

Small Group Guide: IGNITING YOUR SPIRITUAL GROWTH - Expecting The Best From God

Opening Question What's a "David vs. Goliath" moment from a movie, sports, or story that you enjoy watching or remembering?

Opening Prayer *God, thank You for bringing us together. Help us to grow in faith as we talk about Your Word and what it means to trust You in both good and difficult seasons. Open our hearts to what You want to teach us tonight, and help our conversation encourage and strengthen each person here. In Jesus' name, amen.*

Key Takeaways from the Sermon

Faith is essential to spiritual growth. Pastor Brandon reminded us that faith is not just believing God exists, but trusting in Jesus—the Messiah whose death and resurrection makes relationship with God possible.

Expecting the best from God is not the same as pretending life will always be easy. Life includes hardship, heartbreak, opposition, and obstacles. But we can trust that God is in control, that He loves us, and that He has a plan for our lives.

David saw Goliath differently than everyone else did. The Israelite army saw an unbeatable giant. David saw an obstacle that God could help him face.

God uses past experiences to prepare us for future challenges. David's experience protecting sheep from a lion and a bear prepared him for Goliath. Even difficult seasons can become part of God's preparation in our lives.

Trusting God honors Him. When we invite God into our challenges and lean on Him for wisdom, strength, and direction, we acknowledge His authority and goodness.

Faith encourages others. David's courage inspired the army of Israel. Our faithfulness can strengthen the people around us.

Spiritual growth requires intentional habits. Pastor Brandon highlighted practices like praying regularly, reflecting on God's promises, memorizing Scripture, trusting God when things look bad, and staying connected to other believers.

Discussion Questions

1. **Read Hebrews 11:1 and Hebrews 11:6.**
How do these verses define faith, and why is faith so central to pleasing God?
2. **Read Psalm 32:8.**
God says, "I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my loving eye on you." What does this verse show us about God's involvement in our lives?
3. **Read 1 Samuel 17:34-37.**
David remembered how God helped him face the lion and the bear. Why do you think remembering God's past faithfulness matters when we face new challenges?
4. **Read 1 Samuel 17:45-47.**
David makes it clear that the battle belongs to the Lord. What stands out to you about David's confidence in this moment?
5. **Pastor Brandon made the point that "expecting the best from God" does not mean pretending everything will always go well.** How would you explain the difference between biblical faith and simple positive thinking?
6. **The Israelite army saw Goliath as a threat, but David saw him as an obstacle God could overcome.** What are some common "Goliath-sized" obstacles people face today, and how can faith change the way we view them??
7. **Pastor Brandon said our hardest times can increase our ability and prepare us for what God has next.** What are some ways God can use difficult experiences to shape a person's faith, character, or courage?
8. **Read Psalm 5:3.**
David brought his requests to God in the morning and waited expectantly. What are some practical ways we can become more intentional in prayer and listening for God's guidance?

Practical Applications (Choose one or two.)

1. **Begin each day by tuning in to God.**
Take a few minutes each morning to pray, surrender the day, and ask God for guidance.
2. **Make a prayer list.**
Like Pastor Brandon mentioned from Psalm 5:3, write down specific prayer requests and revisit them regularly to see how God is working.
3. **Memorize Scripture this week.**
Choose one verse that reminds you of God's faithfulness and repeat it throughout the day.
4. **Reflect on past faithfulness.**
Write down one or two moments when God helped you through a difficult season. Let those reminders strengthen your faith for current challenges.
5. **Stay connected to other believers.**
Be intentional about Community Group, church relationships, and friendships that encourage you to follow Jesus.

Memory Verse for This Week

Psalm 32:8

"I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my loving eye on you."

Closing Prayer *Heavenly Father, thank You for reminding us that You are with us in every season. Help us to trust You when life is easy and when we face obstacles that feel too big for us. Grow our faith, teach us through Your Word, and use our lives to encourage others. Give us courage like David—not because we are strong on our own, but because we trust in You. In Jesus' name, amen.*