

## **THE "MASCULINE JOURNEY" A TURN DOWN THE *WRONG ROAD!***

In recent times, large numbers of Christian men are flocking to an organization entitled "Promise Keepers." The idea sounds good, and perhaps some of what takes place is biblically sound. However, the organization is promoting a book by psychologist Robert Hicks, *The Masculine Journey*, which is grounded in a fundamentally unscriptural doctrine of man.

At first glance, this book gives the superficial appearance of biblical truth. After all, the author's view is centered around six biblical Hebrew words that describe "man." Biblical characters are cited as examples of each "developmental stage" in the life of the adult male. But appearances are often deceiving.

The author states the purpose of his book:

"...to reveal this male developmental journey and provide directions for a man's life so that he doesn't get lost along the way." (p. 14)

Hicks believes it is important to know "what is appropriate for each season" (p. 21). He assumes that "adult life is not static" (p. 20), and that "what a man is depends on what season he is in" (p. 23). He lists four "developmental tasks" supposedly required at each "stage:" "separation from the past," "initiation to something new," "transition from one place to the other," and "temporary confusion." In all of this, he believes that he is presenting a "normative male...validated by contemporary men's issue research" (p. 22). *But can such "contemporary research" present a view of the normative Christian male?* The author cites 1 John 2:12-14 to claim that it is, that "even in the issues of faith...different ages have differing spiritual challenges and demand different resources" (p. 23). *Is this really a valid comparison? Do Hicks' "developmental stages" have any correspondence to God's instructions in 1 John?* That particular passage is not cited again in the book; the author does not demonstrate its relevance to what he is teaching.

Hicks mentions, but rejects, Carl Jung's theory of "feminine spirits (anima) that have been lying dormant within us" (p. 16). He also notes, and likewise rejects, Robert Bly's use of mythology to define manhood, yet states that he prefers Bly's "wild man within" to the Jungian approach (p. 17). Nevertheless, he frequently makes favorable quotes of both Jung and Bly, along with Sam Keen. Both Bly and Keen are popular authors in the secular

men's movement, and their writings are *anything but* a biblical definition of manhood.

There are numerous theological problems revealed in this book. The nature of man, as created in the "image of God," is flawed. The original condition of man is erroneous. The author's view of sin distorts biblical truth. This cracked foundation has crucial implications for sanctification, where again the author's conclusions are unscriptural. This paper will examine the basic doctrine of man presented in *The Masculine Journey*, as well as the impact on sanctification. We will consider man's creation and original condition, the meaning of "image of God," male as contrasted with female, and the author's view of man's sinful condition resulting from the fall. First, however, we must briefly examine the author's basic approach and his use of biblical Hebrew.

### **Hebrew Word Studies**

The following six words, all used extensively in the Old Testament, have been chosen by Hicks to represent six successive "stages" in the life of the adult male:

<i>Adam</i>	"Creational Male: The Noble Savage"
<i>Zakar</i>	"Phallic Male: The Mysterious Taskmaster"
<i>Gibbor</i>	"The Warrior: The Glorious Hero"
<i>Enosh</i>	"Wounded Male: Painful Incongruency"
<i>Zaken</i>	"The Sage: The Fulfilled Man"

The author claims that these six words:

"...provided me with a biblical framework that was both descriptive of the long-standing male experience throughout the centuries and also true to the current literature. The words also seem to reflect the same seasonal or developmental aspects that have been demonstrated in so many of the recent men's studies." (p. 19)

Note the author's desire to be true to the "current literature" and "recent men's studies" *as well as the Bible*. This is impossible! These recent psychological sources do not share the Bible's presuppositions about the nature of man, as created in God's image, good and upright, then fallen into radical depravity.

Hicks admits that his words:

"...do not always have the same meaning in every context, therefore the meaning I ascribe to each of these words is not necessarily universal" but they "do say something very descriptive and normative about the masculine experience."  
(p. 19)

Notice, in this quotation as well as the other, the author's concern for *experience* in his definition of growth in the life of man.

One of the fundamental problems in this type of approach is the attempt to build a theological *concept*, such as a doctrine of man, around the study of individual *words*. Even more seriously, the author injects his psychological presuppositions, based heavily on Freud and Jung, into the words he has chosen. He forces these words to serve his purposes, lending false support to his unscriptural view of man. He ought to look more carefully at what the Scripture actually says about the nature of man and his fall into sin.

Hicks' admission, that these words do not always carry exactly the same meaning in every context, is a gross understatement. There are significant areas of overlap among the six words. The author chooses to disregard the synonymity that is noted regularly in Hebrew reference works. There are intricate relationships among these words. They are intertwined, not demonstrating the separation that the author wants to promote, and certainly not six successive "stages" in the life of the adult male!

*Adam*, *ish*, and *enosh* are all general terms for "man" or "mankind," synonymous in some contexts, distinguished in others. Numerous other relationships of synonymity and inclusiveness occur among all six words.

*Adam* is used as the personal name of the first man, and also used for Christ as the Second or Last Adam. It occurs 562 times in the Old Testament, being used for the first time in the creation accounts of Genesis 1-2. It can refer to man as created in the image of God and the crown of creation. It is etymologically related to the word *adamah*, for ground; man was originally formed out of that ground (Genesis 2:7). *Adam* is sometimes used in a collective sense for mankind, other times for a single man. It is prominent in texts stressing the relationship between God and man. Like several of the other words, it may emphasize the distinction between God and man. It is parallel to

*enosh* in several passages (Psalm 8:5, 73:5, 90:3, 144:3; Job 25:5; Isaiah 13:12, 51:12).

*Enosh* is used primarily (though not exclusively) in poetic passages, most frequently in Job (18 of a total 42 occurrences). It specifically highlights man's weakness, frailty, and mortality. However, this nuance is not nearly as prominent as Hicks claims. The *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* notes that:

"There are only a few passages in which this meaning is clearly intended, and which would permit a corresponding distinction between *enosh* and *adam*." (p. 346)

The word may be used as a collective for mankind, or for an individual man, like *adam*. Also like *adam*, it may emphasize the difference between the immortal God and mortal man. Occasionally it can mean "trusted friend" or refer to the heart of man. It is possibly related in etymology to *ish*, as well as to *anashim*, another word for men, and *nashim* (women). It is parallel to *gebher* (a relative of *gibbor*) in Job 4:17 and 10:5. It is used for violent or hostile men in Isaiah 51:7, Psalm 45:2, Psalm 66:12, and 2 Chronicles 14:10. Two times it means "unfaithful friend" (Jeremiah 20:10, Psalm 55:14). Two other times it is used of those suffering punishment (Isaiah 13:7, 33:8). As noted earlier, it is parallel to (and synonymous with) *adam* in several passages.

It is significant to note, in connection with *enosh*, that "wounded" never appears as a definition in any of the Hebrew lexicons. *Mortality* is not synonymous with being "wounded" by the sins of either oneself or others, although mortality does result from original sin. Several other Hebrew words are used to describe wounding.

*Ish* is used extensively in the Old Testament, a total of 2,160 occurrences. Its etymology is uncertain, but perhaps comes from a root meaning "to be strong." It is sometimes parallel to *gebher*, which denotes strength, as well as *adam*, *enosh*, *zakar*, and *baal*. Like *adam* and *enosh*, *ish* may be used in a general sense for man, person, or human being. Though more frequently used for an individual man, *ish* may be used for "mankind" in sharp distinction from God, again overlapping *adam* and *enosh*. Often it distinguishes man from woman, as well as from animals and God. Manliness and masculine qualities are emphasized. More specifically, *ish* as husband contrasts with *ishah*, wife; this is first seen in Genesis 2:23 when Eve is created out of the side of Adam. It is similar to *zakar* in its distinction of masculine from

feminine. *Ish* also contrasts with *yeled* and *naar* (youth, young man) and *zaken* (old man). In the book of Hosea, *ish* is used figuratively for God as the "husband" of Israel. In construct form ("man of..."), this word denotes position or rank, station or work, as well as nationality, tribe, or geographical residence. The term "man of God" is a technical phrase for the office of prophet, though occasionally used in a wider sense.

Zakar is a more specific word, with a far lower frequency (82 times, plus 3 uses in adjectival form and 4 occurrences of the related noun *zekhur*). Occurring first in Genesis 1:27, *zakar* is "male" in distinction from "female." It is used for male persons of all ages, as well as male animals. It occurs in biblical regulations concerning sacrifice, circumcision, the Israelite census, prohibitions of homosexuality, war, the social/religious status of men, and vows, all contexts where male is distinguished from female. The etymology is uncertain. Hicks places great emphasis on its origin in a Semitic root meaning "to be sharp, pointed," but the *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* notes this to be conjecture rather than established fact (p. 83):

"The etymology of *zakar* is obscure; we can conjecture that the root conception is 'be sharp, pointed.' The evidence of Arabian *dakar*, meaning both 'male' and 'penis,' supports what is in any case the probable conclusion that the basic reference is 'penis, phallus.' In Ezekiel 16:17, the phrase *tsalme zakar* apparently indicates images containing phallic symbols; but even here the reference is to the sexual character of the image rather than to the phallus itself, which is consistent with the meaning found elsewhere." (p. 83)

Other reference works do not even comment on this historical background, except a passing notation in Brown-Driver-Briggs Lexicon. This is important to note, because Hicks bases his entire concept of the "phallic male" around this conjectured origin, reading a *concept* into an individual *word*. The Bible does have a great deal to say about the human male, his responsibilities before God and his relationship to woman, but these biblical teachings are not centered around the male sexual organ as represented by this author.

Gibbor, occurring 159 times in the Old Testament, conveys the sense of power, strength, superiority, and excellence. It is related to several other Hebrew words with a similar sense of strength. In verbal form, the following meanings are noted in the *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*:

1. "To be strong," or in the comparative sense "to be stronger than, exceed, be superior to, have the upper hand" (qal pattern).
2. "To use more power" or "to make strong" (piel pattern).
3. "To make oneself greater than another, to boast, to be proud" or "to prove oneself to be strong" in battle against an enemy (hithpael pattern).
4. "To be prominent," "to play a (the primary) role," "to be important," "to have significance," "to be of use or to be distinguished," "to exceed," "to win the victory" (hiphil pattern).

The *gibbor* is a particularly strong or mighty man, perhaps a champion or a hero in battle, perhaps even a despot (Genesis 10:8). The word may be used metaphorically for an influential, respected man, or ironically for a man who drinks wine excessively. God is also referred to as *Gibbor*, particularly in His saving acts. So also the anticipated Messiah (Christ), *El Gibbor*, establishes His kingdom in righteousness and justice. The word carries the sense of prevailing over one's enemies and is most frequently used in the context of military activities. In Job and Psalms, the *gibbor* is the man who stands in the right relationship with God, the humble man who fears and trusts the Lord. This clearly contrasts with the secular "warrior" who trusts in his own strength.

Zaken is a specific term for "old man" or "elder" that we might view as included in the terms with a broader range, such as *adam*, *ish*, and *enosh*. It is used 178 times in the Old Testament, with about one-third of those occurrences referencing old age. No specific age is given, but *zaken* is viewed in contrast to terms like *naar* for "youth." Some passages characterize old age as a time of weakness and decline, but the Wisdom Literature often speaks of the aged as having wisdom. However, other texts balance this by noting that wisdom does not necessarily accompany old age (Psalm 119:10, Job 12:12 and 32:9, Ecclesiastes 4:13). The Bible teaches the obligation of younger people to honor those who are older, both inside and outside the family.

*Zaken* is also used in a technical sense for the elders as a judicial council in ancient Israel, giving counsel and making decisions about judicial matters. They are the ones who requested a king and later remained an "advisory board" with independent

authority. It was the elders who alerted King Josiah to read God's law when it was rediscovered (2 Kings 23:1). The elders were an influential group both during and after the exile.

One primary error that runs throughout this book is the author's emphasis on the historical development of word meanings (etymology). The etymology of a word, over a long period of time, is not what determines its meaning at a particular point in time. When studying Scripture, it is important to understand the usage of a word *at that time*. While it is interesting to study the development of a word's meaning over time, it is erroneous to read all of that history into the word's meaning at a *specific* time in biblical history.

There is much more that could be said about these six words and their overlapping relationships in the Old Testament, as well as additional related words that Hicks does not mention. However, it should be evident at this point that these words do not represent six separate, distinct "stages" in the life of the adult male. The author of *The Masculine Journey* has taken a little truth about each word in order to serve his preconceived purposes, rather than looking at what the Scripture actually *teaches* about the nature of man and how his sanctification should progress during this earthly life. That purpose requires a wide study of the Scriptures, perhaps utilizing some word studies along the way but not building an entire theology on such a flimsy foundation.

## **Adam**

The theologically alert reader should recognize danger at the outset of Hicks' discussion of *adam*, when he begins with a quote of Charles Darwin, taken from his book *The Descent of Man*:

"Man with all of his noble qualities still bears in his bodily frame the indelible stamp of his lowly origin."

**The Origin and Original Condition of Man.** The scriptural account of man's creation is anything but *lowly!* While Hicks does not describe himself as an evolutionist (theistic or otherwise), he borrows the term "noble savage" from sociologist Margaret Mead and uses it repeatedly in this chapter. He says that "within the most noble of desires there also exists an often surprising savagery" (p. 32). Savagery...or sin? The two terms are hardly synonymous; "savage" alludes to evolution. Mead's research with uncivilized people was based on the humanistic assumption that man is inherently good until corrupted by society.

The "noble savage" or "creational man" is described as one who has "unique capabilities that are honorable and divine" but is capable "at the same time (of) horrible, destructive evil" (p. 23). Hicks claims that "we must embrace both aspects in ourselves" (p. 41). Such a statement appeals to the flesh, encouraging sinful man to "embrace" and express his sin while maintaining his self-esteem. Such a notion is antithetical to Scripture, which calls the believer to crucify the passions of the flesh (Galatians 5:24).

"Savage" also obscures that the fact that man's origin is anything but lowly. After God performed His initial acts of creation by creative fiat ("let it be"), He changed His mode of creation when he directly formed the first man out of the dust of the earth and imparted His divine breath (Genesis 2:7). Hicks apparently recognizes the creation of man out of earth, as he refers to the etymological roots of *adam* in "dark, red soil and red blood" (p. 32). However, he claims that *adam* is "mankind at the most base level of flesh, blood, and dirt" (p. 32). Such a statement is inconsistent with man's original condition of righteousness. After God created man in His image, the crown of creation, He "saw that it was good" (Genesis 1:31). Man was created in God's image, in a state of uprightness and integrity, consisting of both moral agency (freedom, rationality, religiosity) and moral excellence (righteousness, holiness, knowledge). Hicks seems only to acknowledge the former, stressing man's freedom to pursue either good or evil, apparently without regard to regeneration. This places man in a state of moral *neutrality*, contrary to the biblical teaching of man's utter *depravity* in the unregenerate state.

**The Image of God.** The author recognizes the image of God in man, but there are distortions of his view. Citing Psalm 8:4, along with Genesis 2:7 and 6:3, he claims that:

"To be creaturely means to have a dignity and worth not derived from our performance or obtainments but by our birth and being." (p. 37)

In addition, Hicks brings in man's dominion over the earth, stating that:

"It is awesome to think that God is looking to me to reveal what He is like, but that seems to be intended meaning of the term *image of God*." (p. 33)



Is this true...that God is looking man to reveal what He is like? Let's hope not! In his original state of integrity, man reflected God's glory; he was created with moral excellence. But now? Hicks is confusing on this point. Here is what he says about dominion after the Fall:

"The earthly vice-regent of God has had his crown stolen and has fallen prey to his own earthly rule. He is now ruled by his own passions, ambitions, compulsions, and addictions, rather than ruling in the divine majesty for which he was created." (p. 41)

More than one problem emerges here. Stating that man's crown was "stolen," Hicks clouds man's moral responsibility for the Fall. Also, the term "divine majesty" tends to deify man, who was to always to remain God's *servant* even in exercising dominion.

The author's comments about the image of God reveal serious misunderstandings. He obscures man's original condition of righteousness, raising suspicions that he perhaps holds to a form of theistic evolution. He fails to recognize the aspect of moral excellence, and the fact that in that specific sense man has *lost* the image of God. His major emphasis is instead on man's *being* and his moral agency as the image God. Dominion, another emphasis, is one way in which man *functions* as the image of God, but not the *only* way.

**Self-Esteem.** Hicks' basic errors come to full bloom in his pursuit of self-esteem, which he claims to ground in the image of God:

"If God has made both male and female in His own image, there is then something to be valued and esteemed in the self of every human being." (p. 37)

He claims to be in line with *secular* reasoning as well as biblical truth in this area:

"The entire self-help movement has assumed as its first premise that self-esteem is something to be valued, sought, and recovered. Now, I don't debate the premise as a Christian." However, he asks: "Why should the self be valued and improved?" (p. 36)

We must question this common assumption that self-esteem should be sought. It is true, of course, that God forbids murder (Genesis 6:3) and slander (James 3:9) based on the presence of His image in

man. However, these commands are rooted in the fact that murder and slander offend *primarily* against God. Nowhere does Scripture teach that man ought to seek his own glory. He is to value human life, certainly, and in doing so he honors his Creator. However, when we acknowledge the biblical truth about man's original righteousness, and the fact that by willful transgression of God's law he has *lost* God's image in this sense, we are faced with the gravity of sin--not a call to pursue self-esteem in the manner promoted by modern psychologists. On the contrary, one of the major roots of sin is man's seeking of his own glory rather than God's glory.

**Mortality.** Hicks rightly recognizes the mortality of man, and that quality is indeed a connotation of the Hebrew *adam*. He notes, accurately, that we are *dependent* people despite assertions of psychologists that we can do anything we set our minds to do! (p. 38) He is also correct in noting our cultural focus on youthful sexuality and outward appearance (p. 39). However, he misses the mark when he says that:

"To talk of mortality leads logically and naturally to the more shadowy side of our nobility." (p. 40)

Sin is not merely the "more shadowy side of our nobility." Nor is sin the "savage within." *Without distinguishing between unbeliever and believer*, this author teaches two apparently equal aspects to human nature which must both be "embraced." He fails to clearly recognize the total inability of the unregenerate man to please God (Romans 8:7-8), and the total depravity that corrupts every aspect of man. He does make some statements that give the appearance of biblical truth about sin:

"Until I realize the evil that I am capable of, I don't really believe that Jesus Christ means all that much. I may know I am saved, but I have no real idea of what I am saved from." (p. 42)

But is it really possible to experience regeneration *without* some sense of what one has been saved from, *without* a knowledge of one's own sin, in other words, *without* genuine repentance?

Furthermore, Hicks' statements about man's "nobility" do not clearly state that man is *only* capable of actions that please God by the power of the Holy Spirit. "Nobility" is not an inherent part of human nature. Man is not a two-sided coin with autonomous and equal power to choose good or evil. He no longer has the power of "contrary choice" that he enjoyed prior to the Fall. In

his unregenerate state, he is unable to choose good, but has only the power of "alternative choice." He is able to choose only between morally equivalent alternatives. When regenerated, he is enabled *by the Holy Spirit* to do what is pleasing to God. He progressively grows in righteousness, although he continues to battle sin during this life time.

**Solomon.** Hicks states that Solomon:

"...as the Davidic king, is seen in both the royal aspect of creational greatness and his extreme fallenness." (p. 44)

His "creational greatness" is claimed to be the wisdom he requested from God (p. 44). His fallenness is seen in his multiplication of horses, wives, and wealth, serving his own pleasures and passions near the end of his life (p. 45).

One wonders why the author has chosen Solomon rather than Adam as an example of *adam*. Had he chosen to look biblically at Adam, he could have clearly taught the original righteousness of man, and he could have written about how sin and death came to all men because of the one (original) sin of Adam. Instead, he has chosen a man who is fallen from birth. In doing so, he teaches that man *in his fallen state* has equal capabilities for good and evil. He thus misses both the integrity of man at creation, and the total depravity into which he has fallen. In all of this he seriously minimizes the Fall.

## **Zakar**

This word, or "stage," is used to emphasize male sexuality. The author's stress throughout the chapter is on the male sexual organ. He claims that the Bible "simply defines manhood by the phallus" (p. 49), and that men are naturally focused as this aspect of their anatomy:

"...a critical aspect of maleness is our innate sexual focus on the phallus, which either gets denied, denigrated, or perverted." (p. 24)

The author is specifically concerned about the failure of *Christians* to speak openly about this area:

"Current Christianity cannot openly deal with or talk about the male phallus in its full sexual activity or fantasy." (p. 54)

At the other extreme are secular therapists, who:

"...have not given much attention to the adjacent spiritual issues that surround a full understanding of the phallus."  
(p. 54)

Therefore, the author concludes that while the church elevates religion and devalues sexuality, psychiatry engages in the reverse error. In contrast to both are pagan societies, where:

"...sexuality was seen as an important aspect of uniting the spiritual with the physical and with the worship of gods and goddesses." (p. 53)

Hicks does not suggest that sexuality and spirituality should be united in this pagan manner (p. 53). However, he cites silence in the Christian community as a basic *cause* of immorality, thus diluting personal responsibility for sin:

"Without proper teaching on the phallus, men will carry around in their psyches a spiritual god-hunger so mysterious and powerful that when driven underground, it will seek spiritual fulfillment only in the secrecy of motel rooms, adult videos, and in the bragging and joking about sexual exploits in athletic locker rooms." (p. 55)

In Scripture, this type of behavior is characteristic of the *unbeliever*, the person who does not have the indwelling Spirit (Ephesians 4:17-24; Galatians 5:16-24; Romans 1:18-32). Sexual perversions are *works of the flesh*, resulting not from ignorance but from sin, from the deceitful desires of the flesh. Immoral behavior is characteristic of the *unbeliever*. Christians do sometimes fall into sin, but it is erroneous to claim that silence in the church drives believers into the immoral activities described by this author.

Hicks connects immorality with idolatry, and rightly so:

"...our sexual compulsions, addictions, and aberrations have become our expressions of worship--worship of a false god."  
(p. 55)

His explanation, however, is rooted in discredited Freudian theories of psycho-sexual developmental stages rather than in *anything* taught *anywhere* in the Scripture:

"Our sexual problems only reveal how desperate we are to express, in some perverted form, the deep compulsion to worship with our phallus.... In time, the phallus itself becomes our god." (p. 56)

It is true that man, in his apostasy, has exchanged the worship of the Creator for the worship of created things (Romans 1:23). But where does the Bible ever say that man has a "deep compulsion to worship with (his) phallus?" It never does. Man is exhorted to worship and love God with his *whole being*, not merely his sexual organs. Again, sexual perversions arise out of the sinful *heart* of man, the sinful *desires* resident in that heart. Man is fully *responsible* before God for his sexual (and other) sins.

Quoting Sam Keen, whose analysis of man bears no resemblance to Scripture, Hicks claims that some men never grow past this "stage" of their "developmental journey." Such a theory is grounded in Freud, not in the Bible. The believer, whatever his age, is instructed to crucify the passions of the flesh, to put off the "old man" prior to conversion, and to "put on" Jesus Christ. Nothing in Scripture indicates that an adult male must pass through a "phallic stage."

Hicks does devote some space to the regulations given by God for sexuality. He notes such abominations as bestiality and homosexuality, clearly called sin (p. 57-8). However, he promotes psychological "explanations" of such sin, particularly homosexuality. He blames childhood experiences for the conclusion of many homosexuals that they were "born that way":

"We think 'normative' is whatever our experience has been. One of the main characteristics of children raised in dysfunctional homes is that they have no real idea what normative behavior looks like." (p. 62)

But as *Christians*, we are never to look to experience to determine what God requires of us! We are look to God's revelation in Scripture, and to that alone.

Hicks goes on to relate his experience in counseling "gay men" for some twenty years, stating that not one has had a "normative childhood or normative adolescent development in the sexual arena" (p. 62). He believes that:

"...gay issues...are major identity issues that are the result of traumatic experiences and that have created significant amounts of grief and loss in the gay's

personhood." The homosexual is thus "simply alienated from some valid part of her/himself." Their "masculinity was stolen" and they are "trying to reunite their phallus with their own lost manhood." (p. 62)

Supposedly, all of this "explains" later sexual deviations, but is strangely mixed with a brief statement of truth:

"The later addictions were just the perverted attempts to recover what was lost. The Bible simply calls them what they are: abominations."

Overall, this reflects a deficient, unscriptural view of the nature of sin. Homosexuality is truly called an *abomination* in the Bible, not an alienation from some part of self! Sin is fundamentally the transgression of God's law. It *always* involves God, in opposition to psychological views that redefine it as something within *self*.

Even in the lives of men who are not homosexual, this author explains away their sins by the actions of others:

"In normal sexual relations, our fragile male egos are on the line, and often the slightest rejection of our advances from our wives or lovers can drive us quickly into seclusion, brooding, and hurt. Pornography solves the problem." (p. 65)

Does it really? This is a convenient excuse for violating God's laws. It ignores the fact that Christ has broken the power of sin in the life of the believer (Romans 6:1-14), who now has the indwelling Holy Spirit empowering godly actions.

The suggestions of the author in this area are beyond belief. He says that "many would balk at my thought of celebrating the experience of sin" (p. 177), but laments that:

"...we usually give the teenagers in our churches such a massive dose of condemnation regarding their first experiences with sin that I sometimes wonder how any of them ever recover." (p. 177)

He recommends the following "initiation rite" as a solution:

"...perhaps at this point the true elders could come forward and confess their own adolescent sins and congratulate the next generation for being human." (p. 177)

This is radically opposed to the wisdom God reveals in the Scriptures for young men:

"My son, give attention to my wisdom, incline your ear to my understanding; that you may observe discretion, and your lips may reserve knowledge. For the lips of an adulteress drip honey, and smoother than oil is her speech; but in the end she is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword. Her feet go down to death, her steps lay hold of Sheol. She does not ponder the path of life; her ways are unstable, she does not know it." (Proverbs 6:1-6)

There is much more in the surrounding verses to demonstrate the *godly counsel* that should be given to young people by their parents and other Christian adults. These Scriptures are written in the spirit of solemn warning, showing that the "fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction" (Proverbs 1:7). Such counsel should, of course, be given in a spirit of genuine love and concern for young souls, not self-righteous condemnation. But what this author suggests is an approach that dishonors God and can hardly be claimed to promote the kind of righteous living that does honor God.

**Samson.** The biblical character that Hicks holds up as an example is Samson, whose "fatal flaw was his phallus" (p. 66). It is hardly instructive to hold up a man who sinned so greatly in this area, rather than someone who used his sexuality righteously, controlling the lusts of the flesh.

In addition, the extreme focus on the phallus is hardly a biblical way to describe what is most fundamental to manhood. The author would have done better to describe more fully the relationship that God intended between man and wife, along with the leadership that men are to provide in both their families and churches. Sexuality was created by God and honors Him when rightly used. The human body was created by God and "God saw that it was good" (Genesis 1:31); it is not inherently evil as claimed by some pagan philosophies, and as implied by Roman Catholic views about sin being rooted in "sensual" bodily desires. Sin arises out of the heart of man. This author, however, does not fully recognize the serious sin resident in the human heart--nor does he see the power of the Holy Spirit in the Christian to empower righteous living. The chapter on the "phallic man" is one of the most serious concerns about this book.

**Gibbor**

Hicks draw the "warrior" theme from the secular men's movement, particularly the writings of Robert Bly and Sam Keen. He also leans heavily on Carl Jung's speculations about "archetypes" existing in the "collective unconscious." A few of his remarks are biblical, but these bits of truths are buried in an onslaught of basically unscriptural teachings.

Warriors, says Hicks, "war to be the best, the biggest, the toughest, the richest, the smartest...to kill the competition" (p. 24). Our society, he claims, devalues warriors at times but glorifies them excessively at other times (p. 25). His greatest concern is apparently over the former:

"Whether it is from dysfunctional family backgrounds, multiple job firings, or divorces, they are dead. The warrior-within has departed." (p. 72)

"...our contemporary society has devalued the role of the warrior, if not the very existence of such. Battles, guns, bombs, swords, knives, blood--these are the accoutrements of the warrior, but most of these are decried as violent by women." (p. 73)

Hicks *assumes*, without adequate substantiation, that the "male warrior instinct" is "woven into the fabric of our being as men" (p. 78). He claims that the Bible also makes this assumption, and therefore does not condemn the warrior (p. 85). Departing from Scripture, he digs into the ungodly speculations of Carl Jung, well-known psychologist who immersed himself in occult activities and rejected the gospel:

"Over the millennia, the Warrior has become in the collective unconscious the archetype of resistance to evil in its myriad forms.... Today, no male archetype is under greater attack than the Warrior." (p. 75, quoting Patrick Arnold, *Wildman, Warriors, and Kings*)

The author moves further into the godless speculations of psychology when he states that men *unconsciously* "use the language of the warrior" (p. 77).

Hicks apparently advocates an inner journey to discover the "warrior" within oneself:

"Men who never discover the warrior aspect of their being are not real men. They are what Robert Bly calls 'mother-bound'



boys still in need of a sword to cut their adult souls away from their mothers." (p. 76)

Fundamentally, man is seen in this system as a *victim* rather than a sinner who is responsible before God:

"Many men today are so abused and defeated by life that I am afraid they don't have enough of the warrior left in them to defend themselves, their families, or their societies." (p. 78-9)

The men's movement, rooted in an unbiblical view about the nature of man, comes to the rescue:

"Much of what the growing men's movement in America is about is the recovery of the warrior, often to the dismay of women, especially feminists." (p. 75)

In line with this type of thinking, Hicks advises men to "embrace the latent or rejected warrior within" (p. 85).

A "pride of winning" is clearly seen by this author in his analysis of the "warrior" stage, as noted in the statement that "men must win some battles to prove to themselves that they are men" (p. 92). This attitude is carried to disturbing extremes:

"The 'high' of killing is one of the least understood and most ignored phenomena in many circles because of its radical implications for human nature." (p. 84)

Is this meant to imply that the *Christian* has homicidal instincts and receives a "high" from murdering others? Such a statement indeed has "radical implications for human nature," but not *biblical* implications. Hicks mentions that even as an unbeliever he saw that God sanctioned the taking of human life in war and capital punishment (p. 79); what he fails to note here is that capital punishment (Genesis 9:6) is specifically grounded in the fact that man is created in God's image, so that murder of another person is primarily an offense against *God*. War, in the Old Testament, generally involves God's execution of judgment, via human means, of peoples who engaged in extreme wickedness over long periods of times.

Amidst all of the psychobabble, Hicks also makes some scriptural statements that are in line with what the Bible actually teaches about the godly "gibbor." Because of this mixture of truth with error, it is all the more essential to be

discerning about *The Masculine Journey*. Note in particular the following:

"The warrior never serves himself. He is a servant of the king and his commander." (p. 85)

"Power must always serve the higher values of the King." (p. 85)

"Isaiah declares that a man's real warrior strength lies in such things as repentance, resting in one's salvation, and in the quiet trust of God (Isaiah 30:15)." (p. 86)

"The warrior does not trust in his own abilities, although he does maintain a healthy perspective on them." The "spiritual warrior" is one who trusts the Lord (Psalm 40:4, Jeremiah 17:5). (p. 87)

It is also noted that a man ought to be prepared to defend his family from harm.

However, in the middle of other biblical comments, the author notes that the warrior may become a violent man, and that:

"...though these attributes are not the idea for the true warrior (Psalm 52), they do raise the very real possibilities inherent in the warrior psyche." (p. 87)

There is a confusing mixture here of biblical statements with Freudian psychic determinism. Nothing in Scripture either teaches or implies that there is a "warrior within" or that homicidal tendencies are an inherent aspect of the inner man. *Freud* taught something of this nature when he proposed the ludicrous theory of the Oedipus complex, but remember that *Freud* blatantly rejected God and thus did not acknowledge man as created in the image of *God*.

The applications that *Hicks* makes, even concerning his more biblical statements, are appalling. His teachings are consistent with modern psychology's emphasis on self-assertion, an emphasis that is antithetical to biblical humility. For example:

"So we must find our warrior courage in others to consider ourselves men. Today, that may happen the first time we stand up to our fathers, or ask our mothers to stop criticizing, or stop allowing our family members to

manipulate us. It will probably vary with each man."  
(p. 93)

"Wherever the bears are in our lives, we must call forth the warrior within us to kill them. We must trust God with the outcomes and risk psychological or even physical injury to self or others--all in order to become men. *What is a man without his sword?*" (p. 94)

What has happened here to Hicks' earlier counsel to serve God rather than self, to quietly trust God rather than self? These applications are psychologized nonsense which oppose the biblical picture of a godly man.

Hicks sees the "warrior" as a necessary stage rather than the final goal of manhood (p. 85), a stage that is inappropriate for an older man (p. 94). He sees the challenge of the warrior as "knowing what to fight for, and knowing when to quit" (p. 95). Yet he ignores vast portions of relevant Scripture about *what* the believer must fight for. The New Testament has a great deal to say about spiritual warfare in the life of the believer. Perhaps because of this author's concentration on Old Testament words, he says absolutely nothing about the Christian battle with spiritual powers of wickedness (Ephesians 6:12ff), his ongoing struggle with sin (Romans 7:14-25; Galatians 5:17), and his fight to defend the faith (2 Timothy 2:3-4, 4:7; Jude 3). These spiritual struggles cut across gender lines; both male and female Christians are engaged in spiritual battle, contrary to Hicks' claim that only the male is a "warrior."

**David.** The biblical character cited in this section is David, who engaged in much warfare and was not allowed to build God's temple because of the excessive blood he had shed:

"Apparently, houses dedicated to the service of God were not to be built by men of war. Warriors have their place, but not in certain kinds of spiritual service. The very blood that David shed in conquering Israel's enemies became for him the stumbling block preventing him from building God's house." (p. 92)

To his credit, Hicks does recognize David as a "spiritual warrior" because he trusted in the Lord rather than his own strength (p. 91). However, the analysis above is hardly evidence for the "warrior stage" of adult male life that is promoted by Hicks. Something about David's shedding of blood may have been *sinful* in the eyes of the Lord, and sin is never considered, in any form, a

necessary "stage" of human life. It is interesting that Hicks does not apply the *enosh* or *ish* stages to David's life. He selectively chooses one aspect of David's royal reign. Also, Scripture does not provide the explanation offered by Hicks as to why God chose to have the temple built by Solomon. Hicks is engaging in speculation here, speculation based on his psychological presuppositions.

It would have been better to consider the life of the apostle Paul to understand proper spiritual warfare. Once a man who waged war against the Christian faith, he became one of its most courageous defenders, fighting the "good fight" of faith and instructing the believer about the spiritual wars of this life. Looking at Paul and his New Testament writings would be an excellent way of examining the place of war in the life of a godly man or woman. Instead, Hicks takes us on a turn down the wrong road, where we become entangled in the dangerous speculations of ungodly men like Freud and Jung.

## **Enosh**

The word *enosh* is said to represent "man in his weakness, in his frailty" (p. 25). While the Hebrew word does emphasize human weakness, frailty, and mortality (in addition to more general uses), this is a far cry from the "wounded" man presented by Hicks. The author buys into the popular psychological gospel where man is fundamentally a *victim* rather than a *sinner*. He must twist Scripture to defend such a view, forcing an isolated word to serve purposes it was never meant to serve.

The increasingly popular men's movement is one that Hicks believes to be rooted "in the repressed pain in men's lives" (p. 99). He says it is not surprising that the movement's founder and "guru," Robert Bly, "is an adult child of an alcoholic father" (p. 99). The goals of the movement include "the attempt to reframe the wounding experience for men and give it a new and more honorable meaning," and the creation of "an openness for men to talk about their pain without the stigma that was attached to men's pain in the past" (p. 102). Hicks claims that men have difficulty, more than women do, in accepting and talking about their wounds. The clear emphasis in his discussion of the "wounded male" is on the expression of repressed emotions.

Although Hicks claims at the beginning of his book to reject Carl Jung's approach, he draws heavily on this ungodly man's imaginations when he discusses *enosh*. He agrees with Jung that "this wounding is critical to the development of a deeper

masculinity," and that "it is only through wounding that a man becomes aware of many of the unconscious elements in his being" (p. 100), more specifically, the "constructed defenses that have kept us protected but isolated" (p. 101). Evidently, he also concurs with Jung's teachings that men wound *themselves* through self-destructive behaviors (p. 100). Men, say Jung and Hicks, have to become "painfully aware" of their "deep-seated wounds," and the fact that they are "no longer the heroes they imagined in their youth" (p. 101). It supposedly requires a "tragic loss or wounding experience" to push a man beyond the "warrior stage" on his "journey" (p. 95).

Again, the author claims *biblical* support for his unbiblical view of man:

"Woundedness has been one of the profound experiences found in all the ancient literature. The Holy Scriptures are no exception. The Bible honors it as a normal stop on the male journey." (p. 102)

"In fact, in the biblical motif, when a man encounters his wound he encounters and wrestles with God." (p. 102)

Unfortunately, Hicks demonstrates great confusion between psychological "wounds," human mortality, and sin. All are thrown into the same basket so as to blur the clear distinctions made in Scripture. Following is an example of this serious confusion:

"Given enough time, the journey of the masculine experience will lead us to some kind of wounding that confronts us with our most basic condition. It is in the wounding experience that I learn that I am not God, nor a little god, nor even a little bit like God." (p. 104)

He does, at least, recognize here the Creator/creature distinction. Man is not God. But is it the experience of being "wounded" that causes man to recognize his position as a creature? Biblically, it is the recognition of one's condition as a *sinner* that most forcefully emphasizes the difference between God and man. The final phrase, "nor even a little bit like God," seems to deny the image of God in man. Man is not divine, to be sure, but he is in a sense *analogous* to God. That image has been lost, in the sense of moral excellence, due to sin; in the Christian, that image is being progressively restored. Hicks' major problem, however, is in his emphasis on man as a "wounded" rather than a sinful creature.

**Job.** The word *enosh* is used most frequently in the poetic literature of the Bible, which includes the book of Job. This key biblical character is cited as a prime example of *enosh*:

"Job's struggle to make sense of his woundedness offers a rich commentary about the *enosh* experience." (p. 103)

Hicks notes that this struggle is more complicated in the life of a man who knows God, because he must wrestle with his faith as well as the calamity itself (p. 103). In the case of Job, for example:

"The reality is that Job never knew why he suffered, therefore the meaning of his wounding has been lost in the contradictory feelings of wanting to believe in a benevolent God and hating God for allowing such injustice to befall him. Job's struggle with woundedness is his struggle against God in an attempt to prove his innocence." (p. 104)

One must wonder whether Hicks has read the *entire* book of Job, particularly the conclusion. Initially, Job did not struggle *against* God. He *refused* to speak against God:

"Through all this Job did not sin or did he blame God."  
Job 1:22

When he later began to question God, the Lord *rebuked* him:

"Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind and said, 'Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge?'" Job 38:1-2

Note the verses that follow, the many questions God asks of Job, questions that *silence* Job's daring to question the Almighty. Finally, reading to the end reveals Job's *repentance* in the face of the omnipotent God:

"Then Job answered the Lord, and said, 'I know that You can do all things, and that no purpose of Yours can be thwarted. "Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?" Therefore I have declared that which I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know. "Hear now, and I will speak; I will question you, and you will answer me." I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear; but now my eye sees You; therefore I despise myself, and I repent in dust and ashes.'" Job 42:1-6

The meaning of Job's suffering has not, in his closing words, been "lost in the contradictory feelings of wanting to believe in a benevolent God and hating God for allowing such injustice to befall him." Far from it! Job recognizes the vast distinction between mortal man and the immortal God who created the heavens and the earth. He recognizes the inferiority of his knowledge and understanding. He doesn't "prove his innocence," but repents that he dared to question God. This is an example of the gross misuse of Scripture that occurs regularly on the pages of psychological literature. The passages that refute the psychological claims are simply ignored.

The author's analysis of Job is applied to today's Christian man as well:

"Man and his God, once intimate friends, no longer seem to agree. For the Christian, the agreement established between God and man through Jesus Christ no longer seems experientially valid. The experience of the wounded believer with God is that of distance, alienation, and of a God who seems no longer present or active in one's life."  
(p. 112)

Hicks claims that such "alienation" from God, or "incongruency," leads over time to a new understanding and respect for His mysterious ways. Trials and testing can indeed serve this purpose, but this author errs in placing his emphasis on *experience* without teaching correct doctrine about the sovereignty of God.

**Mortality.** Hicks speaks of the fact that death has entered the world and no man escapes it. He recognizes that death is not simply a natural process operating without reference to sin:

"We are fallen in the sense that we are no longer what we were created to be. Created to be immortal, we no longer enjoy life on this planet apart from the experience of death." (p. 106)

"But mortality apparently is an afterthought, an intrusion, an interference, a foreign and alien addition to our souls. It's not *supposed* to be there and somehow we know this within ourselves at very deep levels." (p. 106)

These statements have a ring of truth but are incomplete and flawed. Death entered the world through the one sin of the one man Adam (Romans 5:12-21). Man's fall into sin resulted in death.

Hicks is not crystal clear about this important connection. He speaks as if our fallenness *equals* our mortality, whereas Scripture says that Adam's transgression of God's law *resulted* in death for all men. It is true that mortality is an "interference," in the sense that man was created good and upright. However, it is hardly an "afterthought," when we consider the absolute sovereignty of God, His foreknowledge and His foreordination of everything that comes to pass.

In general, there is confusion about mortality and sin, along with the relationship between the two. That confusion escalates when Hicks brings "wounding" to the scene:

"The more and greater the wounding, the more the death experience. Every time we feel pain, something has died within us." (p. 107)

The deterioration of physical qualities is included as an aspect of "wounding," rather than clearly seen as a consequence of sin:

"Perhaps the main aspect of this crisis that has been largely ignored is what the normal aging does in terms of wounding the male." (p. 107)

Aging is certainly a *reminder* to man that he has fallen into sin and must inevitably die. Indeed, even the Christian, while anticipating his glorious future, does not relish the experience of death itself:

"For indeed while we are in this tent, we groan, being burdened, because we do not want to be unclothed, but to be clothed, in order that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life." 2 Corinthians 5:4

Hicks needs to clarify the relationship between sin and death, without clouding the issue with a psychological view of man as "wounded."

**Hostility to Homosexuality.** Even more confusion ensues when Hicks brings in clear examples of *sin* and lumps them into his already deviant mixture.

The "experiential mortality, frailty, and limitedness" of *enosh* are said to sometimes be manifest in acts of hostility and even violence toward others (p. 104). The Los Angeles riots are cited as an example:



"The reality is, they have been so reduced to subhuman categories that the only power they have left is the power of abuse and violence." (p. 115)

Serious sin is thus reduced to the category of victimization. Similarly:

"Wounded by society or circumstances, by parent or spouse, the hostile male feels powerless and so strikes out. The hostile spirit is rooted in woundedness." (p. 116)

Job 7:11 and 19:9-10 are wrongly cited in support of this thesis. Here Job cries out in the extreme anguish of his suffering, but he does *not* strike out in hostility or violence. Hicks misses the text. He says that men in today's world lash out because "woundedness" is something that "feels foreign" and is not a "valid experience" (p. 116). However, being "wounded" by society or circumstances does not *cause* a man to become hostile and certainly does not *cause* him to hurt other people.

It is also distressing to note how Hicks links the behavior of the "wounded male" with the reactions of wounded animals, who "isolate themselves" and "lick their wounds" (p. 114) He claims that "perhaps we share some of this primal instinct" (p. 114). Explaining further:

"But the reaction itself is normal, perhaps a God-given grace to buy the time he needs to find perspective and meaning." (p. 115)

"Just as the wounded animal can begin to strike out at those who come near to give aid, so men can externalize their pain and manifest hostility, even violence, toward others."

"...men act out some of the unconscious pain they have accumulated with violence." (p. 99)

Is this possibly another allusion to evolution?? Man, created in God's image, is not a robot and not an animal ruled by instincts. Man is made "a little lower than the angels," *not* a little higher than the beasts. There is a vast difference between man and beast, one overlooked at some points by this author.

In discussing sexual "addictions" and homosexuals, the author once again resorts to the terminology of "wounding," obscuring the reality of sin in these behaviors:

"Many of these are in the church but feel no one there would understand or be supportive. Therefore, they bury their wounds and bandage their bruises with phony smiles but wrestle with gaping holes in their souls." (p. 108)

The entire male population is encompassed in this sweeping statement which categorizes all as victims:

"Sam Keen believes all men are in some sense war-wounded. As such we have developed well-honed psychological armor that allows us to keep on functioning while not really healing." (p. 108)

There is little room here for the biblical view of man as fundamentally a *sinner* in need of God's grace.

The author believes that most men find it difficult to "confess" their wounded feelings and "embrace" their grief, even though:

"To not experience grief reactions when wounded is what psychologists would consider sick." (p. 110)

Such a statement diagnoses most of the male population as psychologically "sick." Because men supposedly experience "a profound sense of loss" when defeated in either the phallic or warrior areas (p. 109), Hicks considers it essential to survival that they learn to experience and express their grief, particularly among others who have also suffered (p. 120). He claims that men ought to "honor the wound in others" (p. 119). He believes men are beginning to "experience the appropriate deep loss reactions" (p. 109) in the context of the men's movement.

Note carefully that the author's emphasis on *confession of feelings* and *expression of grief* is more essential to his system than *confession of sin* and *expression of repentance before God*. This is one of the major errors of the entire recovery movement.

**The Purpose of Pain.** Hicks makes astonishing claims concerning the necessity of experiencing inner pain:

"In order for men to discover what manhood is all about (finding the 'wild man' in Bly's frame of reference), they must descend into the deep places of their own souls and find their accumulated grief." (p. 99)

This inward journey is one that substitutes for the progressive sanctification in the life of the Christian. The answers are found in *self*, rather than God's Word, and empowered by *self*, rather than the Holy Spirit. Examining "accumulated grief" substitutes for examining the sin of one's own heart under the searchlight of Scripture (Hebrews 4:12-13). This is a dangerous counterfeit.

**Asaph**, who set the Psalms of David to music, is cited as a key example:

"The prosperity of the wicked at one point in his life had become a wounding experience for Asaph. He was ready to throw in the towel of his faith (Psalm 73:1-2)" and he felt like a "wounded animal" (73:22). (p. 114)

"He was senseless, embittered, and pierced with an uncontrollable hurt. The result is that he snapped at anyone who tried to help him." (p. 114)

Let's take a closer look at this particular Psalm, one which is a source of incredible wisdom and comfort for the believer who is puzzled by the earthly prosperity of the ungodly. The text doesn't say that Asaph was wounded, but rather than he was *envious* of the wicked (verse 3), seeing how they prospered. It wasn't that he "felt like a wounded animal" in verse 22; rather, he compares himself metaphorically to a beast who *lacks understanding*. He had failed to comprehend the eternal destiny of the wicked, and saw their prosperity only in terms of the present life. When he considered their final destruction (verse 17), he gained the understanding and perspective needed to endure in the midst of apparent injustices. This Psalm is one of *repentance* for the initial failure to fully trust God, and for the envy of others. Hicks is reading concepts into the text that are not there.

**Manic-Depressive??** This author demonstrates an extremely low view of Scripture when he calls the Psalms "the musings of a manic-depressive" (p. 114). His audacity here is incredible. *God's Word* is equated with the ramblings of a psychologically disordered human mind! The Psalms do display a wide range of emotion, but there is only a superficial similarity to the mood swings of a so-called "manic-depressive" (a category that ought to be questioned). David faced real threats to his life, not plunges into "clinical depression," and he emerged repeatedly to praise God in the midst of his extreme trials. David's praise of God here can hardly be likened to the "manic" phase of an unstable

individual. The comparison is a ludicrous attack on God's inerrant, holy Word.

**Strength in Weakness.** The author notes Paul's "thorn in the flesh" of 2 Corinthians 12:9, where God's strength is made perfect in human weakness (p. 118). His psychological interpretation is as follows:

"They (men) must begin to see that out of woundedness comes significant healing, meaning, and growth. In fact, a very mystical, spiritual power is born in male weakness." (p. 117)

First of all, note that Paul's weakness was specifically a *physical limitation* (thorn in the *flesh*), not a psychological "wounding" experience such as exalted by modern psychology. God indeed supplies all that we need to live godly lives in spite of physical weakness, limitation, and even illness. He uses trials of many kinds to test and strengthen the believer's faith (James 1:2-4). However, this is a far cry from claiming that some "mystical, spiritual power" is born in the experience of psychological "woundedness."

**Jacob.** Squeezing biblical characters into psychological categories is seen once again. Jacob, claims Hicks, was raised in a "dysfunctional family" (p. 117). In fact:

"Now I am convinced that only a warrior who has been wounded by a dysfunctional family would think that he could wrestle with an angel of God and win!" (p. 118)

Later, Jacob meets his brother Esau "not in accordance with his strength, but out of his weakness" (p. 118).

Applying the account to modern life:

"Many of us wrestle with strangers in the night as we try to find the blessing we never had." (p. 118)

Categories like "dysfunctional family" are loaded with anti-Christian presuppositions about human nature and behavior. It is entirely inappropriate to apply such terms to biblical characters. The truth is, every person is born into a *sinful* family, because all are sinners at birth. The word "dysfunctional" reduces responsible human behavior to mechanical terms and glosses over the reality and seriousness of sin.

The author ignores the biblical importance of the account of Jacob and Esau. God specifically chose to give the blessing to Jacob rather than Esau. Christ came into the world through the genealogical line of Jacob. It is dangerous to read more into the text than what is stated. Nowhere does Scripture suggest that Jacob was "wounded" in a "dysfunctional family." Hicks clouds the real meaning and purpose of this account by reading his psychological assumptions *into* the passage and forcing it to serve his purposes.

This category, the "wounded male," represents one of the most serious errors in the entire book. It is in line with the general tendency of modern psychology to see man as a *victim* rather than a *sinner*. Hicks moves right along, however, from man-as-victim to man-as-autonomous:

"From our time of wounding we can emerge as rulers of our own souls again, not so willing to sell out our precious lives for such small price tags." (p. 120)

Man is not fundamentally a victim, but a responsible person before God. However, he is never to "rule" his own soul, but is required to submit to the rule of God. Two opposite psychological errors combine to form a disastrous doctrine of man. It is no wonder, however; psychological theories are grounded in the speculations of men who shook their fists in the face of God, denying His sovereign rule and even His existence.

## **Ish**

The *ish* man is one who:

"...is connected to himself" (p. 124).

"...has stopped trying to be the man others want him to be." (p. 124)

"...has gotten in touch with who he is." (p. 124)

"...has been resurrected from the wounds of life and has a new perspective on the meaning of life and manhood because of that pain. This man knows who he is and is known for his attributes." (p. 124)

"...can begin to listen to the voice of God more clearly, and to the leanings of his own conscience and values." (p. 26)

The man at this "mature" stage of life is the "ruler of his own soul, being independent of outside considerations" (p. 26). According to the author, who cites Robert Bly for support, a man must go through some "woundings" in order to arrive at this point and be genuine in his relationships (p. 26, 121). Explaining further, he says that:

"Pain teaches us who we really are, what we are really like, and what we should do and be." (p. 123)

(Note how *pain* has taken over the role of God's Word!)

The *ish* is claimed to be a man "of something," for example, some attribute such as kindness, trustworthiness, or perhaps an occupation or social position. The terms "man of God" and "man of the Spirit" are used in Scripture.

This is the time of life, says Hicks, "for serious integration and dedication to his core values" (p. 27). He recognizes in this the danger of self-absorption, noting that "becoming differentiated and individualized has become the goal of much psychotherapy" (p. 27). He answers this concern by stating that the "biblical male journey" does not come to an end at this stage. Unfortunately, most of these supposedly essential "stages" of life involve a necessary element of sin! That puts the entire "developmental journey" theory in conflict with biblical teachings about the progressive sanctification of the Christian.

The process of "differentiation" promoted by Hicks is grounded heavily in ungodly Freudian theory. He claims that a boy must "break free from his mother and find his father," then "break free from his father in order to find himself," and finally, "find and unite in marriage with a woman" (p. 128). This distorts the biblical (and relatively simple!) teaching that a man is to leave his parents and cleave to his wife. The concept of "breaking free" is one that could easily encourage the dishonoring of parents. *Nothing* is stated in Scripture about the need to "find self" by breaking away from parents. The Bible promotes growth in godliness; the Christian is to be conformed to the image of Christ. Godly parents may be a wonderful help, while the behavior patterns of ungodly parents must be set aside. Hicks claims that a man must reject both the imitation of an admired person and becoming the opposite of someone who is disliked:

"Until we reject both as 'not being me,' they hold a hellish power over our souls and we will never be the rulers of our own spirits." (p. 129)

Yet nothing is said about pursuing godliness and becoming more like our Lord. The emphasis is on *self*, knowing who you are and who you are not (p. 130), rather than knowing *who Jesus Christ is* and growing in His image.

The ungodly nature of this emphasis comes into focus when Hicks speaks of counseling Christians who were homosexuals, Marxists, and the like:

"The labels don't matter all that much, whether they be Communist, Democrat, New Age, feminist, fundamentalist, or hookers-married-to-cross-dressing codependents." (p. 134)

However, these "labels" *do* matter. One cannot be a "New Age Christian" or a "Communist Christian," for example, because these philosophies are incompatible with the Christian faith. The continued practice of a sin (such as homosexuality), without repentance, is reason to question whether the person's profession of faith is genuine. That is not a minor matter, because eternity is at stake! The Christian must demonstrate love and compassion to all persons, but sometimes he must *rebuke*--and *restore*--the brother caught in sin. And he must lovingly witness to those outside the faith, not simply "accept" their behavior as something that doesn't matter all that much.

A portion of the *ish* chapter is devoted to relationships, particularly with women. The one good observation is that Hicks criticizes the "extreme differentiation" in codependency counseling today (p. 136). However, he strays from Scripture when he discusses male/female relationships at each "stage" of life: the "warrior" is focused on rule keeping, the "phallic" treats women as objects, and the "wounded" male may be impotent while licking his wounds (p. 137). Thus:

"Only the mature man can experience a sexual relationship with his wife that is based on complete, unabashed union of spirits." (p. 138)

The "warrior," "phallic," and "wounded" patterns above all reflect *sinful* behavior. Scripture does not exempt man *at any point of his life* from the responsibility to be godly in his relationships with others.

Another emphasis in this section concerns the *ish* as a "man of many things...take any one of them away and I have been robbed of some of my unique personhood" (p. 139). Notice the focus around self:

"To think like this, or to give myself the freedom to enjoy such things, means I am becoming a royal kind of person and taking back some rulership of my life." (p. 139)

This contrasts severely with the words and attitude of Paul:

"But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish in order that I may gain Christ." Philippians 3:7-8

In addition, Hicks points out the biblical term "man of God," saying that:

"This usage implies divine agency, empowering, and representation, if not divine rule through human means." (p. 140)

Thus, he claims, the rule lost at the Fall is "to be recovered during the more mature stages of life" (p. 140). For support, he cites Galatians 5:1, Ephesians 5:1-6:17, and Colossians 2:20-23. It is beyond the scope of this paper to exegete all of these passages. However, check them out. These verses concern the righteous living that should characterize those who know Christ. They teach about replacing sin with godly behaviors that honor God, in relationships and other areas of life. Nowhere is it said that during the "mature stage of life" the specific rule lost at the Fall is regained. It is *regeneration*, at whatever age, that empowers righteous living, not mere passage of years. The effects of the Fall are not fully overturned until Christ returns and creates a new heaven and earth--an event this author never even mentions!

The term "man of God" in the Old Testament is a technical term for prophet. Hicks notes that Moses, Samuel, David, Elijah, and Elisha are all given this title, but he fails to see the similarity in their lives. All were called by God to be prophets; all were *godly* (though not sinless) men who lived to serve God and who were chosen *by Him* for specific purposes in leading His people and giving them His Word. The similarity in their lives is hard



to miss--unless, of course, one is committed to psychological categories.

Interestingly, the author claims that the "mature man" listens to the counsel of God's Word rather than that of man:

"The blessing that accrues to *ish* is that he no longer listens to the outside counsels of evil men, but only to the insights obtained through a diligent meditation on the Word of God." (p. 142)

It is unfortunate that Hicks doesn't follow his own standards here. Throughout *The Masculine Journey* he relies on the ungodly counsel of Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, Sam Keen, Robert Bly, and various others. In fact, he contradicts his own statement when he admits that:

"I value the counsel I have received over the years from outsiders--both Christian and not-so-Christian." (p. 142)

Although Hicks claims to have become less dependent on the opinions of others, it would be difficult to draw that conclusion from this book. *Much* of it is drawn directly from the opinions of others--not even Christian "others," but *enemies* of the faith (see the paper, "Freudian Frauds," published by Discernment Publications.)

**Elijah.** The biblical example of *ish* is the prophet Elijah. Skipping the "creational" and "phallic" stages, the author jumps to the "warrior" time of Elijah's life:

"God raised up the warrior Elijah to deal with the situation (Baalism)." (p. 143)

Elijah's encounter with the prophets of Baal is called "classic warrior stuff." Later, Elijah runs when threatened by Jezebel. Hicks psychologizes this by stating that most men are likely to run from an angry, verbally threatening woman. When Elijah is alone in the desert, the author claims he is engaging in "typical wounded male behavior:"

"During this time of woundedness God begins to deal with Elijah and turn him toward becoming a mature prophet and an *ish* kind of man." (p. 144)

After God deals with Elijah in the desert:

"He is a mature man, a man now capable of ruling his own soul because he has been wounded and has recovered through hearing the word of God in a refreshingly different way. A man thus reborn and resurrected is then ready to be the mentor and sage to a younger man." (p. 146)

However...Hicks overlooks the fact that Elijah is given the title, "man (*ish*) of God," long *before* his time alone in the desert, *before* Jezebel's threat, *before* his encounter with the false prophets. Read the text of 1 Kings 16:29 through the end of chapter 19. You will see that Elijah is portrayed as a godly man, a true prophet, *throughout the account*. His obedience to God is repeatedly underscored. He speaks the true word of God concerning the drought, brought on by Israel's idolatry, and later announces the end of that drought. He challenges the prophets of Baal, and God meets that challenge when His fire consumes the offering. Nothing in this text shows Elijah going through the ungodly male "stages" proposed by Hicks. It seems that Hicks is a sort of "false prophet," a messenger of aberrant psychological doctrines that oppose the true Word of God. In Elijah's day, there was a famine of God's Word along with the physical famine resulting from God's withholding of rain. It isn't much different in the psychologized church of the twentieth century.

## **Zaken**

The "developmental journey" finally reaches its climax at the *zaken* stage, the "goal of manhood:"

"The biblical image sees this man connected to all of life and making his finest and most important contribution to the community and culture." (p. 27)

Unfortunately, Hicks fails to distinguish between Christian and unbeliever when he cites examples of men who made their "finest contributions" during later years. His list includes Freud and Jung, both enemies of the Christian faith! (p. 164) Freud's "finest contribution" is a blasphemous attack on Christianity. (See the paper, "Freudian Frauds," reviewing *The Future of an Illusion, Totem and Taboo*, and Freud's last book, *Moses and Monotheism*.)

Nevertheless, we must extend credit where it is due. In this particular section, Hicks does make some important and biblical comments. He notes correctly the:

"...contrast between our current youth-worshipping culture and the biblical perspective that values older adults." (p. 152)

Americans often place elderly people in retirement homes rather than in positions of respect (p. 150). "Elders" in the church today, the author notes, are generally much younger men (p. 150). In ancient Israel, the elders were respected for their wisdom, and others looked to them for advice and administrative insight (p. 164):

"Many passages underscore the role of *zaken* in furnishing counsel along with the priests and prophets (Job 12:20, Jeremiah 18:18, Ezekiel 7:26)." (p. 165)

Hicks also mentions the song of Moses in Deuteronomy 32:7, where the elders proclaim what God has done for them in the past (p. 153). It is indeed important for older believers to recall God's acts from earlier years.

The author is also correct in noting that the Hebrew *zaken* refers to the old man in contrast to the young, or more specifically "the totality of men with full beard of mature years with legal competence in the community" (p. 151). He is right also in stating that age does not in and of itself guarantee wisdom or competence. Rather, wisdom "comes only from an obedient life before God" (p. 154-5). Of all the six stages, this one contains the most biblical truth.

**Fulfillment.** This final stage is claimed to be a time of genuine fulfillment. Hicks notes the hurried lifestyles and unfulfilled expectations common to Christians, agnostics, and atheists alike. He says we are looking in the wrong places, at the wrong times, and asking for more than the present life can deliver (p. 157). Furthermore, "we live in a death-denying culture" (p. 158).

Note again the failure to distinguish believer and unbeliever. We ought to question whether "unfulfilled expectations" are truly *common* to unbelievers *and true* believers. The Christian looks to eternity, not to this life, for the fulfillment of his expectations:

"...in order that I may attain to the resurrection of the dead. Not that I have already obtained it, or have already become perfect, but I press on in order that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus.

Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." Philippians 3:11-14

Nowhere does Hicks mention the Christian's expectation, not fulfilled as yet, of resurrection from the dead and eternal life with the Lord! This is a devastating omission.

**Family Connections.** The author is vitally concerned about family connections during the later years of life. He believes that the "loss of life and of family connection" become more critical and are obstacles to fulfillment (p. 161). He cites Old Testament passages about factors that impede fulfillment during old age:

1. The lack of *zakens* in the family line, citing Eli and his sons (p. 160).
2. The "needless loss of life due to unnatural causes," in particular "suffering the loss of younger children." (p. 161)

On the other hand, "the crown or reward of life for the *zaken* is seeing one's grandchildren (Proverbs 17:6)" (p. 161).

These family connections do appear to occupy a place of importance in the Old Testament. The Bible honors the family, and it is wonderful for believers to have godly descendants. However, Scripture as a whole does not insist on children and/or grandchildren as *the primary* key to a fulfilled life. For example, some are called to remain single for the kingdom of God. The focus in Scripture is on eternity, not whether or not your children have preceded you in physical death. What matters most is living to please and serve God, and to lead others into His kingdom. Also, those who lack biological family connections (and even those who don't) are vitally connected to *God's family*. A person may have contributed greatly to God's kingdom by discipling younger believers, equipping them to serve God. The author's general focus in this area is one that ignores the centrality of God's eternal kingdom and family.

**Reconciliation.** Hicks stresses reconciliation at this time of life, commentating that:

"We men can make a mess of our primary relationships during our young and middle-adult years." (p. 162)

He believes that a key to fulfillment is "having our important relationships maintained and reconciled" (p. 162). He claims that the desire for reconciliation is built into man's nature:

"All men, being made in the image of God, have the innate desire to see fractured relationships mended and healed.... It's the universal story of redemption and reconciliation that begins with God and has been placed in our consciences through creation." (p. 163)

This comment is highly erroneous. It denies the depravity of man's heart after the Fall. Man does not have an "innate desire" for reconciliation, but is at enmity with God unless or until he is regenerated by the Holy Spirit. His conscience testifies to the *existence* of God (Romans 1:20) as well as moral laws (Romans 2:14-15), but *not* redemption and reconciliation. Redemption absolutely requires the intervention of the Holy Spirit. Apart from that gracious intervention, man wars against God and resists Him at every point (Romans 1:18ff).

The Bible does place a premium on reconciliation, first with God and then with others. It is particularly important within the body of Christ. However, Scripture does not leave it to one's later years. We are exhorted to biblical principles of reconciliation throughout all of life.

**Mentoring.** Hicks defines a "mentor" as "a brain to pick, a shoulder to cry on, and an occasional kick in the pants" (p. 166). He notes that the mentoring concept is discussed today in "almost every field" (p. 165), and he considers it "the greatest need in the church today" (p. 166).

There is a strong element of truth here that should not be overlooked. Scripture shows older men instructing younger men (Paul and Timothy), and older women in the church are called to teach the younger women (Titus 2). The Bible also gives clear instructions for ordained leadership in the church (1 and 2 Timothy; Titus). God's people are to be under their authority and accountable to them (Hebrews 13:17), although they must act with discernment (Acts 17:11).

The major problem with the author's analysis is his failure to speak biblically of ordained leadership. Not that other relationships are excluded, but God has instituted a specific

structure for accountability within the body of Christ. The "mentoring" concept as promoted by the secular world (and this author) can lead to an accountability relationship that goes beyond scriptural standards and ignores the ordained leadership of the church. Caution is needed here.

Hicks cites Elijah and Elisha as an example of "mentoring," claiming that such a relationship is "protege-driven" (p. 167). Looking more closely at the biblical account, this last statement is not true. It was *God* who personally instructed Elijah to anoint Elisha as prophet in his place (1 Kings 19:16). One must be discerning about broad statements such as the claim that a mentoring relationship should be "protege-driven." Not necessarily! Sometimes mature believers need to take the initiative to disciple, exhort, admonish, and rebuke those who are younger or less mature in their faith. In fact, Scripture advises such initiative (Galatians 6:1-5, for example).

While Hicks does make some biblical comments about the closing years of life, those truths are mixed with error. The Christian *zaken* has a glorious hope of entering eternity with the Lord--a hope completely overlooked in *The Masculine Journey*.

### **The "Developmental Journey" of Jesus Christ**

Hicks make the astonishing claim that our Lord Jesus Christ passed through every one of his six "stages:"

"He is the only One who can genuinely empathize with where we are because He also has experienced the same stages on the masculine journey (Hebrews 4:15)." (p. 180)

It is incredible to note the manner in which psychologists squeeze biblical characters, even *God Himself*, into their unbiblical categories. The passage in Hebrews stresses the real humanity of Christ, and the reality of His sufferings. It takes a wild leap of imagination to suggest that this Scripture teaches that He passed through the six "stages" contrived by this author.

Hicks takes an even more daring leap, however, by insisting that Christ was sincerely tempted to *both heterosexual and homosexual sin*, perhaps in the manner suggested by the blasphemous movie, "The Last Temptation of Christ" (p. 181). He believes that "Jesus was phallic with all the inherent phallic passions we experience as men" (p. 181). He claims that our Lord was "sincerely tempted to sin" but "without compromising His deity" (p. 181). However, he fails to consider a couple of important

points. First, the word "tempted" in Hebrews 4:15 may be equally well translated "tested" in some contexts. The fact that Christ was *tested* does *not* imply that he engaged in an inner struggle with sinful desires. Furthermore, outside *solicitation* to engage in sin (Matthew 4:1-11) is not equivalent to being enticed and dragged away by one's own desires (James 1:13). *Temptation* may refer to either outside solicitation or to an internal battle with sinful lusts. The author doesn't make this crucial distinction, one that must be made in order to avoid accusing Christ of sin. Sin does not consist merely of outward acts, but includes the condition of the heart. Hicks acknowledges that Christ committed no outward act of sin, but his statements accuse Him of sin within His heart.

The author also laments the fact that we cannot tolerate the exposure of His genitals in pictures. This is so ludicrous that it hardly requires comment.

Hicks goes on to squeeze Jesus into his other "developmental stage" categories. He is claimed to be the spiritual model of a warrior, because He fought for the truth, and He fought against the Pharisees on behalf of sinners and outcasts (p. 181). Then He is said to be the "wounded male" in the Garden of Gethsemane, and during His betrayal and crucifixion (p. 182). In the resurrection, Hicks sees Christ as "mature man," reconciled with His disciples and ruler of not only His own soul but the universe (p. 182). Finally, Jesus is *zaken* because He was "wise beyond His years" and a mentor to others who would carry on His work (p. 182).

All of this comes dangerously close to a denial of the deity of Christ. It is based on *some* historical truth, as Christ did fight against the Pharisees, and He did suffer both betrayal and the intense pain of crucifixion. However, it takes a wild imagination to see Him *becoming* a "mature man" *after* the resurrection, in the sense that Hicks defines "mature man." Jesus Christ is *God*, the Creator of the universe! He is eternal. He didn't *become* the "ruler of His own soul" after His resurrection. Neither did He *become* ruler of the universe, but rather He was King of Kings from all eternity. "Wise beyond His years" is hardly an appropriate designation for the eternal God. "Mentoring," as Hicks envisions the process, is not equivalent to Christ appointing apostles to evangelize the world. The statements of this author are contrived to force Jesus Christ into a humanly invented mold, one that is highly inappropriate even for sinful men. While it is right to acknowledge his humanity and understand how that humanity is important to redemption, this type

of analysis presses it too far and risks a denial of His eternity and deity. It seems that psychologists will go to any lengths to force their theories to fit reality.

## General Comments

The author claims that "these stages are not intended to be necessarily a chronological prediction" (p. 28). However:

"...there does seem to be a certain implied order in the development of these words. It's harder to be safe without the experience of being a warrior and being wounded. Wisdom always flows from life experience, and unfortunately that life experience is often negative." (p. 28)

Throughout the book, there is an implied assumption that these stages proceed in the order presented, and that each is *necessary* to continued "development." There are some very general characteristics outlined at each stage, so general that anyone is likely to find some parallels within his own experience. Thus the theory is made to sound plausible. However, there are predominantly *sinful* characteristics in the "phallic" and "warrior" stages, as if sin were *necessary* to continued growth. We must question this necessity, along with the assumption above that "wisdom always flows from life experience." Scripture states (Proverbs) that the "fear of the Lord," not "life experience," is the beginning of wisdom and knowledge.

**Common Processes.** Hicks claims that, at each "stage," confusion, transition, separation, and initiation must take place. He briefly describes the "confusion" as follows:

*Adam:* "having to unravel and integrate the paradoxes of human potentiality and our sinful tendencies." (p. 174)

*Zakar:* emerging adolescent sexuality; understanding what is normal for the *Christian*, fear of not having the same kind of experience again. (p. 174)

*Gibbor:* "trying to bring strength and intimacy together." (p. 174)

*Enosh:* "wonders if he is really a man." (p. 175)

*Ish:* "what to do with the rest of his life," plus declining energy and tolerance for things he is used to doing. (p. 175)



Zaken: struggles about impending death and financial resources (p. 175).

Hicks says that a transition process must take place between "stages," and yet there are "no pure stages;" a man never completely grows out of a stage (p. 175). He also believes, borrowing from Freudian theory, that a man may become fixated at a particular stage. Again, due to the very general nature of his definitions, it is easy for men to buy into his theories. For example, sexuality is part of life; so is being sinned against ("wounded").

The author goes on to discuss the "separation" that must take place in order to move on to the next "stage:"

"It takes some conscious effort to see where you are and separate from the characteristics, emotions, and behaviors of that stage." (p. 176)

Notice how this particular concept is a caricature of the biblical exhortations to believers to *put off* the "old man" and to *put on* the "new man" in Christ (Ephesians 4:22-24; Colossians 3:9-10). The Christian is to separate from the practices of his unregenerate state, not a former "stage," and to become conformed to the image of Christ, not to another "stage."

**Initiation Rites.** Here is a major area of concern. Hicks suggests "self-imposed initiation rites to celebrate getting to the next stage" (p. 176). He laments the fact that "we men have lost all of our formal initiation rites" (p. 176) and have often substituted drinking, sex, smoking, and the like. He claims this is a need peculiar to men, that "a woman doesn't have to prove anything to be a 'real woman'" but "men have to prove something" (p. 176). It would be more accurate to say that the *unregenerate man* perceives that he needs to "prove something." It is unbiblical to state that the *Christian man* has such a need. The Christian has been redeemed by the blood of Christ, not by his own works. The whole idea of needing to "prove something" is a type of works-righteousness that attacks the heart of the gospel message.

We have noted earlier how Hicks' idea of "initiation rites" is one that makes sin into a celebration, particularly in the phallic stage. The same difficulties are noted when he suggests the celebration of divorce, job firings, legal liability, and major health problems in the "wounded" stage (p. 178). Hicks

again denies putting a benediction on sin, but that is exactly what he does. His suggestions for the *gibbor, ish, and zaken* are not so blatantly sinful--celebration of spiritual victory in Christ, launching a new career or business, and family reconciliation (p. 178-9). However, he wants to "affirm this developmental stage" (p. 178), an idea that finds no biblical support. The emphasis in "initiation rites" is highly self-oriented, rather than focused on serving and pleasing God.

## **Conclusion: Theological Fuzz**

This book, in line with many other writings of "Christian psychology," demonstrates confusion, contradiction, and fuzziness on key theological matters. This is a grave concern. Accurate theology is essential to understanding the problems of man and offering godly admonition to other believers.

We noted initially how this author misuses one of the original biblical languages (Hebrew) and builds a psychological doctrine of man around six word studies, pouring his psychologized presuppositions into those words. It is exegetically disastrous to build a theology around individual words, particularly when the scriptural context surrounding those words, and the doctrines taught by the Bible, do not support the conclusions that are reached. Hicks' doctrine of man is more firmly grounded in Carl Jung, and the theories of other unregenerate men, than in anything taught by Scripture.

The original integrity of man, prior to the Fall, is seriously compromised in this book. Man is not a "savage" as portrayed by the author, nor are his origins "lowly." Man was created good and upright, but transgressed God's law and fell into sin. Hicks is not clear about this important biblical truth. Nor is he clear about the nature of God's image in man. Man retains God's image in the sense that he is a morally responsible creature who makes decisions, but he has lost the image in the sense of moral excellence (holiness, righteousness, and knowledge of the truth [Ephesians 2:24, Colossians 3:10]). The image of God concerns both man's essence and his functions, such as dominion over the lower creation. Hicks blurs this issue and promotes the popular psychological teachings exalting self-esteem, contrary to biblical evidence. In his fallen state, man uses his qualities as image-bearer *in rebellion against God*. He does not need to feel good about himself, or esteem himself, because he retains the image of God in a restricted sense. On the contrary, the gravity of sin is intensified by the realization that man is not a beast; animals have no moral agency or responsibility, but man does.

Original sin is another issue buried in a theological haze. Hicks states:

"Apparently, had *adam* not sinned, he could have continued to eat at the tree of life and been immortal (Genesis 2:17, 3:22-24). But being cast out of the garden, he lost his access to the tree of life and its life-giving properties. Thus, a death sentence was placed on mankind, and the nobility of the creational-earthly vice-regent was faced with an ever-growing mortality." (p. 38)

The failure to capitalize *adam* leaves us wondering whether Hicks recognizes Adam as a real historical man, or whether he joins many modern theologians (such as Karl Barth) in viewing the early Genesis account as "saga" or "teaching model." The historical reality is no minor point! If the historicity of Adam is denied, the biblical parallel between the first Adam and Christ, the second and last Adam, is destroyed...and along with it the hope of the gospel! Just as Adam represented all men when he sinned, and his sin is imputed to all, in the same way the obedience and righteousness of Christ are imputed to all believers (Romans 5:12-21). If the first half of this crucial parallel is denied, so is the second! Note, too, Hicks' carelessness in stating that Adam could have *continued* to eat from the tree of life. Adam never did eat from it in the first place (Genesis 3:22); that privilege is reserved for redeemed mankind when God creates a new heaven and a new earth (Revelation 22:2, 14).

The death resulting from the fall is another area where Hicks muddies the waters. He mentions mortality, and physical death is indeed one impact of the Fall. However, man also experienced *judicial death* (Romans 5:16, Revelation 20:14) as well as *spiritual death* (Ephesians 2:1-5; Colossians 2:12-13). These serious consequences of the Fall are often glossed over by psychologists, but they are critical to understanding the nature of man and how he can change. Hicks falls further into error when he repeatedly views man's basic condition of weakness as characterized more by "woundedness" than by sin.

The doctrine of sin presented in this book is deficient. Hicks presents it primarily as an inescapable aspect of being human, rather than the violation of God's law. He places responsibility for sin on *outside* forces, rather than in the sinful heart of man. The "initiation rites" he recommends tend to put a blessing on sin, despite the author's objections to the

contrary. At the very least, such "rites" tend to whitewash sin and mask its nature as a serious offense against God.

Commenting about Abraham's call to sacrifice Isaac, the author's remarks border on blasphemy:

"It seems nothing but unjust, uncaring, violent, and sinister. It makes God seem to be an arbitrary, whimsical, malevolent deity." (p. 168-9)

Yet Scripture records God's request that Abraham sacrifice his only son. While God did not ultimately require Abraham to make this sacrifice, who is Hicks to question the ways of God!? Fortunately, Abraham's response was much more reverent than these modern challenges to divine authority.

The view of Christ presented in *The Masculine Journey* is one that squeezes God into a psychological mold, one that doesn't fit either God or man. The author seriously compromises His deity, particularly in suggesting that He experienced an inner struggle with sexual sin. Christ was *tested*, and He genuinely experienced some of the limitations of humanity, but *without* being enticed by inward lusts such as those that tempt sinful man (James 1:13).

The biblical doctrine concerning man's free agency is confused with the erroneous popular notion of "free will." Man is presented as capable of choosing either good or evil at any point in time. On the contrary, *unregenerate* persons are able to choose only between sinful alternatives. They *cannot* do what is good and pleasing to God (Romans 8:7-8), but remain responsible before Him because their choices arise out of their own volitions. The will of the unbeliever is enslaved to sin, but not annihilated; the will of the Christian is renewed so that he is now capable of acts that please God. In his final glorified state, he will have true freedom--freedom *from sin*--because he will no longer be able to sin. Man's *responsibility* must not be confused with an unbiblical notion of "*free will*" that contradicts Scripture. Hicks is confused about both responsibility *and* the free agency of man.

In addition to sin, the total depravity of man is also compromised. "Total depravity" means that: (1) every man is a sinner, (2) every aspect of man is impacted by sin, and (3) every thought, word, and deed of the *unregenerate* (but not the Christian) person is sinful. (Unbelievers perform acts that are outwardly righteous, but they are not motivated by the desire to glorify God.) God places restraints on sin such that it does not escalate as it would otherwise. Hicks compromises the depravity

of man when he claims that many "unconsciously" run from a "caricature" of Christianity; if only they had the correct *knowledge* of the faith, they would believe. However, the Bible states clearly that proper knowledge of the gospel, and with it saving faith, *requires* regeneration by the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 2:14; Ephesians 2:7-9). In the book of Acts, many heard the preaching of the apostle Paul, not a "caricature" of Christianity. Some repented and believed, while others conspired to murder their preacher! Hicks is wrong about the reasons people fail to believe, and his views provide an excuse for some to refuse to submit to God.

This book is intended to give direction for the life of the adult male, presumably the Christian in particular. However, the "phallic" and "warrior" stages, portrayed as *necessary* to continued growth, emphasize particular *sinful* tendencies. The "enosh" stage focuses on man as a *victim* of external forces. At the "ish" stage, man is to be "ruler of his own soul," which clashes with being ruled over by the sovereign Lord. Finally, when a man becomes a "zaken," he is supposed to have obtained wisdom and be able to make his greatest contributions. The distinction between believer and unbeliever is fuzzy throughout this "journey." The theology presented, in terms of both God and man, is sometimes fuzzy and other times clearly unbiblical. There is no eternal dimension to the "journey," no heavenly goal at the end of the road. Rarely (if ever) do we see the necessity for the Holy Spirit's intervention, yet this book addresses issues of *sanctification*. Clearly, this view of the progress of adult male life is a substitute for progressive sanctification as portrayed in Scripture, where the Christian is increasingly conformed to the image of Christ (Ephesians 4:22-24, Colossians 3:10; Romans 8:28-29; 1 Thessalonians 5:23). As such it is a turn down the *wrong road!*

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