

**THE
(YOUNG)
MEN
WE NEED**

**God's Purpose for
Every Guy and How
You Can Live It Out**

**BRANT
HANSEN**

—— **Books by Brant Hansen** ——

The Truth about Us

The Men We Need

The (Young) Men We Need

THE (YOUNG) MEN WE NEED

**God's Purpose for Every Guy and
How You Can Live It Out**

BRANT HANSEN



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This book is dedicated to my stepdad, Carroll Smith.
Thank you for being the man I needed.

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**Guys, we're waiting for you to do this,
to BE this. We mean it. Make no mistake.**

—Pretty Much Every Woman (paraphrase)

Here's a Very Important Introduction, So Hey, Don't Skip This

Thank you for reading this. Most people skip over introductions in these sorts of books. And by “most people,” I mean me. But I need you to know a couple things from the outset.

First, I'm going to try to pack as much wisdom in this little book as possible. I don't want to waste your time.

Second, this book is split into two parts. The first part is to show you what “the young men we need” are like. The second part is about the six decisions you can make to become one of these men.

Ever since I wrote *The Men We Need*, I've been talking about it a lot. I've been speaking to big groups of people. Small groups too. And I've done a ton of interviews. A lot of the people in these groups, and a lot of the interviewees, have been women. When they hear the description of real masculinity that I'm going to spell out in this book, they have a very definite and emphatic reaction:

“YES! THAT'S IT! THAT'S WHO WE WANT MEN TO BE!”

It's *really* hard to get people to agree on something like this, or on anything, really. But I'm telling you—and you may not believe me, but it's true—that reaction has been unanimous so far.

When people hear the description of real masculinity that I'm going to spell out in this book, they have a very definite and emphatic reaction: "YES! THAT'S IT! THAT'S WHO WE WANT MEN TO BE!"

The message resonates with all ages, races, careers . . . and with women.

That should tell us something.

Here's even better news: *This is something you can be*. It doesn't matter if you're a "manly man" or not. It doesn't matter how much you bench press or how awesome your facial hair is. You don't have to be jacked. You don't have to

be a great hunter. You don't have to be great at starting a fire using only a rock or . . . whatever. You don't have to be rich or a mountain climber or a five-star football recruit.

All those things are great, but they're not at the core of what it *means* to be a man and what we're specifically designed to actually *do*. That's what this book is about.



There's something you need to know, and I need to get it out of the way early.

I play the accordion. I'm not good at grilling. I don't really enjoy camping. I was in Boy Scouts, but not successfully. I thought the other scouts would think I was "cool" if I brought my new flute to the campout. (Narrator: "But they did not think it was cool.")

That's right. I play the flute too. I wanted to play sports, but since I was always one of the smallest kids in the class, our town obsession—football—was a no-go. That is, until my senior year, when my mom finally agreed to let me play football after I had a growth spurt and shot up to my current five feet, ten inches.

Until I had to quit before the season started because (and I'm not making this up) *they couldn't find a helmet big enough for my head.*

I did use my oversized head successfully as captain of the Scholastic Bowl team, where I was all-conference. I was also the president—the *state* president—of the Illinois Student Librarians Association.

That's right. Let that soak in.

A little more about me. I'm pretty fit but not jacked. I have zero cool tattoos. I'm not against tats; it's just that I could never decide on one. I'm sure that if I did get one, it would be a *Lord of the Rings* character, but there are so many. I'd hate to go with Gandalf and then wish it was Gimli. I can't live with that kind of regret.

I respect hunters, but I don't hunt. I have a neurological condition called nystagmus that makes my eyes move back and forth rapidly, so in order to see, I have to move my head rapidly too. As you can imagine, rapid, involuntary head movement is not a plus for hunting with guns. It's not safe. Except for, you know, the animals. It's very safe for them.

I say all this because I want you to know this is not going to be one of those books that's all about how, if you want to be a *real* man, you've got to get out there and take down a moose using only judo moves or free-solo El Capitan. I can't do that stuff either.

I'm an avid indoorsman. I own puppets.

But you know what? As much as, say, climbing rocks is impressive and a fine sport, the world isn't truly desperate for more people who can climb rocks. Nothing against rock climbers; they're fantastic. It's also true that the world's deep longing isn't for more puppet-wielding accordion players. I've learned this repeatedly and emphatically.

If you do happen to be a jacked, tatted-up auto mechanic who spends his weekends hunting wild boar barehanded, I respect that. You're welcome here. This book is for you too.

But those things aren't at the heart of what people are yearning for from us. There's something much deeper and much better. That's what this book is about: the big vision for manhood.

The vision is this: *We men are at our best when we are functioning as protectors and defenders.* We are at our best when we champion the weak and vulnerable. We are at our best when we use whatever strength we have to safeguard the innocent. We are at our best when we do the job Adam was given: keeper of the garden.

You, and every other guy you know, can do this.

I should also let you know that this book is written by someone who believes in God. That, of course, is not an odd thing. What may be out of the ordinary is that God is not a side character in this play. He's the central one, influencing (I hope) every page. He knows us, what we're made for, and why we're here.

Our world is hurting. Here's hoping you become just the man we need.

THE KEEPER OF THE GARDEN

The Poster

“What’s the deal with the guy with the baby?”

I was asking this because a few of us were on a tour of a women’s co-op house at the University of Illinois, where I was a student. And I kept seeing the same poster seemingly in everyone’s room: a black-and-white photo of a guy in jeans with no shirt on, sitting and holding a baby. That’s it.

Turns out that poster is one of the bestselling posters of all time, with more than five million sold.

But the guy doesn’t seem *that* muscular or exceptional. You can’t even see much of his face, really. He’s a model, sure, but the world isn’t short on models. So what’s the deal? What made this poster so popular?

The student giving us the tour answered my question. “He’s handsome, but it’s not just the guy. It’s the way the baby is looking at the guy.”

Millions of women bought a poster because of the way a baby is looking at a guy? Yes, apparently.

“And the guy is cradling the baby’s head. The baby is safe. We all want a guy like that.”

Huh. As an eighteen-year-old guy who didn’t have a girlfriend and had never had a girlfriend, I took note of this.

I mean, I knew I couldn’t look like Poster Guy, but still.



For the record, this book isn't all about making yourself attractive to girls. It's about something much bigger, but it's worth noting how females often instinctually want to bring out the best in us.

There's a little experiment I've conducted several times while speaking to mixed groups of men and women or teenage girls and boys. I'll show photos from news stories of men helping people. Instead of a model, it's a soldier carrying an old woman out of a village, or two guys helping a family during a flood, or a guy pulling a baby out of an overturned car in a canal. Some of the men are overweight, some balding, some covered in filth. Nobody has ripped abs.

But it doesn't matter.

I'll ask a quick question of the women: "Do you find these men attractive?"

The response, without fail, is immediate: "YEEEEEEEESSSSS!!!"

I do this because I want the guys to feel the reaction and remember it like I remember Poster Guy. None of these guys look like what other guys would typically think women would freak out about, and yet, they freak out. Why?

Because these men are protectors. That's it.

Check out any survey of women being asked about the most attractive professions that men have. It's always the same: firefighters. Why? Because of pants with awesome reflectors?

No. It's not pants with reflectors. I've tried this.

It's because they rescue people. They take responsibility for the vulnerable.

Now, you can use this information to decide, "Hey, I'm going to be a firefighter so women will like me." But the bigger and better takeaway is this: *Women sense who we are supposed to be.* And yes, they are attracted to us when they see us living that out. They're looking for men who make them feel secure. This is why women often consider confidence, a fit body, wealth, or a deep

voice “sexy.” Wise women, of course, know these are mere surface indicators and can be misleading to the extreme . . . but they’re certainly hoping.

Please know this: A man who is a confident provider and protector can be less than wealthy. He can have a high-pitched voice. He can be less than fit . . . and still be very attractive to women.

Fun fact: Apparently, sometimes you don’t even have to do anything to be admired for being an attractive man of action. A few nights ago, a group of loud teenage guys was in the street in front of our house after 11:00. They didn’t bother me, so I sprang into inaction and stayed in bed.

But my wife, Carolyn, was very unsettled. She couldn’t sleep and watched them through the window. She went downstairs. I didn’t understand what the big deal was. But I finally got out of bed.

I got dressed, went downstairs, and headed out the door to confront the guys. But as I walked out the door, they all left. I didn’t even do anything. And Carolyn’s reaction?

I’m super hot. That’s what. I did nothing, and suddenly my attractiveness made a quantum jump.

Wait, I *did* do something. I showed a willingness to act. A *willingness* to intervene on my wife’s behalf. My wife is not a fearful person, and she didn’t marry me for my awesome nunchuck skills. But women love it when we prove we’re *willing* to do what needs to be done. It turns out it’s not about muscle at all but about character.

Women love it when we prove we’re *willing* to do what needs to be done. It turns out it’s not about muscle at all but about character.

In fact, if you prove to be a man who is passive or weak in character, a woman who was once attracted to your ripped muscles will ultimately begin to resent those same ripped muscles. You will simply lose her respect, no matter how much you work out.

Women sense when we are fulfilling our purpose and when we’re not. Not only do they lack respect for passive men, but they

resent them. They know men are made for something more, and that “more” is a signpost, I believe, pointing us to something: our purpose. What women want from us looks exactly like what God created Adam to do in the Bible’s account of the garden of Eden.

I’m hoping that by the time you’ve finished this book, you have a deep sense of that purpose. If you do, the vulnerable people around you—and maybe those far away—will flourish because of it.

Adam left his post, and the world has been suffering ever since. The world is yearning for men who show up. All kinds of men, in all walks of life, who know who they are and why they are here . . . and don’t leave.

The world needs us to show up. You ready for this?