

# What Makes a Man

## Men and Women

### Wikipedia

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sex\\_differences\\_in\\_human\\_physiology](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sex_differences_in_human_physiology)

**...The hippocampus has been proven by imaging to be larger in women than men. The hippocampus is crucial for memory storage and spatial mapping of the physical environment. This structural difference may be responsible for variations in behavior between the sexes.**

**Studies show that women are more likely to navigate using landmarks, while men are more likely to estimate distance in space or orientation.** Studies of rats show that males could learn better in the face of acute stress, while chronic stress is dealt with better by females.

**Sex hormones may influence female hippocampal cells to tolerate brain damage better than the same cells in men.** The studies of the rats' influx and deflation of hippocampal cells can be translated to the difference in memory and spatial behaviors between the sexes....

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### Medical News Today

How different are men's and women's brains?

Published Friday 29 September 2017

<https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/319592.php>

**... specifically, we should shift from thinking of brains as falling into two classes, one typical of males and the other typical of females, to appreciating the variability of the human brain mosaic."**

**That being said, many scientists continue to point toward evidence that the distinct physiological patterns of male and female brains lead to a differentiated susceptibility to neurocognitive diseases, as well as other health-related problems.**

**One recent study covered by MNT, for instance, suggests that microglia - which are specialized cells that belong to the brain's immune system - are more active in women, meaning that women are more exposed to chronic pain than men.**

**Yet another analysis of brain scans for both sexes suggested that women show higher brain activity in more regions of the brain than men.**

According to the researchers, this heightened activation - especially of the prefrontal cortex and of the limbic regions, tied with impulse control and mood regulation - means that **women are more susceptible to mood disorders such as depression and anxiety.**

**So, are brain differences fundamental to how men and women function? The answer is maybe.** While so many studies noted different activation patterns in the brain, these did not necessarily amount to differences in the performance of given tasks.

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## Stanford Medicine

### Two minds

The cognitive differences between men and women

<https://stanmed.stanford.edu/2017spring/how-mens-and-womens-brains-are-different.html>

Halpern and others have cataloged plenty of human behavioral differences. “These findings have all been replicated,” she says. **Women excel in several measures of verbal ability — pretty much all of them, except for verbal analogies. Women’s reading comprehension and writing ability consistently exceed that of men, on average. They out-perform men in tests of fine-motor coordination and perceptual speed. They’re more adept at retrieving information from long-term memory.**

**Men, on average, can more easily juggle items in working memory. They have superior visuospatial skills: They’re better at visualizing what happens when a complicated two- or three-dimensional shape is rotated in space, at correctly determining angles from the horizontal, at tracking moving objects and at aiming projectiles.**

**Navigation studies in both humans and rats show that females of both species tend to rely on landmarks, while males more typically rely on “dead reckoning”: calculating one’s position by estimating the direction and distance traveled rather than using landmarks.**

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## Exposing the Truth, You Decide

What makes a man a “real man”?

posted by Janina Ottma August 31, 2015

<https://www.exposingtruth.com/what-makes-a-man-a-real-man/>

We are bombarded with hundreds of thousands of models attempting to define masculinity each day. Clearly, in the media there is a glorification of a small number of particular body types

above all others. Also, the **men that seem to be the “coolest” and most successful tend to be portrayed in mainstream pop culture as the most aggressive, dominant, and tough.** Just like women, men are pressured to adapt to distinctive physical and behavioral standards in order to be socially accepted.

### **Hegemonic Masculinity**

For Connell, demands and limitations evolve around male dominated societies – this includes that men need to adapt to certain behavioural patterns and fulfil certain expectations in order to fit into the pattern of conduct which is considered superior within the social and cultural hierarchy of masculinity. By many, men are still put under the pressure to be solely active, courageous, outspoken, rational and so on, while at the same time denying them other equally important character traits which are stereotypically considered “female” and therefore weak.

In her work “Gender and Power” and with reference to Antonio Gramsci, **Connell calls this form of dominant masculinity hegemonic. Hegemonic masculinity is marked by cultural authority over other forms of masculinity which are produced in distinction from it and are consequently marginalized. Also women are central in many of the processes constructing masculinities.**

### **Gender as an Interactive System**

If being a man does not come to you naturally, but is something that needs to be performed, how can masculinity be achieved? **According to Raewyn Connell, gender is constructed in interaction** – it is an interactive system based on power and exclusion. Instead of speaking of gender identities, she sees gender as a system of multiple patterns of social practices and behaviors which need to be learned – for example through gendered socialization and repeated. **Social settings in which masculinity is reproduced are for example football teams or armies, fostering an athletic form of masculinity and placing a focus on strength and physical power. Others are, amongst others, companies and governments, favoring the production of knowledge- and technology-oriented patterns of masculinity. For this reason there is no such thing as the “one and only” masculinity, instead there are multiple forms of “manliness” which often have a hierarchical relationship or compete against each other.**

In this context, Connell sees gender as a system of hegemony/subordination, cooperation and marginalization/empowerment. With regard to gender stereotypes, **masculinity is not to be understood as the sum of specific character traits, but as “configurations of practice which are accomplished in social action”.** Masculinity – and gender as such – is dynamic in the sense that it undergoes historical development and is thus subject to change – and although this is where we can find potential for subversion in Connells approach, the change of constructions of masculinity and femininity over time does not automatically have to be for the better in the sense of greater equality.

## Pressure, Competition, Showmanship

**If masculinity is nothing but a cultural construct, a behavioral pattern, how can authentic masculinity ever be achieved, especially if there is no basis for authenticity given? Clearly, a man who conforms to the hegemonic standards of society cannot be produced without losing something of himself.**

**The nature of hegemonic masculinity is aggressive, ruthless and bases itself on domination.**

Internalizing this behavioral pattern not only includes creating an image of yourself for everyone else to see reflecting those attributes, but also creating a certain self-concept – a mode of how you want to perceive the world around you. Thus, hegemonic masculinity always comes at a cost. If a man needs to conform to the social expectation of being unemotional, not vulnerable and always rational, and if he again and again needs to reassure himself and others of this fact through his actions and statements, this automatically means that he will lose a part of himself in this process. The reduction of your own complexity of character is one price you have to pay: being strong and in control and thick-skinned means not being able to be soft and passive and sensitive.

... Yet others seem to be unaware of the harmful consequences of hegemonic patterns of masculinity for themselves and others around them, and have internalized hegemonic social-role expectations. **In the course of this internalization the loss of parts of themselves becomes unconscious. Thorough self-reflection could be one measure to prevent falling into patterns of “toxic” hegemonic masculinity.**

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“The Future of Men” explores evolving gender roles

CBS NEWS March 1, 2016, 3:12 PM

What we see in our reporting is really that gender roles are converging more than ever before in society, whether you look at women taking combat positions in the military or fathers staying home -- almost nobody is living out the kind of gender script or marriage script that their parents did. And we find a lot of social confusion.

## The Male Identity Crisis and The Decline of Fatherhood

<https://raywilliams.ca/the-male-identity-crisis-and-the-decline-of-fatherhood/>

Overwhelmingly, the portrayal of men and the male identity in contemporary western societies is mostly negative. Men today are extensively demonized, marginalized and objectified, in a way reminiscent of what happened to women. The issue of the male identity is of crucial

importance because males are falling behind in school, committing more suicides and crimes, dying younger and being treated for conditions such as ADHD more than females. There has also been a loss of fatherhood in society as artificial insemination by anonymous donors is on the rise. Further, medical experiments have shown that male sperm can now be grown artificially in a laboratory. There has been a rise in divorce rates where in most cases, child custody is granted to mothers. Continuous negative portrayal of men in the media, along with the feminization of men and loss of fatherhood in society, has caused confusion and frustration in younger generation males, as they do not have a specific role model and are less able to define their role in society.

## Summary

Scientifically, there are not many proven differences between male and female brains. It is therefore unhelpful to generalize too much.

What it means to be a man appears to be primarily determined by social interaction and can change over time.

In North America, the identity of a man currently appears to be under a lot of pressure and flux.

## Biblical References

### Fruit of the Spirit

**Galatians 5:22-23** – “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.”

**Colossians 3:12-15** – “Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful.”

**1 John 4:8** – “Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.”

Your own character can be your judge. How do you treat those around you? Do you love them or retaliate against them?

**Proverbs 28:6** – “Better is a poor man who walks in his integrity than a rich man who is crooked in his ways.”

This verse can lead you to think on different things. I would like to focus on eternity. The poor man who walks with Jesus is going to rejoice in his passing. The rich man who is “living the life” and boasting in his sins will die in his sins and face God’s wrath.

**1 Corinthians 13:4-8** – Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away.

**2 Corinthians 6:6-7** – in purity, understanding, patience and kindness; in the Holy Spirit and in sincere love; in truthful speech and in the power of God; with weapons of righteousness in the right hand and in the left;

**2 Peter 1:5-7** – For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love.

## Summary

Scripture supports a particular way to live and to express the love of God in our relationships. For men, it can provide a centering in a tumultuous time.

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## Questions

What is the modern idea of being a man? Buffoon? Self-centred? Carelessness? Careless of thinking?

What piece of wisdom did you gain the hard way that would help a young man understand what it means to be a man?

How can the church do more to help those men who need to ‘find themselves’ and lead a more productive, fulfilling life?