



Bold Experiments

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to consider the need for bold experiments – responding to God’s prompting to attempt something new with the genuine possibility of failure – in our personal and church lives.

Opener

When was the last time you did something that had an element of risk attached to it? What did you risk, and why did you risk it?

Bible study

Read Hebrews 11:1-40.

Question 1

What, according to Hebrews 11, is faith all about? For what, exactly, are the believers in this chapter commended (2, 39)?

The chapter begins with a definition of faith (1) and a current example of it in the lives of the first readers (3), and then goes on to illustrate it. There is a lot to reflect on, including how faith

- *pleases God (4-6);*
- *is reflected in action (4, 7-8, etc);*
- *can be accompanied by a variety of emotions including fear (7) and confidence (10);*
- *is not knowing, but doing anyway (8);*
- *can be believing against the odds (11);*
- *does not always see the result in this life (13, 39);*
- *is counter-cultural (13);*
- *is future-focused (16);*
- *can stretch us (17);*
- *can lead to discomfort (25-27) and even death (35-38);*
- *and more ...*

Question 2

Consider one of the examples of faith in this list – the example of Noah (7). His story is told in Genesis 6:9-22 and the following chapters. What did Noah risk by acting on what God revealed to him?

Noah believed that he had genuinely heard from God, and that God was trustworthy. If either of those beliefs turned out to be false, then he was risking loss of livelihood (it was a significant undertaking with no immediate return on investment!), family stress, loss of



standing in the community, and loss of confidence in God or in his ability to discern God's voice.

Question 3

In his letter to the Romans, Paul states that faith for salvation comes from hearing the message through the word about Christ (Romans 10:17). To what extent is “faith comes from hearing” a true statement about faith in general? What helps your faith to come and to grow?

Application

Watch the video for this session. This video is available from https://www.baptist.org.uk/Articles/540997/Where_do_we.aspx.

Question 4

In the video, Ken talks about the 2018 rescue of the Wild Boars football team in Thailand, and argues that it provides a helpful illustration of what a bold faith experiment in sharing the good news looks like. He draws out 10 points of comparison. The rescue

- involved a lot of prayer
- was a genuinely life-saving rescue
- was risky and costly
- involved the best skills and plans available
- involved more than one plan at once
- had a sense of urgency
- was accompanied by people saying it couldn't be done
- required the rescuers to go to those who needed rescuing
- saved one life at a time
- culminated in a fantastic celebration even if some said they would have done it differently!

How well do the 10 points describe (a) you and (b) your church's current efforts to reach the lost with the good news?

Question 5

What is the difference between a bold faith experiment and one that is reckless or ill-conceived? How do you tell the difference in practice?

Question 6

“We need urgently to recapture the vision of living daringly for the Lord, throwing ourselves totally upon the power of his Spirit, without whom we are nothing. This is the greatest and most pressing need of the church today. Everything else we do is like trying to sail a boat when the tide is out, and the wind is still.” (David Watson)



Think about what “living daringly for the Lord” looked like for the believers in Hebrews 11. What does it look like for you?

Taking it forward

Watch the feedback video for this session. This video is available from https://www.baptist.org.uk/Articles/540997/Where_do_we.aspx.

How does the idea of a bold and risky experiment make you feel? Excited? Stressed? Share how you're feeling.

I/we need to

- hear from God
- trust in what God is saying
- be courageous and act on what God is saying

Which of the above best describes what you need most at the present time? Ask God for it in prayer.