

Small Group Guide: Ventures of Faith

Based on Samuel 14

Before You Start the Study

Go around the group and briefly share: What is one step of faith you have taken in your life -- big or small -- that you did not know the outcome of when you started?

Key Takeaways

- A venture of faith is not a reckless leap but a faithful step taken in dependence on God, with eyes open to His direction along the way.
 - Jonathan did not wait for perfect conditions. He acted, and God met him in his obedience.
 - The way of faith is rarely easy. Difficulty on the path does not mean God is absent.
 - Small beginnings are not small when God is in them. Two men with one sword changed an entire battlefield.
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Discussion Questions

Leaving the Prayer Meeting

The sermon pointed out that Jonathan heard the prayers being offered under the pomegranate tree but sensed it was time to act. He put legs on the prayer.

1. Is there a difference between waiting on God in prayer and using prayer as an excuse to avoid action? How do you personally discern which one you are doing?
2. Jonathan left without telling his father. He did not wait for permission or consensus from everyone around him. What does this tell us about how God sometimes calls individuals to lead? What are the risks and responsibilities that come with that kind of initiative?
3. Can you think of a time when God was calling you to move and you hesitated? What held you back?

The Cliffs Were Sharp on Both Sides

Jonathan and his armor-bearer faced two treacherous options -- one slippery, one covered in thorns -- just to reach the place where God was calling them to fight.

1. Have you ever stepped out in faith only to find the path harder than you expected? How did that affect your trust in God?
2. The sermon said, "We don't start walking in faith and then finish in the flesh. We have to stay submitted to the Lord the whole way through." What does it look like practically to keep seeking God in the middle of a venture of faith rather than only at the beginning?
3. Jonathan and his armor-bearer devised a sign to confirm God's direction. How do you seek confirmation from God when you are in the middle of a step of faith?

Small Things, Big Impact

Two men with one sword changed the entire battlefield.

1. What does the story of Jonathan teach us about the relationship between our resources and God's ability?
2. The sermon said, "Us plus God equals a majority." Do you genuinely believe that in the area of your life where you feel most outnumbered or overwhelmed right now?

Practical Applications

Choose one or more of the following to put into practice before your group meets again:

- Put legs on a prayer. Think of something you have been praying about for a long time. Ask God this week whether He is calling you to act, and if so, what the first step looks like.
- Encourage someone in their step of faith. Reach out to someone specific this week with a word of encouragement.
- Read Hebrews 11. Spend time this week reading the full chapter and identify two or three figures whose stories resonate with where you are right now. Bring your reflections to share with the group.

Closing Prayer

Close your time together by praying as a group. Be sensitive to topics that came up during discussion.