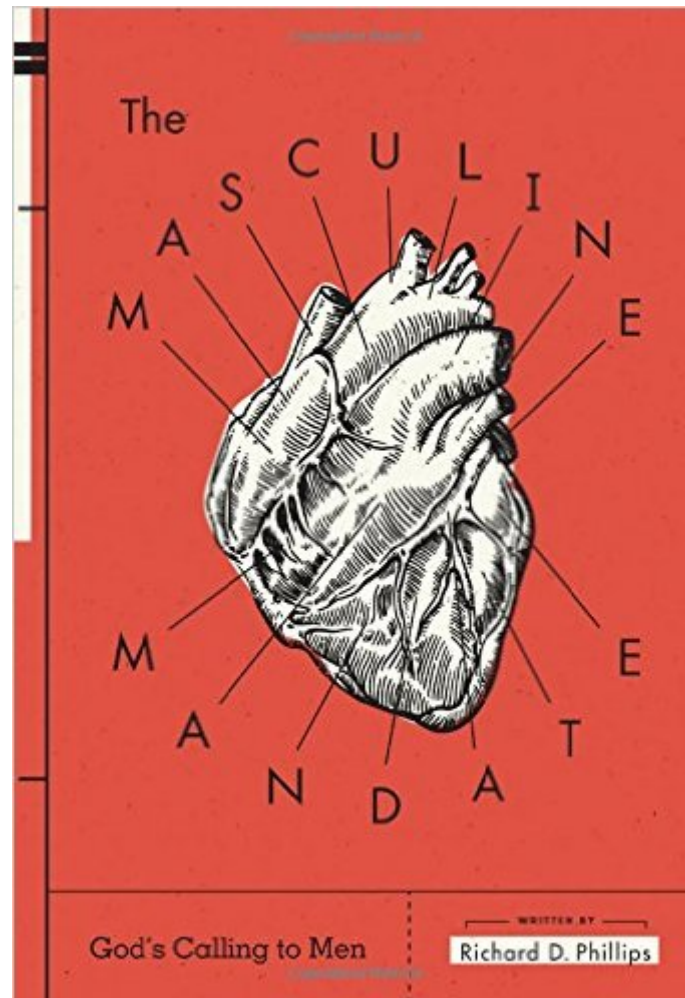


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The Masculine Mandate



Synopsis

SummaryIn this book, Richard D. Phillips cuts through the cultural confusion, highlights God's mandate for men, and encourages readers to join him on a journey of repentance and renewal. Phillips begins in the Garden of Eden, drawing foundational teaching for men from the earliest chapters of God's Word. This is teaching that reaches into all of life. Christian men today need to examine their hearts and embrace their God-given mandate. Only then will they be able to recognize their high calling, and by God's grace, serve faithfully in whatever context God has placed them.

Chapters

Man in the Garden
The Masculine Mandate
Man's Sacred Calling to Work
Man as the Image of God
Man as Shepherd-Lord
God's Astonishing Design for Marriage
Marriage Cursed and Redeemed
Marriage and the Masculine Mandate
To Work: The Discipling of Children
To Keep: The Discipling of Children
Men in Friendship
The Masculine Mandate in the Church
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Customer Reviews

If you have read Rev. Richard Phillips' earlier book, *Jesus the Evangelist*, you know that instead of developing his own theories, passing on worldly wisdom, or even quoting great theologians, he teaches straight from the Bible. His new book is no exception. There is almost enough Scripture in *The Masculine Mandate* for it to be called a commentary. What is the masculine mandate? Phillips says that, "Rather than following the American stereotype of cold, macho masculinity, Christian men should seek to grow in their ability genuinely to bless others." He points to this mandate in Genesis

chapter 2, which "shows that God created man for a purpose. God ordained that Adam would bear His image both in his person and in his work, and God put Adam in the world to work it and keep it--to be a cultivator and a protector." Men today, like Adam in Genesis chapter 2, are called to "work" and "keep." "God put Adam in the garden 'to work it and keep it' and the only difference between Adam's calling and ours lies in the details of how we seek to fulfill it." What are some of the areas where men are called to be workers and keepers? The author concentrates on five: employment, marriage, children, friends, and the church. Men have the responsibility to work hard to glorify God through employment. They are to be good husbands, loving their wife "as Christ loved the church." They are to be godly fathers who both disciple and discipline their children. They are to be friends to the men whom God has put in their lives. And they are to serve and lead in the church. Though all are good and helpful, my favorite chapters are the two that deal with a man's responsibility toward his children: "To Work: The Disciplining of Children," and, "To Keep: The Discipline of Children."

While greatly benefiting from Richard Phillip's fine exposition of The Fourth Gospel as it applied to Christ's Gospel witness in his book *Jesus The Evangelist*, I was quite disappointed in his topical treatment of God's design for men in *The Masculine Mandate*. After laying down a theological foundation in the first 5 chapters, based primarily upon Genesis 2, the author then addresses the practical implications in chapters 6 through 13. This section of the book contains many solid truths and wonderful practical applications on being God's man in roles as a marriage partner, father, friend and servant in the local church. The problem is within chapter 6 where he attempts to convince his readers that marriage is paramount to Godly Manhood. In my view, the title of the book should be properly changed to: *The Masculine Mandate for Married Men*. The author needs to drop all those extra biblical imperatives to single men in chapter 6. Instead of addressing singleness in an extremely marginal and biased way, he should have left this subject to another treatise or author. Here are some quotes from the author and my take on them: "it is imperative for your well being that you be married, to move beyond the 'not good' status of single adulthood" (pg59). This entire presentation in chapters 7 through 13 is based upon the false assumption that marriage is the foundation in becoming God's man. "And the first step for many of us in becoming the men God wants us to be is to become married, so that we will leave behind our selfish ways and begin fulfilling our masculine calling through our relationship with our wives." (pg64) He has this wrong, we should leave behind our selfish ways before marriage.

In Chapter 1, "Man in the Garden," Phillips begins with Genesis 2 as the foundational chapter in

Scripture to describe four essential things about man. First, man is a spiritual creature, uniquely created with "hands-on" care. Second, man was "put in the garden, into the world of covenantal relationships and duties, in order to gain and act out his God-given identity there." Third, man was put in the garden to be a lord and servant. Fourth, man was to obey God by working and keeping. In summary, "That is the Masculine Mandate: to be spiritual men placed in real-world, God-defined relationships, as lords and servants under God to bear God's fruit by serving and leading." Chapter 2, "The Masculine Mandate," introduces us to the masculine mandate of working and keeping. To "work" is to cultivate, build, and grow. Whereas to "keep" is to protect, stand up to, and keep safe all that the Lord has put under our care. In Chapter 3, "Man's Sacred Calling to Work," Phillips develops a good biblical purpose of work. Since we are made for work, "we are able to enjoy work and find a significant part of our identity in it. In fact, as we keep work in proper balance, retaining our primary identity in Christ, God wants us to invest significant passion in our work and find true meaning in it." Phillips provides helpful questions and expands on them to consider regarding our work: * Does this work glorify God? * Does it benefit my fellow man? * Do I consider myself called to this work, or can I at least do it well and find enjoyment in that? * Does it provide material needs? * Does it permit me to lead a godly and balanced life? The author then ends the chapter on what it looks like to please the Lord in our work.

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