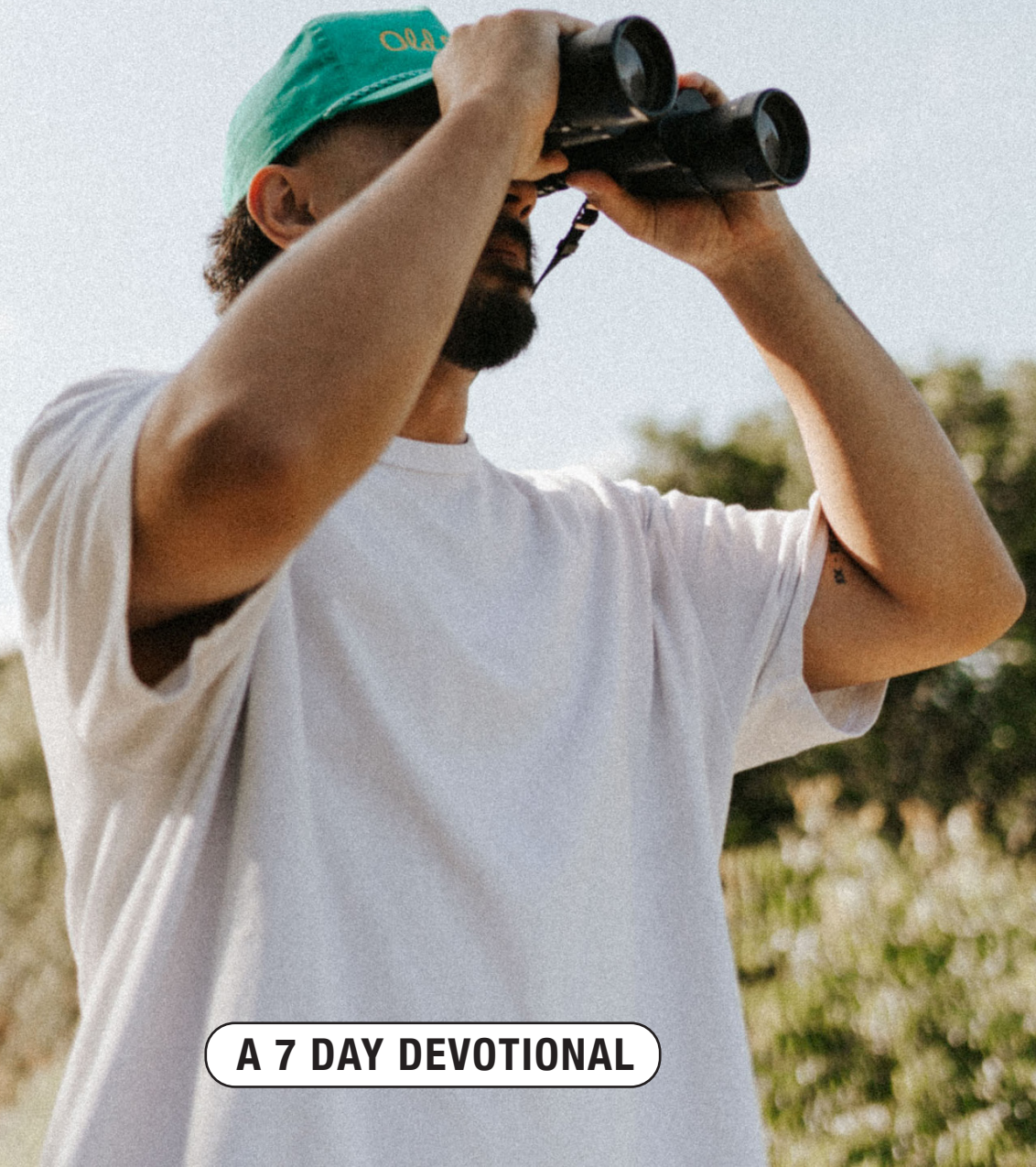


iSEECHURCH

FAITH ADVENTURE



A 7 DAY DEVOTIONAL



BACKSTORY:

The people of God were outnumbered and outgunned. Their army was losing men to fear, on a grand scale. The King of Israel was floundering, and his nation was in danger of being overwhelmed by a pagan regime. Jonathan, the King's son, was having limited success on another front. The nation needed a hero who would stand up and say, "enough."

Before we begin, we remember that we do not wage war as the people in this historical story did. The scriptures teach us that our battle is in the realm of the spirit and our weapons of prayer, praise and proclamation have divine power. Biblical stories like this are shadows of New Covenant spiritual realities, and we can find principles that help us to defeat our invisible enemy.

FROM 1 SAMUEL 14 NLT

(this is a condensed version: read the full story in 1 Samuel 14: 1-22)

One day Jonathan said to his armour bearer, "Come on, let's go over to where the Philistines have their outpost." But Jonathan did not tell his father what he was doing. Meanwhile, Saul and his 600 men were camped on the outskirts of Gibeah, around the pomegranate tree at Migron....

To reach the Philistine outpost, Jonathan had to go down between two rocky cliffs that were called Bozez and Seneh....

"Let's go across to the outpost of those pagans," Jonathan said to his armour bearer. "Perhaps the Lord will help us, for nothing can hinder the Lord. He can win a battle whether he has many warriors or only a few!" "Do what you think is best," the armor bearer replied. "I'm with you completely, whatever you decide."

"All right, then," Jonathan told him. "We will cross over and let them see us. If they say to us, 'Stay where you are or we'll kill you,' then we will stop and not go up to them. But if they say, 'Come on up and fight,' then we will go up. That will be the Lord's sign that he will help us defeat them."

When the Philistines saw them coming, they shouted, "Look! The Hebrews are crawling out of their holes!" Then the men from the outpost shouted to Jonathan, "Come on up here, and we'll teach you a lesson!"

"Come on, climb right behind me," Jonathan said to his armor bearer, "for the Lord will help us defeat them!"

So they climbed up using both hands and feet, and the Philistines fell before Jonathan, and his armor bearer killed those who came behind them.

Suddenly, panic broke out in the Philistine army, both in the camp and in the field, including even the outposts and raiding parties. And just then an earthquake struck, and everyone was terrified.

Saul's lookouts in Gibeah of Benjamin saw a strange sight—the vast army of Philistines began to melt away in every direction. "Call the roll and find out who's missing," Saul ordered. And when they checked, they found that Jonathan and his armor bearer were gone.

Then Saul and all his men rushed out to the battle and found the Philistines killing each other. There was terrible confusion everywhere. Even the Hebrews who had previously gone over to the Philistine army revolted and joined in with Saul, Jonathan, and the rest of the Israelites. Likewise, the men of Israel who were hiding in the hill country of Ephraim joined the chase when they saw the Philistines running away. So the Lord saved Israel that day ...



DAY 1:

AN INVITATION TO ADVENTURE

One day Jonathan said to his armour bearer, “Come on, let’s go over to where the Philistines have their outpost.” (v1)

Here they were, with all the unknowns of war, when Jonathan says something quite unreasonable. He was possibly pondering different ideas about how to survive, whether to engage or even run from the enemy, when his mind settles on an idea. That idea then became ‘something’ when he said it out loud.

This year, we can unlock Holy Spirit adventures by letting our faith speak and accepting the invitation into a new Faith Adventure. When we voice our faith ideas, we begin to frame our future with new possibilities.

In simple terms, every faith adventure, every shift in circumstance and every victory begins with someone somewhere, saying something. As your heart is inspired to believe, let your words reflect your faith and begin today by saying something that sows seeds into the future.

“This is going to be a good year!”

“God is doing a new thing in me, and I am excited.”

It seems too simple but as you form the words around what you actually are believing for, you activate a frequency in the spirit realm that unlocks the supernatural. There is an invitation flowing down to us in the Spirit.

Let’s RSVP to the invitation.

Lord, I am willing to go on a faith adventure this year.



DAY 2:

COME ON, LET’S GO!

Let’s revisit verse 1: One day Jonathan said to his armour bearer, “Come on, let’s go over to where the Philistines have their outpost.” (v1)

Let’s go. Let US go.

It is a powerful thing to begin to declare our expectations in faith over the new year. As you do, remember you do not need to have the whole plan before you begin to move. Faith adventures will unfold dynamically and supernaturally, but first we must begin.

In our story, Jonathan moved from the status quo to the life of faith with just a few words and a heart of faith. He and his armour bearer were stepping into adventure even though at this stage, details were scarce.

When we choose to take a faith step, it can be the catalyst for action beyond just ourselves. Let’s take a moment to consider Jonathan’s friend, known only as ‘his armour bearer.’ This brave young man remains nameless, although his faith and deeds matched Jonathan’s and a phenomenal victory was won because when the call came, he moved.

Let’s move toward Jesus today.

Lord here I am, I trust in You. Lead me into a faith adventure this year that is worthy of the Gospel.



DAY 3: **MEANWHILE, BACK** **AT THE CAMP...**

Meanwhile, Saul and his 600 men were camped on the outskirts of Gibeah, around the pomegranate tree at Migron. (v2)

While Jonathan and his armour bearer were shifting things at a cosmic level, the rest of the army were 'camping'. Passivity can be contagious and the whole army had become immobilised.

Prophetically the image of this stationary army, camped under a fruit tree, can warn us of how easy it is to settle in a place that is relatively safe and has enough provision to maintain 'camping.'

As the scripture recounts the actions of Jonathan and his friend, we read the word, "Meanwhile."

When we choose a faith adventure we are also saying no to the seduction of mediocrity, where we sit in the shade and security that was created by a previous generation.

Let's break camp.

Thank You Lord for Your Word.

Give me courage to move when you speak.



DAY 4:

IT'S NOT USUALLY EASY (NOR GUARANTEED)

To reach the Philistine outpost, Jonathan had to go down between two rocky cliffs that were called Bozez and Seneh.

“Let’s go across to the outpost of those pagans,” Jonathan said to his armor bearer.

“Perhaps the Lord will help us, for nothing can hinder the Lord. He can win a battle whether he has many warriors or only a few!” (v4 & 6)

Movement is always more challenging than staying still. Everyone loves to hear about an adventure after the fact, when the risk is in the past. Heaven only knows how many faith adventures never see the light of day because of the reality that moving takes more effort than to remain. The story notes that the path Jonathan and his armour bearer had to go on was challenging. They had to climb on hands and knees between rocky cliffs. But Jonathan decided to move, to embark on an adventure that opened up new possibilities.

The words ‘emotion’ and ‘motion’ are related. Sometimes, as we stir up our emotions, they help us move, and other times they lag behind. But we are people of conviction, so we move in spite of what we feel (our emotions). We can read how Jonathan was managing his emotions through what he says. He begins with a tentative, “perhaps the Lord will help us,” acknowledging in the moment that once he begins to move, he loses control to some degree.

But keep reading! Next, he encouraged himself in the Lord by declaring a higher reality. He says, “... for nothing can hinder the Lord. He can win a battle whether he has many warriors or only a few!”

Let’s remind ourselves that God is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us.

Father, we trust in you as we take the first steps into our faith adventure.



DAY 5:

AGREE WITH FAITH

“Do what you think is best,” the armor bearer replied. “I’m with you completely, whatever you decide.” “All right, then,” Jonathan told him. “We will cross over and let them see us. (v7 & 8)

This young man, the armour bearer, is a hero, and what leaders call a ‘first follower.’ His agreement lands him on the side of faith through which God saves a nation. He demonstrates total surrender to his calling and to remain alongside his commander. It is impossible to know whether he felt heroic but it is more likely he just felt terrified, as would most of us.

But he had trained for this moment. His life belonged to the mission and when faith was needed, he chose well.

The backstory is told in 1 Samuel chapter 13, and tells of God’s people, almost defeated. Saul and his men camped without purpose under a tree. Their numbers reduced, and many who had deserted were hiding in caves and holes. It was not a single moment that created the ultimate victory for the nation. It was a series of faith steps that unfolded to become a mosaic of victory.

Let’s consider how we can activate our agreement, and step into new faith adventures.

Lord, help me to recognise faith opportunities and be like this armour bearer, choosing well when it matters most.



DAY 6:

FACTOR FAITH INTO THE PLAN

If they say to us, “Stay where you are or we’ll kill you,” then we will stop and not go up to them. But if they say, “Come on up and fight,” then we will go up. That will be the Lord’s sign that he will help us defeat them.” (v9 & 10)

Faith unfolds.

Often it is only after movement has begun that the next step can be discovered. It’s good to make plans and have ideas about how we think things will work out, but we must also remember to elevate our imagination and factor in the impossible.

Some Bibles have titled this story: ‘Jonathan’s Daring Plan.’ In verse 10, that ‘plan’ included a variable that relied on God’s participation. That’s hard to plan for, right? But this is the faith that pleases God and attracts the supernatural. For Jonathan and his armour bearer, God rewarded their faith with supernatural help which included an earthquake.

Fast forward to the New Testament, where the Gospel of Mark records the story of Jesus honouring the audacious faith of a woman. Her adventure began with her declaration and released her healing.

When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, because she thought, “If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed.” Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering. (Mark 5:27)

Today we move from where we are towards our Faith Adventure.

Lord where you lead, I will follow.



DAY 7:

FAITH ADVENTURES ARE CONTAGIOUS

Then Saul and all his men rushed out to the battle and found the Philistines killing each other. There was terrible confusion everywhere. Even the Hebrews who had previously gone over to the Philistine army revolted and joined in with Saul, Jonathan, and the rest of the Israelites.

Likewise, the men of Israel who were hiding in the hill country of Ephraim joined the chase when they saw the Philistines running away. So the Lord saved Israel that day ... (v20-23)

Faith inspires faith, and a whole new path with new possibilities can open up for us (and others!) as we believe. Our enemy wants us to think that faith adventures are for other people, more gifted people, people with more time, or people who have mastered their spiritual disciplines. Satan is a liar, and this train of thought is designed to prevent us from experiencing the blessings that are unlocked by the life of faith. Be assured that when we begin to move, a whole other reality becomes possible.

In our text, the impact of Jonathan’s decision to move, affected first just his armour bearer but eventually a whole army, and then the nation itself. Our first tentative steps may seem inconsequential but the view from heaven may be different.

Remember to factor in the impossible because things will begin to shift in the spirit as soon as we begin to move. Let the Adventure begin!

Lord, we are believing for an army to rise up and adopt the life of faith that moves mountains out of the way for whole nations to be saved.

JONATHAN'S FAITH ADVENTURE

(FULL TEXT FROM THE MSG BIBLE FOR REFERENCE)

1 Samuel 14

1-3 Later that day, Jonathan, Saul's son, said to his armor bearer, "Come on, let's go over to the Philistine garrison patrol on the other side of the pass." But he didn't tell his father. Meanwhile, Saul was taking it easy under the pomegranate tree at the threshing floor on the edge of town at Geba (Gibeah). There were about six hundred men with him. Ahijah, wearing the priestly Ephod, was also there. (Ahijah was the son of Ahitub, brother of Ichabod, son of Phinehas, who was the son of Eli the priest of God at Shiloh.) No one there knew that Jonathan had gone off.

4-5 The pass that Jonathan was planning to cross over to the Philistine garrison was flanked on either side by sharp rock outcroppings, cliffs named Bozez and Seneh. The cliff to the north faced Micmash; the cliff to the south faced Geba (Gibeah).

6 Jonathan said to his armor bearer, "Come on now, let's go across to these uncircumcised pagans. Maybe God will work for us. There's no rule that says God can only deliver by using a big army. No one can stop God from saving when he sets his mind to it."

7 His armor bearer said, "Go ahead. Do what you think best. I'm with you all the way."

8-10 Jonathan said, "Here's what we'll do. We'll cross over the pass and let the men see we're there. If they say, 'Halt! Don't move until we check you out,' we'll stay put and not go up. But if they say, 'Come on up,' we'll go right up—and we'll know God has given them to us. That will be our sign."

11 So they did it, the two of them. They stepped into the open where they could be seen by the Philistine garrison. The Philistines shouted out, "Look at that! The Hebrews are crawling out of their holes!"

12 Then they yelled down to Jonathan and his armor bearer, "Come on up here! We've got a thing or two to show you!"

13 Jonathan shouted to his armor bearer, "Up! Follow me! God has turned them over to Israel!" Jonathan scrambled up on all fours, his armor bearer right on his heels. When the Philistines came running up to them, he knocked them flat, his armor bearer right behind finishing them off, bashing their heads in with stones.

14-15 In this first bloody encounter, Jonathan and his armor bearer killed about twenty men. That set off a terrific upheaval in both camp and field, the soldiers in the garrison and the raiding squad badly shaken up, the ground itself shuddering—panic like you've never seen before!

16-18 Saul's sentries posted back at Geba (Gibeah) in Benjamin saw the confusion and turmoil raging in the camp. Saul commanded, "Line up and take the roll. See who's here and who's missing." When they called the roll, Jonathan and his armor bearer turned up missing.

18-19 Saul ordered Ahijah, "Bring the priestly Ephod. Let's see what God has to say here." (Ahijah was responsible for the Ephod in those days.) While Saul was in conversation with the priest, the upheaval in the Philistine camp became greater and louder. Then Saul interrupted Ahijah: "Put the Ephod away."

20-23 Saul immediately called his army together and they went straight to the battle. When they got there they found total confusion—Philistines swinging their swords wildly, killing each other. Hebrews who had earlier defected to the Philistine camp came back. They now wanted to be with Israel under Saul and Jonathan. Not only that, but when all the Israelites who had been hiding out in the backwoods of Ephraim heard that the Philistines were running for their lives, they came out and joined the chase. God saved Israel! What a day!