

A Word from Pastor Chuck

C A L V A R Y C H A P E L D I S T I N C T I V E S



VENTURES OF FAITH—PART 1

But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.
Hebrews 11:6 KJV

It's always an exciting thing to give God a chance to work. God wants you to be a part of what He is doing. God doesn't want to stop working, so it's important for us to discover what He wants to do. I have found that the way we discover how God wants to work is to venture out in faith, stepping out and seeing what the Lord might do. But as we step out in faith, there has to be a guard against presumption. A lot of people who test the waters to see what God might want to do make a serious mistake by falling back on human effort when God's hand obviously is not in it. Sometimes we can get so committed to something that our reputation seems to be on the line. Then we start pumping extra energy and effort into a program that wasn't of God to begin with.

I've ventured out many times only to discover that God wasn't in it. What do you do then? You retreat. What gets us into trouble is when we proudly say, "We're going to make this thing succeed." We

a troubling or an exciting thought: If God wants to deliver the Philistines to Israel, He doesn't need the whole army. If God wants to work, He can work with one man as easily as 100,000 men.

Now when you stop to think about that from a logical standpoint, it's really true. God doesn't need a whole army. All God needs is one person in harmony with His purpose. God can accomplish His desires through one willing man. That thought kept Jonathan awake until he finally woke up his armorbearer and said, "Let's go over and see if God wants to deliver the Philistines to Israel today."

So they took a venture in faith. But Jonathan did set up a safeguard. As they were on their way over to the Philistine camp, he said, "We have to make sure God is in this. So when we're spotted by their sentries, if they say to us, 'Hey, you guys! What are you doing here? Wait, we're going to come down and teach you a lesson,' then we'll

A lot of people who test the waters to see what God might want to do make a serious mistake by falling back on human effort when God's hand obviously is not in it.

find ourselves spending all of our energy trying to create something that God isn't a part of, and it can just rip us up. When I step out in faith, if it succeeds, I rejoice and say, "Great! The Lord led me." If it doesn't succeed, I step back and say, "I thought it was a good idea, but it sure fell on its nose." I believe there are certain precautions that one must take in any venture in faith.

In the Old Testament, we have the story of Saul. During the time of his reign, he established a small standing army. He was commander over the larger part, and his son Jonathan was over the lesser part. The Philistines had invaded the land and were determined this time to completely wipe out Israel. They had amassed large forces of troops and chariots. They were such an awesome military threat that most of Israel's army deserted and fled to the other side of the Jordan River. There were just a few men left, and they were fearful. Then Jonathan woke up one night with what must have been either

know that God doesn't want to deliver the Philistines today. But if they say, 'Hey, you guys! Come up here, and we'll show you a thing or two,' then we'll know that God does want to deliver them into our hands."

They left the matter open. They didn't presumptuously tear into the Philistines because they thought, God is going to be with us, and we're going to wipe them out. There was a certain amount of precaution, which is always wise if we don't know for sure.

The Bible is full of stories of people who ventured out in faith and gave God an opportunity to do what He intended to do simply by making themselves available to Him. In the next issue, we will continue our look at Ventures of Faith by recounting God's faithfulness within the Calvary Chapel movement. ✨

All verses above are quoted from the King James Version.