It’s easy to get to a place in life where routines seem to take over and dictate the future. Our lives can become a collection of patterns that seem to quietly shape the hours, days, weeks and months of our lives. It’s a comfortable way to live, but over time these patterns can become invisible bars that build a prison around our hearts and restrict the kind of fruitfulness God wants to produce in our lives and in our relationship with Jesus.

Despite some military success, Saul found himself in a dangerous position. And he was stuck in some comfortable but unhealthy patterns. We discover in chapter 13 that his army was outmatched both in numbers and equipment. He was commander-in-chief, but many of his soldiers were hiding or had deserted.

It’s easy to get in a place that is comfortable, but which in reality is a place where we trade success for safety and security for fruitfulness. We begin to assume that God’s biggest blessings are in the past and that our greatest task in the future is to conserve what we already have. We become protective, guarded, and defensive, rather than forward-looking and excited about our tomorrows.

Saul’s son Jonathan shows us that we need not think that way. We can approach the future with faith and confidence because God’s promises and his charac-

8. Jonathan wasn’t guaranteed success in this venture. He sees two possible outcomes in verses 8-9. What do you think he would have done if the Philistines had not invited him to climb up?

9. What did Jonathan believe about God that was and important part of him taking this kind of big risk? (See verse 7.)

10. Share with the group some experiences in your life where you stepped out on faith and God showed up in big way.

11. Even though we know God is faithful, we sometimes stop taking risks. Discuss the things that hold us back.

12. Discuss some of the opportunities in your life today that involve some measure of risk that you suspect God is inviting you to take so that you can see Jesus at work in fresh ways.
ter do not change. His actions in the account demonstrate how we can taste more of the grace and goodness of God for the future.

As Jonathan discovered God’s ability to bless him through walking by faith. So can we.

1 Samuel 14:6-15

6 Jonathan said to the young man who carried his armor, “Come, let us go over to the garrison of these uncircumcised. It may be that the LORD will work for us, for nothing can hinder the LORD from saving by many or by few.” 7 And his armor-bearer said to him, “Do all that is in your heart. Do as you wish. Behold, I am with you heart and soul.” 8 Then Jonathan said, “Behold, we will cross over to the men, and we will show ourselves to them.” 9 If they say to us, ‘Wait until we come to you,’ then we will stand still in our place, and we will not go up to them. 10 But if they say, ‘Come up to us,’ then we will go up, for the LORD has given them into our hand. And this shall be the sign to us.” 11 So both of them showed themselves to the garrison of the Philistines. And the Philistines said, “Look, Hebrews are coming out of the holes where they have hidden themselves.” 12 And the men of the garrison hailed Jonathan and his armor-bearer and said, “Come up to us, and we will show you a thing.” And Jonathan said to his armor-bearer, “Come up after me, for the LORD has given them into the hand of Israel.” 13 Then Jonathan climbed up on his hands and feet, and his armor-bearer after him. And they fell before Jonathan, and his armor-bearer killed them after him. 14 And that first strike, which Jonathan and his armor-bearer made, killed about twenty men within as it were half a furrow’s length in an acre of land. 15 And there was a panic in the camp, in the field, and among all the people. The garrison and even the raiders trembled, the earth quaked, and it became a very great panic.

Sometimes we can get stuck in the familiar patterns of life and routines without being aware of it. What is normal may not be fully satisfying, but it is at least familiar. Over time, the spirit of adventure and excitement can be drained from our lives.

1. Discuss with the group some of the areas where you tend to get into a rut. Consider the following:

   Foods you eat

   Entertainment you watch

   Clothes you wear

   Places you visit on the internet or stuff you read on line or in magazines or books

2. Discuss what might be some of the warning signs that a pattern or way of doing things is starting to stifle your life and make it smaller rather than make it richer.

3. What do you think prompted Jonathan to issue the challenge he did to his armor bearer in 1 Samuel 14:6?

4. In what ways can dissatisfaction be a blessing in our lives?

5. What is the difference between a healthy dissatisfaction and an unhealthy spirit of discontent?

6. What other examples can you think of in scripture where someone took initiative when most of the people around them were comfortable?

7. Why do you think Jonathan’s armor bearer responded the way he did in verse 7 rather than say, “What! Are you crazy?”