

L E S S O N # 1 :

GOD WANTS TO MAKE YOU MIGHTY

CORE TRUTHS

- God is still looking for mighty men through whom He can show that He is mighty.
- It's not the might of the man that matters but the might of his God.
- God's mighty men have new hearts that are completely devoted to Him.
- God wants to make you mighty so the world can see that He is mighty.

WHY "MIGHTY MEN"?

After opening the class in prayer, ask: "Why do you think the name of this group is *Mighty Men*? Where did that name come from?"

After a few guesses ask your students to turn in their Bibles to 2 Samuel 23:8–23 and read the exploits of some of David's mighty men.

NAMED FOR DAVID'S MIGHTY MEN

After reading the passage, ask them again, "Do you now have a hint as to why the name of this group is *Mighty Men*?" We named this group after David's mighty men. They were spectacular warriors who served God under King David. Although David had more than thirty mighty men, that number was small compared to the number of men in the whole army of Israel.

MAIN PASSAGE: 2 SAMUEL 23:8–23

Be prepared to describe the exploits of a few of David's mighty men. Remember, young men love stories of battle and heroism. Be sure that you are prepared to give these stories all the dramatic flair they deserve.

- **Josheb-Basshebeth (Adino):** He killed 800 men with a spear in one battle! Can you think of anyone in the Bible who, in one battle, killed more men than Josheb-Basshebeth? There is only one: Samson. He slew 1,000 men during one battle using just the jawbone of a donkey.
- **Eleazer the son of Dodo:** Israel was in a battle with the Philistines, and they were losing the fight. As the Israelites began to retreat, one man, Eleazer, refused to run away. He stood his ground and fought alone against the Philistines. He fought so

hard, for so long, and with such intensity that his hand was frozen to the sword. He single-handedly turned back the Philistine army.

- **Josheb, Eleazer, and Shammah:** They were with King David in the Cave of Adullam near Bethlehem, David's hometown. The Philistines had captured the city of Bethlehem and were guarding it. David was thinking about his hometown in the hands of the enemy. When he recalled the well by the city gate, from which he used to drink, he said nostalgically, "O that someone would give me water to drink from the well of Bethlehem which is by the gate!" Upon hearing this, his three most trusted warriors took off running towards Bethlehem. They broke through the camp of the Philistines, fought their way to the well, got some water, and brought it back to David. They risked their lives to get David a cup of water. David was so overcome that he did not think himself worthy to drink the water. Instead, he poured it out as a drink offering to the Lord.
- **Benaiah:** This man was famous for killing two well-known warriors of Moab. Another time he went down into a pit on a snowy day to kill a lion. Most impressive of all, with only a club for a weapon (probably a staff), he fought a 7 1/2 foot tall Egyptian (1 Chron. 11:23) who was armed with a massive spear. Benaiah fought the Egyptian, took his spear, and then killed the man with his own weapon. He fought a giant with only a staff and won!

Ask your students which of the mighty men they would want to be and why. Be sure to tell them who you would want to be and why. You may have to go first.

GOD GIVES US A DESIRE TO BE MIGHTY

Men and boys have a desire to be great. We want to be mighty. We want our lives to matter. We want our lives to count for something big. We love stories about battles and heroic deeds. Every young man wishes that someday he could come through in a desperate situation and prove that he is a great man.

This is not wrong. In fact, God has given us those desires. However, those desires can become focused totally on us—what we can do and be. They can produce pride and arrogance in us, keeping us from becoming mighty in God.

If we are to allow our God-given desire for "mightiness" to flow in the right direction, then we must know something that David's mighty men knew. It's found in verses 10, 12, and subtly in verse 16. Can you tell what it is?

If you will read carefully, you will see that in two of these heroic acts (vs. 10, 12), the Bible tells us that it was "the LORD" who brought about a great victory. In verse 16, you read that David poured out the water from the well of Bethlehem "to the LORD."

What did these mighty men know? They knew that it wasn't their might that mattered but the might of their God. You see, the point of telling us about the mighty men of David is not so that we will admire the mighty men of David but so that we will admire their God. These men were not nearly as mighty as some of the men they killed, right? The story of David and Goliath serves as a perfect illustration of that fact. They were not mighty because of who they were but because of whom they served.

GOD IS LOOKING FOR MIGHTY MEN

CORE TRUTH: GOD IS LOOKING FOR MIGHTY MEN THROUGH WHOM HE CAN SHOW THE WORLD THAT HE IS MIGHTY.

The whole *Mighty Men* study is built around one core belief: God is still looking for mighty men through whom He can show the world that He is mighty. Bring out this truth every week as you meet with the young men to encourage them in their pursuit of God.

It's not the might of the man that matters but the might of his God.

If you have a mighty God, you can be a mighty man. It isn't about us, our ability to be mighty. It's about God and His might. It's about His desire to show the world His glory and power through men like us. Remember, the mighty men of David were not as mighty as many of the men they killed. Their mighty deeds were done only because they had a mighty God working in and through them. He won the battle through them. Again, it's not the might of the man that matters but the might of his God.

Illustrations of God's might

The Bible is full of illustrations of God doing incredible works through men. Let's look at some examples.

David defeats Goliath (1 Sam. 17:45–46)

David did not defeat Goliath—God did. Read 1 Samuel 17:45–46. God did mighty things even though David was not as mighty as Goliath.

Moses parts the Red Sea (Exo. 14:13–21)

Moses may have raised his hands just before the Red Sea parted, but it was God who parted the waters. Moses himself gave God the credit. Notice the might, power, and glory that Moses attributes to God in Exodus 14:13a, 14a, and 21a. God did mighty things through Moses even though Moses was not as strong as the deep waters.

Gideon defeats the Midianite army with 300 men (Judg. 7)

In the eyes of the Israelites, Gideon's army was of respectable size, but God tells Gideon that there are too many men. God gives Gideon the instructions to reduce the army from 32,000 to a mere 300 men. In Judges 7:19–22, Gideon's 300 with trumpets and pitchers in their hands are given victory over the Midianites by the *sword* of the Lord. God once again shows Himself to be mighty through Gideon's army even though their numbers were few.

BIBLICAL TEXT: 2 CHRONICLES 16:9

Read the first half of 2 Chronicles 16:9 and have the students write it in their student books.

THE HEARTS OF MIGHTY MEN

God delights in showing His power and glory, and He does that through us. It isn't about our might but His might. So, how do we become one of God's mighty men? How do we become the kind of men through whom God will do great things?

GOD'S MIGHTY MEN HAVE NEW HEARTS THAT ARE COMPLETELY DEVOTED TO HIM

If you are to become one of God's mighty men, then you must have a new heart that is completely devoted to Him.

David, the leader of the mighty men, is described in Scripture as a man after God's own heart (Acts 13:22). David had a heart like God's. This is what set him apart, and this is why he is remembered to this day. David's great exploits began in his heart. The Bible is very clear that God doesn't look at the outward appearance. If He did, He would've chosen Goliath, not David, right? God looks at the heart (1 Sam. 16:7). If you are to be one of God's mighty men, then you must have a heart like David's, which is to say, you must have a heart like God's. What kind of a heart do you have?

Everyone is born with a deceitful and wicked heart (Jer. 17:9)

According to Scripture you are born with a heart that is not at all like God's. In fact, the Bible says you have a heart that is "deceitful above all things and desperately wicked" (Jer. 17:9). So how does a heart that is "desperately wicked" become a heart like David's heart...like God's heart? It can't. You cannot change your heart. You have a hard heart that is desperately wicked. You need a new heart. You can't change your heart, but God can.

**God gives man a new heart at salvation
(Ezek. 36:26; 2 Cor. 5:17; Heb. 8:8–12; 10:16–18)**

The good news—the gospel—is that when you receive Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, God gives you a “new heart” and begins a work of renewal in you. He takes your heart of stone and changes it into a heart of flesh. He writes His law on your heart and draws you to Himself. So, the first step in becoming one of God’s mighty men is not something you do but something He does. It’s not your might that makes you mighty but His might. He gives you a new heart, a heart like His.

**God shows Himself mighty on behalf of those whose hearts
are devoted to Him (2 Chron. 16:9)**

Have the students recite the first half of 2 Chronicles 16:9, which they have written in their student books.

Once you have a new heart, you are able to devote that heart completely to God. God will always come through for men whose hearts are completely His. He wants to show to the world His glory and power through men whose hearts are devoted to Him. If you devote your new heart completely to Him, He will show Himself mighty on your behalf. You can count on it. Remember: it’s not the might of the man that matters but the might of his God.

**We have an enemy who seeks to keep us from devoting
our hearts completely to God, our King**

What is it that keeps us from devoting our hearts completely to God? The enemy. You have an enemy without and within, and these enemies fight against your new heart. The enemy without is called “Satan,” and the enemy within is called “the flesh.” You either live from your new heart, or you live from your flesh. Your new heart is born into a world at war. As soon as God gives it to you, Satan begins to assault it from without and within. Satan’s desire is to destroy your new heart, and he uses the temptations of the world and the desires of your flesh to accomplish his goal.

If you are to become one of God’s mighty men, then you must learn to live from your new heart and resist these enemies. We are in the middle of a holy war, and the stakes are very high. Satan is real, and the flesh is strong. Our enemies are cunning, so we must be trained for battle.

WE MUST TRAIN OUR BODIES TO LIVE FROM OUR NEW HEARTS

You do have a new heart. God has given it to you. The battle of your life is a battle to live from that new heart. You must train your body to live from your new heart. Paul is very clear that we must “exercise or discipline” ourselves for “godliness” (1 Tim. 4:7). Interestingly enough, the Bible has lots to say about training.

Our training is like the training of an athlete (1 Cor. 9:24–27; 1 Tim. 4:7–9)

In 1 Cor. 9:24–27, Paul compares our spiritual training to the training an athlete goes through who competes in the Olympics (track and field and boxing). These athletes go through agonizing practice to train themselves to compete. We are called to something much greater, so our training will be even more difficult.

Read 1 Timothy 4:7–9. If you want to be in shape physically, you have to do physical exercises, and if you want to be in shape spiritually, you have to do spiritual exercises. As the saying goes, “No pain, no gain.”

Our training is like the training of a soldier: it’s agony (1 Tim. 6:12; 2 Tim. 4:7)

Soldiers undergo intense training. Boot camp is mandatory for every soldier, and it requires incredible discipline and hard work. When Paul compares our training to that of a soldier, he uses the word “agony.” Ask anyone who has been to boot camp, and I’m sure they would say it was agonizing. It is certainly rewarding, but it’s still a difficult and challenging process.

- 1 Timothy 6:12 – The word *fight* is the Greek word from which we get our English word *agony*. So we could read it, “Agonize the good agony...”
- 2 Timothy 4:7 – The same thing applies here, it could literally read, “I have agonized a good agony.” The training of the heart is a difficult process. It is hugely rewarding, but it is hard work nonetheless.

Our training requires self-discipline (2 Tim. 1:7; Gal. 5:22–23)

- 2 Timothy 1:7 – God has given us the Spirit of discipline for a reason. He knows we will need it. The Spirit keeps our heart and mind focused in the midst of a world full of distractions.
- Galatians 5:22–23 – One part of the fruit of the Spirit is temperance or self-control. If we are to train our hearts to be the kind of men through whom God’s power and glory are displayed, then we will need the fruit of self-discipline.

If you are to be one of God's mighty men through whom God will show His glory and power to the world, then you must be a man who has trained himself to live from his new heart. You get your new heart at salvation and then train yourself to live from your new heart so that you can overcome the enemy as one of God's mighty men. God's work of renewal is a process, and our training is at the center of that process.

GOD WANTS TO MAKE YOU MIGHTY SO THAT THE WORLD WILL SEE THAT HE IS MIGHTY

DAVID'S SONG (2 SAM. 22:33–36)

2 Samuel 22 records one of David's last songs. In this song, David recounts all that God has done for him and all the great victories he has won through God. In verses 33–36, we find something very interesting.

In verses 33–36a, David talks about who God is and what He has done for David:

God is David's strength

God is David's strong refuge or fortress. God makes his feet secure like a deer upon high places. God prepares David's hands for war with power to bend a metal bow.

God gives David the shield of salvation

- God saved David. God gave many victories to David, saving him from defeat both physically and spiritually. Today's battles also require the armor of God as mentioned in Ephesians 6:10–20.

RESULT: GOD MADE DAVID GREAT (2 SAM. 22:36)

After all of this, David makes a very interesting observation. He says, "...your help makes me great."

God protected David, gave him amazing abilities, trained him, and guaranteed him the victory so that...David could be great. Why? Why did God want David to be great? Because in making David great, people would see that God is great. David was not mighty without God. In fact, he was a little forgotten shepherd boy whom Goliath called a dog. Without God, David was nothing. With God, David was mighty.

God wants to make you mighty so that people will see that He is mighty. He will show the world His might through you.

It's not the might of the man that matters but the might of His God.

As God trained David’s hands to bend a metal bow, so He is now ready to train you to do the same. In this class we are going to learn about the things God uses to train our hearts. We are going to do more than just learn about them; we are actually going to do them. During the next nine months, you will be in a spiritual “boot camp.” The purpose of this boot camp is to train you to live from your new heart.

This course was designed with your training in mind. Each month you will learn about and practice a spiritual discipline. These disciplines have been used by God’s mighty men for centuries and have proven effective in the spiritual warfare we must fight. It will take time for you to understand how to use these disciplines, and you may fail to see their importance at first. However, if you stick with it—if you embrace this training—you will see God use these disciplines to transform your life and give you victory in this holy war.

OVER THE NEXT FEW MONTHS, YOU WILL LEARN TO:

LISTEN TO GOD SPEAK THROUGH HIS WORD

COMMUNICATE WITH GOD IN PRAYER

REMEMBER GOD IN THE SCRIPTURES

BEHOLD GOD IN THE STORY OF THE BIBLE

FOLLOW THE WORK OF GOD IN THE MIGHTY MEN OF THE PAST

FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD IN THE COMPANY OF OTHERS

TURN TO GOD AS YOU ARE BROKEN OVER YOUR SIN

As you can see, your training is all about God. We need Him above anything else, and these seven areas are designed to take us to Him and create an increasing desire for Him.

God is ready to show His might through you. He is ready to make you mighty.

This is the beginning. I believe you are ready.

You may want to review the following course expectations with the group. They are printed in the introduction of the student manual.

COURSE EXPECTATIONS

This course will be hard work: “No pain, no gain.”

- Be faithful in attendance.
- Bring your Bible, your student book, and a pen to every session
- Do assignments on time and be ready to be held accountable.
- Example: Do daily devotions, memorize Scripture, read assignments, be prepared for quizzes, etc.

What can you expect from me?

- I will pray for you.
- I will not ask you to do anything I won't do.
- I will help you by reviewing assignments with you.
- I will hold you accountable.

QUIZ ANSWERS

1. David's mighty men
2. 2 Samuel 23:8–23
3. c
4. a
5. b
6. to admire their God
7. the world that He is mighty
8. Answers will vary. Examples from the lesson include the following: God used David to defeat Goliath; God used Moses to part the Red Sea; and God used Gideon to defeat the Midianites.
9. He had a heart like God's.
10. God gives us a new heart at salvation.
11. who are devoted to Him
12. without—Satan; within—the flesh
13. to destroy your new heart
14. temptations of this world and the desires of your flesh
15. live from your new heart
16. He is mighty

LESSON 1

GOD WANTS TO MAKE YOU MIGHTY

- **Why “Mighty Men”?**
 - Named for David’s mighty men
 - Main passage: 2 Samuel 23:8–23
 - Josheb-Basshebeth (Adino): Killed 800 men in one battle
 - Eleazar the son of Dodo: Refused to run away
 - Josheb, Eleazar, and Shammah: Risked their lives to get David a cup of water
 - Benaiah: Fought a giant Egyptian with only a staff and won
 - Your favorite mighty man: Answers will vary.
 - God gives us a desire to be mighty
- **God Is Looking for Mighty Men**
 - Core truth: God is still looking for mighty men through whom He can show that He is mighty
 - It’s not the might of the man that matters but the might of his God!
 - Illustrations of God’s might
 - David defeats Goliath (1 Sam. 17:45–46)
 - Moses parts the Red Sea (Exo. 14:13–21)
 - Gideon defeats the Midianites army with 300 men (Judg. 7)

- Biblical text: 2 Chronicles 16:9

- Write out the first half of this verse on the lines below.

Answers will vary depending on translation.

- **The Hearts of Mighty Men**

- God's mighty men have _____ **new hearts** _____ that are completely _____ **devoted** _____ to Him
 - Everyone is born with a _____ **deceitful** _____ and _____ **wicked** _____ heart (Jer. 17:9)
 - God _____ **gives** _____ man a _____ **new** _____ heart at salvation (Ezek. 36:26; 2 Cor. 5:17; Heb. 8:8-12; 10:16-18)
 - God shows Himself _____ **mighty** _____ on behalf of those whose hearts are devoted to Him (2 Chron. 16:9)
 - We have an _____ **enemy** _____ who seeks to keep us from devoting our hearts completely to God, our King
 - Enemy without: Satan
 - Enemy within: the flesh
- We must _____ **train** _____ our bodies to live from our new hearts
 - Our training is like the training of an _____ **athlete** _____ (1 Cor. 9:24-27; 1 Tim. 4:7-9)
 - Our training is like the training of a _____ **soldier** _____: it's _____ **agony** _____ (1 Tim. 6:12; 2 Tim. 4:7)
 - Our training requires _____ **self-discipline** _____ (2 Tim. 1:7; Gal. 5:22-23)

- **God wants to make** you **mighty so that the world will see that** He **is mighty**
 - David's song (2 Sam. 22:33–36)
 - God is David's strength
 - God gives David the shield of salvation
 - Result: God made David great (2 Sam. 22:36)

*God wants to make you mighty so that people will see that He is mighty.
He will show the world His might through you.*

- **Over the next few months, you will learn to:**
 - Listen to God speak through His Word
 - Communicate with God in prayer
 - Remember God in the Scriptures
 - Behold God in the story of the Bible
 - Follow the work of God in the mighty men of the past
 - Fellowship with God in the company of others
 - Turn to God as you are broken over your sin

THIS MONTH'S ASSIGNMENT

The Bible is full of examples of God using ordinary men to make God's name great. Spend time this month reading about two of these mighty men and how they glorified God with their mighty acts. If you spend two weeks studying each mighty man, you will be done before next month's meeting.

MOSES

Even though Moses was the child of Israelite slaves, he grew up in a palace raised by an Egyptian princess. He had everything he could want, but the Egyptians hated God. Moses had to make a hard decision. Read Hebrews 11:24–26.

- What did Moses do? **He refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter.** _____
- Why? **Moses chose to be mistreated along with the people of God. He** _____
regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ more valuable than Egypt's treasure. _____

Moses left Egypt to live in the desert. After spending many years caring for his father-in-law's sheep, Moses received a special visit from God. Read Exodus 3:1-4:17 and answer the following questions.

- In your own words, describe what Moses saw (3:1-6). **Answers will vary.** _____
- What was God going to do for His people (3:7-9)? **God was going to deliver** _____
His people from the Egyptians. _____
- How was God going to deliver them (3:10)? **through Moses** _____
- Was the power to deliver Israel dependent on God or Moses? **God** _____

At this point, Moses began to make excuses why he isn't mighty enough. Look at each verse below and write out the excuse given, or how Moses tried to get out of serving God.

- 3:11— **Who am I that I should go before Pharaoh?** _____
- 3:13— **What if the Israelites ask me Your name?** _____
- 4:1— **What if they do not believe me or listen to me?** _____
- 4:10— **I don't speak well.** _____
- 4:13— **Please send someone else to do this job.** _____
- What does Exodus 4:11-12 teach us about where the might of God's people truly comes from? **the LORD; God would help Moses speak and tell him what to say** _____

The ten plagues are the best-known part of Israel's deliverance out of Egypt. Look up the following verses and list the ten plagues that God brought on Egypt. Notice how often the Lord is mentioned in these passages.

- Plague 1—Exodus 7:14–21 **water turned to blood** _____
- Plague 2—Exodus 8:1–6 **frogs** _____
- Plague 3—Exodus 8:16–17 **gnats** _____
- Plague 4—Exodus 8:20–24 **flies** _____
- Plague 5—Exodus 9:1–6 **death of livestock** _____
- Plague 6—Exodus 9:8–10 **boils** _____
- Plague 7—Exodus 9:17–26 **hail** _____
- Plague 8—Exodus 10:3–15 **locusts** _____
- Plague 9—Exodus 10:21–23 **darkness** _____
- Plague 10—Exodus 11:1–6 **death of firstborn** _____
- What was God's purpose in doing all these mighty works (Exo. 9:16)?
to show His power so that His name would be proclaimed everywhere _____

After God led Israel out of Egypt, He did many more mighty works through Moses. Look up the following passages and describe the ways God used Moses to display God's glory.

- Exodus 14:21–31 **God used Moses to open the Red Sea so that the Israelites could safely cross on dry land.** _____

- Exodus 16:4, 13–18 **God used Moses to explain His provision of manna for the Israelites.**

- Exodus 17:1–6 **God used Moses to provide water from a rock for the Israelites.**

- Exodus 17:8–16 **God used Moses to defeat Amalek.**

- What did you learn about the mighty works of God through the life of Moses?
Answers will vary.

JOSHUA

As Moses drew to the end of his life, God appointed a new leader for the people of Israel. Joshua would be another mighty man for God and would spread the glory of the Lord. Even before he took over as the leader of Israel, God was using him in mighty ways.

- You have already read of Joshua’s first mighty act recorded in Exodus 17:8–16. What did God enable Joshua do in this passage? **God enabled Joshua to have victory over Amalek and his people.**

- How do you know that the victory came by God's power and not Joshua's ability? **When Moses held up his hands to God, Israel prevailed. But when he lowered them, Amalek prevailed.**

- Joshua appears again in the story of Israel in Numbers 13–14. Read 13:1–20. What was Joshua's mission? **Joshua's mission was to spy out the land and people of Canaan.**

- What were the people in the land like (Num. 13:28–33)? **They were powerful giants.**

- How did the Israelites respond to this news (Num. 14:1–4)? **They wept and grumbled that it would have been better to have stayed in Egypt.**

- Why did Joshua and Caleb tell the people they should attack the land (Num. 14:6–10)? **They believed that the LORD was with the Israelites.**

The Israelites refused to listen to Joshua and Caleb. As a result, God judged the unbelief of the people by making them wander in the wilderness for forty years. When Moses died at the end of those forty years, Joshua took his place as the leader of Israel. God appointed him the task of leading the Israelites into the land that God had promised them. The history of this conquest is recorded in the book of Joshua.

- Deuteronomy 31 records the transfer of leadership from Moses to Joshua. After reading verses 1–8, summarize the mission that Moses gave to Joshua. _____
Moses gave Joshua the mission of leading the Israelites into Canaan.

- By whose power would Joshua and the Israelites conquer the land? **the LORD's**

What phrase in each of the following verses shows whose power would be needed?

- Deuteronomy 31:3 **The LORD your God Himself will cross over ahead of you.**

- 31:4 **The LORD will destroy your enemies just as He did the kings of the Ammonites.**

- 31:5 **The LORD will deliver your enemies to you.**

- 31:6 **The LORD your God goes with you.**

- 31:8 **The LORD Himself goes before you and will be with you.**

- In Joshua chapter 1, God speaks to Joshua as the new leader of God's people.

Read verses 1–9 and record the promises that God made to Joshua.

I will give you every place you set your foot.

No one will be able to stand against you.

I will never leave you or forsake you.

God did many mighty works in the land of Canaan as Joshua led the people in the conquest. Read the passages below and write down the works that God did.

- Joshua 3:7–17 **God parted the waters of the Jordan River.** _____

- 6:1–21 **God caused the walls of Jericho to collapse and gave Israel victory over the people of the city.** _____

- 10:1–15 **God caused the sun to stand still over Gibeon.** _____

At the end of Joshua’s life, he reminded the people one last time that all they had accomplished was due to the mighty power of their God. Read Joshua 24:1–18.

- Who had done all the mighty works in verses 1–13? **the LORD** _____

- What choice did Joshua give the people in verses 14–15? **Joshua gave the people the choice of whom to serve—God or idols.** _____

- Why did the people choose to serve God (24:16–18)? **He had delivered the Israelites and given them victory over their enemies.** _____

- What did you learn about the mighty works of God through the life of Joshua? **Answers will vary.** _____

