

Good News for Families

Help My Unbelief

September 2021

Some of the best comedians and social commentators are those that are just so . . . ordinary. They're great because they are the ones who just say the thing that everyone is thinking but that no one else is bold enough to say. I'm sure you know a few people like this. Maybe you're even friends with some.

How I wish I could get to know the father—the persistent, faithful father—that Jesus encounters in the midst of a crowd. Do you remember the one? In the Gospel of Mark, this father is desperately seeking a cure for his son, who is regularly seized and made mute by an unclean spirit that causes him to have convulsions. The father even feared that the spirit was out to destroy his son by casting him into fire and water. It sounds terrifying, and as parents, we can easily put ourselves into this man's shoes.

He seeks help from Jesus:

“But if You can do anything, have compassion on us and help us.” And Jesus said to him, “If You can! All things are possible for one who believes.” Immediately the father of the child cried out

and said, “I believe; help my unbelief!” And when Jesus saw that a crowd came running together, He rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, “You mute and deaf spirit, I command you, come out of him and never enter him again.” And after crying out and convulsing him terribly, it came out, and the boy was like a corpse, so that most of them said, “He is dead.” But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose. (Mark 9:22-27)

We all love this man for saying to Jesus what we're all thinking: “I believe; help my unbelief!” What a struggle it is, especially in our most desperate times, to have faith in God's love and healing. We somehow engage in Orwell's doublethink—believing, yet not believing at the same time. It seems the depths of our sin would obscure our faith, and we'd have no hope.


But Christ, God's own Son . . . He believes. Rather than rebuking the man and just yelling at him

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to believe already. He takes matters into His own hands. He rebukes the spirit and heals the boy. Even more, He only does this because He also takes the matter of *believing* into His own hands. Literally, on the cross, He takes our believing-unbelief and allows His hands to be pierced with nails, and we are helped.

Somehow, by the grace of God, the faith of Christ is counted as the father's own faith, and the good work is done for him. The father receives the gift of faith, and with it, receives the gift of a once-again healthy son. God won't let our doublethink get in the way of His goodness. Just as He

took the boy's hand and lifted him up. He also makes us rise. He gives us faith to believe His promises and doesn't turn us away when our sin causes us to doubt.

Maybe we'd like to hang around with the father in this Gospel because He says what the rest of us may have been too scared to admit. But here's one better: we get to be near to Christ, who not only speaks boldly but also acts boldly. And He does it all for us and our families. There's just nothing ordinary about it. 

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Recommended Reading

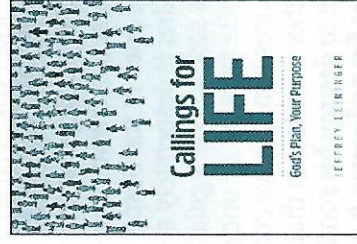
Callings for Life: God's Plan, Your Purpose

by Jeffrey Leininger

Often in life, it feels as if you're supposed to live up to one big thing—one monumental event that you've been placed in creation to uphold and follow through on. The reality is, God calls you to many things, both great feats and small vocations. God gives you more than one calling in His plan for your life.

Work through five chapters with Jeffrey Leininger to see how you're being called in all aspects in your life. Not only will you come away with a clearer understanding of how God is using you in His plan but you will also see all of the small vocations you are called to that you might have been overlooking.

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