

The Man Talk

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As is tradition, at the start of every new semester of training at Ellerslie (the ministry I lead in Windsor, Colorado) I gather all the men from the upcoming semester onto the chapel stage.

It's time for the "Man Talk" with Eric.

All the men, young and old, are dressed up in suit coats and ties. Our shoes are polished, our hearts stirred with anticipation, and the occasional bead of sweat can be spied slowly dripping down the forehead of one of the men. The atmosphere in the chapel is sparkling, even regal – bursting with expectancy. The tables are set for our opening night banquet while the flicker of candlelight shimmers enthusiastically about the decorated room.

When all the men arrive up onto the stage, I look each one in the eye, then clear my throat and begin.

"Men," I say in a serious, grave tone. "You have entered an environment that demands you behave as men. This is not a place for boys. This is not a place for perverts, egotists, fools, and rebels. This is a place that celebrates the dignity and nobility of manhood."

I can visibly see the discomfort in many of the men's eyes. I'm only starting my fourth sentence of the semester and yet I can perceive that some of these men are already wondering if they are supposed to be here.

"If you are planning on spending twelve weeks here on this campus," I say, "then you will spend those twelve weeks behaving as men. Men of honor. Men of purity. Men of Truth. Men of holiness. Men of humility. Men of courage. Men of God!"

Every *Man Talk* is a bit different. But all carry the same soul searching thunderous commission to rise up and behave as men.

Paul had a *Man Talk*, of sorts, with the church in the ancient city of Corinth. I must admit, that his particular *Man Talk* was a bit shorter than mine. In fact, he packaged his *Man Talk* into one very pithy word. He simply growled the word, "*Andrizomai!*"

If someone said *andrizomai* to you, you might simply shrug your shoulders and say, "Gesundheit!" After all, the word doesn't hold meaning to you and sounds more like a terrible sneeze than anything else.

But the church in Corinth knew the strong and historic commission that Paul was issuing to it with that one singular word. Paul was pressing the ancient words of Moses into their soul. These were the same words, now translated into the Koine Greek, that were originally passed on to Joshua, then passed on to David, then passed on to Solomon, and passed along through Jewish history 1,000 years until they reached Jesus Himself, who passed them on to Peter, James, John and the rest of His disciples. And now here is Paul walking in this ancient tradition passing these words of forked-lightning on to the namby-pamby Corinthian

church. And what amazes me is that, after two thousand years, somehow here, in the present day, that same powerful word of ancient Israel is being passed along to you and to me.

Andrizomai! (pronounced - an-drid'-zom-ah-ee)

Moses, when he gave his manly commission to Joshua, to be strong and of good courage shouted two words, "Chazak" and "Amats." But when translated into Koine Greek, those two ancient Hebrew words of manly gusto got packaged into one singular word of thunder and lightning... *Andrizomai!*

Simply put – Moses said to Joshua: "Be a man! Do your job manfully! Behave with the courage of a real honest-to-goodness man of God! Go! Do valiantly!"

Joshua then said to the men of Israel as they prepared to set out to conquer the nations of the giants, "Be men! March forward manfully! Behave with the guts and determination resident to true honest-to-goodness men that believe in God Almighty! Go! Be fearless in the face of the giants!"

"God's men... are purposely strong, purposely courageous, and purposely brave. They don't accidentally do what they do... they do it because it's the 'manful' thing to do..."

This ancient *Man Talk* got passed down through the ages. Typically, this ancient combination of two Hebrew words (Chazak + Amats), were repeated amongst the Jews simply through the emotion-infused phrase of "Rak Chazak!" And those two words spoken, even whispered, were enough to cause a Jewish soldier's knuckles to turn white with manly purpose, his throat to let out a guttural war cry of determination, and his soul to

grip its iron will and pull it from the scabbard.

But as Paul took up his pen, pondered the present weakness of the Corinthian church, and yearned to see the manfulness of the people of God return full force, he took the burning Hebrew phrase of Rak Chazak and packaged all its grandeur, glory, power and purpose into one singular Greek word. He shouted to Corinth, "*Andrizomai!*"

Rumor has it that I'm coming to Iowa in June to give a *Man Talk*, of sorts. Nowadays, these *Man Talks* are simply called Home-school Conferences (don't worry, ladies, you can join in, too). Unfortunately, my *Man Talk* won't be delivered to you in Hebrew or Koine Greek, the way Paul dished it out. But, though it be in a different language, it is the very same *Man Talk*. It possesses the same vigor that led Joshua to face thirty-one hostile enemy nations with dauntless courage and the same audacity that led Caleb, at the age of 85, to climb the mountain of giants and purge those dreadful characters from their long held ancient stronghold.

God's men have the thunder clap of "*Andrizomai!*" always booming within their souls. "*Rak Chazak*" infuses their thoughts, their actions, their attitudes, and their every plan and design. They are purposely strong, purposely courageous, and purpose-