

House On The Rock Life Group Study outline 2023

November: Believing God for the Impossible

Outlines for the month

Week 1: From fear to faith ✓

Week 2: Praying past unbelief

Week 3: Seeing the impossible

Introduction

If you're a parent, you may have sat up at 3 a.m. with a sick child, praying that the fever would break and that the child would recover. You may even have driven anxiously to the emergency room with your child, praying all the way that God would spare the child's life. Even if you're not a parent, you will understand what it is to care intensely for a loved one, and pray that they make it through the storm.

Because of this strong familial love, all of us can identify with the distraught father, Jairus, who came to Jesus on behalf of his dying daughter. Luke tells us that she was his only daughter and that she was 12 years old. We don't know what the illness was or how long it had gone on, but it was obvious that she was not getting better. She was at the point of death. For days now, Jairus' wife could have been saying to him, "This new teacher, Jesus, has been healing many. Why don't you go and see if He would come heal our little girl?"

"I know He has healed many," Jairus may have responded. "But you know how opposed our leaders are to Him. With my position as the leader of the synagogue, I just can't go to Jesus." But finally, Jairus knew that he had no other choice. Either he went to Jesus with the hope that his daughter could be healed, or she would die. So off he went, leaving his wife at the girl's bedside. In desperation, he threw himself down before Jesus and begged Him to come and lay His hand on his daughter that she might live.

Just as it seemed that things would get better, some friends arrived from Jairus' house who spoke those fearful words, "Your daughter has died; do not trouble the Teacher anymore." This was a dark moment of deep despair, a place where it was impossible to come back from. It was one thing to heal a sick child, but what hope was there for a dead one?

But Jesus overheard them and told Jairus, "Do not be afraid any longer; only believe, and she shall be made well." The rest of the story tells how Jairus then took Jesus to his home, giving the Lord a place in his life and room to do the impossible for Jairus and his family. When faced with the deepest of fears, Jairus somehow managed to find a place for faith in his heart. When faced with the voice of fear, how can we move on to find our faith and act on it?

Intro credit: [bible.org](https://www.bible.org)

Pilot text

Luke 8:49-56 49 While He was still speaking, someone came from the ruler of the synagogue's house, saying to him, "Your daughter is dead. Do not trouble the Teacher." 50 But when Jesus heard it, He answered him, saying, "Do not be afraid; only believe, and she will be made well." 51 When He came into the house, He permitted no one to go in except Peter, James, and John, and the father and mother of the girl. 52 Now all wept and mourned for her; but He said, "Do not weep; she is not dead, but sleeping." 53 And they ridiculed Him, knowing that she was dead. 54 But He put them all outside, took her by the hand and called, saying, "Little girl, arise." 55 Then her spirit returned, and she arose immediately. And He commanded that she be given something to eat. 56 And her parents were astonished, but He charged them to tell no one what had happened.

What does this pilot scripture tell us about how to overcome fear and move in faith?

1. **Fear has a voice, but so does faith.** In this passage there is dialogue from only two people, both addressing Jairus. Both voices had a message, and both were attempting to influence what Jairus **knew**, what he **believed**, what he therefore **felt**, and ultimately what he **did**.
 2. **Whenever fear speaks, listen immediately for the voice of faith.** Fear thrives in the dark and in silence. In the passage we can see that as soon as Jesus heard the voice of fear speaking to Jairus, he responded with the voice of faith. Because we have the Holy Spirit in us, the voice of Jesus (of faith) will surely speak in our hearts; we only must listen and give voice to it.
 3. **Fear may speak first, but faith will have the final say if we give it full voice**'. This passage begins with a message that instilled fear (v49). But whereas fear only speaks once in this passage, the voice of faith is heard not once, not twice, but **three** times (v. 50, 52b and 54b). This only happened because Jairus listened and gave voice to faith, thereby amplifying it and letting it determine what he **knew** (that there was an alternative to what fear was saying), **believed** (that Jesus could do something about the situation), **felt** (hope) and ultimately **did** (allowed Jesus into his home). If Jairus had entertained and enthroned the voice of fear, then the story would have been very different.
- Questions for discussion (use scriptures to support your position):
 1. Is fear sin? Is it ever okay? If so, when?
 2. Does faith require that we believe that Jesus is going to answer our prayers affirmatively or is it enough to believe Him whatever the answer? Explain your position.

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In the old testament we are told a story of how the prophet Elisha faced a major crisis: He was surrounded by a foreign army that intended to take him captive. Elisha's servant went out one morning, looked up and saw this horde of soldiers, with horses and chariots. He rightly surmised they weren't paying a social call! So he ran back inside crying, "Alas! What are we going to do?"

Probably none of us has ever walked out the door in the morning to confront an army in the front yard waiting to do us bodily harm. But we all know what it's like to be suddenly confronted with life-threatening problems beyond our control. And we all can relate to the servant's panic in the crisis.

What seems strange is Elisha's cool, calm response: "Do not fear, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them" (6:16). Then he prayed that his servant's eyes would be opened. Suddenly the servant saw the unseen spiritual world that Elisha already saw: The mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha! He strolled out to greet the soldiers, calmly asked God to strike them blind, led them to the capital city 12 miles south, where they were then surrounded by Israel's army, and then asked God to restore their sight. Then he directed the Israelite king to feed them and send them on their way. And, for a while, the Arameans did not bother Israel.

Often, we look for sophisticated answers to the questions that life throws at us. These questions may include how to get past this latest and most difficult challenge; how to meet that financial need that is beyond anything we are capable of; or how to locate and thrive in God's purpose for us. While there is certainly valuable help to be found in books, classes, seminars, courses and the like; sometimes the biggest thing that stands in our way is that we do not believe that it is possible for that dream to become reality.

What we see in this story about Elisha is how prayer is key to dealing with that root cause. Once we can believe God, everything becomes possible – even an invisible army far beyond anything that the enemy can throw at us.

Intro credit: bible.org

Pilot text

2 Kgs 6:15-18 15 And when the servant of the man of God arose early and went out, there was an army, surrounding the city with horses and chariots. And his servant said to him, "Alas, my master! What shall we do?"

16 So he answered, "Do not fear, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them." 17 And Elisha prayed, and said, "Lord, I pray, open his eyes that he may see." Then the Lord opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw. And behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha. 18 So when the Syrians came down to him, Elisha prayed to the Lord, and said, "Strike this people, I pray, with blindness." And He struck them with blindness according to the word of Elisha.

What does the pilot text tell us about the role of prayer in dealing with unbelief?

- v15-16: **Prayer is a source of peace in place of panic.** We see two contrasting reactions in Elisha and his servant. While the servant panicked (Alas, what shall we do?!), Elisha was peaceful. Panic tends to crowd out faith, but peace creates an environment for faith to flourish. There is a virtuous cycle of faith and peace; faith brings peace, which then allows faith to flourish, and so on. The same is the case with panic and fear.
- V17: **Prayer opens our eyes to a spiritual reality that supercedes the natural.** It was only through (Elisha's) prayer that his servant was able to access the invisible army that was already at their disposal.
- v3-4: **Prayer helps us to see the reason(s) why we should believe God.** Through prayer, Elisha's servant received the exact knowledge (insight, revelation – take your pick) that he needed in order to believe God. Sometimes, our greatest barrier to believing God is that we cannot see past the challenges that lie in front of us.
- Questions for discussion (use scriptures to support your position):
 1. Through certain kinds of prayer we can change God's mind. Agree/disagree with reasons.
 2. There are some issues that cannot be overcome except with fasting and prayer. Agree/disagree with reasons.
 - 3.

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A woman once approached the famous preacher, G. Campbell Morgan, after he spoke and asked, "Do you think we should pray for even the little things in our lives, or just for the big things?" In his dignified British manner he replied, "Madam, can you think of anything in your life that is big to God?"

God is not just able to do beyond what we ask, but abundantly beyond. But that's not enough, He is able to do far more abundantly beyond what we ask. But, we still aren't to the limit: "Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us." Now, what is it that you need? I want to encourage you to pray in faith, asking God to do far beyond all that we can ask or think.

The one limiting factor in this picture is what we can ask or think. God is **able to do** far above all we can ask or think, but what **we actually see God do** is tied to what we are able to believe him for (ask or think). But how can we believe for something we have never seen, or cannot imagine?

To truly start to venture into the realms of what is actually possible with God, we need a supercharge, a boost to our imagination, to *what we can see*. We need to lift our imagination beyond what we know and are familiar with, into realms where we become vulnerable, uncomfortable, intimidated even. We need to look into the mind of God Himself, to see the impossible.

Intro credit: bible.org

Pilot text

1 Cor 2:9-12 9 But as it is written: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him."

10 But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. 11 For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. 12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.

Gen 15:5-6 5 Then He brought him outside and said, “Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them.” And He said to him, “So shall your descendants be.” 6 And he believed in the Lord, and He accounted it to him for righteousness.

Gen 22:17 17 blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies.

What do the pilot texts tell us about how to see the impossible?

- 1 Cor 2:9-12: **Look inwards** – Listen to **the voice of God** in your spirit. What does the Holy Spirit imprint in your heart via the scriptures? What prophetic words have resonated in your spirit, in tune with God’s word in the scriptures and what He has been speaking to you?
- Gen 15:5-6: **Look upwards** – Look up into the spirit realm, into the heavens where you are seated with Christ. In the place of prayer, ask God to open and focus your eyes so that you can access new realms of possibility. Ask God to “Open my eyes, so that I can see that which my eye has not seen, my ear heard, or that has previously entered into my heart” (1 Cor 2:9-12).
- Gen 22:17: **Look outwards** – see what God has already done (sometimes in other people’s lives). God used both stars in the sky and sand on the seashore as examples of His promise to Abraham. If the stars in the sky (upwards) seem too far away and unattainable, the sand on the seashore is much closer to you and your circumstances.
- Questions for discussion (use scriptures to support your position):
 1. How can we tell the difference between a God-given dream or vision, and a personal desire?
 2. What is the difference between “looking outwards” as used in this study, and being covetous? [Look at the dictionary definition for more information]