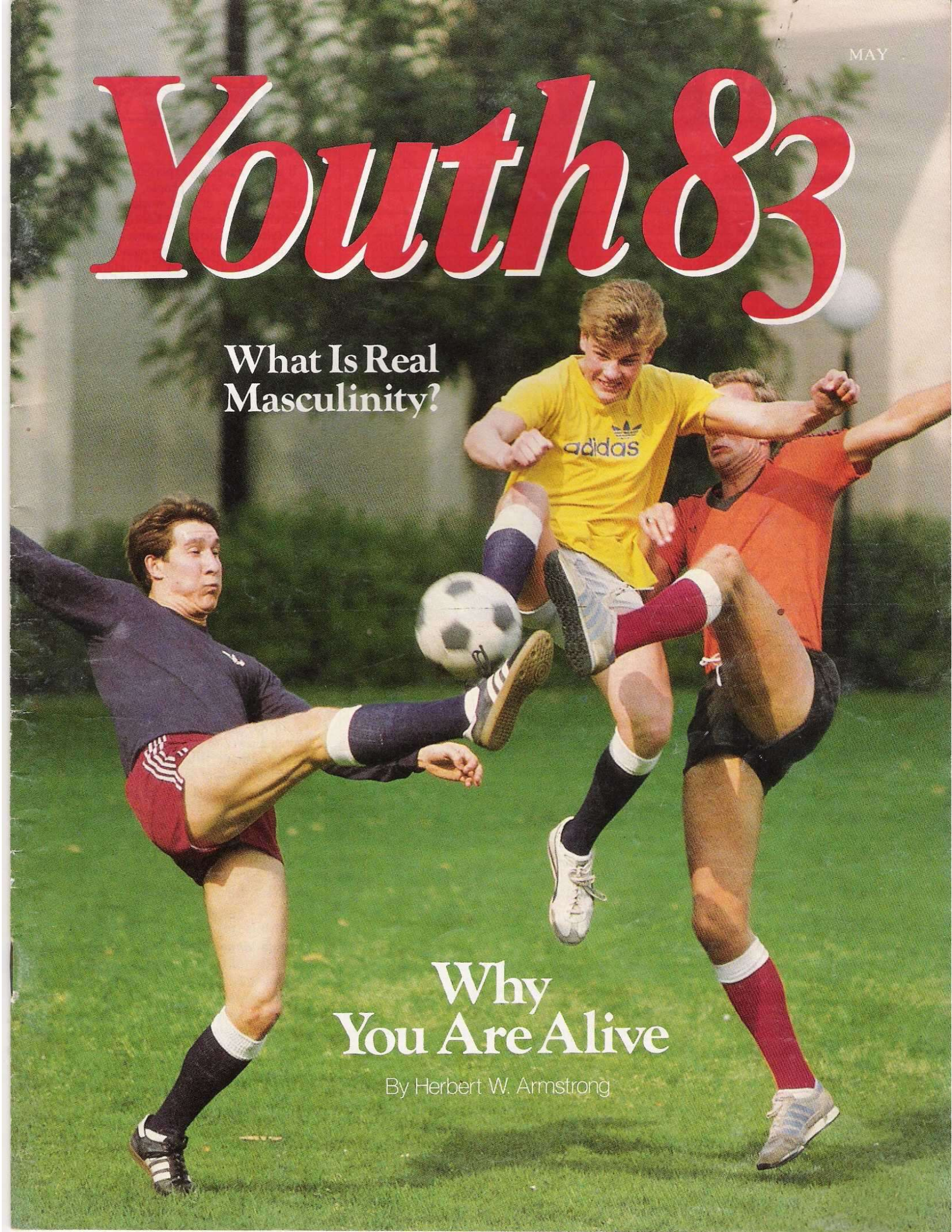


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What Is Real
Masculinity?

Why
You Are Alive

By Herbert W. Armstrong



Why YOU Are Alive

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Why are you alive? For what purpose did God put you here on this earth? Do you know?

This is the greatest, most important question your mind can contemplate just now — the most vital question of life, yet the one most people think about the least.

If, as some believe, God's purpose in our being alive is to get us "saved" — and if, as so many believe, all there is to getting "saved" is accepting Christ as Savior, then why is it that God does not instantly take each one to his reward as soon as he accepts Christ — *away* from all the continuous trials, heartaches and sufferings of this life?

The answer, briefly stated, is that God created the human family for a very great purpose — a purpose I'm afraid most professing Christians, and even most ministers, have missed entirely.

Almighty God is the supreme Artist — you see His artistry in magnificent sunsets, beautiful landscapes, awe-inspiring mountains, in the star-studded sky. God's work of artistry is CREATION. He is the supreme almighty Creator of all.

But now in man, God has set His hand to produce the crowning pinnacle of His own works of creation, yes, even higher than the angels. In man He is creating perfect, righteous, holy CHARACTER! And that is the highest, most lofty achievement that even the supreme almighty Creator can accomplish!

God's purpose in having brought you into this world — in permitting you to live and breathe — is to create in and through you



His own supreme masterpiece of creation! Is *that* important?

Oh, but you say — "Why, I'm not important — I'm not of much consequence — how could the great omnipotent God be specially concerned about me?"

It's true, you, as you are now, certainly are not very important — certainly of very little consequence — so far as your own inherent ability and capacity is concerned. God made you a little lower than the angels. He made man a little higher than dumb animals, but on his own power and initiative, man has sunken down to depths lower than any animal would be capable of reaching.

Man has *sinned* — yes, YOU have sinned! You are full of faults, weaknesses, shortcomings. You have bad habits. You probably have some secret sin you have not yet mastered and overcome, which no one knows anything about except just you — and God!

Then can you realize the sobering truth that it is the purpose of the ever-living God to make out of you — sinful and unworthy and incapable though you have been — an immortal, spiritual and holy CHARACTER so pure and noble and righteous that ultimately the eternal God Himself can look upon you with loving pride as the supreme product of all His creative power throughout eternity?

Can your mind grasp the awful greatness — the solemn immensity of that truth? And it *is* a truth. Of course, there will be many others on the same lofty high plane — just as holy and righteous characters as

you. But you are a human being, and that is God's purpose in human existence! It ought to fill you with awe — with wonder! Impossible? Not at all! It would, of course, be ridiculously, utterly impossible for you, of yourself, to transform yourself into such a creation. But with God all things are possible, and this is the zenith of all things. Remember God is ALL-powerful — He is the ALL-mighty. His power is not limited.

And that's exactly why you were born — why you are alive and reading these very lines this minute! GOD HAS A PURPOSE FOR YOU! A great, mighty, supreme purpose! Does it make you feel rather humble — lowly, insignificant, unworthy? It should!

But you see, you, yourself, do not have to do this. It is God who is the Creator. And His purpose — His supreme purpose of all eternity — is to create in you, as one precious member of the human

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Photo by Nathan Faulkner

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family, this very pinnacle of character. God Himself will do this creating. HE will do the work. HE is the divine Sculptor. You are only a piece of human clay in His hands.

But this character will not be created in you unless and until you, yourself, make the decision — unless and until you simply hunger and thirst for the pure, holy character of God to be built within you — unless and until you crucify this mortal flesh and its cravings and desires and tempers — unless you repent bitterly and deeply of sin, and will exert your utmost effort to put it down and hold it under, crying out earnestly to God with broken, contrite heart continuously, believingly, trusting Him to forgive you and to fill you with His love, His understanding and wisdom, His faith, His power, to simply take you into His capable hands and to make of you what He purposes, and what you are utterly unable to make of yourself. Yes, you have your part in it — but it is God who will impart to you His righteousness — His very own holy and righteous character!

If you'll repent, and come to God through Jesus Christ as Savior, trusting in His precious shed blood for the remission of every sin you ever committed, trusting the risen, ever-living Christ as High Priest to come literally inside you, through His Holy Spirit, and to mold, fashion, shape your character — then you'll see that the Creator is still creating in you, the very highest work of all His entire works of creation!

Yes, Christians are being "created in Christ Jesus unto good works" (Ephesians 2:10) — "created in righteousness and true holiness" (Ephesians 4:24).

For this tremendous purpose, you were made of mortal clay — made a little lower than the angels. Yes, made subject to pride, vanity, passions and tempers, the lusts and desires of the

flesh. Character is something that cannot be instantaneously created. It grows, and is developed through experiences — and experiences require time.

It requires the human lifetime, during which one must suffer temptations, encounter obstacles, endure tribulations, overcome self. But you have GOD'S POWER to draw on. It isn't really you doing it — it's God. Your part is to repent, surrender fully, wholly, unreservedly into His hands — seek Him, cry out to Him, trust Him. You have your part in it, of course, else there would *be* no character!

And all this is why "it is through much tribulation we must enter the Kingdom of God" — and "many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Eternal delivers him out of them all" — and "all who will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."

Are you persecuted, opposed, for your belief and Christian life? If not, you'd better fall to your knees quickly, and repent, and ask God to show you why you are not living godly in Christ Jesus! If you are, REJOICE — and read Matthew 5:10. But don't deliberately bring on persecution through lack of wisdom or through misdirected zeal!

Jesus Himself is our example. If they persecuted Him, so shall we be persecuted if we truly are His followers! Jesus SUFFERED! But it is recorded, "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Hebrews 5:8-9).

Again, "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour . . . for it became him . . . to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings" (Hebrews 2:9-10).

Jesus *became* perfect! He was born human, and was not perfect. He was made perfect, through suffering — He learned by the things that He suffered!

So we suffer. We learn through suffering. It develops character.

If we suffer with Him, we shall reign with Him!

Do circumstances come up in your life — adverse circumstances that may first bring fright, consternation, worry, but that drive you to your knees seeking deliverance from God — circumstances that you later see were actually sent from God to punish you — to teach you a lesson — to bring you closer to Him? God says He chastens every son whom He loves! So don't grumble, gripe and growl, REJOICE!

Do you have enemies? Can you see that the devil is literally after you, perhaps using deceived people under his sway, even though they pose as Christians? Well, rejoice! If Satan is angry with you, then you must be one of God's elect! Read Revelation 12:12-17. But you don't need to fight back against your enemies. God will fight your battles for you, if you'll just trust Him! Pray for your enemies — and be sure it's not a prayer against them. If their works are evil, do not fellowship with them — avoid them, but never be unkind to them. Everyone whom God is using, and who is accomplishing anything for Christ, will have enemies. But keep your heart filled with the love of God, your mind filled with His faith and trust Him!

Of course, you do have one enemy whom you, yourself, must fight — continuously, relentlessly. That enemy is your own SELF! You are your own worst enemy. If you, with God's help, overcome him, you shall sit with Christ on His throne, ruling over the nations!

God is the great Master Sculptor. We are His clay. If we submit into His hands, He will shape, fashion and mold out of our lives a beautiful, holy and perfect character that shall one day, when finished, become His crowning masterpiece!

It is for *that* purpose that you were born, and are alive. Don't let another day — not another hour or minute, pass by while you neglect or overlook that great purpose! Yield yourself fully to God — rededicate your life — reconsecrate yourself, utterly and wholly, and do it NOW! □