

JOSEPH VS. THE MANOSPHERE

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Quick quiz -- What do these men all have in common: St. Joseph, Andrew Tate, Atticus Finch, and Stanley Kowalski?

If you said, "Absolutely nothing!" You'd be right.

These four men, 2 fictional and 2 real, represent the huge contrast between toxic masculinity (Andrew Tate, Stanley Kowalski) and healthy masculinity (St. Joseph & Atticus Finch).

Yes, besides being what we might call the stepfather of Jesus Christ, Joseph is a perfect exemplar of the healthy masculinity that our contemporary culture desperately needs.

TOXIC MASCULINITY

This year's British mini-series "Adolescence" (Netflix) has received 13 Emmy nominations and 5 Golden Globe nominations. It centers on a 13-year-old schoolboy, Jamie Miller, who is arrested after the murder of a girl in his school.

Jamie is an INCEL (Involuntary Celibate), a male virgin who believes he is being cheated out of the sexual expression that is his right by feminist females, especially those in his school who have teased, ridiculed, and tormented him, and rejected his fumbling romantic approaches. He has come to this conclusion via his addictive obsession with the "Manosphere," a loosely connected network of online communities, websites, forums, and social media spaces where men unite in a critical stance toward feminism and a belief that society is biased against men due to feminist influences.

The primary purpose of the manosphere is to provide a space for men to discuss their struggles and challenges, often in relation to dating, relationships, and societal expectations. However, many communities within the manosphere promote [narrow and aggressive definitions of masculinity](#), emphasizing traits such as emotional control, material wealth, and dominance over women as markers of male worth.

Would that "Adolescence" was just fiction, the product of some writer's overactive imagination, and nothing more. But, alas...

Andrew Tate, a former professional kickboxer and popular social media "influencer" with over a million followers promotes a vision of "alpha male" dominance, entitlement over women, and disdain for empathy, and has become a figurehead of toxic masculinity in popular culture. His content has been banned on platforms like Instagram and TikTok for misogynistic tirades, yet he remains highly influential on X (Twitter). In the UK, a man convicted of murdering his ex-girlfriend and her family had consumed Tate's content hours before the crime.

That is not to say that Andrew Tate made him commit those horrible crimes but neither can it be denied that steady diet of toxic online rhetoric like that of Tate and those like him can segue into violent, destructive behavior like that illustrated in "Adolescence."

Tate himself, along with his brother were being investigated for multiple sex crimes in Romania and prohibited from leaving the country while under investigation until, according to the [New York Times](#), the Trump administration stepped in on their behalf and they were allowed to return the U.S.

With voices like that of Andrew Tate and others in the Manosphere reaching out to influence men, especially young men, our culture is crying out for roll models who present an alternative perspective on maleness.

HEALTHY MASCULINITY

If Luke presents the birth of Jesus narrative almost solely from Mary's point of view, then Matthew offers it from Joseph's perspective. This quiet carpenter says not a single word in all of scripture but his influence is profound, especially as it relates to the topic of healthy vs. toxic masculinity.

While the toxic masculinity that is not just accepted but popularized, today thrives on control and humiliation. Joseph shows us strength in compassion and restraint. So, does true, healthy masculinity use power to protect and uplift, to dominate and destroy?

Scripture gives us Joseph, who faced shame, confusion, and cultural pressure—but chose mercy over vengeance, obedience over pride, and quiet strength over loud domination. Joseph models a masculinity that is neither toxic nor timid, but faithful and compassionate.

The story begins with Mary and Joseph engaged to be married but not yet living together. It becomes apparent that Mary is pregnant and Joseph has two choices. He can renounce her as an adulteress and send her back to her own family. Adultery, you will recall, is a capital crime. Those found guilty are stoned to death. But Joseph is a compassionate man and decides, instead, to send her away quietly.

Just as he has resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appears to him in a dream and tells him, "Do not be afraid," (a favorite theme of this angel), to take Mary as his wife, and to name their son Jesus which will fulfill the words of the prophet. Joseph obeys. He marries Mary quietly in a simple service and, when the son is born he names him, Jesus as commanded

He could have exposed Mary, but chose not to (v.19). He chose listening and flexibility in favor of over reacting. He receives the angel's word and adjusts his plan (v.20–24). He places obedience over ego by accepting a costly, misunderstood role as guardian of Jesus. He expresses strength through silence. Though he never speaks a recorded word in Scripture, his actions speak volumes.

He is the very model of healthy masculinity –

ATTICUS FINCH ET. AL.

When I grow up I want to be Atticus Finch – the Gregory Peck version. No disrespect to Richard Thomas who played the part in the recent Broadway revival but, for me, and I imagine most people my age, Gregory Peck is the one and only real Atticus Finch.

On the off chance that you don't know or have forgotten who he is, let me offer a brief refresher: Atticus is the main adult character and protagonist in Harper Lee's classic novel *To Kill a Mockingbird* and the 1962 movie by the same name.

To Kill a Mockingbird, explores themes of racial injustice, moral growth, and empathy through the eyes of a young girl in the Deep South during the Great Depression. Plot summary:

Set in the fictional town of Maycomb, Alabama, during the 1930s, the story follows Jean Louise "Scout" Finch, her brother Jem, and their widowed father Atticus Finch, a principled lawyer. The narrative begins with Scout and Jem's childhood adventures, including their fascination with their reclusive neighbor, Boo Radley. The plot thickens when Atticus is appointed to defend Tom Robinson, a Black man falsely accused of raping a white woman, Mayella Ewell. Through the trial and its aftermath, Scout and Jem witness the deep-seated racism and moral complexities of their community, leading to significant personal growth and understanding of human nature.

Atticus Finch is the personification of masculinity as it is expressed through empathy, justice, integrity, moral fortitude, and protection of the vulnerable. He is kind, patient, and understanding. Not unlike Joseph whose masculinity is expressed through mercy, humility, compassion, restraint, and obedience to God.

Stanley Kowalski is a fictional character in [Tennessee Williams'](#) play [A Streetcar Named Desire](#). He is the antithesis of Atticus Finch. Here is how the Wikipedia describes him.

He lives in a working class neighborhood of New Orleans with his pregnant wife, Stella (née DuBois), and is employed as a factory parts salesman. He was an Army engineer in World War II, having served as a Master Sergeant. He is a controlling, hard-edged man, with no discernible capacity for empathy, forgiveness, or patience, and no apparent family ties of his own. He also has a vicious temper and fights with his wife, sometimes leading to instances of domestic violence.

The play is a tragedy in the classical sense in that Kowalski's sociopathic penchant for misogyny turn everyone he meets into his victims. As long ago as 1947, Tennessee Williams was aware of the dangers of toxic masculinity.

In 2025, Andrew Tate and his "manosphere," express masculinity as domination, misogyny, and aggression. Even though he has been banned from major platforms for harmful rhetoric, yet he still manages to be influential. His influence has been linked to violent acts and distorted views of manhood. His is a toxic masculinity that thrives on control and humiliation.

Literature shows us two paths: men who use power to protect and uplift, and men who use power to dominate and destroy. Scripture gives us Joseph, who faced shame, confusion, and cultural pressure—but chose mercy over vengeance, obedience over pride, and quiet

strength over loud domination. Joseph models a masculinity that is neither toxic nor timid, but faithful and compassionate.

Parents, grandparents, this Christmas let us resolve that one of the gifts we will give our sons and grandsons is a model of masculinity that is not about domination but about service, not about control but about compassion, a masculinity that thrives on service, dignity, and protection of the vulnerable.

Let us give them St. Joseph.

And maybe a little bit of Atticus Finch, too.

AMEN