

BIBLE STUDY LESSON

“DISCOVERING IF YOU POSSESS THE POWER AND SPIRIT OF UNBELIEF” (“TO SEE WHAT THE END WILL BE”)

SCRIPTURE TEXTS: **“DEUTERONOMY 32: 15-20” AND “ST. MARK 9: 14-24”**

By Bishop Dr. Julian E. Turner, Sr.

INTRODUCTION:

In Ernest Hemmingway’s Green Hills of Africa, he hunts for **Sable**. He shoots a **Large Chestnut-Colored Cow**, and then sees an **Immense Black Bull**, which he shoots but badly. **He finds the Cow**, but he and his team of trackers and porters search all day for the **Bull**. The language he uses, I believe, is no accident.

By the middle of the day, some of the men were sitting under trees or searching Half-Heartedly. They began to Doubt that The Bull Sable Existed. Perhaps it was really only a Big Cow, and They Had Already Found It. Their Smaller Cow had Gotten Away Instead. No, there was No Bull. Hemmingway admits that it was very hard to keep looking against the force of so much unbelief. It was hard to Have Faith that The Bull Even Existed. He Began to Doubt the Bull's Existence.

Then He Imagined The Situation, The Bull Breaking From The Trees. His Own Excited Bad Shot. The Size of The Horns, The Bull Breaking Through The Grass and Running. No, He Had Shot The Bull. His Tracker also Remembered With Him. The Bull Was There, They Just Had to Keep Looking. The Others Caught The Faith Briefly, but Eventually They Gave Up Again. It Made The Faith, Even of The Leaders Hard to Maintain.

This Is a Real Force of Power. Think About The Way Love Works. If a man does not tell his wife that he loves her on a regular basis, she begins to doubt it. Talking about it reinforces the truth. It Strengthens Belief.

This is not just a story about Sables and Big Game Hunters. It Is About Faith and “The Power Of Unbelief.”

“Unbelief puts our Circumstance Between Us and God, but Faith Puts God Between Us and Our Circumstance.” (By F.B. Meyer, Famous Pastor and Author)

(Cont. 2)

I. WHAT IS UNBELIEF?

Unbelief is a Lack of Faith. Instead of trusting God, you follow your own heart and your own way. Instead of having confidence in God you are bowing to the situation.

Sometimes the level of faith we confess with our mouth doesn't match the level of faith that our heart is confessing. Without faith it is impossible to please God. God wants all faith. He doesn't want us to be lukewarm.

Unbelief is the position of your heart. Unbelief Is Sin. It invites demonic voices into your head. Unbelief will cause you to do something completely opposite to what God said.

You can choose not to believe because you do not trust God, His character or His word. So, when you hear the word of God, you can choose to believe and act on it or read and not put it into action. Unbelief is a decision that you make not to put your trust in what God promised.

The result of unbelief is limiting God's manifestation in your life. Limiting what can do in your life. Sometimes you achieve very little in your Christian walk because unbelief will bring fear and cause you surrender to situation. When we Lose Faith, We Stop Flowing In The Supernatural.

When the Israelites were in the wilderness, they were happy and believed God was there until the smallest problem arose. They immediately lost their belief or faith.

Unbelief is what locked the doors of the Promised Land to the children of Israel ([Nu 13:2, 31, 14:11](#)). For all the grumbling, bad attitudes, and discontentment that characterized their demeanor after leaving Egypt, it was their unbelief that kept them at a distance from God's promised reward ([Nu 14:26-30, 34](#)). Jesus, too, allowed the people's unbelief to tie His hands on His ministry visit to His hometown. The Bible clearly says, "He did not do many miracles there because of their unbelief" ([Mt. 13:58+](#)). The Sovereign God has limited Himself to work according to the faith and belief of the people of God."

(Cont. 3)

II. TWO KINDS OF UNBELIEF

The Bible Mentions **Two Kinds of Unbelief**. One Kind of Unbelief is **Doubt... Accompanied by a Desire to Believe**: "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief" (Mark 9:24). Jesus had mercy on the father who said this, for this man's son was possessed by an **Evil Spirit**. Although the father had his doubts, he was willing to exercise faith as small as a mustard seed (Luke 17:6), so Jesus healed his son.

Another kind of unbelief is **An Obstinate (Stubborn), Hard-Hearted Refusal to Believe**: "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God" (Hebrews 3:12). This kind of unbelief not only hinders the supernatural work of God (see Matthew 13:58) but also brings about God's righteous anger and swift judgment.

Biblical Examples: Take warning from those who fell away in unbelief:

- Some no longer have faith at all (2nd Thessalonians 3:2).
- Some have shipwrecked their faith (1st Timothy 1:19).
- Some have left the faith for the doctrines of devils (1st Timothy 4:1).
- Some have denied the faith by not providing for their family (1st Tim. 5:8).
- Some have cast off their first faith (1st Timothy 5:12).
- Some have turned aside after Satan (1st Timothy 5:15).
- Some have erred from the faith for the love of money (1st Tim. 6:10, 21).
- Some will overthrow the faith of others (2nd Timothy 2:17-18).
- Some are reprobate [disqualified] concerning the faith (2nd Timothy 3:8).

Unfortunately, not everyone who sets out on the **Road to Salvation** will hold fast to faith in Jesus, for many will fall away **In Unbelief**.

Hebrews 10:38-39 tells us, "Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition [the opposite of salvation]; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul." The Bible is very clear that faith in Jesus Christ is the only way of salvation — both initial salvation from sin and ultimate salvation from judgment.

(Cont. 4)

This is why we are warned: "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" (2nd Corinthians 13:5).

Perhaps the most profound example of Unbelief in the Bible comes from the generation of Israelites who failed to reach the Promised Land. Those Israelites were the same ones who experienced the brutal oppression of slavery, they witnessed God's plagues upon Egypt, they watched the Red Sea part for them, they trembled at God's power revealed at Mount Sinai, they tasted bread from heaven, and they drank water from a rock. But what happened to that generation? They wandered in the wilderness for forty years and did not enter into the Promised Land (except for Joshua and Caleb) because of their Unbelief.

"But with whom was he grieved forty years? Was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness? And to whom swore he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief" (Hebrews 3:17-19).

Those Israelites were initially saved: they were delivered from the bondage of Egypt, they were spiritually baptized in the Red Sea (1st Corinthians 10:2), and they were led by a pillar of cloud and fire through the wilderness.

But then, "The Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not" (Jude 1:5); They were broken off like a branch from a vine (Romans 11:20-32) Because of Their Unbelief. As a result, that generation did not reach their final destination of salvation in the Promised Land.

III. THE REQUIREMENTS TO ENTER THE KINGDOM

The Wilderness route from Mount Sinai in Arabia to Kadesh Barnea near Mount Hor has been calculated to be a journey which could have taken the children of Israel about Eleven Days, If They Had Entered In By Faith When God First Led Them There.

(Cont. 5)

However, in reality, it took them forty years to arrive at their destination as a result of their Unbelief Which had Its Outworking in Disobedience. They went round and round the same mountain, conditioned by their Fleshly Nature and Dominated by its Lusts.

God calls us to Hear His Word! (Deuteronomy 6:4) Listen and Obey – Not Just Hearing. It is a Hearing of the Word that Penetrates a Receptive Submissive Heart, Motivating it To Respond In Faith and Act Accordingly, In Obedience to The Word given.

“So, we see that They Could Not Enter In Because Of Unbelief” (Hebrews 3:18)

The Word Unbelief Here Is APEITHEO (Greek Word Study) and Does Not Mean Just a Passive Unbelief, but “A Refusal To Believe”; An Actual Unwillingness To Be Persuaded. It Denotes An Obstinacy that is based upon “A Rejection of The Will of God.” The person's own will is in control, Preventing The Word From Penetrating and Generating Faith In The Heart To Motivate Action.

“For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.” (Hebrews 4:2)

God complained that their hearts were hard and stony and His Word could not take root and bring forth fruit. Their Unbelief is equated with disobedience because their lack of faith caused His Word to fall on deaf ears and they did not obey. Their hearts were motivated by their own will. (See the parable of the Sower Luke 8:4-15)

The same word APEITHEO is translated as 'unbelief' in Hebrews 3:18; and as 'Disobedience' in Hebrews 4:6. Hearing In Faith and Acting In Obedience, is necessary to bring forth righteousness (i.e. Right Actions).

“The righteous shall live by faith” (Habakkuk 2:4) See also Romans 4:3-4. The Motivation of The Heart by His Word is what produces righteousness, otherwise it is our own works. (Romans 4:5-6) So we see that Faith Is Required to Enter The Kingdom – The Word Born of The Spirit, Producing His Life In Us!

(Cont. 6)

IV. THE CONSEQUENCES OF UNBELIEF

The sobering truth is that unbelief will keep you from the promises of God, but more importantly, Unbelief will prevent you from obtaining salvation. Don't be deceived: those who cast off their faith and depart from God — Even if they Knew Him at One Time — Will not inherit The Kingdom of God, Unless They Repent and Get Back on The Path to Salvation. This may be a hard word for some to receive, but it is biblical truth. "Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?"(Galatians 4:16).

Unfortunately, many churches preach an imbalanced, watered-down version of the Gospel by downplaying the consequences of disobedience and underemphasizing the cost of salvation. Yes, truly salvation is a free gift to all, but it is not cheap. Those who cannot give up all to follow Jesus are not worthy of Jesus (see Matthew 10:38). Salvation is a lifetime journey that requires dying daily to yourself and learning from (being disciplined by) the Savior. Jesus said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me" (Matthew 16:24).

The Bible presents salvation not as a carefree cakewalk, but As A Serious Faith Walk. There is an enemy of your soul (The "Tempter" — see 1st Thess. 3:5) who seeks to draw your heart away from faith in Christ and get you caught up with the entrapments of the world so that you Fall Away. "Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness" (2nd Peter 3:17).

You must guard your heart diligently and cling to Jesus Christ so that you do not lose faith. "Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. ... Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief." (Hebrews 4:1,11).

As believers we are given many instructions and encouragements on how to live Godly in Christ Jesus. We are to draw near to the Lord, with a True and Undivided Heart.

(Cont. 7)

Hebrews 10:24-31, “And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: ²⁵ Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

Hebrews 3:7-19

Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says: Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice,⁸ Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: ⁹ When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years. ¹⁰ Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart; and they have not known my ways. ¹¹ So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.) ¹² Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. ¹³ But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. ¹⁴ For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end; ¹⁵ While it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation. ¹⁶ For some, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses. ¹⁷ But with whom was he grieved forty years? was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness? ¹⁸ And to whom swore he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not? ¹⁹ So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; but exhort one another daily, while it is called “Today,” lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end, while it is said: “Today, if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.” For who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed, was it not all who came out of Egypt, Led by Moses? Was it not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness? So, we see that They Could Not Enter In Because of Unbelief.

(Cont. 8)

V. SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF UNBELIEF

Asking for a Sign as Proof that God is Speaking to Us is an Indication of Unbelief.
It says more about Our Faith than it does About God...

REVERENDFUN.COM COPYRIGHT BIBLE GATEWAY



01-25-2013

IF YOU ARE OUT THERE, SEND A SIGN.
SOMETHING SIMPLE ... LIKE HAVE THIS
LOTTERY TICKET I BOUGHT WIN ... OR MAYBE
THAT GIRL SUE FALLS IN LOVE WITH ME ...
OR I FIND A PILE OF CASH OR SOMETHING.
PLEASE SOMETHING SIMPLE LIKE THAT TO LET
ME KNOW YOU ARE THERE

A Symptom is a manifestation of disease apparent to the patient himself, while A Sign is a manifestation of disease that the physician perceives. The Sign is objective evidence of disease; a symptom, subjective. Symptoms represent the complaints of the patient, and if severe, they drive him to the doctor's office.

Signs are objective as they are visible and can be measured by using some suitable medical devices. Symptoms are subjective as they cannot see and can only be felt or experienced. It is duty of patient to discuss all his symptoms with physician for proper diagnosis.

“WE ARE THE PATIENT” AND “JESUS IS THE GREAT PHYSICIAN”

(Cont. 9)

A. SIGNS – MARK 8: 11-21

Jesus has just fed the 4,000 and is ending his 6–8-month journey in which he took the good news to the unreached Gentiles: “And straightway he entered into a ship with his disciples, and came into the parts of Dalmanutha.” (v 10)

As He arrives back on the west side of the Sea of Galilee, we read in verse 11 That The Religious Gestapo come out of hiding and slam into Him: “And the Pharisees came forth, and began to question with him, seeking of him a sign from heaven, tempting him.” The word “came” indicates that they “came out” as if in hiding, marching toward Him with purpose and determination. The word “began” is in the present infinitive, meaning “they began at once and kept it up.” Jesus has already given these religious leaders many signs but they don’t pay attention to them. All they wanted to do was argue with Him while they sought a way to trap Him.

There were plenty of signs for the Pharisees to see but they had ignored all of them. One of the biggest ones is found in Mark 1:11: “And there came a voice from heaven, saying, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” Jesus had Healed Diseases, Cast Out Demons, Controlled The Deep, Made a Miraculous Dinner Twice, Healed The Deaf, and Raised The Dead. What other signs did they need?

In response to the demands of the phony Pharisees who are settled in their unbelief, Jesus does two things.

1. He Denounces Them. Their attitude affects Jesus emotionally in verse 12: “And He sighed deeply in His spirit...” We saw in Mark 7:34 that Jesus sighed when seeing and sensing the situation the deaf man was in. When face-to-face with the Pharisees He sighed because of the hardness of their hearts. The idea is that He “snorted with anger.” This sighing was done “deeply” in His soul, which means that it was emphatic and very strong. This is similar to His reaction in Mark 3:5 where “He looked around at them in anger, grieved at their hardness of heart.”

(Cont. 10)

With a hint of exasperation, Jesus then asks them a probing question, “Why does this generation seek a sign?” In [Matthew 16:4](#), Jesus describes this generation as “Evil and Adulterous.”

In [Mark 9:19](#), Jesus cries out, “O faithless generation...” As we come back to our passage, Jesus definitively states with an oath, “Truly, I say to you, no sign will be given to this generation.”

2. He Departs From Them. Verse 13 is one of the saddest verses in the Bible: “And He left them, got into the boat again, and went to the other side.” This is an abrupt departure because Jesus knows these men have become settled in their unbelief. They want to fight, not grow in faith. They want to argue, not accept what is true. Jesus no doubt knew [Proverbs 23:9](#): “Do not speak in the hearing of a fool, for he will despise the good sense of your words.” [Proverbs 18:2](#) says: “A fool takes no pleasure in understanding, but only in expressing his opinion.” Do you know people like that? Jesus is practicing what He taught in [Matthew 7:6](#): “Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.”

This is similar to what we read in [Psalm 81:12](#): “So I gave them over to their stubborn hearts, to follow their own counsels” and [Romans 1:24](#): “Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves:” In [Hosea 4:17](#), God knows that one of the tribes is so hardened towards Him that He declares: “Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone.”

Because these men are so hardened against the Lord, Jesus denounces them and then departs from them. They experience the wrath of God’s abandonment as they are turned over to their own deeds of darkness. That sure explains much of what we see in our culture today, doesn’t it? I like how one pastor puts it: “No one goes to Hell because God sends them there... People go to Hell because they refuse to turn from their sins and believe on Jesus.”

Phony Pharisees can become hardened but so can forgetful followers.

(Cont. 11)

ILLUS: “I heard recently about a man who wanted to build a bar next to a church. The congregation strongly opposed it and started praying that it would never open. Just before it was finished, lightning struck the bar and it burned to the ground. The church members rejoiced and gave all the credit to the Lord.

The bar owner then sued the church, claiming that the congregation’s prayers had cost him his building, but the church leaders denied having anything to do with it. The case went to court and the judge wasn’t sure how to rule because he had a bar owner who believed in the power of prayer and a church congregation that didn’t!”

The disciples, who were close to Christ, had a hard time believing in Him, even when the signs were very clear.

In St. John 4:48, Jesus exhorts them: “Then said Jesus unto him, Except ye see Signs and Wonders, ye will not believe.” Yet, as we learned what Jesus said to Doubting Thomas, “Blessed is he who believes without seeing.” Jesus had a similar argument after He fed the five thousand.

In John 6:26-40 we see the people reasoning with Jesus when He is trying to explain to them that the people do not come to Him and believe in Him because they see signs, but because God has revealed to them the Kingdom:

²⁶ Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.

²⁷ Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.

²⁸ Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?

²⁹ Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.

(Cont. 12)

³⁰ They said therefore unto him, What sign shewest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? What dost thou work?

³¹ Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat.

³² Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven.

³³ For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.

³⁴ Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread.

³⁵ And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

³⁶ But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me, and believe not.

³⁷ All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

³⁸ For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.

³⁹ And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.

⁴⁰ And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.

Our struggle with faith is understanding this concept; Our Belief in God and Jesus as the Christ comes from Him! It is a Saving Revelation to us. So, why then did Jesus say that no sign will be given to that generation of Pharisees? Because they seek physical signs instead of seeking first the Kingdom of God. They are trapped in self-righteousness and physical pleasure instead of trying to understand better the spiritual realm.

(Cont. 13)

No sign will be given to them because it would be wasted time. Even seeing they wouldn't believe... Because they didn't.

They didn't believe in Jesus through the miracles He performed or the love He displayed, they only plotted to kill Him because He was destroying their religion.

This is why James 1:27 tells us that "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."

The Pharisees had become stained by the world. They sought their own status and stature instead of the advancement of the Kingdom. It didn't matter what signs they would see, they still would not see the Kingdom of God because their vision was obscured by their selfishness and pride. We should then be careful not to fall into the same trap.

This is why Jesus was so frustrated. His disciples spent every moment of every day with Him and heard and saw the same message repeated but their hardness of heart prevented them from breaching past their insecurities and trusting in God. How many times has God proven Himself to us in our lives but we continue distrusting Him or looking to worldly ways of sustainment?

Jesus said in John 6 that if we consume Him as the bread of life, we will not hunger, we will not go without, nor will we worry about what is to come. Our physical bodies after eating eventually need more food, but our soul will be continually satisfied with the Bread of Life that is Jesus.

Jesus' concern was that His disciples were falling into the trap of the Pharisees. That their refusal to trust God despite not seeing was becoming contagious and was affecting the disciples. The Pharisees were respected and regarded as the experts of God, but Jesus Exposed them as seeking Hypocrites.

The disciples, however, whom were raised Jewish and taught to respect and regard these men of high societal status, had to Unlearn following them as an example.

(Cont. 14)

Jesus was exhorting the disciples so that they could begin to understand that living in the Kingdom of God isn't about signs and wonders, but about an intimate connection with God the Father. It's about trusting Him for the simple things and relying on Him for the big things. "Do you not yet understand?"

B. SYMPTOMS – HEBREWS 3: 7-19 AND ACTS 7:51

Within this passage we see several Symptoms of Unbelief –

A Hardness of Heart: The Heart, in effect, is the whole person in all of his or her distinctive human activity As A Thinking, Planning, Willing, Feeling, Worshiping, Socially Interacting Being. And, of course, when the person is not living according to God's will, it is the heart that is described As Darkened, Rebellious, Callous, Unfeeling, or Idolatrous.

It is within the heart that God works; hence the human heart may be tender and soft or as hard as stone (Ezekiel 11:19). Hardness of heart thus describes a negative condition in which the person Ignores, spurns, or rejects the gracious offer of God to be a part of his or her life.

Failing to Acknowledge God's Works: "In all thy ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct thy path." (Prov.3:6)

To me, this is a very wonderful thing--that my whole life can be directed by God. But I have a responsibility too. It's found in this word Acknowledge. What does it mean? Acknowledging means to admit as true and to recognize the authority or claims of; Meaning when we acknowledge God in our day to day routines, we are admitting that we are nothing without Him. We are admitting that we are in need of His guidance, His wisdom, His Counsel and His Direction. Sometimes when we do something on an everyday basis, it becomes routine and familiar; so subconsciously we think that we can handle it. We must realize that we can do nothing without the Lord's help.

Drifting From The Truth: When I say Drifting From The Truth, I mean we have been carried away from what we once believed about God, Jesus ("I Am The Way, The Truth and The Life").

(Cont. 15)

The Bible, and The Church, by The Current of Culture and Unbelief. The drift is hardly ever intentional. Life happens. We get distracted. Busyness of Crowds out the priority of our relationship with God and we begin to drift. Our hearts grow colder and we wander further from Him. We feel spiritually empty and apathetic.

The Deceitfulness of Sin: Deceitfulness is defined as "to cheat, deceive, beguile, that which gives a false impression, whether by appearance, statement, or influence." **Sin Appears Beautiful.** Sin will try to convince us that immorality, fornication, adultery, and homosexuality are beautiful. The "affair" is something "sweet and precious." I've had individuals, living in adultery, tell me that they are the happiest they have been in years. How can that be? **The Deceitfulness of Sin!** "Sin Deceives." In plain terms a person who is deceived by definition does not even know they are deceived! And this is the deadly effect of sin in our lives. Sin so alters our thinking that we do not even realize we are deceived when we sin!

Herein Lies The Danger: Children of God may become Morally Obstinate, Unwilling To Listen To God At All (3:15), Because of The Deceitful Appearances and Impressions of Sin.

Rebellion and Disobedience: Do you have a hard time submitting to the authority over you at work, in your Family, at Church, or in other situations? Do you Disrespect Authority Figures by Refusing to Comply, or Doing a Poor Job? Rebellion's Family of Behaviors Includes Insubordination, Insolence (Rude), Betrayal, and Disrespect.

ALL Symptoms of Unbelief. If we cling to Christ by faith and place our full confidence in Him, we can remain steadfast and we will experience God's Best.

Unbelief is very much like a cancer in the natural. When unbelief begins to take root in our spirit, it Grows and Eats Away at Our Faith and Confidence in God much as cancer eats away at the physical body. Cancer may affect one area of the body while other organs remain healthy. If cancer is left unchecked, it will usually kill the whole body.

(Cont. 16)

Unbelief doesn't begin by affecting our entire spiritual life. Often it manifest in one area, such as healing or believing in the love of God. If it's diagnosed early enough it can be removed and no real harm is done. If it remains undiagnosed, it can grow to the point where it cripples our entire faith life until we cannot believe God. When a crisis comes, we are destroyed because Unbelief is stronger than our faith. That's what happened to Israel in wilderness.

I have studied Three Additional Areas that we must monitor In Order To Diagnose Unbelief Before It Begins To Cause Us Real Problems.

1. **Questioning God's Word:** God's Word is alive. It is the source of spiritual life for the believer. God used his Word To Create and he gives it to us so we can use it to conform the natural to his will. When we doubt the truth of God's Word, we are opening the door to unbelief. (Numbers 14)

2. **Questioning God's Power:** As with everything the devil does, this is something that is both gradual and subtle. When the power of God ceases to be a practical way to solve problems, we are doubting God's power. This is tied to a lowering of our sense of what is possible in God. We also call this a lowering of hope. (Psalm 78:19-20)

3. **Hating God's Messengers:** The people of Israel always blamed Moses for what was wrong in their lives. If we begin to sense anger when the Word is preached or when people try to encourage us, this is classic unbelief. (Numbers 14:4)

I want to finish by looking at One More Symptom of Unbelief. As Stephen was chastening the Jews in the books of Acts, he points out a Manifestation of Unbelief That Was Common To Them.

4. **They Were A Stiff-Necked People:** He defines how they were stiff-necked saying, "You always resist the Holy Spirit." I believe Resisting The Work of the Holy Spirit In Our Hearts Is An Important Symptom of Unbelief.

None Of Us Would Intentionally Resist The Holy Spirit. That would be like saying that if Jesus manifested in the flesh and told us what to do, we would tell him No. I do not believe any Christian would do that.

(Cont. 17)

The Holy Spirit does not usually deal with us in the realm of the flesh. We may feel something in our body at times, but that is not the norm. The Holy Spirit Deals With Us In Our Spirit.

We tend to believe that the most powerful manifestations of the spirit are the things that do affect our physical body. In Charismatic and Pentecostal circles for instance, it's common when people are prayed for... They "Go Out Under The Power." They seem to faint or at least fall down when hands are laid on them. There's nothing wrong with this but If We are Not Careful we will think that The Physical Effects of The Spirit are More Powerful than when He Deals With Us Inwardly. They are not. They're just manifestations of what God does in us. God looks at our hearts not just our flesh.

One of the most miraculous things about Christianity is that God is in us by the Holy Spirit. He talks to us inwardly. He reveals himself by dealing with us inwardly. Even When Emotion Is Manifested Outwardly, it begins with the Holy Spirit working inside of us.

This brings us to Our Symptom of Unbelief. When we do not yield to his inward dealings, We Are Resisting Him. This manifests in many ways.

You may be in a meeting and the preaching of the Word speaks to the thing you have been going through. However, you make up excuses why it does not apply to you or you argue with the truth of what you are hearing. That is resisting the Holy Spirit.

We have all heard stories about people who were so moved that they could not help go up front. You do not feel that kind of pressure but inside you know that you should go. The message spoke to your problem. The preacher is offering to pray about the thing you are dealing with. You think, "If I go up people will know that I have a problem.

They may think something worse than what I actually am going through. After all, it is not that bad. I don't feel like God is pushing me to go up. I'll just pray here."

(Cont. 18)

All the time you know you should be up front. You feel that impression in your heart. If you do not obey that impression, you are resisting the spirit. Why would you care what others might think? The only reason is pride. When we allow this kind of thing to happen, we are saying that the opinions of men are more important than the dealing of the Holy Spirit.

You might say, "What if I am wrong and the Lord wasn't leading me to the altar?" I have never known a time in my life when coming to God's altar did me harm. You have nothing to lose and much to gain.

We Resist The Holy Spirit when we know we should either do something or change something but we do not. Every time we do not yield to the inward working of the Holy Spirit, we become more susceptible to Unbelief.

I do not really have to tell you when you are resisting the Spirit. You know when you are. Many times, we want the outward manifestation so we will be sure it is God. That is a little like saying I will yield to you when you make me. That is not what God wants for us. He wants us to come to the place where we are so tender to the things of God all it takes is the still small voice to move us to obedience.

What should I do to combat resisting the Holy Spirit? As soon as I sense that resistance in my flesh, I must do the opposite. If I even think the altar call might be for me, I must go. I must accept the preached Word when it deals with me and not try to apply it to my brother or sister. I must do my best to obey as soon as I understand what God wants of me. One senior man of God said we must cultivate the habit of instantly obeying the voice of our spirit.

You will fail at this. We all do. When you fail, ask the Lord to forgive you and do your best to yield next time. The most important thing is that we recognize resisting the Holy Spirit as A Symptom of Unbelief. We must prepare ourselves to yield to him every day and in every service.

I believe services are often training sessions for the believer. If we will not yield to God among family, how will we yield to God in the market place?

(Cont. 19)

As with any Symptom, having one of them does not mean you have the disease. They can mean you are in danger of catching the infection. It is better to be safe than sorry. I encourage you to be on the lookout for them. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you recognize if there may be other symptoms manifesting in your life. When you find one, treat it with repentance and a healthy dose of the Word of God.

Unbelief is just as dangerous to our spiritual life as cancer is to our physical life. We must take it seriously, have regular checkups and treat the symptoms immediately. That will help us have long and powerful spiritual lives.

VI. DIFFERENCES BETWEEN BELIEVING AND UNBELIVING DOUBT

The word “doubt” is an uncomfortable one in most Christian circles. It’s something that is frowned upon or even condemned in many church circles. But that doesn’t stop us from doubting; it just makes doubting shameful for many of us. We don’t know what to do with it, who to talk to about it, or how to talk about it. We just know that our questions feel like they are pulling us away from God.

But what if they aren’t? What if doubt isn’t inherently wrong? And what if doubt is something that doesn’t necessarily undermine our faith but can actually lead us *deeper* into faith? How we respond when we doubt determines whether it is “Unbelieving Doubt” (that which leads us away from faith) or “believing doubt” (that which leads us to deeper faith).

Here are four ways to distinguish unbelieving doubt from believing doubt.

1. Unbelieving doubt asks questions in order to challenge. Believing doubt asks questions in order to learn.

Think about a prosecutor asking questions of a witness. He isn’t asking questions to learn something but rather to disprove something, to make a point. He has the answers already and is challenging the witness.

(Cont. 20)

This is the attitude of unbelieving doubt. It puts God on the witness stand and treats Him as if He owes us answers and as if we are the authority.

Now think about a young child asking her parents questions. She has total trust in their ability to answer and is simply seeking to learn and understand. This is what the Bible calls “Childlike Faith” and is a good example of believing doubt. It isn’t sure. It doesn’t know. But it asks with trust in the one who has authority and power.

2. Unbelieving doubt takes questions to anyone but Jesus. Believing doubt takes questions directly to Jesus.

When we doubt in an unbelieving way our instinct is not to seek the Lord in prayer or through His Word. Our instinct is to hide our doubts, to pose questions to friends, to seek experts, to read, to explore. While all of these (except hiding) *can* help us, we usually make the mistake of doing them in lieu of going to Jesus. Whether it is out of guilt or arrogance (or both) we turn away from Him and act as if He doesn’t hold the keys to belief. We disregard and dishonor Him by thinking we can find a better solution anywhere than in His Word and His presence.

Now consider the father from Mark 9 who brought his demon possessed son to Jesus, the father who uttered that simple, profound prayer— “I believe; help my unbelief.” He came to Jesus as a doubter. He expressed his doubts to the Son of God. And he asked for help with them. He was not rock-solid confident. He wasn’t certain. He doubted, and he came to Jesus with that doubt in his time of need. And Jesus helped him, as He will for every doubter who comes to Him. This is the response of a Believing Doubter.

3. Unbelieving doubt questions God’s character because He is beyond our understanding. Believing doubt trusts in God’s character because He is beyond our understanding.

At its base, doubt is simply not knowing something, not being sure. And it is inevitable because we are finite and sinful people who are called to trust in an infinite and perfect God. We simply can’t understand everything about Him.

(Cont. 21)

We will encounter numerous aspects of God's character, plan, and work that befuddle us because His "wondrous knowledge is beyond" us (Psalm 139:6).

So, here's the rub: when we are befuddled, do we see that as reason not to trust God or do we see that as evidence God is eminently trustworthy? Unbelieving doubt sees mystery as a threat and as ominously untrustworthy. When it doesn't understand something about God it sees that as a mark against God's character.

Believing doubt, on the other hand, reflects [Hebrews 11:1](#). "Now faith is the reality of what is hoped for, the proof of what is not seen." When believing doubt encounters the unknown it responds with *faith*—resting in what it does know about God's character and promises from His Word to find confidence in what it doesn't understand. The mystery is not a threat but rather a promise that God is working in ways beyond our limited capacity to see and understand.

4. Unbelieving doubt says, "not Your will, but mine be done." Believing doubt says, "not my will, but Yours be done."

Adam and Eve were the original unbelieving doubters. They listened to what God told them and decided they knew better.

Unbelieving doubt is willful rebellion against God just like theirs. It is the insistence that we know better than God and would be better off if He did things our way. Ultimately it seeks to subjugate God to our authority.

Christ sets the example for the believing doubter. In our moments of greatest uncertainty and in the face of our biggest fears and questions we are to respond as He did in the garden of Gethsemane: make our plea to God for help and then submit to His perfect will. We will not always get our way. We will not always get clear answers. But God will always hear us and respond to us. He will give us what is best and what we need. And, on top of His example, the work of Christ Himself gives us this assurance.

(Cont. 22)

VII. UNBELIEF IN BELIEVERS

We have all at some time probably cynically said about something “I’ll believe it when I see it”, with the implication that we will not believe it until it is seen.

It Is More Than Simple Doubt, It Is An Emotional Defense that puts up barriers to prevent disappointment. Most of us have a fear of being let down and disappointed, so we protect ourselves. When we see “I’ll believe it when I see it!” it is normally about something that we would like to be true, but are afraid of building our hopes up and getting disappointed when it doesn’t happen.

“A similar phrase is Seeing is believing”. However, unlike “I’ll believe it when I see it”, it is essentially an expression of belief, a statement of belief that something has occurred that was perhaps unexpected, but because it has been witnessed, it is believed. It is an expression of surprise and often joy and excitement that the unexpected has happened. It is the breaking down of defensive barriers of doubt.

We see something about both of these expressions in the story of Thomas (Doubting) and Jesus. It was now a week since that great day when Jesus had appeared to his disciples as the risen Lord. They had seen it and they had believed, they had experienced the surprise, the excitement and the joy of seeing their dead master alive again.

Thomas, however, had missed out. He was not with the others that first Easter Sunday. For whatever reason he had missed the time when they all met together. However, The Others Eventually Met Up With Thomas, and, in their excitement, told him what had happened. Thomas’s response was blunt:

St. John 20:25, “Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.”

Thomas often gets a bad press, he gets slated as ‘doubting Thomas’, but I wonder if, in fact he was trying to protect himself from further disappointment. Thomas wanted to be sure, so that he would not be disappointed.

(Cont. 23)

He had the testimony of the other disciples, but it was not enough for him. He wanted to see.

We have the testimony of other believers, of people whose lives have been changed by the risen Christ, we also have the Bible, the word of God, we have so many pointers to the fact that Christ is risen from the dead and that he is Lord and God as Thomas recognized, but we will not actually see him until he comes again as he has promised to do.

It is for us to decide whether to believe or not. For belief or unbelief is not something that happens to us, it is something that we decide and choose for ourselves. We can choose to believe in this risen Christ, Trusting His Word and The Testimony of Other Believers, or We Can Choose Not To.

We must all make a decision. What we believe effects the way we see and understand the world. It is possible to become so obstinate and insistent in Unbelief That Nothing Will Convince Us.

Today many Christians are offended at any teaching which implies that they may have unbelief. But Jesus was constantly rebuking his disciples for their Unbelief, and "Little Faith".

If you can get free of unbelief, you will be of all Christians, most fruitful, and most pleasing to the Lord.

We ought to resist all simplistic claims that true believers do nothing but believe. The reality is, there are many who are trusting God in certain areas of their life for example, The Forgiveness of Sins, who still need deliverance from unbelief. Some Christians seem to refuse to believe the Word of God and act as if everything Jesus taught on certain subjects, such as Prayer, Faith, Healing and Deliverance was False.

There are many who genuinely have committed their life to Christ, and trust Him for eternal salvation, who are not believing some very important promises of Jesus Christ.

(Cont. 24)

The Spirit of Unbelief binds the minds of Christians many times, to the point where they can neither see nor recognize what really should be staring them in the face. Declarations that Jesus Christ himself has given are treated with less credibility by many Christians than the assertions of politicians, ungodly journalists and other notorious liars! Such things ought not to be. Its Evidence of a Lack of The Renewal of The Mind.

If you doubt this, I will give you a few examples from the teachings of Jesus.

He whose heart does not condemn himself, let him go free: Jesus said, “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father”. (John 14:12)

“These signs shall follow those who believe: in My name they shall drive out demons, they shall speak with new tongues.”

Are these statements true or false? Consider this from Jesus:

“He who believes in Me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.” (John 7:37).

“If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.” (John 15:7)

Is it true that we can come to a place in our Christian life that everything we desire we can have? According to Jesus, it is, but we must first abide in Him. But how do we do that? “If you keep my commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I also have kept my Father’s commandments, and abide in His love”. (John 15:10)

God’s commandments can be summed up as: Love Him and Others, Believe Him, and Seek Him Always.

“God is a rewarder of them that DILIGENTLY seek him.” (Hebrews 11:6). Do you really believe that God will make it worth your while if you sacrificially give time to prayer and seeking the face of God?

(Cont. 25)

If you do believe it, you will do it, and you will enjoy God's favor. If you don't do it, you prove that there is still Unbelief in your heart.

Many Christians believe some things with their minds only, but not with their hearts. This leads to an Internal Torment. We want to please the Lord and fully believe all the promises, but something in us Resists Faith. We find we "Cannot Believe" Even though we want to. This can be due to a spirit of unbelief.

Praise God there is Deliverance... "We Can Overcome The Spirit Of Unbelief!"

VIII. OVERCOMING THE SPIRIT OF UNBELIEF

There were Two Spirits that Marveled Jesus. One was The Spirit of Unbelief, and the other was The Spirit of Faith. Those are the Two Spirits that operate in the lives of human beings all the time. Until you decide and make up in your mind that you are going to believe the Word of God, regardless of circumstances or situations or whatever is surrounding you, then you will always be wavering between two opinions. As a matter of fact, one Prophet in the Bible said, "How long will you be halt between two opinions?" Either you are going to believe God, or you are going to believe the devil.

There comes a place in the believer's life where they have to resolve, "I Will Believe The Word of God."

Everybody else can trend or evolve or go wherever they want to go, but I am going to stick with God. Anybody believe the Word of God? Amen. That is why when you come to this church, we are going to keep opening these Bibles. I am not going to tell you what I think or what my opinions are, because you know I am human just like anybody else, and I can trend away from the Word of God.

But it is the Word of God that is going to keep us rooted and grounded, and able to grow in God. In order to grow, God said that, like babes, you have to desire the sincere milk of the Word of God, that you may grow thereby. But then you have to come on and get to maturity, because He says that meat is for them that are of full age. It is time to grow up! You cannot say a baby forever.

(Cont. 26)

You have to get to the place where you are full grown in the things of God. That is where you really start seeing the power, the glory and the manifestation of that Word.

Today, you may feel like the man with the demon-possessed child who had cried out to the Lord for help when he said, “Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!” (Mark 9:24)

If you desire to be a man or woman who believes in the promises of God without wavering, you can keep the weeds of doubt out of your garden by putting into action these Three Ways To Overcome Unbelief.

1. Overcome Unbelief By Knowing God’s Will

“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”(Rom.10:17)

Ignorance is the devil’s playground. He knows if he can keep you from knowing all that belongs to you, he has you. A lack of knowledge results in unbelief—and the devil is right there to take advantage—telling you you’re Sick, Broke, Depressed and A Failure. But Satan is Overruled By The Word of God. If you know this, you can object to his claims. If you don’t, you’ll buy what the devil is selling and stay right where you are. Maybe you’re praying for healing today. You say all the right words, “Thank God, I Believe I Receive...” but Inside You’re Thinking, I Wonder Why God Isn’t Healing Me?

Even if you confess you believe you are healed, you can still stagger at the promise of God—Believing what your body is telling you instead of the Word of God.

It doesn’t matter how long you’ve been a believer or how long you’ve been practicing the principles of faith—you can easily slip into unbelief about the promises of God. And, when you do, it will cost you dearly.

“But if slipping into unbelief is so easy,” you may say, “how can we avoid it?”

Hebrews 4:11 tells us: “Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.”

(Cont. 27)

We Must Labor! How? By Hanging On To The Promises of God By Faith Day After Day.

Don't get casual about the Word. Don't make the mistake of thinking, Oh I know all that faith stuff. I know how to receive my healing. If you do, you'll slack off, and one of these days, the devil will catch you unprepared and steal you blind.

That's what happened when the disciples could not cast the demon out of the child. They felt defeated, asking, "Why could we not cast it out?' So Jesus said to them, 'Because of your unbelief'" (Matthew 17:19-20). Then He added, "However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting" (verse 21)

Many people believe He was talking about the demon... but He Wasn't. You can't fast a demon. He was referring to the kind of Unbelief—He was telling them how to overcome it.

What is it they did not believe? They did not believe what He had already said to them in Luke 9:1 when He "gave them power and authority over all devils". They were walking the fine line between Belief and Unbelief. And that's what we have to beware of, too.

The difference is between you receiving all God has for you or not receiving at all.

2. Overcome Unbelief By Rejecting Fear

"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." (Philippians 4:6)

The basis of all Unbelief Is Fear. If you don't deal with it, it will begin to work on your mind and you will begin to Question The Word of God.

Did you know that it is impossible to worry and trust God at the same time? Worry is a form of Unbelief; it causes us to doubt God's Love and His ability to come through for us when we need Him.

(Cont. 28)

Satan can put pressure on you over your finances that goes beyond anything you've ever seen. He can squeeze you over money, particularly if you're in the ministry because it threatens to stop the very thing that God told you to do. All Doubt, All Unbelief and All The Pressure from it is Based On Fear.

Fear will keep you from the promises of God... Even if you know what they are.

3. Overcome Unbelief By Believing In God's Love

"And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." (1st John 4:16)

Notice the phrase "Believed The Love." "We have known and believed the love." We're not talking about just any love, but THE LOVE. Why? Because God IS LOVE. He Doesn't Just Have Love... GOD IS LOVE!!!

The Love of God is a powerful force that has provided you with abundant life.

But most Christians Don't Have Faith In His LOVE. If you were to ask them if God loves them, most would say Yes, but they don't really believe it. They just mentally agree with John 3:16.

We see a picture of this when the disciples were on a ship that was threatened by a great storm. Jesus was asleep on a pillow, and they woke Him up shouting, "Master, carest thou not that we perish?" (Mark 4:38).

That's Unbelief! In what? THE LOVE—WHO IS GOD—WHO IS LOVE.

Maybe today, you're saying the same thing, "Jesus, don't You care that I'm sick? Don't You care that I'm in this desperate financial situation? Don't You care that I've been wronged?"

That's where we get it wrong. You can overcome unbelief! When you know God's will and Believe It without a Doubt... Refuse to Fear, and Receive the Unending Love of God, you will Overcome Unbelief and receive what you desire! Jesus of Nazareth doesn't want you to have to depend on the Government, Your Job or Your Family. He wants you depending Only On Him.

"Jesus said ... all things are possible to him that believeth. (Mark 9:23) Amen.

(Cont. 29)

CONCLUSION:

Unbelief is a condition that often appears innocent enough, but to God it is far from innocent. Like our enemy, The Devil, Unbelief comes Disguised in many forms, so that we may consider it Justified In Our Lives. It's time to unmask Unbelief in our Lives, and call it what it truly is: A Thief!!

Maybe the saddest part about Unbelief is that it can Rob Our Lives Of So Much. In much the same way it has Robbed So Many Others Of Enjoying The Blessings Of God, So Can WE Even As Believers Be Robbed By Unbelief In Our Lives.

IT'LL ROB US OF OUR MEMORY! Unbelief never considers what God has already proven in the past. Unbelief ignores that God is Immutable (Unchangeable), and Is Still Able To Do The Impossible. Don't let Unbelief Rob You and Blind You of the God of your Past - He's Still The Same God Today As He Was Yesterday!

In every instance that Thief of Doubt Kept The Disciples from Receiving God's Best For Them. His highest and best for their lives was for them To Receive By Their Faith. If we will but utilize the power that is within us and act on God's Word, we will achieve God's Greatest Blessings that He has planned for our lives.

In much the same way the generation died in the desert after seeing the fruit of the promised land because they chose to hear the evil report of unbeliever's... Our lives can be lived Envyng Other Believers who enjoy The Blessings of God, or We Can Choose To Be a "True Believer" Not Trading God's Blessings for... "The Power And Spirit Of Unbelief" ... "What Will The End Be ... For You?" Amen.