



## [Matthew 17:17-21](#)

(17) "O unbelieving and perverse generation," Jesus replied, "how long shall I stay with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring the boy here to me." (18) Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of the boy, and he was healed from that moment. (19) Then the disciples came to Jesus in private and asked, "Why couldn't we drive it out?" (20) He replied, "Because you have so little faith. I tell you the truth, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you." (21)

## [Mark 9:23-29](#)

(23) " 'If you can'?" said Jesus. "Everything is possible for him who believes." (24) Immediately the boy's father exclaimed, "I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!" (25) When Jesus saw that a crowd was running to the scene, he rebuked the evil spirit. "You deaf and mute spirit," he said, "I command you, come out of him and never enter him again." (26) The spirit shrieked, convulsed him violently and came out. The boy looked so much like a corpse that many said, "He's dead." (27) But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him to his feet, and he stood up. (28) After Jesus had gone indoors, his disciples asked him privately, "Why couldn't we drive it out?" (29) He replied, "This kind can come out only by prayer."

*New International Version*

This miracle teaches that *it takes the power of [faith](#) to overcome the enemy* ([Matthew 17:20](#); [Mark 9:19](#), 23-24). Why had the nine disciples failed? They had been careless in their personal spiritual walks and had neglected [prayer](#) and [fasting](#) ([Mark 9:29](#)). The authority that [Jesus](#) had given them was effective only if exercised by faith, but faith must be cultivated through spiritual discipline and devotion. The apostle Paul uses [Abraham](#) as an example of this:

No unbelief *or* distrust made him waver (doubtingly question) concerning the promise of [God](#), but he grew strong *and* was empowered by faith as he gave

The Berean: Daily Verse and Commentary for Matthew 17:17-21 (<http://www.theberean.org>)  
praise *and* glory to God, fully satisfied *and* assured that God was able *and* mighty to keep His word *and* to do what He had promised. That is why his faith was credited to him as righteousness (right standing with God). ([Romans 4:20-22](#), *The Amplified Bible*)

Half of the healings Christ performed happened due to the prayer of loved ones and friends. The father of the demon-possessed boy remains a monument of faith, timid yet true, through his [love](#) for his boy. His pleading, "Have compassion on us, and help us," was highly honored by Jesus.

The key to the exercise of such faith is not its quantity, but the God to whom it is directed; therefore, even the smallest faith—"like a mustard seed"—will see spectacular results ([Luke 17:5-6](#); [Matthew 17:20](#)). Jesus says in [Mark 9:23](#), "All things are possible to him who believes." Faith acts as an open door into a [relationship with God](#) and as a shield that protects God's people when they are under spiritual attack.

— Martin G. Collins

**To learn more, see:**

[The Miracles of Jesus Christ: Exorcising a Young Boy \(Part One\)](#)

**Related Topics:**

[Neglected Prayer and Fasting](#)

Commentary copyright © 1992-2016 [Church of the Great God](#)  
New International Version copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by [International Bible Society](#)