

A black silhouette of a man in a superhero costume, viewed from the front. He is tearing open his chest, revealing a glowing blue emblem. The emblem consists of a large, stylized letter 'Q' with a blue arrow pointing upwards and to the right, resembling a transgender symbol. The background is a vibrant blue with a geometric, low-poly pattern.

THE MEANING OF

MAN

BY LOGAN LIGHT

Growing up I had an infatuation with comic books; but more specifically, an infatuation with superheroes. There were the costumes, the muscles,

the capes, the powers, the tights and the over-underwear. I even made plans to become a superhero and more than once considered dumping cleaning supplies over my head to induce a gamma radiation effect. Looking back, I can see there is something about the journey that all superheroes have to take that really drew me in. Whether it was the accident that spawned greatness, the radiation that mutated into excellence, or the occasional handicap that was used to captivate, every hero had a story, and the story made the hero.

In my brief time on this earth, I've figured out a thing or two about being a man. There are times that I lose the battle and have to retreat to my fortress of solitude. I've had my experiences with kryptonite to say the least. What I have learned though gives me the power to win the war. It gives me the courage to fight for truth and justice, and lets me own up to the consequences of my actions. What I've learned is powerful.

THE COSTUME

When you think of a Man, what image pops up in your head? Is it an outdoorsman? A muscle-bound gym rat? Is he a sports guru? What does that Man wear? Surely the tights and cape of the superhero are equivalent to the designer jeans and latest kicks of the Perfect Man. The right look is key to pulling off manhood, so what exactly is that look? I always thought that I needed to be handy. I thought I needed to be tough and to sport a full beard, but that changed. I moved on to see cooler costumes; I got an upgrade if you will. The costume of the man I've learned about is truthfulness, righteousness and faithfulness. Yeah, now how do you wear that, right? Fact is, when a man models these attributes, people notice.

It's not something that can be ignored.

Do you think Superman would have been spotted from the streets if he was wearing dark purple? He went with the primary colors — the bright blue, yellow and red. Likewise, if you want to stand out as a man, you need to wear these primary characteristics: Truthfulness: conforming to the truth of Christ and reacting as such, and living and loving as he would. Righteousness: being morally upright in a zigzag world; going against the grain. And Faithfulness: being true to your word by following through with your actions. The real man understands that dressing in this way will catch the attention of the people.

THE SECRET IDENTITY

Every superhero has a secret identity and he goes to great lengths to make sure it stays that way. Batman is the king of this concept. He changes his voice when in character and behaves vastly different as Bruce Wayne. If anyone were to find out who he was he would be ruined and his alter ego would be no more. He would be forced to live either as Bruce or as Batman, but he couldn't do both.

All my life I lived just like Batman. I would don my cape and cowl for some activities and my tuxedo for others. I wasn't very consistent and eventually, like Batman, it caught up with me. I was two completely different people and it ate me up. I was forced to make a decision on which I was going to be; I chose to be the hero. That meant that I had to lose my secret identity. I decided to let everyone know who I was and what I was about. My costume was going to be permanent. It wasn't easy to do. I had to move a lot of things around and give up on even more, but it was for the best. Being

a man means you lose the secret to your identity. You need to choose who you are going to be and let people know.

THE WEAKNESS

Real men are tough and dependable. Real men don't have any weaknesses. That's what I thought, but I was wrong. We do have weaknesses and in my years of reading comic books I've noticed that it's not the weakness itself that has doomed some of my favorite characters, it's the lack of acknowledging that weakness. There were several times in Superman's illustrious hero career that he was face-to-face with kryptonite. Once this happened there was nothing he could do, he was powerless. No matter how he struggled and fought, he couldn't touch the stuff, yet he never died because of the glowing green rock. Why? On numerous occasions Superman used his friends to get rid of the kryptonite. How do you think he would have fared if he never mentioned his deadly reaction? What would Lois have done if all of a sudden Superman dropped to the ground in pain without ever acknowledging to her that it was the kryptonite causing his woes?

Lois did know about Superman's weakness and she was able to react and save him. Being a man means that you own up to your weaknesses and you let people know about it. You point out when that weakness is in your presence and you get help. Do you have friends willing to kick glowing space rocks out of your path? Better yet, do your friends even know what your kryptonite is? Being a man means that you share that you are not perfect because even Superman needed help.

LOGAN LIGHT is an admissions recruiter for Harding University in Searcy, Ark.



Be a real man. Cut out this pledge and stick it on your mirror, your locker, or keep it in your wallet as a reminder of what real men look like.

I am a man, a real man. I stand for justice. I am draped in truthfulness, faithfulness, and righteousness. My secret identity isn't so secret and my weaknesses are known by many. I am part of a brotherhood, an alliance fighting against evil. I have shaken off what the world tells me I should be like and I have accepted my true calling. I am not defined by sports, or books or the woods. I am a hero. I am a man.