**Session 5: Hindrances to Faith**

Sometimes, we think we're acting in faith, but it's "not working." What's blocking your faith from being fruitful?

**Mark 9:23** NKJV – *Jesus said to him, "If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes."*

Said oppositely: If you cannot believe (if you have unbelief), all things are NOT possible.

We can limit what is possible through our faith.

**Mark 9:24** NKJV – *Immediately the father of the child cried out and said with tears, "Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!"*

Believe (Greek: *pisteuō*) – to be persuaded of, to have faith
Unbelief (Greek: *apistia*) – disbelief, weakness of faith

You can have both. But unbelief works against faith.

*Suggestion: Study all the accounts in Scripture where Jesus speaks of people's faith*

**What did Jesus identify as faith hindrances, what were the circumstances, and what can we learn from it?**

Jesus identifies unbelief working against faith:

**Matthew 17:14-21** NKJV – *14 And when they had come to the multitude, a man came to Him, kneeling down to Him and saying, 15 "Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is an epileptic and suffers severely; for he often falls into the fire and often into the water. 16 So I brought him to Your disciples, but they could not cure him." 17 Then Jesus answered and said, "O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him here to Me." 18 And Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of him; and the child was cured from that very hour. 19 Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "Why could we not cast it out?" 20 So Jesus said to them, "**Because of your unbelief**; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you. 21 **However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting."***

You don't need a large amount of faith, but rather, a pure faith that is free from unbelief. (Andrew Wommack)

Ex: water hose with a kink – still flowing, but restricted

This kind (of unbelief) goes out by prayer and fasting → makes you more sensitive to the spiritual realm and less moved by the natural

**Ways Unbelief Comes:**

1. Lack of understanding

   **Matthew 16:5-12** NKJV – *[5] Now when His disciples had come to the other side, they had forgotten to take bread. [6] Then Jesus said to them, "Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees." [7] And they reasoned among themselves, saying, "It is because we have taken no bread." [8] But Jesus, being aware of it, said to them, "**O you of little faith**, why do you reason among yourselves because you have brought no bread? [9] **Do you not yet understand, or remember** the five loaves of the five thousand and how many baskets you took up? [10] Nor the seven loaves of the four thousand and how many large baskets you took up? [11] How is it you do not understand that I did not speak to you concerning bread?—but to **beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees**." [12] Then they understood that He did not tell them to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the **doctrine** of the Pharisees and Sadducees.*

   A lack of understanding (whether through not knowing, willful rejection, misunderstanding, bad teaching, etc.) can cause us to believe things that aren't actually true about God or how His Kingdom operates.

   **1 Corinthians 8:2** NKJV – *And if anyone thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know.*

   **Matthew 13:19** NKJV – *When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, then the wicked one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart.*

   How to address: Get understanding! Abide in Jesus, keep the Word in front of you, get <u>good</u> biblical teaching, seek revelation knowledge, and continually renew your mind to the truth of God's Word.

2. Doubt

   **Matthew 14:28-31** NKJV – *[28] And Peter answered Him and said, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water." [29] So [Jesus] said, "Come." And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus. [30] But when he saw that the wind was boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, "Lord, save me!" [31] And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him, and said to him, "**O you of little faith**, why did you **doubt?**"*

Doubt causes us to waver in what God has said when our circumstances seem to contradict it. Instead of remaining fully persuaded, we become double-minded and uncertain.

**James 1:6-8** NKJV – *[6] But let him ask in faith, **with no doubting**, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. [7] **For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; [8]** he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.*

How to address: Become established in God's Word, fully persuaded of its truth. Abide in Jesus, keep the Word in front of you, get <u>good</u> biblical teaching, seek revelation knowledge, and continually renew your mind to the truth of God's Word.

3. Fear and Anxiety

**Matthew 8:23-26** NKJV – *[23] Now when [Jesus] got into a boat, His disciples followed Him. [24] And suddenly a great tempest arose on the sea, so that the boat was covered with the waves. But He was asleep. [25] Then His disciples came to Him and awoke Him, saying, "Lord, save us! We are perishing!" [26] But He said to them, "Why are you **fearful, O you of little faith**?" Then He arose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm.*

**Luke 12:28-32** NKJV – *[28] If then God so clothes the grass, which today is in the field and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will He clothe you, **O you of little faith**? [29] "And do not seek what you should eat or what you should drink, **nor have an anxious mind**. [30] For all these things the nations of the world seek after, and your Father knows that you need these things. [31] **But seek the kingdom of God**, and all these things shall be added to you. [32] "**Do not fear,** little flock, for **it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom**.*

Fear and anxiety cause us to become consumed with what might happen, rather than trusting God with what we cannot control. Instead of trusting His care, fear controls our response.

How to address: Seek the kingdom of God. Be intentional about what you allow into your mind, and bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. Abide in Jesus, keep the Word in front of you, get <u>good</u> biblical teaching, seek revelation knowledge, and continually renew your mind to the truth of God's Word.

4. Offense

**Mark 6:1-6** NKJV – *[1] Then He went out from there and came to His own country, and His disciples followed Him. [2] And when the Sabbath had come, He began to teach in the synagogue. And many hearing Him were astonished, saying, "Where did this Man get*

*these things? And what wisdom is this which is given to Him, that such mighty works are performed by His hands! [3] Is this not the carpenter, the Son of Mary, and brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon? And are not His sisters here with us?"* ***So they were offended at Him.*** *[4] But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his own country, among his own relatives, and in his own house." [5] Now* ***He could do no mighty work there****, except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed them. [6] And* ***He marveled because of their unbelief.*** *Then He went about the villages in a circuit, teaching.*

Unbelief hindered Jesus' ministry; be aware of this as you minister to others.

Offense can cause us to become so focused on what we think we know or how we've been treated that we become resistant to receiving from God.

How to address: Deal with the offense God's way (Matthew 18:15-20), and move forward in forgiveness (Ephesians 4:20).

**Unbelief and a Hardened Heart**

**Mark 16:14** NKJV – *Jesus appeared to the eleven and rebuked their* ***unbelief*** *and* ***hardness of heart****, because they did not believe those who had seen Him after He had risen.*

Hardness of heart (Greek: *sklērokardia*) – Strongs: destitution of (spiritual) perception
Destitute (dictionary.com): lacking the basic necessities of life

**Romans 8:6** NKJV – *For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.*

Consider the example set by Abraham:

**Romans 4:19-21** NKJV – *[19] And not being weak in faith,* ***he did not consider his own body****, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb. [20]* ***He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith****, giving glory to God, [21] and being* ***fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform.***

This is what we need to be like! Do not consider your circumstances, stand on the Word without wavering, strengthen your faith, and be fully convinced in God's promises and ability!

**What did Jesus do when He encountered unbelief?**

Removed the unbelief – **Mark 5:40**

Taught the Word (the Truth will set you free!) – **Mark 6:6**