

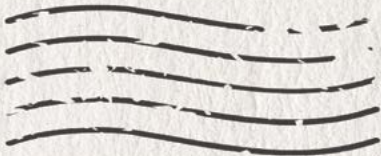
Mark 9:23-24 And Jesus said to him, "If you can!"

All things are possible for one who believes." Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, "I believe; help my unbelief."

THE POWER OF DESPERATELY DEPENDENT PRAYER



WEEK  
2



Madame  
Paris  
Paris

## week 2

The Power of Desperately  
Dependent Prayer

**Mark 9:23-24: And Jesus said to him, “If you can! All things are possible for one who believes.” Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, “I believe; help my unbelief!”**

## introduction

Belief is often misunderstood. We tend to believe in what we can prove, synonymizing belief with knowledge, believing in what we rationally know without a shadow of a doubt. But what about things we don't, can't, or won't know? What does it look like to believe when uncertainty abounds?

One inescapable constant throughout the New Testament is that Jesus meets people where they are. Whether resting at a well, hiding in a tree, or observing from the shadows, Jesus sees us where we are and draws near. Mark 9 displays one man's encounter with Jesus amid fear, uncertainty, and doubt.

Trust Jesus with your fears, doubts, and worries as you read and pray this week. Let His grace and hope shine on your areas of unbelief.

**SIMPLE PRAYER: I believe; help my unbelief!**

**PRAYER PRACTICE:** This week, we will wrestle with what it looks like to believe God's Truth over our opinions during struggles. Begin by listing areas where you struggle with God's Truth, whether you struggle to know, understand, act on, or believe it. Be honest with yourself, and trust that God can handle your doubts.

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**POSTCARD:** Remove this week's postcard in the back of this guide, and put it in a prominent place as a reminder to pray. When you pray for someone else, write a note on the back of the postcard, and give it to them as an encouragement and an opportunity to start a conversation about Jesus.

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## day 1

### READ MARK 9:1-13

This passage describes an intimate moment between Jesus and His disciples where their beliefs about Jesus' true nature were challenged.

- 1 | Which of the disciples did Jesus take with Him on to the mountain? Because of this moment alone with Jesus, what did they get the privilege of witnessing (v. 2)?

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- 2 | What did Jesus charge the three disciples to do afterward (vv. 2, 9-10)? Why would He command this?

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- 3 | What did the disciples' response to seeing Jesus' full glory demonstrate about their belief regarding Jesus (v. 5)?

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- 4 | What two Old Testament figures were also present at the Transfiguration (v. 4)? What significance do they represent?

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## PRAY

In the space below, copy this week's simple prayer: **I believe; help my unbelief!**

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After studying this passage, pray this prayer from *Guerrillas of Grace* by Ted Loder. Pray it now and whenever needed:

### Remind Me of Your Steady Power

O God,  
this is a hard time,  
a season of confusion,  
a frantic rush  
to fill my closets,  
my schedule,  
and my mind,  
only to find myself empty.

Give me hope, Lord,  
and remind me  
of your steady power  
and gracious purposes  
that I may live fully.

Renew my faith  
that the earth is not destined  
for dust and darkness,  
but for frolicking life  
and deep joy  
that, being set free  
from my anxiety for the future,  
I may take the risks of love today.

Mark 9:23-24 And Jesus said to him. "If you can!" All things are possible for one who believes. Immediately the father of the child cried out and said. "I believe; help my unbelief!"

# day 2

## READ MARK 9:14-29

Believe (NET): πιστεύω *pisteuō*

To consider something to be true and therefore worthy of one's trust, believe.

Unbelief (NET): ἀπιστία *apistia*

Unwillingness to commit oneself to another or respond positively to the other's words or actions, lack of belief.

\*BDAG, Greek Lexicon

Truth goes hand in hand with trust. In this passage, belief means entrusting oneself to something with complete confidence. This passage implies a total commitment to the one being trusted (Jesus).

The father in the story contrasts his desire to trust Jesus fully (πιστεύω) with his unbelief (ἀπιστία). His unbelief reveals his unwillingness to respond confidently to Jesus' ability to bring the healing He promised.

Today's passage is evidence of Jesus' power amidst a moment of great uncertainty.

1 | Why was the crowd arguing with the disciples?

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2 | Why weren't the disciples able to cure the possessed boy (vv. 17-19, 23, 28-29)?

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3 | How long had the boy been afflicted? What harm had he endured during that period (vv. 20-22)?

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4 | What does the father specifically ask of Jesus in v. 22? What surprising heart posture does the father ask of Jesus first?

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5 | What does the father's plea reveal about his own belief in Jesus?

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6 | How does Jesus respond to the boy's father (v. 23)?

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7 | Read the father's response from v. 24 in the NIV translation. What picture do his words paint?

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8 | Like the father in this passage, have you ever felt tension between doubt and faith?

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9 | What unbelief do you need Jesus to overcome with God's Truth?

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## PRAY

Pray this week's simple prayer aloud: **I believe; help my unbelief!**

# day 3

## READ MARK 9:33-49

Today, we look at another instance where Jesus intentionally stresses the importance of belief in the Kingdom of God.

1 | Those who wish to be the greatest in the Kingdom must become like what, according to Jesus (vv. 35-37)? What is it about a child's belief that makes it special to Jesus?

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2 | Why did the disciples try to stop someone from casting out demons in the name of Jesus? Under whose authority did they think the man should submit (v. 38)?

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3 | What does Jesus' response to the disciples demonstrate about His authority (vv. 39-41)?

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4 | Mark records some vivid imagery (vv. 42-49). What does this language communicate about the severity of causing others to stumble into sin?

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## PRAY

This week, pray for the children of our church as you pray our simple prayer:  
**I believe; help my unbelief!**

- Pray that the Gospel would take root early and sincerely in their hearts.
- Pray that they would discern God's Truth from deception from an early age.
- Pray for belief in the areas they struggle to see God's Truth as good, beautiful, and right.

## day 4

### READ PSALM 62

God's Word is full of prayers. Every week, we will examine a prayer in the Bible with a similar theme to our study.

1 | How does David characterize his enemies in the psalm?

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2 | What is David's response to the chaos he feels (vv. 1-2)?

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3 | Read vv. 5-8 aloud slowly. What words does David use to describe God?

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4 | Who is David addressing in vv. 5-8?

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5 | Where do you need to remind yourself of God's protection and deliverance from your doubts, fears, and disbelief right now?

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### PRAY

Write a prayer based on this week's simple prayer: **I believe; help my unbelief!**

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# day 5

## READ MARK 9

1 | What role does spending time with Jesus play in cultivating your belief? What gets in the way of making this a regular rhythm in your life?

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2 | Mark 9 contains shocking examples of Jesus' power and authority (Transfiguration, casting out demons, prophecy). What elements discussed in this chapter make you uncomfortable or confused? What makes these aspects harder for you to believe?

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3 | Have you ever had to endure a chronic affliction? How did that experience affect your own beliefs about Jesus and what He is capable of?

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4 | Like the disciples, we sometimes doubt that Jesus can do what He says. Have you ever "missed out" on an opportunity to be part of God's work because of your unbelief?

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5 | We live in a rational world ruled by our reasoning. Yet, sometimes, God calls us to do or believe things that seem impossible. How do you wrestle with belief in a world of opinions?

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6 | Who do you trust with your areas of unbelief?

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7 | What is an area of unbelief God is calling you to trust Him in?

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**PRAY**

Go back to the list of areas in your life where you struggle to believe in God's Truth from this week's Prayer Practice (pg. 18). Pray over the list, trusting that God delights in being known and revealing His Truth.

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Choose one area from your list. Share this area with a trusted friend or mentor, and ask them to pray that your belief will be strengthened.









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