

07 NOTHING BUT PRAYER

KEY TEXT: MARK 9:14-29

CENTRAL truth

Jesus never said things would go our way if we follow Him, but He did say all things were possible with God (see Matt. 19:26). The disciples learned this lesson when Jesus was able to cast out a demon after they were unable to. When we put our faith in Jesus, we give Him the opportunity to do what God thinks is best in and through us. **Jesus strengthens our faith in Him.**

key question

What encouragement can we draw from the way Jesus corrected His disciples, who should have known better?

Jesus was frustrated with His disciples because their faith had wavered, even after spending lots of time with Him. Their lack of faith had discouraged someone and made it more difficult for him to believe. Even so, Jesus didn't shame the disciples. Instead, He answered their questions and gave them another chance to get it right. Becoming like Jesus is a process that takes a lifetime (see Phil. 1:6). When we make mistakes, we can trust Jesus to speak truth to us, teach us, and give us another chance.

keep in mind

- Exorcism is not a common occurrence in our culture. Most students can't even imagine trying to perform an exorcism, so they will likely identify with the disciples and find their inability to cast the demon out understandable. If so, Jesus's rebuke might sound harsh to them. Point out that the disciples were familiar with the task at hand and had been trained by Jesus.
- Jesus is compassionate. He wouldn't have refused to heal the boy, even if his father hadn't asked for more faith. Make sure students understand that Jesus was simply taking the opportunity to encourage and teach the man, not putting conditions on His compassion.

application

How can you ensure you are someone who encourages faith in God's ability instead of discouraging it?

the win

FOR THE STUDENT: Faith in God is never misplaced. Students need to know that through prayer, they can know the heart of God and play an integral role in His plan to redeem the whole world. They don't have to be "good" at it. They just have to be willing and honest. If they ask God for faith, He'll give it.

FOR THE LEADER: Encourage students to put their faith in God's ability to do the impossible. Share how God has proven His way is best in your life. Give a few examples of how prayer has helped you know Him better and strengthened your faith.