

**HOW CAN WE KEEP FROM FAILING IN WHAT GOD ASKS US TO DO?  
JESUS' GRACIOUS INSTRUCTION TO HIS FALTERING DISCIPLES  
Matthew 17:14-21**

- I. **RECOGNIZE *THE CONSEQUENCES OF WHEN WE FAIL IN WHAT GOD HAS CALLED US TO DO***: It gives unbelievers opportunity to blaspheme (14-18, Mark 9)
  - A. Jesus arrives during an argument between His disciples and the scribes concerning their inability to cast out a demon (14-16, Mark 9:14-18)
  - B. After being petitioned by a desperate dad, Jesus rebukes the crowd, the dad and casts out the demon (17-18, Mark 9)
    1. Jesus reprovcs the crowd: Revealing they are evil, unbelieving and wearing on Him (17, Mark 9:17-19)
    2. Jesus reprovcs the dad: "If you can!" (Mark 9:20-24)
    3. Jesus is vindicated as He casts out the demon (17b-18, Mark 9:25-27)
- II. **REALIZE *FAITH IS NOT SIMPLY BELIEVING THE FACTS***: Faith believes what God has said but also relies on the God who said it (**Mark 9:23-24**)
- III. **UNDERSTAND *GENUINE FAITH IS MANIFEST IN DEPENDENT PRAYER***: Jesus answers His disciples' private question, 'why they couldn't'...because their faith was deficient, as manifest by a lack of prayer (**19-21, Mark 9:28-29**)
  - A. Jesus reveals they couldn't do it because of the littleness of their faith (20a)
  - B. Deficient faith is characterized by a lack dependent prayer (21, Mark 9:29)
  - C. Jesus further explains if they had had persistent growing faith, as illustrated by a mustard seed, they would have been able to do whatever His will was (20b-21)