

WHAT IS A MAN?

Roger Ebert: What other figure in the history of the cinema has been an actor for 53 years, a director for 37, won two Oscars for direction, two more for best picture, plus the Thalberg Award, and at 78 can direct himself in his own film and look meaner than hell? None, that's how many.

Whatever your take on Walt Kowalski, **Gran Torino** opens with Clint in familiar territory – he is _____ and he likes it that way.

There are many themes that run through this movie: racism and how it will be overcome; how to live with guilt and regret and if it is possible to find forgiveness; what a family is and why they so often end up estranged and disconnected.

Our focus in this lecture is one of the primary issues **Gran Torino** explores: What is a man?

TWO QUESTIONS THAT PROVIDE THE FOUNDATION FOR GRAN TORINO ARE:

1. Can Thao become a man?
2. Can Walt become a _____ than he has ever been?

What makes a boy a man and how will he know when he becomes one?

It's a question most boys wrestle with.

It's a question our _____ doesn't do much to help answer.

What does it mean to be a man?

And is Walt Kowalski's portrait of manhood anything like the picture we find in the Bible?

1. TRUE MANHOOD REQUIRES _____.

1 Corinthians 16.13: Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be men of courage; be strong.

1 Kings 2.2: So be strong, show yourself a man.

Men were created to be strong.

A juvenile understanding of manhood focuses on _____ strength.

What makes us men is not how much we can bench press;

it's how much we're willing to _____ to live by our principles and fight a battle that matters.

Walt Kowalski: I _____ things; that's what I do.

Being a man is the strength to persevere.
 It's the fortitude to live by your principles when it's costly.
 It's the determination to stand up and the ability to _____ to do
 what's right all the way to the end.

2. REAL MEN _____ TO FULFILL THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES.

It's part of our nature to be active – it's written into our male DNA.
 Being a man and being _____ are a contradiction in terms.

Genesis 2.15: The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to
 work it and take care of it.

Men were put on this planet to do stuff and to be active with the strength they
 were given.

Real men don't ignore life's problems, look for _____ or try to find a
 reason not to do what's required.

They act to fulfill their responsibilities.

One of the most puzzling dynamics I have witnessed working with men is that the
 same man who is incredibly active in his professional life can be extraordinarily
 passive in his _____ life.

JESUS, OUR EXAMPLE, ACTED.

He stepped out of heaven, engaged the powers of darkness, challenged the
 powerful, healed the broken, walked to a cross, and offered himself as a
 sacrifice.

True men are not passive when it comes to what matters most.

Boys are active.

Men are active in fulfilling their responsibilities, doing their duty, and making the
 most of the opportunities that God puts before them.

3. REAL MEN POSSESS _____.

The strongest man in the Bible was Samson.

But he wasn't strong enough to _____.

The Result of Not Being Able to Control Oneself:

Judges 16.21: Then the Philistines seized him, gouged out his eyes and took him
 down to Gaza. Binding him with bronze shackles, they set him to grinding in
 the prison.

Samson's story teaches us that true manhood isn't about outer strength; it's about
 _____ strength.

The difference between a man and a boy – whether it's with his anger, his lust, his
 appetites, his desire to succeed, or his strength is the ability to control his
 _____ rather than be controlled by them.

Philippians 2.8: When he appeared in human form, he humbled himself in **obedience to God.**

Matthew 26.39: ... He fell with his face to the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will."

The difference between Jesus and Samson was not what they felt inside.

It's what they _____ with what they felt.

Samson never learned self-control or obedience to God and he was always a child. Jesus mastered his desires and obeyed the Father; and when he died, he died as he had lived – like a man.

Mark 15.39: And when the centurion ... saw how he died, he said, "Surely **this man** was the Son of God!"

4. REAL MEN _____ THROUGH SERVICE AND SACRIFICE.

What redeems Walt's character is that, almost in spite of himself, he loves. He comes to love Thao and Sue and ultimately to care more about their lives than he does his own.

Walt gives Thao the gift he needs most: he invites and initiates Thao into the _____.

Women can't do that.

Passive weak men can't do that.

Only real men can communicate to a boy: you're one of us; you're accepted; you are a man.

What makes Thao into a man?

It's _____ – given by Walt Kowalski through acts of serving and ultimately sacrifice.

Walt Kowalski teaches us that _____ is more powerful than vengeance; that strength often appears as weakness; and ultimately what provides security and life for others is not a bullet coming from the barrel of a gun but love coming from the heart of a man.

These are the very lessons taught to us by the truest, strongest man who ever lived when he stretched out his arms and willingly gave himself to death that we might live, shortly after he spoke these words:

John 15.13: Greater love has no man than this – that he lay down his life for his friends.

At the heart of the male heart is the ability and the _____ to sacrifice himself in a cause that matters for the good of others.

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