

Definition of Masculinity

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A few weeks ago the headlines proclaimed a contest between two archetypes of femininity: the 'trad wife' and the 'cat lady.' It was inevitable that the worm would turn for the other half of humanity. This week the headlines carried stories about what it means to be a man.

Newsweek on August 16th featured, "Tim Walz, the Kelce Brothers and a New Era of 'Positive Masculinity'." The article established a dichotomy between "toxic masculinity" and "positive masculinity." On one side toxic masculinity is characterized ". . . as being stoic and tight-lipped about personal matters," while positive masculinity is defined as ". . . men showing more traditionally feminine traits, such as talking about feelings." Examples of men who model toxic masculinity are never named in the piece, but their omission is proof of their expected extinction.

In a serendipitous dichotomy, August 17th featured ballot-themed articles in both journals that are the flagships for their side of the American political spectrum. The New York Times carried, "Masculinity Is on the Ballot," while the Wall Street Journal reciprocated with, "On the Ballot: American Manhood." The New York Times stated, "This election isn't going to be a referendum on inflation, immigration or foreign policy anymore. It's going to be a referendum on masculinity in America." The Wall Street Journal asserted, "The 2024 vote was set to be a referendum on the rights of women. Instead it has become a debate over the needs and desires of men." In this sub-rosa election, the New York Time declares, "The choice is clear. On one side, there's the enlightened maleness . . . Then there is the other model, the dark side of the Y chromosome." From the 'dark side,' the Wall Street Journal states, "The point is that male struggles aren't confected by reactionaries: they are real. And they are not being adequately addressed by either side."

For Christians, the headline should be, "God knew these days were coming." He was not surprised by the struggle between 'trad wife' and 'cat lady' or between 'toxic' and 'positive' masculinity. God knew that the root of this struggle is not between X and Y chromosomes, but between knowing Him and not knowing Him. The Message translation of the Bible states the problem this way, "Refusing to know God, they soon didn't know how to be human either—women didn't know how to be women, men didn't know how to be men" (Rom 1:26-27).

The Bible says all the false dichotomies that cause conflict now disappear through the waters of baptism. The church in Galatia was told that after baptism, "There is no Jew or Greek, servant or free, male or female: because you are all one in Jesus Christ" (Gal 3:28). The only struggle now is to believe the Word of God.