

“After God’s Own Heart,” Lesson 1, Leader’s Guide
Introduction, 1 Sam 8-10, 13:1-14

Central theme: God’s knows what a “real man” is

For Starters – Reading Some Man Résumés

The point: In this section, you’ll introduce the lesson by looking at some different models of manhood. The point is not to make fun of or degrade certain models, but to point out the variety of models that young men are faced with.

Supplies:

Copies of each man résumé, cut out individually

Slips of paper, one for each guy

Pens

Instructions: Assign each of the following “man résumés” to different guys in the group. Have each guy read their man résumé in a way that is convincing. They want to try to convince the rest of the group that their model of manhood is the best one. If you don’t have enough guys in your group, choose only a few of the man résumés or have a couple guys read more than one.

Tell them that, after all of the “man résumés” have been read, they’re going to vote, anonymously, for which model seems best to them and which seems worst.

The Frat Boy Model: So, what makes me a man? Beer and freedom! That’s right! Only a real man like me can kill two six-packs a night and still drive myself home! Being a real man is all about being free to have as much fun as I want, nobody can tie me down!

The Action Hero Model: What makes me a real man? These real man muscles! No girly wuss boys allowed. Any doubt about my manliness is erased when I flex. Only a real man can look this jacked!

The Soft and Sensitive Model: I’m a real man because I’m in touch with my emotions. I’m not threatened by expressing how I feel or crying at movies. I’m just being authentic. Any guy who is afraid to express his emotions is just hiding.

The Ladies’ Man Model: A real man is measured in the eyes of the ladies. Yeah, who cares what other guys think or say? All that matters is that there’s always a hot chick on my arm. Can I help it if I’m irresistible?

The Cowboy Model: I can’t believe we’re even talking about this crap. You just figure it out when life knocks you around. A real man doesn’t even have to define it.

The Rescuer Model: Being a real man is about taking care of things. Put food on the table? Check. Work those extra hours at the office so that there are never any worries about money? Done. It all comes down to providing.

The Authority Model: It's all about getting my respect. You can't be a man unless you're treated like a man, and a man should get respect. A real man is in control and in charge. The women should know that he's a leader. That's how it works.

After the guys have read through the models, pass out slips of paper and the pens and have them vote. Tell them to be honest with their vote and not to write their name on the card. After they've voted, collect the papers, count the votes, and reveal the results.

Then ask about the one voted best, "What is it about this model that is so appealing?" Then ask about the one voted worst, "What is it about this model that seems so unappealing?"

Point out that each model has its shortcomings and that none of them really reflects God's standards for manhood. Tell them that, fortunately, God has spoken a little bit about what his standards are.

Look at the Book –

Tell the guys that you're going to be spending the next few meetings talking about what it means to be God's kind of man. To do that, you'll be looking at the life of someone God identified as his kind of man and learning about his character. But, first, it's important to understand the background.

Distribute the lesson handouts.

Have everyone open their Bibles to **1 Samuel 8**. Explain that Samuel was the last of the judges who ruled over Israel and was also the first of the great prophets. Although he had led the nation, the people were unhappy.

Read **1 Samuel 8:1-9**

Handout: What did the people ask for in 1 Samuel 8? (**A king to rule over them**)

Ask: Do you think there's anything wrong with the people's request?

Explain that Israel already had a king: God himself! For them to ask for a king like the other nations meant that they didn't want God as their ruler. So, God grants their request, but warns them it won't go well.

Read **1 Samuel 8:10-18**

Handout: How would you summarize Samuel's warning to the people?

Ask: How would you have responded to such a warning?

Let's read verses 19-22, and see how the people responded.

Even after Samuel tells the people so much bad stuff about the king they want, the people still request a king to rule over them! So, in the next chapter, Samuel goes and anoints a guy named Saul who seemed to most of the people to be a great choice to be king. In fact, 1 Samuel 9:2 says that Saul was "an impressive young man without equal among the Israelites." If there was anyone who should be king, it was Saul!

Show your group the funny warning signs at the end of the lesson.

Some warning signs are probably not very serious or worrisome, but others shouldn't be ignored. Like when God warns about trouble ahead, you can trust that He's telling the truth. And that's exactly what happened with Saul. Although he started off pretty well, saving the people from the Ammonites (1 Sam 11:1-11), he also went off course pretty quickly.

Read 1 Samuel 13:5-14

Handout: What did Saul do that was so wrong? (**He offered the sacrifices that only Samuel should have offered; he tried to be more than God asked him to be**)

Handout: What did Samuel say God would do in response? (**Take the kingdom away from him; find a new king**)

Handout: What type of man was God going to look for, according to Samuel? (**A man after his own heart**)

Handout: What do you think that means?

God did, in fact, choose a new king to take Saul's place and his name was David. Over the next few meetings, we're going to look at David's life to see if we can discover exactly what it was about him that made him "a man after God's own heart." Along the way, we'll see how we can all become men after God's own heart and that we can learn a lot from the life of David about what it means to please God.

Optional activities –

- You can replace the opening activity or end the lesson with showing a montage of manliness from various films (think, Commando, Animal House, etc.). This would require some advance planning to make sure to edit appropriately and avoid objectionable content, but could be worth a few good laughs.
- Reveal some of the world's wisdom about what it takes to be "a real man" by using the Internet. For example, check out the bike seat for "real men" at <http://www.sheldonbrown.com/real-man.html>. You should be careful, though, and thoroughly preview and bookmark sites ahead of time. Plugging "real man" into Google doesn't return the most sanctified results.
- Host a "Manliness Olympics" to start off the night. Have events such as distance spitting, endurance belching, freestyle flexing, and so on. You can be the "judge" and even give out "medals." Play the Olympic fanfare by John Williams. Take photos of guys on the "medal stand."

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