

LIVING
IT OUT



**DAILY
BIBLE
STUDY**



CEDARCREEKCHURCH

A Life-Changing Adventure

June 22, 2020

During the weekend service, Ben interviewed Nate Cook, a CedarCreek attendee who experienced quite an adventure on the television show *Naked and Afraid*. CedarCreek's mission is to introduce people to Jesus and the life-changing adventure with him. But what is an "adventure"?

An adventure, as Ben defined, is "a bold undertaking, usually involving danger and unknown risks, that leads to exciting new experiences."

If adventures usually involve danger and unknown risks, that means there's no guarantee of success or safety when you go on them. It's enough to make some of us wonder, "Why should we go on an adventure at all?"

Personally, I've struggled with perfectionism most of my life. There have been times when I felt it was better to *not* try something at all, rather than risk failing at it—so part of me recoils at the idea of success not being guaranteed. Maybe you're like me, or maybe the idea of safety not being guaranteed makes you anxious.

But you know what? The times I've decided to do something adventurous have led to some of the most life-changing experiences for me—experiences that shaped who I am, helped me grow in ways I couldn't imagine, brought me closer to God, and honestly, completely altered the path I was on.

For example, in my senior year of high school, I applied for my college's "Freshman Irish Studies Program." I had lived in the same house, in the same small town, since I was three. I had known many of my friends since elementary school, and some even since kindergarten. But if I was accepted into this program, I would spend my first semester of college (which was already a big shift for me) in a foreign country with a group of students I'd never met before.

I *was* accepted, and that experience changed my life forever. My own family still says I came back changed (in a good way), and nearly seven years later, the people I met on that trip are still some of my most trusted friends. Applying was scary, but it was the best decision I've made in my life, so far.

However, if we are looking to have adventurous opportunities following Jesus, there are things we need to surrender:

- Convenience
- Comfort
- Control

Spending my first semester in a different country was not comfortable; it definitely wasn't convenient; and there was a lot outside of my control. I had no idea what to expect. But looking back, I wouldn't exchange that experience for *anything*—**definitely** not for those three Cs.

When you see that surrendering those things can lead to adventurous opportunities, it changes your perspective on uncomfortable, inconvenient, or uncontrollable experiences you might have previously avoided.

You start to realize what you might have thought of as an inconvenience, a threat, or underlying anxiety before is really an **invitation to step into the bold and risky adventure** in front of you—which can lead to experiences that are truly meaningful and fulfilling.

Over the next four days, we'll look at four characters from the Bible and how they surrendered areas of convenience, comfort, and control by choosing to live by faith—and as a result, lived full and meaningful lives.

Questions:

Think of a time God called *you* into an adventure. Did you follow? What was the result?

What opportunities are you avoiding for the sake of your comfort, convenience, or control? What would it take to get you to take the step God is calling you to make?

Next Steps:

Read [Matthew 16:25](#). Reflect on this verse and what it means to give up your life for Jesus' sake. Write it down. Memorize it.

The next time you find yourself avoiding something for the sake of your comfort, convenience, or control, pause and ask yourself if God is calling you into an adventure. **Pray** and seek God's direction.

Prayer:

*Heavenly Father, thank you for the life-changing adventure you call us into. Thank you for being faithful and trustworthy—we know that no matter where you lead us, you'll be there with us. Help us to listen for and follow your guidance. Teach us to surrender comfort, convenience, and control so we can follow the exciting plans you have for us. May **your** will be done in us and through us. Amen.*

Noah Was a Hero

June 23, 2020

When I hear the name Noah, the first thought that comes to mind is that he was the builder of the ark. Although this is true, Noah was much more—he was the *only* righteous man living on Earth. Because of Noah's unwavering faith in God, God spared all living animals, Noah, and his family (eight people), and the planet itself. Can you even imagine living in a world where EVERYONE is evil to their core? How did Noah remain faithful? He walked closely with God.

[Genesis 6:8-9](#)

⁸ But Noah found favor with the Lord. ⁹ This is the account of Noah and his family. Noah was a righteous man, the only blameless person living on the earth at the time, and he walked in close fellowship with God.

[Hebrews 11:7](#)

It was by faith that Noah built a large boat to save his family from the flood. He obeyed God, who warned him about things that had never happened before. By his faith Noah condemned the rest of the world, and he received the righteousness that comes by faith.

Noah's righteousness did not come from his character or self-control; it was his faith. Faith resides in your mind and heart but shows up in your walk with God. Even though experience was against the probability that the flood would occur, Noah was faithful. He left convention behind and embraced adventure as he followed the Lord's commands.

During the weekend services, Lead Pastor Ben Snyder interviewed Nathan Cook, a participant on the show *Naked and Afraid*. He was dropped off in a jungle with nothing, not even the clothes on his back. He left everything behind to go on an adventure of survival.

In contrast, the adventure on which Noah embarked involved risk and had no guarantee of success, but he simply obeyed God. What did Noah leave behind? At the onset, he left the comfort of his daily routine to undertake the back-breaking task of building the ark. Once on the ark, he then left behind the comforts of his home, the conveniences of having necessities at his fingertips, and the control of everything he knew thus far in his life. By accepting the invitation to step into a bold and risky adventure Noah experienced something

very meaningful and significant. Noah's adventure was like no other and allowed him to experience God's faithfulness and saving grace in an amazing way.

Questions:

Would you go on an adventure like Nathan? Would you go on an adventure like Noah? Was your response different? If so, why?

Next Steps:

Read [Genesis 6-9](#) for the complete story of Noah and the ark. Pay close attention to how God's heart changed from broken ([Genesis 6:6](#)) to compassionate ([Genesis 8:21](#)).

Prayer:

Dear Father in Heaven, give me wisdom to be like Noah. Thank you for the rainbow as a sign of your covenant to Christ followers. Thank you for sending your Son to die on the cross for my sins. Help me to seek out unbelievers so I can introduce them to the life-changing adventure with you! In Jesus' name, amen.

This post was written by Jennifer Macke, a regular contributor to the LivingItOut.

Who Am I?

June 24, 2020

The daughter of Pharaoh found Moses floating down the river in a basket and adopted him. Although Moses was born a Hebrew, he grew up in the home of Pharaoh. As a young man, Moses witnessed an Egyptian beating one of his fellow Hebrews. Moses killed the Egyptian ([Exodus 2:12](#)). Fearing he would be found out, he ran away to Midian, leaving behind the convenience, comfort, and control of being the adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter. In Midian, Moses married, had a son, and lived a good and simple life.

Then one day, God spoke to Moses in the form of a burning bush. God told Moses, "I have certainly seen the oppression of my people in Egypt" ([Exodus 3:7](#)). Moses listened and was amazed by the bush that didn't burn up. God spoke many things to Moses and then said, "Now go, for I am sending you to Pharaoh. You must lead my people Israel out of Egypt" ([Exodus 3:10](#)).

Moses didn't want to go. He protested to God that the people wouldn't believe him. But God promised to be with Moses, to convince the people and Pharaoh. So Moses decided to leave his life, again. He had faith in the power of God—Moses knew God would honor his promise.

Because Moses had witnessed the Egyptian cruelty imposed on the Hebrews, it likely made a significant impact on his decision to, once again, leave the convenience and comfort of his life and his family to venture out in faith. Moses once had enough compassion for the Hebrews that it caused him to take another man's life. Now, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob was promising to be with him so that he could approach the situation with more power than he had ever known before. Although Moses didn't cross over to the promised land, God was with him all the way, and the Hebrews were freed from slavery.

Being in a relationship with God makes all the difference when you're faced with uncomfortable inconvenience or about to embark on an adventure. I look back over my life and remember situations in which God asked me to give up something in order to be a blessing to someone else. God's blessings and bounty in my life are undeniable. I don't deserve any of them, but Jesus made me worthy by dying on that cross for my sin. He can do the same for you and anyone who calls on his name!

Questions:

Is God calling you to give up some comfort or convenience to make a difference in the life of someone else? Do you have faith that God will fulfill his promises?

Next Steps:

Read the stories of Moses in Exodus, Leviticus, Deuteronomy, and Numbers. Think about the comfort and conveniences Moses had to let go of to follow God's will. Meditate on what God has asked you to let go of to bless your life or for you to be a blessing.

Prayer:

God, you are my Father, most holy and worthy of my praise. Thank you for the courage it takes to let go of my own desire to make a difference in the life of another. Help me to see where you are at work in my surroundings and strengthen me to join you there. Open the eyes of my heart Lord, that my legacy would be as a servant of the most high God. This world, this country, these people need you. I lift them up to you Lord—have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and lead us in life everlasting. Amen.

This post was written by Julie Estep, a regular contributor to the LivingItOut.

The Poster Child of Adventure

June 25, 2020

What is your idea of living an adventurous life? Does the thought get you excited or make you cringe? For Nate Cook, high adventure included stripping off his clothes and every convenience, abandoning all comfort, and giving up control of every element in his environment. Me? I'm afraid of dead fish, so even the thought of spending time in "the wild" eating them freaks me out.

Why an adventure? Is it for fun? A change of scenery? To find out what you are really made of? Or is it bigger than that?

David, son of Jesse, was the youngest of eight sons and the overlooked runt of the litter. He was the shepherd of the family's flock of sheep and goats. His job included guarding, guiding, and sitting around watching the flocks day after day. *Alone*. (See [1](#) and [2 Samuel](#) and [1 Kings](#) for his story.)

David's closest companion was the one true God. Nothing came between them with David's shepherding lifestyle. He spent hours talking to God, writing him love letters called Psalms, and praying for the ability to serve and understand the Creator of the universe.

David was hardworking, a deep thinker, and fearless in a fight—think about taking on a lion or bear with a club to protect your sheep. And he was obedient to his father, Jesse, and his Lord.

One day, God sent his prophet Samuel to Jesse's house to find and anoint the man God had chosen to be the king of Israel from among Jesse's sons. God told Samuel that man would be, the seemingly least likely choice, David. Because he had a servant's heart, David was God's man. God was always at the center of his obedience and motivation.

You might say, from that day forward, David became the poster child for living a big, adventurous life. Sometime later, Jesse sent him to the front lines to deliver food to his brothers who were in King Saul's army. When David arrived, he saw the king and the entire Israeli army standing on a hillside, overlooking the Elam Valley, paralyzed with fear while a giant of a man, named Goliath, taunted them every morning and night. Goliath was defying the army of the Living God of Israel.

David was furious that this pagan soldier would insult the Lord and defy the army of God and demanded to be allowed to fight Goliath. And so the adventure began! Ever since, the amazing career and life of David—described by God himself as “a man after my own heart” in [Acts 13:22](#)—have been immortalized in literature.

For the rest of his life, David continued risking life and limb against the enemies of God and Israel. His motivation? Serving the one true God. Did he ever fail, ever sin? You bet. But he also begged God for forgiveness, turned from his sin, paid whatever price the Lord demanded as the cost for that sin, and continued to love and serve God until the end of his life. In other words, a life of great worth is one lived for the glory of God. Now that’s an adventure.

What’s your adventure? I hope mine doesn’t include dead fish ...

Questions:

Have you ever considered the possibility that serving God could be the greatest adventure of your life?

If so, how is your life reflecting that viewpoint?

If not, why?

Next Steps:

Ask God to give you clarity as to what he created you for by checking out the lives of some of the great heroes of the Bible. Pray for God to lead you into your own adventure serving him.

If you need help, call one of our campus pastors.

Prayer:

Lord, thank you for making life about so much more than chores, jobs, and the day-to-day. I pray that you would help me live a life worthy of a child of God. Focus my perspective on you and whatever adventure you have for me, and give me the ability to be your servant all the days of my life. In Jesus’ name I pray, amen.

This post was written by Martha Smith, a regular contributor and editor of the LivingItOut.

The Dust of the Rabbi

June 26, 2020

[Matthew 4:18-22](#)

¹⁸ One day as Jesus was walking along the shore of the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers—Simon, also called Peter, and Andrew—throwing a net into the water, for they fished for a living. ¹⁹ Jesus called out to them, “Come, follow me, and I will show you how to fish for people!” ²⁰ And they left their nets at once and followed him.

²¹ A little farther up the shore he saw two other brothers, James and John, sitting in a boat with their father, Zebedee, repairing their nets. And he called them to come, too. ²² They immediately followed him, leaving the boat and their father behind.

Have you ever really considered these verses? Have you ever really thought about this invitation, and what it meant 2,000-plus years ago in the northern region of Israel that surrounded the Sea of Galilee?

These two groups of brothers were working in their families' businesses, which is what Jewish boys often did when school wasn't an option. Their fishing businesses provided both food and money to buy things they couldn't provide for themselves. It was probably how their families had lived for generations.

Apparently, these boys weren't that good at it because in [Luke Chapter 5:5](#), it says that when Jesus came along, they had fished all night and not caught anything! Still, this guy Jesus, whom they may have heard about from their cousins the Zebedees when they were hanging around with John the Baptizer, made them an offer, and they dropped everything to follow him. James and John did the same!

They left everything! Their businesses, their families, their synagogue, and their communities. They left it all and walked into the unknown, an adventure that we still read about today!

They knew a little bit about what it was to follow a rabbi. There was a saying that a disciple “was to be covered by the dust of his rabbi.” This meant the disciple followed the rabbi so closely and imitated him so thoroughly that they were covered by the dust as the rabbi’s sandals stirred up the dirt. The disciple lived as the rabbi did, emulated his behavior, and sat under his wise teaching. But Jesus chose these brothers to be fishers of men. What a curious invitation!

Still they gave up convenience, comfort, and control to follow him, and what an adventure they had! Imagine following Jesus as he spoke the parables, healed the sick, cast out demons, and taught them how to pray and to trust in him and his Father. For three years, they followed him, and then one horrible day, the dream was over.

Who were they now, since their rabbi was gone, dead on a Roman cross? All that they had come to believe about him died that dark afternoon. Sunday changed all that when the risen Jesus appeared to the disciples, but John’s gospel says they returned to the Sea of Galilee and took up their old occupation (with the same dismal results). Jesus helped them out once more and then gave them their next job!

The adventure, along with the discomfort, inconvenience, and lack of control, continued! Through their efforts and God’s grace, over the next thirty to forty years, the greatest movement the world has ever known was born and nurtured: the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ!

Questions:

What breaks your heart? Are you willing to be inconvenienced, uncomfortable, or out of control to begin to change it?

Next Steps:

When you find the thing that breaks your heart, pray about what God would have you do about it. Research the problem, and find a way you can begin to make a change. Think about this quote from Edward Everett Hale, “I am only one, but still I am one. I cannot do everything, but still I can do something; and

because I cannot do everything, I will not refuse to do the something that I can do.”

Prayer:

Lord Jesus, thank you for inviting us on this great adventure of knowing and following you! Even though what you ask might be uncomfortable or inconvenient at times, I pray that you grant me the courage to obey the opportunities you place before me, that I might know you and love you more through them. I am only one, but still I can do something. By your will and power may the something I do grow your kingdom here on earth. Amen.