cor. 16:14).

Sometimes love, however, is the motivating force for a fight. Remember 9/11 and United Flight # 93. Four Islamic

terrorists killed the pilots and took command of the airplane. They turned toward Washington D.C. and indicated to passengers that they were going to crash into the Capital Building. It was at that point that men like Tom Burnett, Jeremy Glick, and Todd Beamer decided to quit acting like sheep and start acting like men. Tom Burnett said during a phone call to his wife: *"I know we're all going to die, but we are going to do something, I love you honey."* Jeremy Glick phoned his wife and said: *"I love Emmy, take care of her."* Todd Beamer was on the phone with Lisa Jefferson. Before he uttered his famous words: *"Let's roll"* he made Lisa promise to call his wife and two sons and tell them that he loved them.

The Aztec Emperor Ahuitzotl (1486-1502) celebrated the opening of the great temple in Mexico, by killing some 70,000 political prisoners. The victims were lined up for miles and the ghastly ritual took several days to complete. Was there not anyone among these 70,000 victims who would dare to act like a man? In Spanish the word *"agachar"* means to bend down or stoop. To refer to someone as an *"agachado"* is therefore an insult. It stereotypes them to be like their spineless ancestors who stood in line with stooped shoulders and bowed head waiting to have their heart cut out with an obsidian knife. Wouldn't it have been better to act like men?

Patrick Henry asked this haunting question: *"Is life so dear, or is peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery. I know not what course others may take, but as for me, give me liberty or give me death"*.

In recent times we have suffered from what some have called the "Feminization of America". Men today are expected to be as "sensitive like women". The desire to be manly has been replaced by a "touchy feely" and "limp wristed" approach to the problems of society. The divorce courts reward women with the children in 85% of child custody cases and the welfare checks stop when the father comes home. Justice is not blind, but it ought to be! One feminist quipped that *"a woman needs a man"*

like a fish needs a bicycle”.

So what did Paul mean when he wrote by inspiration to: “**Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong . . .**” ? We can lament the fact that God made us male, rather than female. We can whine like Kermit the Frog about how tough it is to go through life being green. Or we can do what the Scriptures command us to do and “act like men”.