

## The Power of Unbelief

*Matthew 17:14-22*

### Introduction

Faith is the bridge that moves us from the natural to the supernatural. Unbelief destroys that bridge and keeps us bound to a natural way of thinking. In Matthew 17, the story of the boy possessed by a demon, illustrates the damage that unbelief can do when it is not dealt with in the life of a believer. A father approached Jesus to ask for healing for his son. This father had previously approached the disciples but they were not able to heal the boy. Jesus' response in verse 17 indicates that the disciples' inability to perform the miracle was a spiritual issue at its core. Why couldn't they heal the boy? In verse 20, Jesus tells the disciples that the problem was their unbelief.

Unbelief literally blocks God because it is a way of thinking that refuses to cooperate with God. The reason that we as believers do not see more happening in the supernatural is because we block God with our lack of faith. Unbelief is a spiritual problem that requires a spiritual solution. Jesus said that this kind of supernatural solution could only come by deeper spiritual engagement (vs. 21, fasting and prayer). The disciples were trying to fix a problem in their strength and by their actions. From this passage, we see that we have to be willing to engage with God on a deeper level in order to see Him more in our day to day experiences. Going through religious motions won't cut it if you need to see God at work in your life.

As we seek God's power at work in our lives, we must be willing to believe. The good news is that we don't have to possess tons of faith to see God intervene. Faith is like a grain of mustard seed (vs. 20). Faith has to be present but it doesn't have to be big.

### Getting Started

1. If your group hasn't seen much of each other this summer, take a moment to share one detail about what you've been doing since you last got together!
2. What one point resonated with you from this morning's sermon?
3. As you listened to Pastor teach, in what area of your life do you desire to see God at work in a tangible way?

### Let's Get Personal

1. Are you currently viewing your circumstances with spiritual eyes? How do you know?
2. The boy in the story was possessed by a demon and therefore was out of control. Is there an area of your life where things are out of control? What about in the life of someone you know personally?
3. If there is an out of control area in your own life, or in the life of someone you know, do you sense that those challenges are due to a spiritual root? Explain your thoughts to your group.
4. What have you been doing spiritually to deal with the problems you are facing?

### Take the Next Step

1. When you need more of God, just going to church won't do the trick. Jesus told the disciples that in order to deal with a deeper problem, they had to go deeper spiritually. What will you do this week to do just that?
2. If you see the grip of the enemy on the life of another person, what can you do on their behalf this week to address the spiritual root of their challenges?
3. Take time to read Isaiah 58 and 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 (in your group time or by yourself) for additional reading on the importance of addressing our concerns from a spiritual perspective.

### Renew Your Mind

*"And He said to them, 'Because of the littleness of your faith; for truly I say to you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible to you. [But this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting.]" Matthew 17:20-21*