

# Athletes in the Bible



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# INTRODUCTION

Welcome to *Athletes in the Bible*—an interesting adventure into the Word for a new look at men who were not always noted for their athletic skills. While their names might be familiar, get ready for a fresh new look at these amazing men and how they needed athletic abilities and strong faith in their efforts to obey God. Just like you, they struggled with all kinds of temptation, challenges, and trials, yet they still succeeded in following God’s will.

Today it is common to see an athlete in the news for all of the wrong reasons—bad choices, poor judgment, and more. However, throughout history there have been many outstanding athletes who have followed God when facing their giants. It is the athletes of earlier times, those from the Bible, whose character and stories offer so much for today’s athletes to apply in achieving their goals.

If you are interested in becoming a better athlete, you know that it takes hard work and commitment to achieve that goal. To be an exceptional athlete, the requirement is plenty of work with body, heart, and mind. As a Christian athlete, you have an advantage because you have the 24/7, ever-present God that you can turn to and rely on for guidance and help. This gives the Christian athlete a priceless advantage in all areas of life.

There is much that you can learn about doing this successfully from some of these early athletes. The people of the Bible were of all types—short, tall, rich, poor, weak, strong, doubting, and faithful. They had all kinds of interesting characteristics, all worthy of study. However, the six people that we are about to study shared six common traits that are so important to an athlete as well as a person of faith. These traits are control, endurance, strength, leadership, courage, and balance.

Let’s take a look at our Bible athletes’ stories as well as the core characteristics that they had to develop and use to be able to meet both the physical and mental demands that God would place on them. Their trials and tribulations tell quite a history of faithful men for God—enjoy the adventure!

## How to Use This Study

Take your time and dig deep as you move through this study. I suggest that you keep your answers in a notebook, writing them down as you proceed through the study. **Don’t miss this**—the Notes section on each “Tell Me About It” page is interactive! It provides a convenient place to capture your thoughts as you work through the section.

With 44 study sections, this study can be used many ways, perhaps as a one-semester course (19 weeks) or as a full-year course (38 weeks). Each study section should take 20–30 minutes.

For those of you wanting to spread this study over one semester (19 weeks), work on 2 or 3 sections each week. To use this study for a full-year course, work on one section each week.

Please keep in mind that this study, like all USAB studies, is meant to be used in a way that works for your situation. I hope that it helps you to grow stronger in your understanding of some of the fascinating people in the Bible, especially the *Athletes in the Bible*!

# DAVID

## The Young Athlete

**Study Subject**

Control

Who was David?

[David](#) and [David](#)

Read [1 Samuel 16](#) to discover how David entered into the world of heroes and leaders as a young man.

When we meet new people, we usually look at their physical features, the clothes that they are wearing, their expressions, and perhaps their smiles. However, in [1 Samuel 16:7](#), what does God tell Samuel that He is looking at in the search for the next king?

Check out this servant's description of [David](#) to King Saul in [1 Samuel 16:18](#):

*One of the servants answered, "I have seen a son of Jesse of Bethlehem who knows how to play the harp. He is a brave man and a warrior. He speaks well and is a fine-looking man. And the LORD is with him."*

Do any of the traits that describe David in 1 Samuel 16:18 also describe you?

Musical

Brave

Warrior

Good speaker

Fine-looking

Faithful to the Lord

### **Definition**

Accurate obedience of the muscles to the mind

### **In the Bible**

[1 Samuel 16, 17](#)





***Tell Me About It***

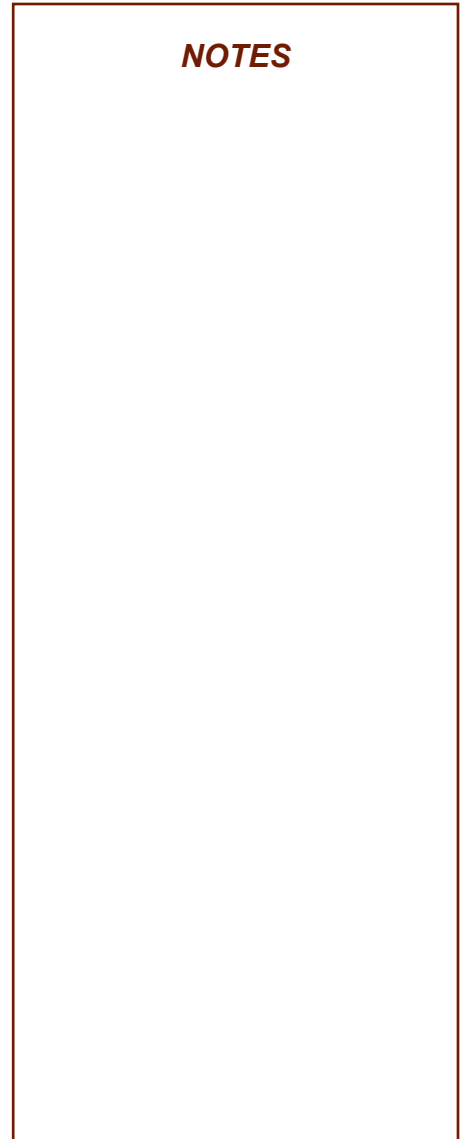
Go back and read [1 Samuel 16:11](#) again, where David's early years are described. What can we learn about David's early life from this passage?

The focus on David in this study is on the character trait of control. How do you define control, as it applies to performance as an athlete?

How do you rate yourself in the category of having control as a positive character trait in your life?

What do you think that he meant when the servant said of David: "and the LORD is with him?" in [1 Samuel 16:18](#)?

***NOTES***



## Internet Learning Links

[David](#) – from Easton’s Bible Dictionary

[King David](#) – a Bible study

[Goliath](#) – from Nave’s Topical Bible

[Goliath](#) – from Easton’s Bible Dictionary

[Scripture References to David](#) – From Nave’s Topical Bible