

**Discussion Guide**

*Use this guide by yourself, with a friend, or in a group to help you pursue a deeper relationship with Jesus this week!*

**Open**

As Pastor Don continues his sermon series explaining how we can move from living a life of “practical atheism” to a passionate pursuit of all that Jesus has for us, this week he challenges us to examine ourselves to see if we’re whole-heartedly trying to follow Him in trusting obedience. One of the guiding passages for us today is found in Mark 9:14-29 where a man honestly answers Jesus’ question about the depth of his belief - and then asks for help to trust even more. To get today’s discussion started, share about a time when a good thing you thought would never happen actually came to pass - what was the situation and how did you feel afterward?

**BIG THOUGHT**

We may never have enough faith to perfectly rely on God in every situation, but Jesus shows us that we can always ask Him for more even when we’re in the midst of our difficulties.

**Dig**

1. Read Mark 9:14-19. Jesus and three of His disciples (James, John, and Peter) are just coming back to the crowd and the rest of the disciples after being off by themselves and experiencing the miracle of the Transfiguration (see Mark 9:2-13). How do you normally respond when you come back home or to work after a wonderful event to be met with arguing or a conflict? What emotion do you hear in Jesus’ words in v. 19? Frustration? A “parental” rebuke of the disciples? Anger? Something else? Explain.
2. Read v. 20-21. Because of the specifics of the description, most commentators feel that the boy was probably suffering from some type of epileptic condition. If you had been the boy’s father and heard the disciples and teachers of the law arguing (with nobody seemingly in a hurry to heal your son), what would you have felt? How does Jesus’ question show His empathy for the whole situation?

3. Now read v. 22-23. Do you think the father had reason to doubt that his son would be healed that day? Why? How do you think Jesus delivered His response - angrily? Sarcastically? Gently? Something else? Give reasons for your choice.
4. What does the father say in v. 24? And why do you think Mark includes “immediately” in his description of the father’s response - what does that tell us about the dad’s motivation or attitude? Have you ever felt or prayed the same way as the dad? Share with the group the situation if you can...
5. Now read v. 25-26. Jesus at some point must’ve moved away from the crowd with the dad - what happens next? How does Jesus’ mercy for the boy show up as He removes the evil spirit (see the end of v. 25)? And could this event give hints about what might lie behind someone’s physical illness? Why or why not?
6. Read v. 28-29 to finish. Why couldn’t the disciples get the spirit to leave the boy alone? In what areas of following Jesus do you think you don’t see enough success because you fail to pray?

**Take it Further**

Talk with God about the places in your life where you’re struggling with believing that He will be faithful to you...and then ask Him to help you overcome your unbelief.

Daily Readings

Day 1: Proverbs 3:5-6  
Day 2: Matthew 6:25  
Day 3: John 14:1

Day 4: Psalm 28:7  
Day 5: Hebrews 11:6  
Day 6: Psalm 56:3

Memory Verse: Mark 9:24



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