

Single-minded care. Overwhelming mercy. Awesome power. Radical commitment. These are the hallmarks of God's relationship to you in Christ.

[For use on Father's Day: Some dads, uncles, coaches, and mentors I know would love to receive hang glider gear and a lesson or two to jumpstart the soaring on Father's Day. But every dad, uncle, coach, and mentor I know would enjoy a firm handshake or a "manly" hug and a sincere, "Thanks for all you've taught me!" Many of these men not only soar themselves, they've helped you to soar—and in doing that have become gifts from God in your life. Tell them that today, won't you?]

Taking It Home

As the men who are here today leave, they will each receive a (name the item/s you are distributing). I pray that these items will remind each of you again and again to "take a flying leap," to soar on the updrafts of God's love for you in your Savior, to remember all he has done to make that possible.

But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.

(Isaiah 40:31)

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The Scripture quotations are from the King James Version of the Bible.

#MOGXDA



Expanding the Impact of Your
Gifts of Encouragement

Man of God: *Soaring to New Heights*

Introduction

Has anyone ever told you to "take a flying leap"? It's not a compliment! Unless, that is, you're a hang glider. Of all the extreme sports, hang gliding has to rank among the most extreme. If you get really good at it, you can do things that are almost miraculous.

Some hang gliders have flown more than 400 miles—on air currents alone! Some hang gliding athletes can catch the right kind of thermal currents and stay aloft for hours! Experts sometimes reach speeds of 80 miles per hour! And some hang gliders have topped 20,000 feet! That will pump up your adrenaline!

To achieve liftoff, a hang glider needs an airspeed of about 20 mph. Airspeed is a combination of the pilot's running speed and the speed of the wind coming toward the pilot. If the air is still, the pilot has to run at about 20 mph—not very likely when you consider the world's fastest sprinters run about 23 mph, and they

aren't carrying hang gliding equipment on their shoulders when they do it. But if the wind is blowing 15 mph, the pilot need only run into the wind at 5 mph. The wind lifts the glider, and the pilot begins to soar. Hang gliding enthusiasts tell us it's a feeling like no other.

Getting to the Heart

God's prophet Isaiah had that kind of feeling in mind when he wrote these words:

But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.

(Isaiah 40:31)

So how about it? Do you soar like that, Man of God? Or do you bump along, much closer to earth, trying to make it through life on your own strength, skill, and supposed "good luck"? In the best of circumstances, the burden quickly gets heavy. And as life's storms erupt, it can feel like you're running toward a cliff at 15 mph with a 50-pound anvil strapped to your back.

If that describes you today, I have good news! You can soar because of all your Savior *is* for you and all your Savior *has done* for you in his **Single-minded care**, **Overwhelming mercy**, **Awesome power**, and **Radical commitment** to you—**SOAR!**

Single-minded care. The Bible tells us that our Savior-God thinks about us all the time. Listen! (*Read Psalm 139:17–18.*)

You are always on God's mind. And his thoughts focus on how to best defend, protect, encourage, and build you up in your faith! Doesn't that free you to soar?

Overwhelming mercy. Knowing that God thinks about us all the time could be intimidating, especially when we remember he knows all about us. I mean, *all* about us. He knows our

thoughts—the sinful ones, too. He saw that last explosion when our temper got the best of us. He sees all the opportunities we bypass when, instead, we could help others.

Yet, in the cross of his Son, our Lord's attitude toward us is one of overwhelming mercy! We stand, in faith, at the foot of that cross, clothed in Jesus' own righteousness. In fact, we wear Jesus' own armor! (*As time will allow, invite members of the audience to compare Ephesians 6:10–20 with Isaiah 59:15–20.*)

In Christ's overwhelming mercy, we can soar—in thankfulness, in confidence, in service to others!

Awesome power. This is the power that flung the universe into existence. Human beings are only now beginning to catch a faint glimpse of all that the universe contains, of all our heavenly Father has made. What we don't yet know is overwhelming. What we do know sends us to our knees in worship! And that creative power is at work—right now—on your behalf! (*Read Ephesians 1:15–23.*) Knowing our God's awesome power, active in the universe for us, can make our hearts soar. As we serve him, he has our back! We are strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. (*See Ephesians 6:10.*)

Radical commitment. The word *radical* refers to getting to the root of something. *Radishes* are *root* crops. Our Savior's commitment to us is radical in just that sense! His commitment to us comes from the deepest place in his heart; from the root, core, of his being, he's on our side. He proved it by dying for us. (*Read Philippians 2:8.*)

Someone has said that fathers need to give their children two things—roots and wings! Children need the security of knowing their parents' love and the freedom to soar in courage and hope. That's what our heavenly Father has given us: Roots in his unchanging, radical commitment to us; wings in his forgiveness for all our sins and the confident courage that forgiveness works in us.