



REAL MOMENTUM

A Man & His Church, God's Mighty Men
By Tony Williams

When David Livingstone, the missionary pioneer, was working in Africa, some friends wrote: "We would like to send other men to you. Have you found a good road into your area yet?" Livingstone wrote back: "If you have men who will only come if they know there is a good road, I don't want them. I want men who will come if there is no road at all." (In *Reader's Digest* [8/89], p. 143.)

It is my desire that we first address and then give answers to a crisis looming over society. In order to see a reversal of this crisis, there has to be a movement of men that sees revivals in their homes and churches. We pray that there will be a "real momentum" started as we draw closer to our families, churches and most of all to God, our creator, sustainer and our salvation for eternity.

First, understand that we are in the midst of a collective coming of age crisis that we have never seen in our history. We live in a world of perpetual adolescence. No civilization has ever embraced endless adolescence before. Our kids simply don't know what an adult is anymore and they do not know how to become one. Many don't see a reason to try. The older generations have forgotten that we need to plan to teach them. It is our fault more than it is theirs.

These are not normal times. The generation now coming of age is going to need a greater grit and resilience than previous ages. We need a generation of individuals willing to stand up for what they believe, even when challenged.

Statistics from "The Vanishing American Adult" by Senator Ben Sasse:

30 % of college students drop out after their first year of college

Only 40% graduate

1/3 of all 18-34 year olds live with their parents

Most kids over 13 are spending 60% of their time in front of a screen consuming media

From *The Gathering Storm* by Robert Lewis: studying age 18-29 millennials

44% of millennials believe marriage is obsolete so it's nothing to pursue

64% of millennial women will have at least 1 child out of wedlock in the next generation.

The new normal is the single Mom

Children are Fatherless... 43% don't have a Dad around.

Dartmouth Study:

Women no longer think it's realistic to depend on men in their lives. They have seen or experienced too many bad behaviors and infidelity to rely on men as a life partner. With their new economic freedom, they don't need men. That's where we are today.

How did this happen?

For an entire generation, we are guilty of over protecting our children, making them "softer". There was a day when our children were involved in our work. We have created a passive, dependent generation of "long term" adolescents who depend on others for all their needs.

Parents have, for an entire generation, spent their time protecting their kids. From how to deal with a bully to how to deal with a teacher, parents jump in. Instead of giving kids the ability to work out their own issues, we are guilty of making that phone call to protect them.

We have provided them with "participation trophies" taking out the ability to compete. There is a movement to get rid of the awards of "valedictorian" and "salutatorian" in our schools. One Tennessee school granted 48 Valedictorians this past year. Why? So we can be more holistic and less competitive. It may challenge the "feelings" of other students. Of course, the honor of being the Valedictorian was watered down to where the one with the highest-grade point average had difficulty getting into the college he desired. Why? Too many Valedictorians in one school.

Then due to our students not being prepared for college, there is talk of adding a 13th grade to prepare them for college. My question... what about grades 1-12? What happened during those years?

In a different time, there was clarity about what coming of age into adulthood meant. Leaving childhood and becoming an adult was conceptually clear. It was a gift that older generations gave to the younger. But, no longer.

Being an adult means to be fully formed, vivacious, appealing, problem-solving who are motivated to follow God's leading. We need a generation of souls who see themselves as called to love and serve their neighbors better than themselves.

Philippians 2:3,4 *Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. ⁴Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.*

We need our emerging generation to be fully functional adults, providing for their families, investing in their communities, showing the ability to raise children who will carry on after them. We need curious, critical, engaged young people who can demonstrate initiative and innovation.

How do we reverse this crisis?

We need MIGHTY MEN of GOD!!

God's Mighty Men (2 Samuel 23:8-39)

By way of contrast, a cartoon in *Leadership* (Summer, 1988, p. 81) poked fun at the low level of commitment required in many modern churches. It pictured a church building with a sign in front which read,

"The LITE CHURCH: 24% fewer commitments, home of the 7.5% tithe, 15 minute sermons, 45 minute worship services; we have only 8 commandments--your choice. We use just 3 spiritual laws and have an 800 year millennium. Everything you've wanted in a church ... and less!"

As one pastor put it, "Ninety per cent of our churches across the country require less commitment than the local Kiwanis club." (Wayne Pohl, in *Leadership*, Winter, 1982, p. 95.)

Down through the ages, whenever God has done a significant work, He has done it through a band of committed people. God doesn't work through the lukewarm, but only through those who are fervent in their love for Christ and His kingdom.

This was the case when David's kingdom was established. Through David's reign, the name of the Lord God of Israel was published far and wide. But great as he was, David did not stand alone. Surrounding him were a band of mighty men who accomplished great feats of valor. They were committed to David and his kingdom. We read of them in [2 Samuel 23:8-39](#).

If God is going to accomplish a great work among us, then He wants to raise up a band of mighty men in our midst who can do great exploits for God. [1 Cor. 11:3](#) **But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.** The New Testament makes it clear that God desires men to be in spiritual leadership in the home and church. The church today--this church--needs a band of mighty men like those who surrounded David.

What characterized these men? A study of this text reveals that there were two important marks of these mighty men:

They were attracted to David's person, and
They were committed to his cause. In this,

The church needs mighty men who are attracted to the person of Christ and committed to the cause of Christ.

These two characteristics are related. It was the attraction to David's person which motivated these men to commit themselves to David's cause. Even so, it will be our attraction to the person of the Lord Jesus Christ which will motivate us to commit ourselves to His cause.

1. The church needs mighty men who are attracted to the person of Christ.

David's men were willing volunteers who served out of devotion to David. The love these men had for David can be seen in the incident described in chapter 23:13-17. David was hiding from Saul in the cave of Adullam. The Philistines were in Bethlehem, David's home town. David thought back to the cool, clear water which he used to drink from the well in

Bethlehem as a boy. So, perhaps without thinking, he exclaimed, "Oh that someone would give me water to drink from the well of Bethlehem which is by the gate!" (23:15).

It was certainly not a command. Probably David would not even have verbalized his desire if he had known that these men would risk their lives to fulfill it. But he mentioned his craving, immediately these three men slipped away and brought the precious gift of water from the well to David.

David was so touched that he could not drink the water, but poured it out to the Lord (23:16-17). He acknowledged the devotion of these men and his own deep appreciation for their love. David knew that these rugged warriors loved him enough to die for him. They undoubtedly shared a close bond of love.

Do we really look for opportunities to serve? Why wait to be asked... Step out and look for the need. Get it done. The church has many opportunities. We need counselors at altar call. We need soul-winners. We need greeters here at Real Momentum. We need men to call other men to make sure they come. We need generous givers. We need men with the gift of hospitality. We need mentors and those who want to learn, act and fulfill. We need a few good men.

A. Let's see what sort of men were attracted to David:

(1) They were men of diverse backgrounds. As you skim over this list, you will find a variety of obscure places from which these men originated. Some, such as Uriah the Hittite, were foreigners. None of them seem to have anything noteworthy regarding their families or home towns. They were probably from small towns no one knew.

But there was one thing which united these men--they were all attracted to David. He was their hero and rallying point. In [2 Sam. 21:15-17](#), David, who was getting older by this time, grew weary in battle and was almost killed. But Abishai, one of the mighty men, slew the giant who almost killed David. David's men then told him that he would not go out to battle with them again, "that you may not extinguish the lamp of Israel." They were men of diverse backgrounds, but they were all drawn together because of their attraction for the lamp of Israel.

Even so, though we in the church may be from various educational, economic, geographic, family, and even racial backgrounds, we can be a unified band because we are all attracted to the Light of the world, the Lord Jesus Christ. He has captured our hearts, and because we love Him, we love one another, no matter how different our backgrounds.

(2) They were men of difficult backgrounds. Note [1 Samuel 22:2](#). These were not Sunday School boys. They were men who were distressed under the reign of Saul. They were in debt. They were discontented. It was a motley crew which gathered unto David in the cave. They were men with problems, with things in their pasts to overcome. But David accepted them and trained them into his loyal, fighting troops.

In the same way, the Lord Jesus does not require that you solve all your problems before you come to Him. He accepts those in distress, debt, and discontent and molds them into a

band of mighty men for His cause. In fact, those who are self-sufficient and self-satisfied will not be attracted to the Lord Jesus. But like these men, those who feel the pain and poverty of a life lived under the current ruler of this world will see the beauty of the anointed King in waiting, and they will gladly join themselves to Him.

God may have to "Disqualify" you to "Qualify" you.

The first 40 years of Moses' life he thought he was a "Somebody"

The next 40 years Moses found out he was a "Nobody"

The last 40 years of his life Moses found out what God could do with a "Nobody"

D.L. Moody

These men, attracted to David, were from diverse and difficult backgrounds, but they were drawn to the person of David. What sort of person was this?

B. THE PERSON TO WHOM THEY WERE ATTRACTED:

(1) A rejected person. When these men were drawn to David, he was a fugitive, running for his life from Saul. In this, David is a type of the Lord Jesus, who came unto His own people, but they did not receive Him.

Following such a rejected Savior won't make us popular with the ruler of this world and his followers. But still we must join the rejected King and share His sufferings.

But why follow a rejected David in the cave? Why follow a crucified, rejected Savior? He was also...

(2) An anointed person. Some men may have rejected David and followed Saul, but God had rejected Saul and anointed David. He was God's choice. By joining themselves with David, these men became the enemies of Saul. By making David their captain, they declared themselves to be in rebellion against Saul. They were men who had exchanged masters and they now served a different kingdom, a kingdom yet to come, the kingdom of God's anointed, David.

In the same way, we have submitted ourselves to the Lord Jesus as God's anointed, His Messiah, His Christ. We believe that He is coming again to establish His kingdom. We willingly choose to become enemies of the domain of darkness and this present evil world system in order to further the kingdom of God's anointed. He is our Captain!

So the first mark of a mighty man in the Lord's church is that he is attracted to, captivated by, the person of the Lord Jesus.

Men, may I ask you a very personal question?

How is your love life--not with your wife, but with Christ?

Is your relationship with the Captain of our souls marked by duty or devotion? You've got to work at recovering that first love for Him as your first priority!

The attraction which these mighty men had for the person of David motivated them to commit themselves to the cause of David. Even so,...

2. The church needs mighty men who are committed to the cause of Christ.

In David's day, there were enemies to be overthrown and kingdoms to be repulsed and conquered so that the people of God could dwell securely in the land, the worship of God could be established, and the name of God exalted among the heathen nations.

In our day, the powers of darkness must be conquered, the people of God must learn to worship Him, and the name of God must be proclaimed to every tribe and tongue and nation. In other words, the Lord has not simply called us to sit around in a holy huddle. There is a cause--the great cause of Christ--the cause of world evangelization. Those who are attracted to the person of Christ must commit their lives to the cause of Christ. Consider with me...

A. THE CAUSE:

(1) It is a *great* cause. It is nothing less than the cause of God's kingdom. There is no greater cause!

God's kingdom is a kingdom which *spans the ages*. God had promised Abraham that He would establish a great nation from his descendants. He promised David that his house and kingdom would endure forever ([2 Sam. 7:16](#)). The kingdom of God goes back in history and extends forward in history. And we have the privilege of advancing His kingdom in our day.

It is also a kingdom which *spans the nations*. God chose Israel to be a light unto the Gentiles. Today the church is to proclaim His kingdom to the uttermost parts of the earth. There is simply no greater cause than the cause of Christ!

(2) It is a *team* cause. David, as great as he was, anointed of God, could not have accomplished God's purpose alone. He needed his mighty men and the rest of his faithful troops to pull it off.

Even so, the Lord Jesus has not called us to be a bunch of isolated great people for His cause. It is a team effort. We are part of the Body, and every part is essential. True, not all of us can attain to the greatness of these mighty men. But we all are on the team, and we all have important tasks given to us by our Captain.

Because the cause is a great cause and because it is a team cause, every person must commit himself wholeheartedly to the cause. Note the commitment of these mighty men.

B. THE COMMITMENT:

(1) A commitment which overcomes the odds with faith in God.

Note [23:8](#), *Adino the Eznite, because he had killed eight hundred men at one time.*

[9-10](#), *And after him was Eleazar the son of Dodo,^[a] the Ahohite, one of the three mighty men with David when they defied the Philistines who were gathered there for battle, and the*

men of Israel had retreated. ¹⁰ He arose and attacked the Philistines until his hand was weary, and his hand stuck to the sword. The Lord brought about a great victory that day; and the people returned after him only to plunder.

11-12, And after him was Shammah the son of Agee the Hararite. The Philistines had gathered together into a troop where there was a piece of ground full of lentils. So the people fled from the Philistines. ¹² But he stationed himself in the middle of the field, defended it, and killed the Philistines

18, Now Abishai the brother of Joab, the son of Zeruiah, was chief of *another* three.^[a] He lifted his spear against three hundred *men*, killed *them*, and won a name among *these* three.

20-21, Benaiah was the son of Jehoiada, the son of a valiant man from Kabzeel, who had done many deeds. He had killed two lion-like heroes of Moab. He also had gone down and killed a lion in the midst of a pit on a snowy day. ²¹ And he killed an Egyptian, a spectacular man. The Egyptian *had* a spear in his hand; so he went down to him with a staff, wrested the spear out of the Egyptian's hand, and killed him with his own spear.

In every case these mighty men faced incredible odds. But note 23:10, 12: "the Lord brought about a great victory." These men weren't considering the odds for victory; they were looking to the God of victory.

Let's face it: the odds are against us when we serve Christ. The world has us outnumbered. We face situations which seem overwhelmingly against us. But there are always enough people sitting on the sidelines pointing out the size of the giants in the land. We need some mighty men whose commitment to the cause overcomes the odds with faith in the living God.

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2) A commitment which endures exhaustion. See 23:10. Eleazar was so tired he couldn't open his hand after the battle was over. I don't know how long it took Adino the Eznite to knock off 800 men on one occasion or how he did it (23:8), but you can be sure that he was exhausted when it was over.

You can count on being tired if you commit yourself to serve Christ--not tired of serving, but tired in serving. But it is a great feeling to go to bed at night exhausted from serving the cause of Christ.

(3) A commitment which spurns the attitude of the crowd. Note 23:9-12. The Israelite warriors had fled. The people of God were in retreat. If you had taken a vote, it would have been a landslide in favor of surrender. But these mighty men ignored the majority and stood alone for God. The cowards returned to gather the spoils (23:10). They benefited from the courage of these men whom they would have called fools a few hours earlier.

If the church is going to go forward and conquer for Christ, it can't be operated as a pure democracy. The majority often decide to the world. But God is looking for mighty men of commitment who spurn the attitude of the crowd, who take a stand for Christ, and win great victories for Him.

(4) A commitment which takes the initiative. These mighty men were not passive. They were not just on the defensive--they were on the offensive as well. Note 23:20-21. It's impressive enough to kill a lion in a pit--but to do it on a snowy day! Wow! Most of us would have been glad to leave well enough alone if we happened upon a lion in a pit on a snowy day. But this guy Benaiah went after the lion and killed it! He also went after this 7 1/2 foot Egyptian who had a spear: "May I borrow that please? Thank you. Zip!"

Do you know what is one of the greatest blights in Christendom today? Passive men! Chuck Swindoll once asked a Christian counselor what was the number one problem he faced in counseling Christian families. Without hesitation the counselor replied, "Passive males."

Men, why is it that with many of you, your wife must take the initiative in spiritual things? Why is it that if the children are going to receive any spiritual training in the home, your wife must be the one to do it? We need mighty men in the church who will take the initiative in spiritual leadership. That does *not* mean barking commands at your family! It means setting the example in love for Christ and in serving your family and others.

(5) A commitment which risks life itself, if need be. These mighty men all risked their lives because of their commitment to David and his cause. During the early years of the Africa Inland Mission, more of their missionaries died from the harsh jungle conditions than Africans became Christians. The area became known as the white man's graveyard. But still the missionaries came. But they began arriving with their belongings packed in coffins. The Africans were amazed with this determination. They said, "Surely only a message of great importance would inspire such actions!"

As a comfortable American Christian, it's hard to relate to that kind of dedication. I don't know whether you or I will ever have to face the possibility of risking our lives for the cause of Christ. But I do know this: if you have been a convenience Christian--one who attends church when it's convenient, who supports the cause of Christ financially when it's convenient, who is willing to serve Christ when it's convenient--then you won't risk your life for the cause of Christ if it ever comes to that.

Conclusion

God wants to raise up a band of mighty men who are attracted to the person of Christ and who are committed to His cause. Perhaps you're thinking, "Where do I start?" If your heart has grown cold and complacent toward Christ, then start there. The Lord directed the church at Ephesus which had lost its first love to "**remember from where you have fallen and repent and do the deeds you did at first**" ([Rev. 2:5](#)). Remember what the Lord has done for you. Take the time to spend alone with Him in His Word each day. Work on your love life with Jesus. It is drudgery to labor without love.

But it is laziness to love without labor.

So once you rekindle that first love for Him, then get off the bench and commit yourself to His cause in this church. "Do the deeds you did at first." We need men to work to see our facilities paid off releasing more funds for ministry, to lead their families, to build other men in Christ, to be involved in missions. Commit your time, effort and money to the great cause of

Christ as we seek to make Him known in this community. Let's not be "the Lite Church, home of fewer commitments." Christ loved us and gave Himself for us.

With the hymn writer Isaac Watts, our response must be,

"Love so amazing so divine..... Demands my life, my soul, my all."

Men... With Jesus Christ as our leader, Let's turn the crisis around. Let's build the church with men of compassion who refuse to be passive.

A FEW GOOD MEN... Gaither

What this dying world could use is a willing Man of God
Who dares to go against the grain & works without applause;
A man who'll raise the shield of Faith, protecting what is pure;
Whose love is tough & gentle; a man whose word is sure.

God doesn't need an Orator who knows just what to say;
He doesn't need authorities to reason Him away;
He doesn't need an army to guarantee a win;
He just needs a Few Good Men.

Men full of Compassion, Men who Laugh & Love & Cry-
Men who'll face Eternity & aren't afraid to die-
Men who'll fight for Freedom & Honor once again-
He just needs a Few Good Men.

He calls the broken derelict whose life has been renewed;
He calls the one who has the strength to stand up for the Truth.
Enlistment lines are open & He wants you to come in-
He just needs a Few Good Men.

Men full of Compassion, who Laugh & Love & Cry-
Men who'll face Eternity & aren't afraid to die-
Men who'll fight for Freedom & Honor once again-
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Bill Gaither, Gaither Vocal Band

Choose A Discussion Question:

1. How would advise a Christian who has lost his first love to recover genuine fervency for Christ?
2. Why do we see so much "convenience" Christianity in our day? How can we guard against this mentality? Do we demand enough as a church?
3. Why are men often spiritually passive in our culture? What can a wife do whose husband is spiritually passive?
4. Where is the balance between being so committed that you burn out versus being so laid back that you rust out?