

Community Group Guide

@ our core – Bold Faith

The Gathering

Paul Jenkins

May 13, 2012

1 Samuel 14:1-23

Community Groups are the primary vehicle for discipleship at The Gathering. It is through the interaction that takes place in each of these groups around our area that will enable people to begin to move from being drawn to God to a life that is being deepened by God. Use it as a resource to lead your group in discovering, owning, and applying the truths of God's Word. There may be aspects you do not want to use and there may be instances where you just want to focus on a particular point or truth. Some questions may bring out emotions and cause people to dwell on an aspect of their relationship with God. Your role is to help facilitate this encounter with God in His Word through His Body, not just to complete the guide. Use this as a flexible teaching tool not a rigid group task list.

HEY!

Begin your group time by engaging in relational conversations and prayer that may include the following elements:

Greet each other—a simple, brief time to greet one another (especially new friends), enjoy refreshments, and make announcements.

Week in review—a time to review the truths discussed last week and report on how members have had success or frustrations in applying those truths during the week. The leader will want to provide encouragement and shepherding during this time. Periodically, the leader will also want to review the gospel and allow members to share reports about opportunities they've had to share the gospel. Occasionally, the leader will want to revisit the vision for the group and discuss ways to accomplish that vision better.

Opening prayer—a time of general prayer with the whole group praying for struggles regarding the application of truths, for those with whom the group is sharing the gospel, and for understanding of today's truths.

SAY!

Use the following summary and questions to review this week's message and reflect on its implications in our lives:

Message Summary

The last week in the "@ our core" series took a close look at faith and what can happen when we live with bold faith. At The Gathering, we value **Bold Faith** and expect people to dream and do big things for God. Pastor Paul focused on 5 unique qualities of bold faith:

1. **Bold Faith is risky.** One can't read 1 Samuel 14:1-2 and not see the stark contrast: Saul under a shade tree on the outskirts playing it safe and Jonathan with his armor-bearer sneaking past enemy lines taking a risk. You and I weren't called to safety. We were called to be spent for God's glory.
2. **Bold Faith sees an opportunity for greatness.** Why did Jonathan take such a risk? Because he saw the chance for greatness (v. 12) – not for himself, but for his country and for God. We naturally dream of greatness, and God wants us to see His glory in those dreams.
3. **Bold Faith attracts others.** I love what the armor-bearer says in verse 7! In response to the possibility of death or defeat, he tells Jonathan that he is with him "heart and soul." Literally, he said he was going to back Jonathan with everything in him. The result was both of them racing up the cliff toward a fight in verse 13! Your bold faith will attract others every time!
4. **Bold Faith ignites passion.** Not only does bold faith attract others, but it ignites a passion in them, as well. These 2 young men didn't care how they looked – they just wanted to get to the opportunity! Verse 13 describes a race on all fours! They weren't messing around and they weren't holding back. They were determined and moved with passion to the divine moment.

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5. **Bold Faith appears reckless.** *When we see people living like Jonathan and his armor-bearer, it begs the question: what inspired them to move with such bold faith? Was it a guaranteed victory? A definite payday? The promise of riches and comfort after the fight? No. Verse 6 says that the armor-bearer didn't need any of those in order to go "all in." He went all in on a maybe. When you and I live with bold faith, we can expect some odd looks from others, because most people want a safety net and they don't understand how anyone could take a step like this without one. But these young men knew what you and I are learning: **bold moves for God require bold faith in God.***

Discuss

Use the following questions to review and apply the points learned in the message.

- On a scale of 1 to 10 (1 being very little and 10 being a lot), how comfortable are you with taking risks?
- Discuss your reactions to the following statement: we weren't called to be safe, but rather to be spent for God's glory.
- Read Matthew 14:22-33. What bold move did Peter make? What lessons did he learn that the men in the boat did not?
- Jonathan saw an opportunity for greatness in an obstacle (the Philistine army) they were facing. What obstacles in your life currently hold an opportunity for the greatness of God's power and glory?
- Bold faith attracts others and ignites passion in others. Have you ever found yourself going all in – "heart and soul" – because of the bold faith you saw in someone else? Describe that experience.
- Our bold moves for God can appear to be reckless, especially to others around us. Why do you think that is? How does having bold faith in God make bold moves for God less reckless?
- Read Hebrews 10:35-39. How can the faithfulness of God (knowing we will receive what we've been promised by Him) keep us from "shrinking back and being destroyed?"

PRAY!

Encourage your group to break out into smaller, same-gender groups where they will respond to the truths of the message. These groups will share with one another based on the following questions and then close in prayer:

- What are some of the main truths that God wants you to know from the message?
- According to the truths from the message, what does God want you to desire/value?
- How do your desires/values need to change to align with His desires/values?
- What actions does God want you to take according to the truths of this message?
- What is an action that you can start to implement today or tomorrow?

Close this time by praying for each other, specifically for strength in the application of these truths and for the lost people with whom you are seeking to share the gospel.