

middle school



Lesson 12 / February 16, 2025

Liberating Power

by RLD Editorial Team

for use as
STEP 1 

Lesson 12

Focus:

Jesus uses His mercy and power.

Lesson 12

Bible Basis:

Mark 5:1-20

Lesson 12

Memory Verse:

For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline.
—2 Timothy 1:7

Your students will see how one political figure used power to show mercy as they explore Jesus' example of balancing mercy and power.

Materials:

- Internet access

Do you know someone who is very powerful? Does that mean he or she is physically strong? Or does power mean something else? We can see power depicted in superhero movies or on an athletic field, but sometimes a person's power can be used to rescue the weak or forgotten. Recently, two political figures used their influence to do something merciful for others.

In the recent transfer of power between U.S. presidents, both the outgoing and incoming presidents granted pardons to several people. Let's hear a little bit more about what these presidential pardons mean. Read the following out loud to your students:

"Presidents are granted the authority to issue pardons under Article II, Section 2 of the Constitution... As outlined by the White House, a pardon releases a person from punishment and restores all civil liberties..."

A pardon can help eliminate some of the consequences of conviction and restore a person's civil rights. According to the Justice Department, the offense is not removed from a person's criminal record when they are pardoned but instead the conviction and the pardon both appear on the record. But the pardon can be helpful in obtaining licenses, bonding or employment."

Remind students that this is not a discussion of politics. Regardless of whether we agree with politicians or their policies, the history of presidential pardons enables U.S. presidents to offer mercy to individuals facing punishment for their offenses.

- **How do you think the people pardoned in this recent transfer of presidential power reacted to their pardons? (Answers may include grateful and relieved.)**

➤ **Can anyone define the word “mercy”? How could presidential pardons be an example of showing mercy?** (Mercy means “having the power to punish, but showing compassion or forgiveness toward someone instead.” A political leader might have the power to harm others, but this time, we see someone powerful showing understanding instead.)

➤ **Can anyone share when someone of influence has shown you mercy?** (Answers will vary, but students might recall a teacher, parent, coach, etc. who withheld punishment and was able to extend forgiveness and care toward them.)

It might seem that mercy and power are on opposite ends of the spectrum, but we’re going to explore the amazing ways that Jesus demonstrates both.

Sources:

<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/what-is-a-presidential-pardon/>

https://constitution.congress.gov/browse/essay/artII-S2-C1-3-2/ALDE_00013317/

(Continue on to Steps 2 and 3 in your teacher’s guide; your Step 4 appears below.)

Liberating Power

for use as
STEP 4 

Lesson 12
Focus:

Jesus uses His
mercy and power.

Lesson 12
Bible Basis:

Mark 5:1-20

Lesson 12
Memory Verse:

For the Spirit God gave us does
not make us timid, but gives us
power, love and self-discipline.
—2 Timothy 1:7

Materials:

- Internet access
- Dumbbell printouts cut apart (1 per student; printout found at the end of this document and has 2 per page)
- Pens/pencils

Before class, print out enough dumbbell graphics so that each student has one (the printout can be found at the end of this document; note that there are two graphics per page). Cut each page in half. (If your class is meeting online, email the template for families to print at home ahead of time. Invite students to bring cut apart printouts, along with pens and pencils, with them to class.)

One of the most fragile things around is an egg. Sometimes we are a lot like eggs—we need gentle care and handling to keep our fragile selves safe and secure. God is very powerful, but He also shows mercy toward His children. Let's see if an egg can withstand a powerful force without cracking.

Share this video with your students [0:59]

Impossible Egg Crush

<https://stevespangler.com/experiments/impossible-egg-crush/>

After watching the video, share the information given on the website to explain this phenomenon. When you're finished, discuss the following questions together.

- **How can we see God's character reflected in this experiment?** (He holds us in the palm of His hand, He has the power to destroy, but He never allows more than we can bear, etc.)
- **Do you ever stop to thank God for His mercy? Do you think we ever take it for granted?** (It is easy to forget how He has rescued us—and does it daily. We must remind ourselves that His power and mercy are infinite.)
- **Does God's mercy mean that He never disciplines us?** (Like a good parent, God disciplines us for our own good. That does not diminish His mercy; in fact, discipline *is* mercy to keep us from going the wrong way and doing great harm to ourselves and others.)

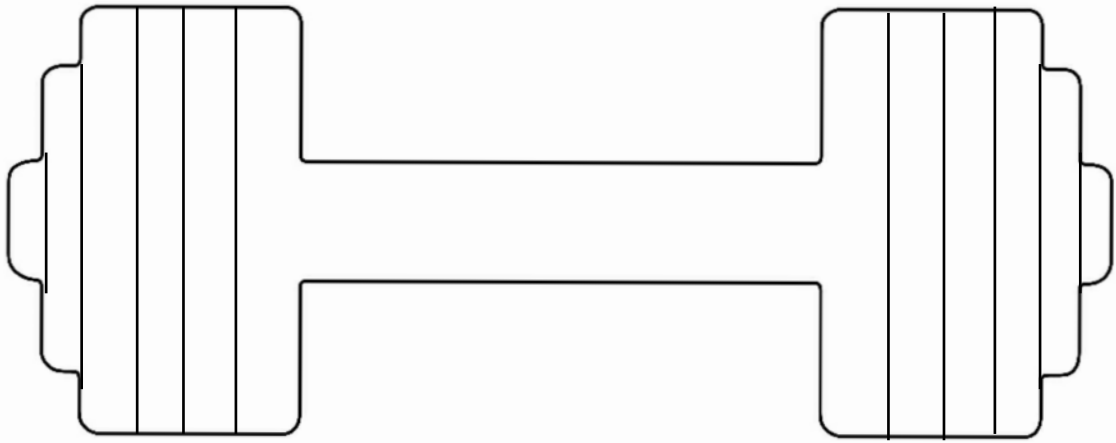
Give your students some homework for the coming week. Distribute supplies (or invite students to have them ready at home). Instruct them to label one end of the dumbbell MERCY and the other end, POWER.

Even when we don't realize it, people are showing us mercy every day. This week I want you to take home this dumbbell and write on it. When someone shows you compassion, like giving you a second chance to finish a school assignment or your sister does a chore for you, write it down on the MERCY side.

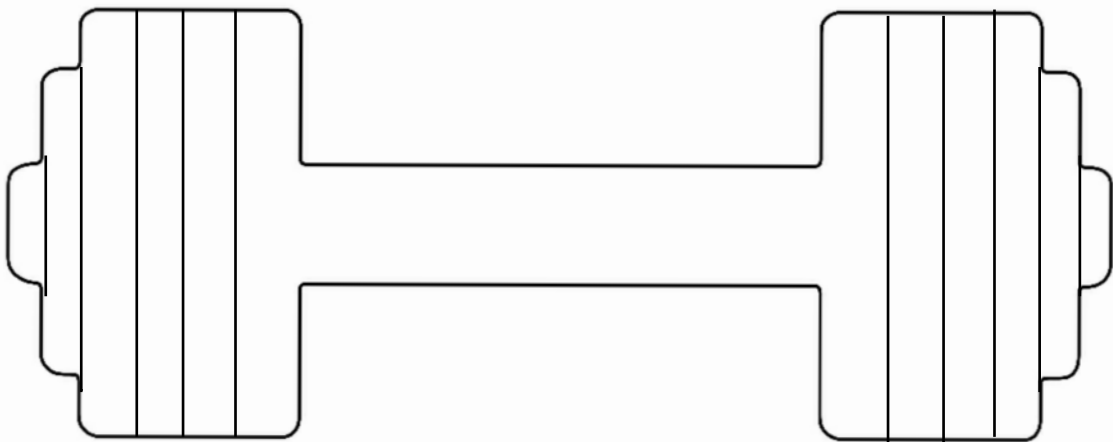
When you're reminded of something God has done for you in His amazing power and strength, write it down on the POWER end of the dumbbell. For example, if you have accepted Jesus as your Savior through faith, repentance, and baptism, write down how His sacrifice has saved you. If He answers a prayer for you or someone you know, write it down. If He protects you from a dangerous situation, write it down. If you see a display of His power in creation this week, write that down, too.

Before class is dismissed, remind them to bring back their mercy/power papers next week to share with the class. Consider choosing two students to close in prayer by thanking God for each of these amazing attributes.

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