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SPEAKER	David Smith
TITLE	Out of the Gideon Groove
SERIES	Your faith matters. In fact, it's so important to God that He's given you useful tools, situations and opportunities He wants to use to perfect your faith. You just have to jump. What are you willing to jump into or out of, so God can perfect your faith?

Faith/Belief

What does it mean to believe something? Is it different than understanding? Are there layers, or levels, of belief?

Pastor David began this week's message asking, "What if you had faith that the full power of God could help you take action in an area where you are defeated?" Is there an area of your life where a large dose of renewed faith and action is needed to overcome defeat?

Our autonomic nervous system responds to situations based on our beliefs even if they are false (e.g. stressful thoughts can trigger our blood pressure to rise). This internal *belief* can be strong enough to influence our control (addiction) over our actions. This can cause us to behave (actions) in ways we don't want. Do we need more faith/action to overcome this?

What do you think of the relationship between belief and faith? Is it possible that we don't really believe the things we understand to be true or desire to be true?

In David's example of letting a car's automatic braking system stop his vehicle, he said he believed that it worked. But, in his next breath, he described having to purchase several cars if the brake system failed. Is this true *belief* and isn't it fair to say his belief in his own abilities exceeded those of his belief in the car's?

Gideon Groove

Why do you think the author of Judges chose to write the entire narrative in this Gideon Groove cycle?

Have you noticed the "Gideon Groove" in your own life? What is the most effective way to deal with it? Should we be striving to get out of the groove, or can we work with it somehow to grow closer to God?

Are there impediments to your faith that you need to get rid of? Are there rehearsed thoughts that are part of this (i.e. worry or negative thoughts that are processed repeatedly)? Are there actions you need to struggle with despite the emotional, mental, and physical difficulties?

Pastor David gave a long list of things we may need to tear down – from jealousy, lust and materialism, to smart phone over-use. What do you think should be torn down because it gets between your faith beliefs and faith actions?

We don't always see God as we should in the events and relationships of our lives. Why do we often overlook God's hand in daily living? Have you sometimes longed to see God more clearly? How important is it to keep faithful habits of prayer and Bible reading?

Deepening your Faith

In Hebrews 11:6 we read, "And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to Him must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him." In your experience, why is it so hard to move from believing to trusting? Do you ever feel that God's will in action through faith might blow up a situation where you feel safer just enduring?

Can contemplative practices such as prayer and meditation help deepen your faith? If so how?

In Hebrews 11, the words "by faith" appear 21 times – where people of the Bible took remarkable actions in faith. Can you describe a situation where "by faith" God wants you to trust in Him more and take action?

We heard that, "actions prove that we believe". What are your thoughts on this statement? What actions that prove belief do you most often see in Christian believers? What actions do you take that prove your belief? How frequent or rare are these actions?

In James 2:17 we learn, "In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead." Are there troubling problems we work endlessly in our minds, but lack faith to take action? Isn't this just another description for worrying? Are we held back by a lack confidence in ourselves or by faith and trust in God? How can renewed faith overcome both obstacles?

Are you willing to take some practical steps of faith? Do you agree that a good start is to confess to God the obstacles you are responsible for, to share your concerns with someone and then take a specific step in faith?