

FEET TO FAITH SERIES

HELP MY UNBELIEF

WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY

BY KRIS JORDAN

HELP MY UNBELIEF

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HELP MY UNBELIEF

MARK 9:14-27

Have you ever been at a place where you were emotionally spent, mentally drained, and physically exhausted after experiencing something you never thought you would encounter? Did you find your situation getting worse the more you tried to fix it on your own, and it left you feeling more hopeless than before you started?

Years ago, I underwent a very personal and painful trial, which left me feeling hopeless daily. The worst part was, I knew I was powerless to change my circumstances, so I had to find a way to cope with the hand I had been dealt. Although I never lost my faith in Jesus, the despair I experienced was so intense that I found myself doubting even Jesus could help me.

The childlike cry of the father's heart in Mark chapter nine was what Jesus used to lift me out of my despair and bring me back to trusting

Him fully with my situation. I believe He will use it powerfully in your life as well.

And when He came to the disciples, He saw a great multitude around them, and scribes disputing with them. Immediately, when they saw Him, all the people were greatly amazed, and running to Him, greeted Him. And He asked the scribes, "What are you discussing with them?" Then one of the crowd answered and said, "Teacher, I brought You my son, who has a mute spirit. And wherever it seizes him, it throws him down; he foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth, and becomes rigid. So I spoke to Your disciples, that they should cast it out, but they could not."

Mark 9:14-18 (NKJV)

After Jesus returned from the Mount of Olives with Peter, James, and John, He witnessed drama transpiring between the scribes and His nine other disciples. When He injected Himself into the debate, He questioned the scribes about their point of contention with His disciples.

In response to Jesus' inquiry, a father from the crowd spoke up and told Him a distressing story. Given his account of things, it is likely this dispute arose over the disciple's inability to set his son free. After witnessing this failure, the scribes

probably took the opportunity to criticize them for it, and a large ruckus resulted.

What an unfortunate scene this must have been. Aside from a debate erupting from a very serious, yet unsuccessful intervention, this young man remained in bondage to this wicked demon. With his son's life in danger and at risk of death continuously, this father could only watch helplessly to see what might happen next.

I cannot fathom what it was like for this father to watch his flesh and blood suffer as he had. It must have been terrifying and torturous at the same time. Not only was his son unable to communicate with him, which is tragic in itself, but he was subjected to life-threatening conditions that were out of both their control to prevent. Whenever this demon manifested itself and violently threw his son to the ground, all this dad could do was watch in horror until the assault ended before coming to his son's rescue. This spirit of wickedness knew it was in charge, and it was determined to remain that way, no matter what this dad did or said.

As the parent of two children myself, I cannot imagine the stress and anxiety that filled this dad's heart every day. He must have been on-guard every second, watching his son's every move, because he never knew when this vile spirit would strike. Since his son could not forewarn him before being hijacked each time,

he had to remain alert and ready always. That must have been exhausting on every level.

Then one day, he heard about a man named Jesus who did miracles among the people. Not only was Jesus healing the sick, raising the dead, restoring sight to the blind, and causing the lame to walk, He was casting out demons also. Finally, a glimmer of hope filled this dad's heart! Could Jesus be the one to help his son? Would his boy finally be set-free from years of torment?

This father wasted no time looking for Jesus. He gathered himself and his son and went after this Miracle-Worker. When Jesus could not be found, this dad sought out Jesus' disciples next. After approaching them for help, I believe he expected instant deliverance for his son.

Interestingly, the disciples had been given authority by Jesus to cast out demons and heal the sick when preaching in various towns. Having some experience and success under their belts in these areas, the disciples were probably confident and enthusiastic about their abilities when approached by this desperate father. After hearing his gut-wrenching story, they immediately sprang into action, expecting to set this boy free in a matter of seconds. But, much to their dismay, their attempts to cast out this demon failed to produce any results.

As the disciples' minds swirled with confusion over their inability to help, this desperate father sank

further into despair. To make matters worse, some onlooking scribes chimed in to criticize the disciples, and things went even further downhill.

As unfortunate as this scene was, the saddest factor of all was this demon remained in charge of this young man while his father's residual faith dwindled by the second. But then, Jesus showed up, and everything changed.

Before we move on, if you know someone in despair today, reach out to them and show you care. Pray for them. Tell them you love them. Invite them over for coffee and offer your shoulder for them to cry on. Or allow them to unload their frustrations in confidence, with you being a soft place for them to land. Do whatever the Lord leads you to, but do something. Get involved. Do not stay on the sidelines. Just knowing you care enough to check in with them speaks volumes to their heart and helps their healing journey.

He answered him and said, "O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him to Me." Then they brought him to Him. And when he saw Him, immediately the spirit convulsed him, and he fell on the ground and wallowed, foaming at the mouth. So He asked his father, "How long has this been happening to him?" And he said, "From childhood. And

often he has thrown him both into the fire and into the water to destroy him. But if You can do anything, have compassion on us and help us.”

Mark 9:19-22 (NKJV)

As soon as Jesus heard the father's despair over his son's condition and learned of His disciple's inability to help him, He took action. After calling the young man forward, the demon within him recognized Jesus immediately. Although it knew it was up against the King of king's unmatched power, this wicked, rebellious demon made a showing of "its" power and dominion. It seized the young man's body and threw him into violent seizures. When the helpless boy hit the ground, his body contorted, twisted, and writhed like a serpent while his mouth filled with frothing saliva. Although the crowds stood watching in horror, none of them were more distraught than his father.

I have never encountered a demon-possessed person face-to-face. I have seen several people act in ways that made me suspicious of it, but I have never known for sure they were possessed. My husband, Joe, however, had a few encounters with demonized individuals at various times in his life.

When Joe was in college, a fellow student was reported to be possessed. This student lived in the dorm room directly above his. One night, Joe and his roommates heard a loud commotion upstairs.

They heard odd shrieking sounds coming from above and what sounded like furniture being thrown around the room. Suddenly, they heard glass shatter, and a large chair hurled past their window, splintering into pieces on the ground. They were petrified. Joe and his roommates clutched their Bibles and immediately began to pray because this was their first experience with anything so violent. A few days later, Joe learned it took four believers to cast out this demon and set this student free.

Another time, several years ago, a neighbor asked Joe to come over and pray for her adult nephew, whom she believed to be possessed. When Joe walked inside the house, he approached the young man and asked if he could pray for him. The man responded in, what Joe describes as, a long, drawn-out creepy voice saying, "Noooooo, nooooo, nooooo! Shhhhhh, shhhhhh, shhhhhh!" Joe said, "Well, I am going to pray for you anyway," and he did!

While Jesus watched the young man thrash around on the ground, the boy's father described the horror of living with this demon. In essence, he said, "This is nothing! More times than I can count, this spirit grabs my son and tosses him into the fire when we are warming ourselves! Or it convulses him so violently near water, my boy plunges in face-first! If I had not been there, my son would have died!"

Imagine daily life for this family if they lived in modern times. What if they were driving to the grocery store or movie theater across town when

the demon manifested? It could easily cause a head-on collision with another vehicle! What if they were on the freeway approaching an overpass or driving down a mountain road? Can you envision the danger of that? What if they pulled into a gas station to refuel, and the demon took control at that point? A chain-reaction gas pump explosion would be deadly on multiple fronts! So, of course, their lives were crazy and stressfully unpredictable, not to mention dangerous every day.

With his son fully engulfed by this demon in Jesus' presence, this dad makes one final plea for help. He says to Jesus, "If You can do anything, take pity on us and help us!"

Jesus said to him, "If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes." Immediately the father of the child cried out and said with tears, "Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!"

Mark 9:23-24 (NKJV)

I love how Jesus responds to this father. In essence, He says, "You do not need a minor improvement. You need your son delivered and set-free from this bondage! You cannot go on like this, and neither can he. This demon needs to go, and I can make that happen. But the issue is whether or not you believe I can."

The words barely fell from Jesus' lips before this dad immediately recognized his doubt. He instantly understood he needed to trust Jesus completely for his son's deliverance. He exclaimed, "I believe!" But then, in the very same breath, he proclaimed, "Help my unbelief!"

When we read that statement, we immediately think, "Wait a minute - that is an oxymoron! You cannot believe and simultaneously not believe because one cancels the other out." But, we need to understand where this father's faith was and what he meant by his words to help it make sense.

When this father left home with his son that morning, he possessed a certain amount of faith for his son's deliverance. If he had not, he would not have gone in search of Jesus in the first place. As the day progressed, however, and the situation unfolded the way it did, his small measure of faith began to diminish a piece at a time.

First, when he could not find Jesus, he had to settle for asking His disciples for help. When their attempts to expel this demon failed, his faith weakened considerably.

Next, when the scribes ridiculed the disciple's failure to perform, and an argument ensued, his dwindling faith took another hit.

When Jesus entered the scene, and the boy was brought to Him, the demon immediately

manifested as if it was not the slightest bit intimidated by Jesus' presence or power. Witnessing this latest hijacking caused the father's faith to suffer an additional blow.

Finally, when Jesus asked him how long these episodes had been happening, this dad managed to scrounge up his last bit of faith remaining. But, rather than asking for a miracle, he settled for a morsel instead. He knew his faith could not support anything more than that, so he basically said, "If there is anything you can do, just do 'that' because 'something' is better than 'nothing.'"

Upon hearing this father's meager request, Jesus challenged his lack of faith. It was then that the man acknowledged his doubt, despite not abandoning all faith entirely. He cried out, "Lord, I believe but help my unbelief," because he knew he needed Jesus' help to believe.

I have to say, I love this dad's honesty. He was so transparent with Jesus and did not pretend his faith was somewhere it was not. He humbled himself and admitted he needed help to trust Jesus for the miracle he needed.

That is so powerful and inspiring to me! I know when we, as believers, are in similar situations, frantically praying for a miracle from Jesus, it is easy to become discouraged and doubtful when things get worse instead of better. As more time goes by, and less change occurs, the greater our

hopelessness can become. Eventually, if we are not careful, we can begin doubting even Jesus can fix it – and that is a scary place to be.

Whenever that happens, we often stop believing Jesus for a miracle and settle for a morsel instead. We say things like, “Lord, forget about delivering me completely. Just ease my suffering for a few minutes.” Or we say, “Lord, don’t worry about restoring this fractured relationship. Can You just keep my heart from hurting today?” Or we pray, “Lord, never mind about providing for all my financial needs. Can You just give me enough for this one bill?” Jesus would say to us, “It is not about whether I can. It is about whether you believe I can and am capable of meeting every need you have.”

Just like this father in the story, I have also said, “Lord, I believe. But help my unbelief! Help me overcome my doubt and fully trust You with this nightmare because I am struggling to right now!” It was not until I recognized my faithlessness, and humbly turned to Him for help, that He gave me what I needed most.

I am so grateful Jesus does not wait until we “have it all together” before He is willing to intervene in our lives. Instead, He is right there with us in our moments of doubt, weakness, and uncertainty. He is always ready to help us believe Him when we are struggling to, and He increases our faith when it is lacking.

When Jesus saw that the people came running together, He rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, "Deaf and dumb spirit, I command you, come out of him and enter him no more!" Then the spirit cried out, convulsed him greatly, and came out of him. And he became as one dead, so that many said, "He is dead." But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose.

Mark 9:25-27 (NKJV)

Just like that, with one powerful act, Jesus "killed two birds with one stone." He delivered this young man from this tormenting demon despite its last-ditch effort to kill the boy. Simultaneously, He built up this dad's remnant faith by accomplishing the impossible – something only God can do. As a bonus, He guaranteed this wicked spirit would never return to possess this young man again.

Personal Testimony

I hope this true-life account brings you tons of encouragement in whatever impossible situation you are facing or may face in the future. As I stated at the beginning of this study, it not only encouraged me but monumentally changed my life.

My impossible situation began in the summer of 2008. It was the most painful ordeal I had ever been through and, having rocked me to the core; I was not sure I would come out the other side.

This nightmare went on for three years. After not seeing any changes occur, I finally reached my breaking point. Not only did I feel entirely helpless, but I was spent and exhausted in every way possible. My prayers had become desperate pleas, and I resorted to begging Jesus to put an end to this “bad dream.”

When Jesus did not do what I had asked Him to, I started checking out and shutting down. That, in itself, scared me because I had never been in that position before. Having zero experience with this type of thing, I did not know what else to do.

By the grace of God, I managed to get myself up every day and put on a happy face for my children because I did not want them affected by what I was going through. I went to work every morning and pretended I was okay because I did not want to talk about it with anyone. But when I came home, I crawled back into my shell and suffered in silence – alone.

Aside from my husband, I kept my family and friends at a distance. I did not talk to anyone about my ordeal except him. Right or wrong, that was the choice I made. As time ticked by, nothing made my circumstances improve. Everything I thought would fix it did not, but only made things worse.

One day, I was flipping through the pages of my Bible, trying to find something to encourage me. I came across Mark chapter nine and read this distraught father's plea of, "Lord, I believe. Help my unbelief!" Instantly, I connected with this dad. I related to his desperation because, like him, I was facing a situation I was powerless to change also. I knew I was trusting Jesus to intervene in my circumstances, but I also knew I doubted His ability to do anything at all, as crazy as that sounds. Facing my doubt and unbelief head-on made me feel like a dog. But that is how desperately hopeless I had become.

As I read those verses, the Holy Spirit reminded me of Proverbs 3:5-6, which states, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths." At that moment, and through many tears, I humbled myself and began to pray, "Lord, start with me! Help my unbelief! Help me trust You with this because I am failing at it miserably!"

It was through this encounter that Jesus showed me why He had not intervened in my circumstances the way I had asked Him to. It was me! I was the one who needed to surrender everything to Him instead of taking matters into my own hands. I needed to trust Him to do what only He could do in the first place – the impossible! I broke down and cried some more, getting really raw and real with Jesus for the first time in three

years. Through my tears, I said, “Lord, help me overcome my unbelief because my faith is weak.”

A few days later, I received my first breakthrough. It was late one Sunday afternoon. After getting in my car to take a drive and clear my head, I turned my cell phone on, which had been off all day. Immediately, I received a text notification. It was from someone I had not heard from in a long time. This person had no idea what I was going through or that I was even struggling. I was shocked to see a text from her – especially one sent at 4:26 a.m. that morning!

Her text message read, “The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still’ (Exodus 14:14). Stand firm and see the deliverance the Lord will bring today! He is fighting for you, and you’re on the winning side! So, be still and know that He is God! His timing is perfect! He will act on your behalf!” Then she concluded with the words “Praying for you!”

I still remember how I felt reading those words. They were so moving and powerful. In fact, they still give me chills to this day. For the first time in a long while, I remember experiencing a small glimmer of hope while sitting in my car that day. As silly as it sounds, I felt so special knowing Jesus cared about me and my despair so much that He stirred someone at 4 o’clock in the morning to send me words of hope and life.

To make a long story short, her words to me that day were absolutely prophetic and spot-on, every single one of them! That Sunday was the day that Jesus finally shifted the direction of my situation and began “fighting for me,” just like her text said. It was not long afterward that I was completely set-free from my nightmare.

Practical Application

My long-awaited breakthrough did not begin until I humbly surrendered my situation to Jesus and cried out, “Lord, help my unbelief!” I knew if Jesus could rescue that father and son in Mark chapter nine, He could rescue me too, and He did. But we are not the only ones Jesus can help. He is there for you, too, able to carry you through whatever situation you are facing, even if you are struggling to believe Him for “that.” The first step, however, is to get honest with yourself and Jesus. You must acknowledge and own your doubts, and ask Jesus to help you trust Him completely.

Regardless of how long it takes to get through your storm, God’s Word assures you, as a follower of Jesus, that He is with you always (Matthew 28:20). Even if it is the most difficult trial imaginable, Jesus will never leave you nor forsake you (Hebrews 13:5b). His Word also promises that He will use all things together for your good as He accomplishes His purposes in and through your life (Romans 8:28).

In closing, my husband shared a song with me as I was coming out of my storm. It was by Kerrie Roberts entitled “No Matter What.” I had not heard it before

that day, but it moved my soul in a way I cannot explain. Her lyrics were the cry of my heart. Not only did they bring me immense comfort and reassurance at that moment, but they helped me stay surrendered to Jesus throughout the rest of my journey. If you have never heard her song or if it has been a while since you listened to it, I encourage you to go online and listen with a fresh set of ears. It is still one of my all-time favorite songs, and I listen to it often when I need encouragement. It is an excellent reminder of what Jesus brought me through, plus it helps me continue trusting Him no matter what lies ahead.

Putting Feet to Your Faith

Take a few minutes and thank Jesus for His goodness, grace, and unmatched power and compassion. Spend time thanking Him for being with you at all times, despite all you have endured. Ask Him to continually remind you of everything He taught you through this study so you can stand strong in the face of future fears and doubts. When you finish praying, take a few minutes to answer the following questions with transparent honesty.

1. What is the one overriding truth Jesus spoke to your heart specifically through this study that He wants you to believe, apply, adopt, or act upon immediately?

2. What are some reasons you have difficulty being honest with yourself (or Jesus) when you have doubts or fears? What can you do to combat those things? What verses can you memorize to encourage yourself to be transparent in those moments?

3. What are some things you are struggling to trust Jesus with right now, and why?

4. Who are a few people you trust in Jesus who can pray for you regarding the struggles you are going through? Contact them today and ask them to pray for you daily.

5. List two trials from the past that Jesus brought you through. What did you learn from those experiences that you can apply or implement in future trials?

6. What can you do today or this week to bless someone you know who is going through a challenging time?

**To request additional copies of "Help My Unbelief," go to www.krisjordan.net or email us at request@krisjordan.net.*



Help! I'm Not a Christian!

If you haven't trusted Jesus for your forgiveness and salvation, you can do that right now. Here's how:

Step One: Recognize You Are a Sinner

- For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23)
- There is none righteous, no, not one (Romans 3:10)

Step Two: Understand Your Sin's Consequences

- For the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23a)
- Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God (1 Corinthians 6:9-10)

Step Three: Believe Jesus Died for Your Sins

- While we were still sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5:8b)

- For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life (John 3:16)
- [Jesus] who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed (1 Peter 2:24)

Step Four: Pray to Receive Jesus as Lord

- But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God (John 1:12-13)

Sample Prayer:

Lord Jesus, I know I am a sinner, which has separated me from having a relationship with You. I believe You died for me on the cross and shed Your blood so I could be forgiven. Please forgive me for all of my sins and come into my heart as my Lord and Savior. Fill me with Your Holy Spirit and help me live for You all the days of my life. Teach me what it means to follow and honor You every day. I choose to follow You from this day forward. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Notes

HELP MY UNBELIEF

WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY



Kris is a wife and the mother of two children. She is also an author, a women's Bible Study teacher, a passionate defender of the faith, and works in full-time ministry with her husband, Joe.

Joe and Kris Jordan lead Jordan Outreach Ministries in Coachella, California, and Fred Jordan Missions on Skid Row in Los Angeles, California.

Joe and Kris were married in 1988 and served as missionaries in Hong Kong before returning to the states to minister at Fred Jordan Missions. In 1997, seven days after the birth of their first child, they resigned from Fred Jordan Missions to respond to God's call to minister to impoverished children and families in the Coachella Valley. In 2001, a year after their second child was born, they founded Jordan Outreach Ministries International.

In 2018, Jesus called Joe and Kris also to lead Fred Jordan Missions, so they split their time between Los Angeles and the Coachella Valley "Declaring and Demonstrating the Love of Jesus" through both ministries.

For more information, contact Kris at info@krisjordan.net or visit www.krisjordan.net.

