


CIRCLE OF

SWORDS
Becoming a Mighty Man of God

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PREFACE

Circle of Swords honors the memory of my friend, Chris Seiff. In the fall of 2012, Chris, Hector Hoyos, and Mike Blattenberger joined me on a 21-week discipleship journey. It was one of the greatest adventures I've ever been part of. Four strangers became life-long friends and I watched Chris, Mike, and Hector become men of God.

On February 1, 2014, when I was about halfway done writing this book, Chris's life tragically ended. He was just beginning to tap into his vast God-given potential. Every time someone tells me this book inspired him to be a man of God, I will think of Chris.



This book was written at a time in my life when I felt lonely, isolated, forgotten, unimportant, and uncertain of my future. But, like David, I “*found strength in the Lord my God.*”²¹ One day during a time of prayer, when I was close to completing the book, I remember thinking, *God often used people who felt broken and unworthy to do great things...and His greatness is best displayed in and through our weakness.*

At that moment, I prayed, “God, I give this book to You. Use it to impact the lives of men.”

The book you hold in your hands that now belongs to you, first belonged to God. I pray He will use it uniquely in your life and that the Holy Spirit will supernaturally empower the words and ideas you read to help challenge and change you into the man God always knew you could be.

INTRODUCTION

This book is for guys. Guys who like action movies over chick-flicks. Guys who would rather read comic books, *Field & Stream*, *Sports Illustrated*, or *Hot Rod* magazines instead of long, boring novels with no pictures. Guys who grill meat, watch sports, ride Harleys, play practical jokes, and sit around campfires with their buddies laughing and telling crazy stories. *And*, it's for guys who get about as excited over the idea of a Bible Study or Support Group as they do an afternoon shopping at the mall.

Here's the thing: the Bible is an awesome book full of great advice that can help you live a better life and learn how to know God. But lots of men don't read the Bible, and they don't know how to relate to God or to guys who do.

So, I wrote this book for *that guy*. Am I crazy? Yes I am. And I have a lot of crazy guys I call friends. When we get together to hunt, fish, or watch a game, we have a great time. We laugh...A LOT. We live for adventure. We try to out-do each other. (It's a guy thing.) But behind all that testosterone-infused chest-thumping, we're just grown-up boys in men's bodies. We need what every human being needs: acceptance, friendship, encouragement—and a relationship with God. *We just don't like to talk about those things*. And we sure don't like when the conversation gets all mushy (emotional). I get it. I'm a guy.

But I also know that deep inside, every man wants to make a difference; to live a life of adventure; to be respected and admired;

to be someone's hero. So I'm pumped to introduce you to a group of guys in the Bible you're going to totally relate to. Chances are, you've never even *heard* of them or won't believe a group of guys this wild and crazy are even mentioned in God's Book. But they are! Many of them were outlaws when they met—armed and dangerous. They had a secret hideout in a cave! Their leader was a fugitive—WANTED: DEAD OR ALIVE. But guess what? *God loves fugitives and outlaws!* And through the influence of a godly leader, God turned a bunch of criminals into an elite group of commandos willing to lay down their lives for what—and Who—they believed in.

The Bible calls them *David's Mighty Men*. Thirty-seven of the baddest dudes in the Bible; the Green Berets of David's army. Check out this description of them:

*They were brave warriors, ready for battle and able to handle the shield and spear. **Their faces were the faces of lions....** Day after day [such] men came to help David, until he had a great army, like the army of God.¹*

If you want to meet these guys and hear some of the crazy things they did, keep reading. Here's my promise to you to help you stay tuned:

- Short chapters
- Lots of guy stuff you will relate to
- In-Your-Face Challenges in each chapter
- You'll be a better man if you apply the things you read in your life

So whad'ya say...are you man enough to hang out with David's Mighty Men? Then grab your sword and let the adventure begin.



The Circle of Swords

There's no biblical evidence to prove it, but knowing guys like I do, I guarantee you David and his elite team of commandos had their own unique rallying cry—like a football team about to take the field or soldiers headed off to battle. At the end of meetings or before they would march out to war, I can see David and his thirty-seven Mighty Men forming a *Circle of Swords*. David and his top three leaders would step *into the middle* of the circle. Then, one at a time, each of the four leaders would shout a phrase, lifting his sword as he shouted. Each phrase was then repeated by the men in the outer circle as they raised and lowered their swords. It went like this:

David shouts, “To HONOR!” Men reply, “To HONOR!”

Second Leader, “To COURAGE!” Men, “To COURAGE!”

Third Leader, “To COMMITMENT!” Men, “To COMMITMENT!”

Fourth Leader, “To GOD!” Men, “To GOD!”

At some point, his men added, “To GOD and to DAVID!” at the end as their way of showing loyalty to their leader. The *Circle of Swords* inspired and unified David's Mighty Men and his army by constantly reminding them of what—and Who—they were fighting for. It also symbolized the commitment of David's men to their leader.

At the end of each chapter, I challenge you to put your sword in the circle, signifying you're all in on the theme that was just placed in front of you; committed to God as your leader. And I want you to remember as you go through life that you're not alone *unless you choose to be*. You are meant to belong to a band of brothers who fight for what is right and have each other's backs as elite members

of the *Circle of Swords*: “To Honor, To Courage, To Commitment... To God!”

The Challenge: To Become a Mighty Man of God

Only thirty-seven bad-to-the-bone guys made it onto David’s list of Mighty Men. They didn’t become part of this elite group of warriors by being average. They proved themselves on the field of battle again and again.

Do you want to be average, or do you want to be a Mighty Man of God?

If you want to be average, you can stop reading now. This book isn’t for you. You’re content to play it safe, never take risks, compromise, waste valuable opportunities, make excuses, and in general, refuse to discover and live up to your God-given potential. Too many men settle for being average. Don’t be one of them!

If you want to be a Mighty Man of God, then don’t just read this book—*accept the challenge to become a better man!* A man who is committed to his family and friends. A man who is trustworthy, unwilling to compromise or make excuses. A man who is ready to take on challenges and fight for what’s right. If you want to be respected and live up to your God-given potential, then you’ve got to be willing to step onto the battlefield and fight!

Here are the tools you’ll need to come out on the other side of this book a Mighty Man of God:

- *A determined attitude* driven by simple, honest prayers and a willingness to give God a chance to speak to you and change you. Here’s an example of a prayer you could pray before you

read a chapter, “*God, I want You to use what I’m about to read to speak to me, challenge me, and make me a better man. Thanks for Your help! Amen.*”

- A *commitment* to read and respond to each chapter.
- A *Bible* in a translation that makes sense to you; in printed or digital form. The FREE *YouVersion* Bible App lets you take the Bible with you on your phone or tablet wherever you go! If you’re not sure which translation to use, try the New Living Translation.
- A *pen or pencil* to write notes and answer the In-Your-Face Challenges.

Advanced Training: If you want to take it up a notch and go Green Beret, add the following to your training routine:

- *Go Mano-a-Mano.* Proverbs 27:17 says, “*As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.*” Find another guy who’s serious about wanting to be a Mighty Man of God and get together once a week to talk about what you read. Push each other by asking hard questions, praying for each other, and holding one another accountable.
- Sharpen your sword by *memorizing the Word.* Bible verses inspire us, challenge us, and remind us of what’s important. I’ve included theme verses at the end of each chapter. Even if you only memorize one or two them, that’s one or two more verses than you had memorized when you started! Psalm 119:11 says it well, “*I have hidden your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.*”

