

LESSON 3, DEVOTION 1

"JESUS REPLIED, 'I TELL YOU THE TRUTH, IF YOU HAVE FAITH AND DO NOT DOUBT, NOT ONLY CAN YOU DO WHAT WAS DONE TO THE FIG TREE, BUT ALSO YOU CAN SAY TO THIS MOUNTAIN, 'GO, THROW YOURSELF INTO THE SEA,' AND IT WILL BE DONE. IF YOU BELIEVE, YOU WILL RECEIVE WHATEVER YOU ASK FOR IN PRAYER.'" - MATTHEW 21:21-22

Have you ever had a prayer God didn't answer? If your answer is yes, you're not alone. There are many, many other people that would respond similarly.

So, how do we take to heart what Jesus said in the verse you see at the top of this devotional? First, we have to ask ourselves does Jesus really answer our prayers? The Bible is literally chock full of verses and stories that support the idea that, "yes," God does answer our prayers. So, if we believe this to be true, then we have to step back and look at our prayers through this lens.

If God answers prayers, then what are we to make of the times when God doesn't appear to answer ours? First, we have to ask if the prayer was in line with God's character. So, praying for an ex-boyfriend to have a piano fall on his head or praying to win the lottery or praying to pass the test you blew off studying for . . . yeah, these might not be prayers God will honor.

But what about prayers that do seem to be in line with God's character and plan? We have to allow for the fact that God may not answer prayers like we want Him to, or within our timeline. We have to trust that His answer is for our good and His glory, even if we can't see how that's the case. We must trust. We must believe. We must have faith.

God does answer prayers. Sometimes it just takes time to have the perspective to realize exactly how He answered them.

LESSON 3, DEVOTION 2

Do you have faith that when you pray God will hear you? Don't just say yes. Really think about it.

Do you truly, 100% believe God will answer your prayers? Do you ever wonder if your prayers are important enough? Do you ever question whether or not God wants to answer your prayers?

The great thing about our relationship with God is that we can know Him and His ways through the Bible. And the Bible promises that God hears our prayers. So, we don't have to doubt that.

But if you doubt, what would you say the cause of your doubt is? Don't feel like you have to hide from God. Take your questions and doubts to Him and listen until He shows you an answer.

LESSON 3, DEVOTION 3

"Immediately the boy's father exclaimed, 'I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!'" – Mark 9:24

While it can sound a little confusing, one thing we have to give the father in Mark 9 credit for is that he is honest. He isn't sugarcoating anything.

In one breath, he professes faith in Christ. And yet, in the very next breath, he appeals to Jesus for help in overcoming his lack of faith. Which is it?

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If we're honest, we know right where the dad is coming from. Our faith life with Christ is an interesting little dance. There are times when our faith is strong, and maybe times when it isn't. While this isn't ideal, it's not a surprise. We're human after all. Our sin keeps us from being able to have a flawless faith in Christ at all times.

The cool thing is that God never changes. His love is unfailing. He is perfectly patient. And He loves us in spite of our flaws.

Does your faith go up and down? Don't be hard on yourself! Don't let disappointment keep you from trying again and again! Believe in Jesus. And trust Him to help your belief when it needs it.

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