



## THE BIBLE GIVES MEN A VISION FOR WHO WE WERE CREATED TO BE

Talking to middle-aged men of Gen X and young men of Gen Z today! In the midst of understanding various generations, it would be easy to pigeonhole generations; however, the more that generations may be different, the more humanity is the same. The point of this series is not to define manhood as a generation but according to the Bible.

1. What do you view as distinctive traits of the two generations and the commonalities, particularly as believers?

## YOUR CHARACTER IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING ABOUT YOU

[1<sup>st</sup> Samuel 16:18] You can have many accomplishments in your life, but the most important thing about you is your character. It comes out of you by default because it is in you and your foundation. Other people will see it. When all is stripped away—in the good times or the difficult times—your character will stand.

2. How are the concepts of character, reputation, and accomplishments the same or different? How do they interact?

## A MAN OF VALOR

David was known as a man of valor, having significant social stature in how he was seen by others. Your reputation is how you are seen by others rather than who you are. Your character is who you truly are. Your reputation should be backed up by your character because your character will always outpace your reputation. You can maintain a facade about how you want to be seen, but this won't last.

3. What character traits do you most want to develop or maintain to back up the reputation you want to convey?

## A WARRIOR

David was known as a warrior. Warriors were men of principle and conviction. They didn't fight arbitrarily. When David was running from Saul, he had mighty men who would do anything for him because they were men of principle and conviction.

4. How do the waves and tides of culture seek to shift around our views and perceptions?
5. How do your views of faith, women/dating, and work reflect your principles and convictions?

## ELOQUENT

David was known for his eloquence. Rather than being able to get up in front of people, speak, make sense, and present a rational argument, the original Hebrew means David was very wise and intentional with his words. We live in a time when we can rapid fire our words and opinions without fully considering their ramifications. We can undo many things but our words cannot be unsaid. Rabbis teach that harmful words are more severe than murder because both are final. The New Testament tells us that the mouth speaks from the overflow of the heart. So, if you don't like what's coming out of your mouth, don't think about reigning in your tongue, but think about the condition of your heart.

6. What are the types of speech that overflow from a heart that is in healthy or unhealthy condition?

## GREAT PRESENCE

David was handsome or had great presence. David was THAT guy who could fight lions, write music, and whoop you on the battlefield. He was wildly talented and took care of himself. Young guys, think about how you shower, shave, and put yourself together. While appearance isn't everything, we should be intentional about it because it affects how we are perceived.

7. What aspects of appearance affect the perceptions of others? What matters and doesn't matter?

## THE LORD WAS WITH HIM

Most importantly, the Lord was with David. His life emanated his faith. The most important thing a young man can be developing is a robust faith. The most significant people are those that emanate Jesus because they make us want to be a better lover of God because of them. Character is something you can't hide from yourself or God. Many in Gen Z are looking for fame/recognition but if you pursue a platform before a foundation, the platform will crush you. Your gifting will always be outpaced by a subpar character, but Jesus wants to develop things within you that will be able to stand the test of time and weather any storm. What are you doing to do to work on it now?

8. What practices develop your faith and ability to grow independently rather than being spoon-fed?
9. How to you incorporate your faith into your life and what you do?
10. What content have you seen people put out on Instagram, Snapchat, texts, or even search history that made you question their character or made you want to be a better lover of God?

## PROTECT YOUR CHARACTER FROM THE DRIFT

[2 Sam. 11:1-5] We see the descent of David's character in his 40s to 50s. Middle-aged guys, our character is developed over decades but can be lost in seconds—just a handful of poor decisions. This is a pivotal time in David's life that he never recovers from. While still a man after God's own heart, his reputation was forever tarnished. A series of small decisions and then you wake up in a place you can't recognize. We need to be conscientious about how we guard ourselves because people never forget how you finish. When we have a purposeless period in our lives, we can have a little too much time on our hands. Men are visual creatures but to see is one thing but moving beyond and looking again creates a pivotal point. If you don't think about how you're going to respond, you're going to react. At the lunchtime at work, are you compromising because it's "just" a casual workplace time? We should live lives where we don't have to cover up our actions. Middle-aged guys need to finish strong because the next generation is looking to us as role models. We need to continue in good character so we don't find ourselves finishing having lost our influence. Paul says to Timothy in 1 Timothy 4:12 because he tells the young man to set an example. Young men need to pursue their character, but middle-aged guys need to protect their character.

11. How do we guard the good character we've developed and nourished and protect our influence on the next generation?
12. When you find yourself in a place where you are convicted about what you see, what should you do?