

# AT THE BOTTOM OF THE MOUNTAIN

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Coming down from the mount of transfiguration with His three disciples...  
A chaotic scene, the disciples' frustration and father's emotions much in evidence

Jesus finds His other disciples embroiled in controversy - Mk 9:14  
Surrounded by a multitude, disputing with scribes - ibid.

The controversy apparently involved a failed attempt to heal a deaf-mute boy...

Who from childhood had been prone to seizures

Whose father desperately wanted him healed

Whom the disciples of Jesus had not been able to heal

[The account of this miracle is one of most detailed in the gospels. From it we can learn valuable lessons]

*What awaits us at the bottom of our mountain top experience?*

- Human Need
- Arguments about truth

As the boy is brought to Jesus, he has a spirit-induced seizure - Mk 9:20  
The father describes how this has happened often since childhood - Mk 9:21-22

The father begs for compassion if Jesus can help - Mk 9:22

If the father can believe, all things are possible

The father professes faith, begs for more faith

As the crowd draws closer, Jesus heals the deaf-mute boy - Mk 9:25-27  
The demon cast out with a great convulsion, leaving the boy dead-like

Jesus takes the boy by the hand, lifting him up, and the boy rises  
Jesus privately informs the disciples as to the reason for their failure - Mk 9:28-29

The battle is not about "truth," Jesus is our truth, the battle within is between flesh and spirit.

Most of us get it backwards. We fight over "truth" and then go and eat... fellowship with the people who agree with us... make out own little echo chambers. The result is that the "oppressed" remain in their oppression. The battle "without" is between spiritual dominions.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF FAITH

Faith cannot be underestimated - He 11:6; Mt 8:13; 9:22,29

Such faith grows through the Word of God - Ro 10:17

It certainly does not hurt to pray: "Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!" - Mk 9:24

## THE POWER OF PRAYER

Our faith, while important, is not always sufficient

God must be involved, for only with Him are all things possible - Lk 1:37

Thus at time faith must be joined with prayer - e.g., Jm 5:14

## THE ROLE OF FASTING

Fasting was often joined with prayer to incur God's favor - Ezr 8:21-23

Fasting served to humble oneself before God - Psa 35:13; 69:10

Such humility is more likely to incur God's favor - Isa 57:15; 66:1-2

Thus people often served God with fasting and prayer - Lk 2:36-37; Ac 13:2-3

-- Faith, prayer, and fasting working together can accomplish more if it be God's will

## THE APPLICATION CAVEATS...

Avoid misapplication

It can be tempting to take Jesus' words in isolation

Especially "all things are possible to him who believes"

All things are possible, but must be within God's will - 1Jn 5:14

E.g., Jesus in the garden - Mk 14:35-36

E.g., Paul with his thorn in the flesh - 2Co 12:7-9

As one brother put it: "All things are possible, but they must be on the menu"

Some things are not possible, when asked improperly

For selfish and sinful reasons - Jm 4:3

While not keeping God's commandments - 1Jn 3:22

-- Jesus' words presume God's permission and our obedience