



## ON LOCATION 8: STEPPING OUT

*So Abraham left, as the LORD had told him. (Genesis 12:4, NIV)*

IT'S NOT A BIBLICAL EXPRESSION, but you've heard it a hundred times. *Step out in faith*. It gets swallowed up among any number of similar charges: "make a decision," "test the waters," "try something new," "go for it."

We golfers are familiar with that last one. Standing in the fairway on the edge of our maximum abilities, we must decide if the chance at golfing glory outweighs the lurking disaster if we don't pull it off. Risk-reward, they call it. Are you more of a birdie hunter or a bogey hater? The shot you choose will reveal your answer to that question.

Though we don't find "step out in faith" quoted in such a way, the concept fills the pages of Scripture. God asks people great and humble to do things they have never before considered. Authorities demand actions that run contrary to what God's people know to be right. Noah, Abraham, Moses, Ruth—from the earliest pages of your Bible forward, you'll find examples of men and women doing what did *not* come naturally. They made choices to walk into the unknown.

This should not surprise us if we are familiar with the definition of faith we find in Hebrews: "Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see." By faith, the invisible becomes visible.

But let's be clear and cautious: Faith is not its own power. The error in taking up the directive to "step out in faith" among "go for it" and other similar compulsions is doing so with the belief that it is faith alone that carries the day. If that's the case, then it's *my* faith that wins. And thus, when it comes to semantics, *faith* means no more and no less than *strength* or *fortitude* or *bravado*. I am the one doing the stepping, so all that succeeds depends on me.

Biblical faith rightly exercised carries no such self-reliant aspect. Noah's instruction, Abraham's directive, Moses' call, and Ruth's attachment came from God himself. Thus, their faith was not a loose hope; it was tied to the source of all assurance. Their faith was in him.

These ancestors of faith did not know the details of what God had in store for them, but they knew it was God who was leading. They were not blind to follow him. Neither are we.

**Opening questions** Do you see a difference between confidence and faith? Do you exercise a sort of faith on the golf course? How about in other areas of life? Is this faith connected to God?

**READING** Daniel 1:3-16; Mark 14:32-36

### Faith in practice (Daniel 1)

How did both Daniel and the king's official act in faith in this passage? What differences do you see between the faith they showed?

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Eating a particular diet was a practical expression of faith for Daniel and his friends. Can you think of examples of practical actions (your own or those of others) that demonstrate faith in God?

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### Christ's faith (Mark 14)

What was Jesus' disposition as he entered Gethsemane? How do the words of Jesus' prayer reveal his faith in the Father's will for him? Do we have a guarantee that our faith will be rewarded with success or comfort?

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