

# The Ishbane Conspiracy

## Image

### Ice Breaker/Game:

### Book Study:

#### Image Distortion

*Time: about 60-90 minutes*

*Students will learn about the themes of "The Ishbane Conspiracy" by Randy Alcorn, more specifically how we can define ourselves by what God sees, not our society's standards.*

**Supplies:** Bibles, *The Ishbane Conspiracy* by Randy Alcorn, Celebrity Pictures, white board, markers.

Start the study out with groups of 3-4 and discuss the students' reactions and insights of chapters 4-6. Allow time for discussions and questions.

Ask: **What did you think about the first three chapters?**

**What stood out in your mind?**

Come back together into the big group.

Say: **Tonight our main topic will be 'image'. What our society and God thinks of who you are. Our culture is obsessed with a certain standard that is focused on the outside appearance and people are pressured into fitting a certain mold.**

Ask: **What are some examples that you have seen of society's "image"?**

**How does it make you feel when you see these things?**

Say: **It used to be that there was only one mold to fit into, but we find today that people feel that they have to look according to their assigned "roles". This culture then defines people strictly by how they look.**

Have pictures of certain celebrities and have the students define the "role" they fit into.

Ask: **God does not define or limit what we can do by how we look, so why do we?**

Have a volunteer read *1 Samuel 16:7*

<sup>7</sup> But the LORD said to Samuel, “Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.”

Say: **When we see ourselves through God’s eyes, he gives us the confidence to fulfill our purpose in the world.**

Have volunteers read aloud the following scriptures: Romans 8:14-16, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Romans 8:37, 1 Corinthians 6:19, Philippians 4:13 and have the students list who God says that we are through Him.

<sup>14</sup> For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. <sup>15</sup> The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. <sup>[a]</sup> And by him we cry, “Abba, <sup>[b]</sup> Father.” <sup>16</sup> The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children.

<sup>17</sup> Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: <sup>[a]</sup> The old has gone, the new is here!

<sup>37</sup> No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

<sup>19</sup> Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own;

<sup>13</sup> I can do all this through him who gives me strength.

Break into gender specific groups.

Say: **One of the issues that comes up in the book is eating disorders. Because we have been placing our identity on outward appearances, eating disorders continue to be a huge problem in our culture. Eating Disorders can affect females and males of all ages. Here are a few statics on eating disorders.**

Have the following gender specific statistics written on the white board ahead of time and reveal them now to go through in your groups.

### **Female Stats:**

Eating disorders are a daily struggle for 10 million females in the United States.

The National Institute of Mental Health reports that 2.7% of teens, ages 13-18 years old, struggle with an eating disorder. <sup>[14]</sup>

50% of teenage girls use unhealthy weight control behaviors such as skipping meals, smoking cigarettes, vomiting, and taking laxatives to control their weight.

### **Female Eating Disorder Prevalence Rates**

.9% of women will struggle with anorexia in their lifetime

1.5% of women will struggle with bulimia in their lifetime

3.5% of women will struggle with binge eating

### **Male Statistics**

Eating disorders are a daily struggle for 1 million males in the United States.

The National Institute of Mental Health reports that 2.7% of teens, ages 13-18 years old, struggle with an eating disorder.

30% of teenage boys use unhealthy weight control behaviors such as skipping meals, smoking cigarettes, vomiting, and taking laxatives to control their weight.

### **Male Eating Disorder Statistics**

.3% of men will struggle with anorexia

.5% of men will struggle with bulimia

2% of men will struggle with binge eating disorder <sup>[13]</sup>

**Ask: What if you know someone who has an eating disorder? What should you do?**

**What other image issues have you struggled with?**

**Say: Let's look over what God has to say about us and who we are to Him.**

Read *Psalm 139:13-16*

<sup>13</sup>You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother's womb.

<sup>14</sup>Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous—how well I know it. <sup>15</sup>You watched me as I was being formed in utter seclusion, as I was woven together in the dark of the womb.

<sup>16</sup>You saw me before I was born. Every day of my life was recorded in your book.

Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed.

**Ask: How does this scripture bring encouragement to you?**

**How can we apply this to our daily lives?**

Have the groups come back together to end in prayer.