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## Heart and Soul ... A Weekly Meditation

January 3, 2016

### The Struggle to Believe

*"I have faith; help my lack of faith!"*

Mark 9:24 (Common English Bible)

Many who sincerely want to believe in God find believing to be difficult. Faith rarely comes easily. The only way it does come is when we accept where we are on our faith journey and go on from there. Longing to be someplace else along the journey accomplishes nothing, apart from frustration.

At the beginning of a new year, we cannot say I wish I was fifteen pounds less before beginning a New Year's resolution of a healthier lifestyle. Eating better, exercising more and getting more rest must begin where you are. That is what the unidentified man in this story from Mark's Gospel teaches us; we must begin where we are, "Lord, I believe, help my unbelief." He begins from where he is. Within him is a mixture of belief and unbelief. He owns that when he speaks to Jesus.

Each day, we may know a little more of God. We can never know all of God. But instead of being occupied with what we don't know we can say, "help me with my unbelief." The man in our story approaches Jesus with both belief and unbelief. Rather than dwelling upon what he doesn't know - or being troubled by what he doesn't understand - he seeks Jesus' help. There is present enough faith to seek more of Jesus. This is a more helpful approach to faith than those who claim they will not believe until they understand fully.

The Christian faith is not established upon right beliefs, right doctrine, or on how much someone believes. The Christian faith is personal, centered upon the person of Jesus. Here, this man in Mark's story instructs us that often we approach faith incorrectly. Rather than trying to understand all the mystery that is God, this man seeks out the person of Jesus; he seeks a relationship. To concentrate on what you don't understand will destroy whatever faith you have. Accepting God's love in the person of Jesus and making your love for him tangible in each day of life results in a faith that will grow from more to more.

Doug Hood