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bigIdea small group discussion

In our culture the definition of masculinity has been blurred. Most men in our culture if they are honest have a nagging question that won't go away. It goes something like this, "there must be more than this?"

So often men, out of a sense of deep dissatisfaction seek to express their masculinity in different ways. Some seek to prove themselves through business and the acquisition of wealth. Some through athletics and physical prowess. Some through power and status. The truth is that being savvy in business, or good at making money, or physically strong, or a powerful leader can all be very good things, as long as they are accompanied by other "manly" characteristics that get less press. We want to talk about both. So men, let's adjust our cup and Man Up!



BIG IDEA: If I take care of my character, my reputation will take care of me.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What type of reputation were you known for when you were in High School? In college? What type of reputation do you have now?
2. How do you feel about your height? Was height a factor in your selection of a mate? Or in your vote of a political candidate?
3. Who sat where at your family dinner table when you were 12 years old? Were you ever the honored guest at a fancy meal? What for?
4. *With your Bible or YouVersion, read 1 Samuel 9:1-6.* Outline the chain of 'chance' events which the Lord uses to put Saul where He wants him.
5. What physical advantage did Saul have over his peers? Why might that impress others during that time of warfare? How might that impress us today?
6. What distinguishes a *man of God?* (9:6) What role did a prophet serve? What did they do? Who did they speak for? Who did they speak to?
7. What does Saul's ignorance of Samuel indicate?
8. Carlo said, "Saul was the best looking guy in the country, but the Bible tells us that regardless of how Saul looked, his heart was ugly." Have you ever met a pretty on the outside, ugly on the inside person? Have you ever been that person?
9. When it comes to *outward appearance* or *inward character*, which of those two do people usually focus on improving? What steps can you take to improve your *inward character?*
10. **Character is who you are when no one is looking.** *With your Bible or YouVersion, read 1 Samuel 15:24-26.* How did Saul's character catch up with him and ultimately lead to his downfall?
11. *With your Bible or YouVersion, read Proverbs 22:1.* Which one of these contrasts is the most desirable to God? Most desirable to the world?





GOING DEEPER

1. *With your Bible or YouVersion, read 1 Samuel 9:1-27.* What is God's purpose for the king-to-be? (9:16) What does this teach us about His mercy?
2. What do you think Samuel saw in Saul's heart? (9:19) In Saul's future? (9:20)
3. How does Saul react to such prophetic insight? (9:21): with true modesty? Still in ignorance? Fear? Why?
4. In what ways does Samuel honor Saul at the meal? (9:22-25) Do you think Saul knows what Samuel's intentions are? (9:24, 15-16) Why or why not?
5. What is the significance of Samuel's private anointing of Saul? (10:1) Why a private ceremony when there would be a public coronation later? (10:17-27)
6. What three signs would be given to Saul? (10:2-6) What would these signs confirm? (10:7)
7. If you would have been in Saul's sandals at this point, how would you consider this prophecy, given the events of the past 24 hours?

MOVING FORWARD

When it comes to manhood, God cares more about what is inside than what is outside. God told Samuel when picking the next king of Israel after Saul, ““Don't judge by appearance or height. The Lord doesn't see things the way you see them. People judge by outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.” God's next choice of king? A young, 17-year old, ruddy boy named David who was the runt of his family, yet whom God called *beloved* (David's name means *beloved*). Men, let's spend more time working on our inner character than our outward biceps.

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

To work on our inner character and reputation, this week, do the following:

- Spend the next 7 days reading about the life of Saul in 1 Samuel 9-15. Journal and write about Saul's downfall and how and why he lost the throne.
- If you have sin in your life, find another credible guy to confess your sins. Ask him to hold you accountable so that you do not fall like Saul.
- Pray that God would show you any ways in which you need to change. Pray David's prayer in Psalm 51.

CHANGING YOUR MIND

A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches, and favor is better than silver or gold. Proverbs 22:1

