

Going Deeper

Your weekly guide to understanding God with others

Encounter - From this day forward

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Introduction

Leaning on a walking stick with many months of rehab ahead, Andrew, a Team Crossway member, shared in church about the choices confronting him in the wake of a traumatic car accident. He could follow the path of depression, or he could lean in to God and see how God would use his experience. Andrew challenged us, reminding us that we all face choices with the circumstances life has thrown our way. Choose life in Christ – and see what God will show you or teach you through your unique situation.

Read Mark 9:14-29 (focus on verse 23)

Discuss

1. In today's passage, the young boy's future hung in the balance. What made the difference? Discuss the father's response in verse 24. Can you relate to his cry for help and the need to overcome unbelief?
2. After the boy was delivered from demons he could truly say his best days were ahead of him. All of us will face struggles in our lives, and sometimes we settle for the status quo, doubting that things will improve. Quoting verse 23, pastor Stuart reminded us that "the best days are before you, if you will yet believe." What steps can we take to believe this for our future?
3. Some miracles take place in an instant, while others unfold over time and may be years in the making. Modern culture does not engender the patience to wait or persevere in faith for God's answer in God's time. How can we not lose hope while taking steps of faith towards a better future?

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4. Pastor Stuart said, "God does not expect a miracle from you, but He expects you to expect a miracle from Him... you will see miracles if you believe." What is the unbelief that gets in the way of our belief? What is the difference between expecting a miracle and craving a miracle?
5. Note that the man's plea to Jesus in verse 24 was to "help ME overcome..." Why is that significant? How did Jesus respond to the man's plea? Note that the situation seemed to get worse before Jesus revealed the outcome. Can you relate to that in your own experience?
6. Read Luke 9:23. Following Jesus is not a half-hearted commitment (consider Deuteronomy 6:5), it requires everything. How does this effect our future and what we are prepared to deny ourself as an expression of our faith?

Respond

Whilst there is no condemnation in Christ, there is the conviction of the Holy Spirit. Thus, it is possible to be content and thankful, while also being challenged to press into God and to know more of Him and His power at work in and through our lives. Be encouraged to hold expectations of God as an expression of your faith from this day forward. Start by choosing one need to believe God for. Be willing to persist in prayer and take steps of faith towards it until you have God's response.