

## Chapter 3 He is Mighty who Conquers Himself



### General Information

#### Topic

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Strength and self-discipline.

#### Contents

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- ▶ Strength, properly understood, is mental as well as physical.
- ▶ Self-control and self-discipline.
- ▶ Strength in relationship to others.

#### Objectives

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##### Knowing

- ▶ To discover and understand that strength and self-discipline are necessary for maturity.
- ▶ To understand that 'being one's own master' means that being truly in command of oneself requires self-discipline.
- ▶ To value inner strength as well as physical strength.

##### Accepting

- ▶ To become interested in being strong and self-disciplined.
- ▶ To realise the importance of strengthening both mind and body.

##### Doing

- ▶ To see how strength and discipline can apply in daily life.

#### Areas of Human Development to be Emphasised

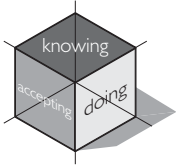
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- ▶ Body-spirit integration.
- ▶ Self-control and self-discipline.
- ▶ Responsibility in relationships.

## Class Plan

### 1 Knowing

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#### Motivation

Ask students some questions: whether they want to become 'strong'; which 'strong' people they admire; what kind of strengths these people display.

#### Story context:

Charlie is interested in becoming 'strong'. His coach teaches him about the inner strength of self-control and self-discipline; he challenges him to live up to this.

#### Introduction

Strength of mind as well as body is true strength, and commands the respect of others.

#### Presentation

##### Key Ideas

- ▶ Strength is not just physical, but includes self-discipline and self-control.
- ▶ Conquering one's destructive impulses is the greatest strength
- ▶ Such strength commands respect and improves relationships

#### Topic Development

##### A Definition of strength as mental as well as physical

Emphasise that defining strength as physical strength alone is inadequate, ignoring the moral and mental strength needed to do well in life. Charlie yearns to be 'strong' like a professional footballer. He is thinking only in terms of muscle strength. His coach tells him that real strength is that of character; it involves saying no to oneself, and using judgment and discernment so as not to give in every impulse and desire that occurs.

References to saying no to drugs, or holding back from doing too much at once (Charlie was forcing himself to do too many push-ups) should be emphasised as examples of the 'other' kind of strength.

Mr Jackson tells Charlie of the saying: 'He is mighty who conquers himself'. He says that doing this shows real strength. It includes things like being true to family and friends even when people are mocking them and working when we don't want to.

##### B Self-control and self-discipline

This chapter emphasises that restraint when one is angered and/or hurt takes strength too—maybe the greatest strength. Charlie loses control of himself when Malik teases him, and he shoves Malik hard. Rebuking him, Mr Jackson, for an example to Charlie of self-control, relates how Dr. Martin Luther King did not retaliate when whites bombed his home and nearly hurt his wife and baby.

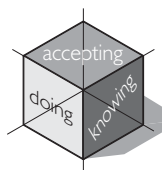
*"The whole world changed a little bit for the better because Dr. King refused to strike back. That's real strength—in fact, so much strength it changed history."*

Even though Malik provoked Charlie's retaliation, Mr Jackson asserts that Charlie should have had the self-discipline not to strike back.

## C Responsibility in Relationships

Another aspect of inner strength is the willingness to show responsibility in human relationships. On the positive side it means taking initiative in the relationship, sharing expenses, being willing to be first to invite the other home, etc. In a negative sense, it means taking responsibility for personal faults, flaws, and mistakes which affect the relationship. Charlie makes himself apologise to Malik, taking responsibility for his part in their quarrel. This requires great effort for Charlie. Far from thinking Charlie a 'wimp' for doing this, Malik admits his own fault, accepts a handshake, and expresses respect in front of others for Charlie's 'strength'—both inner and outer.

## 2 Accepting



### Guided Work

#### Activity 1

##### Part A

All of us, especially boys, have firm ideas of what 'strength' is, what being 'tough' is, and what not being a 'wimp' means.

Ask the students to read Activity 3A (p.220 of their Student Books) about the karate instructor. Break them into small groups to discuss the karate instructor's remark: "The hardest thing I ever did was walk away from a fight." Ask them to answer the questions in their discussions.

#### Activity 3 A

What do you think?

A karate instructor who was a twelfth-degree black belt once told his students, "The hardest thing I ever did was walk away from a fight." He had grown up in a tough neighbourhood and had been fighting all his life. When he discovered karate, he realised that fighting should only be for self-defence. The tough guys from his neighbourhood did not realise that, though! What do you suppose they thought of him when he wouldn't fight? Would they have thought him a 'wimp'? What kind of strength does it take not to fight?

##### Part B

For balance, ask students to name times when a person should use force—for instance, self-defence against a serious attacker, defending someone weaker, police capturing criminals, to defend one's country, etc.

Discuss legitimate uses of force, emphasising that most common interactions among people do not call for its use.

## Activity 2 Developing inner strength

Ask students to look at and try Activity 3B, featured in the student book.

What kind of strength do they think doing this might take? Would it be easier to do ten push-ups or to do this?

## Activity 3 B

Try saying only nice things for just one hour—nothing sarcastic or complaining, or critical of someone else. Is it easy or difficult? If it was easy, try it for two hours or a whole day. You might want to write a small report about this or make an entry in your journal.

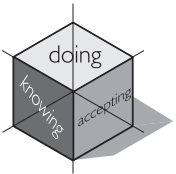
## Activity 3

Ask students to think about an 'everyday hero' who shows strength in daily life. It might be a parent who, after working hard all day, comes home and helps the children with their homework. It might be a local person who voluntarily gives up time to help others, in spite of being just as busy as everyone else.

Ask them to write a letter of appreciation to this person for showing an example of quiet strength.

## 3 Doing

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### Evaluation

#### Activity 1

Encourage each group to present its conclusions in class.

#### Part A

Emphasise that strength should not be understood in a merely physical sense. Real strength is shown by those who do not resort to using physical violence.

#### Part B

Explain that sometimes we must apply a certain degree of physical strength to reach certain goals. Students must understand that this must be done with caution and only as a last resort.

### Specific Resolutions

To develop strength of character as well as outer strength or physical accomplishments.

To determine to show 'real strength' in fulfilling obligations: being true to one's word, living up to responsibilities at home and at school, even when one doesn't want to.

To take responsibility for one's own part in conflicts, regardless of the other person's actions or attitude.