ROOTED IN CHRIST · SEVEN-DAY DEVOTIONAL

There is room for faith that feels small.

Bring uncertainty and unanswered questions to God through Scripture and honest prayer.

Full Bible passages · Guided prayer · A practical step each day

A little encouragement before you begin. You do not have to manufacture certainty. Start with an honest prayer and the next faithful step.

Faith resources · Rooted in Christ · 7-day journey

For Christians who feel uncertain, disappointed, spiritually dry or unsettled by unanswered prayer. Practise honest trust rooted in God's character rather than treating emotional certainty as the measure of faith.

Begin the study · Start the seven-day devotional · Ask for prayer or a conversation

> Immediately the father of the child cried out with tears, "I believe. Help my unbelief!"
>
> *Mark 9:24, World English Bible British Edition*

Go deeper: the Bible study and group discussion

Faith can speak honestly

Read Mark 9:14–29 and Psalm 13, printed below. The father brings mixed belief to Jesus, while the psalmist puts distress into prayer. Neither passage commends pretence. Faith is directed towards God, not towards your ability to feel fearless. Name the question, grief or disappointment you carry. Do not assume that a struggle with confidence means you have lost the right to pray. Honesty opens a conversation that religious performance keeps closed.

Read promises within their setting

Hebrews 11:32–40 includes remarkable deliverances and people who suffered without receiving rescue in this life. It will not support the claim that strong faith guarantees a particular outcome by a particular date. Look at who a promise addresses and what the surrounding passage says. Christians trust God's faithfulness without pretending to know everything he will do in an individual situation.

Choose the next faithful action

James 2:14–18 and Romans 10:14–17 connect hearing the good news with faith expressed

in action. That may mean telling the truth, asking forgiveness, returning to Scripture or accepting help. Do not try to manufacture a miracle to prove you believe. Choose a small action consistent with what you already understand of Jesus, then share your questions with someone who listens well.

Discuss and apply

1. What is the difference between trusting God and feeling certain?
2. How does Psalm 13 give language for disappointment?
3. What does Hebrews 11 prevent us from promising other people?
4. Which promise have you been reading without its context?
5. What is one faithful action available to you today?

Your practical exercise: Write a prayer in three honest sentences: God, this is what hurts; This is what I understand about your character; This is the next faithful step I will take. Choose a verse and read the paragraph around it. Mark what it promises and what it does not promise. Review your prayer with a trusted person rather than grading the strength of your feelings.

For leaders and supporters: Listen before offering explanations. Do not tell someone that illness, bereavement or poverty proves weak faith. Mark 9 is not a basis for diagnosing modern medical symptoms as demonic. Questions that carry trauma or severe distress may need qualified support alongside pastoral conversation.

Seven days of Bible reading and prayer

Read each full passage, consider the reflection, pray and choose one manageable action. Declarations are optional, Scripture-shaped expressions of trust and commitment. They are not new revelation or a guarantee of healing, wealth or an outcome by a deadline. Bible texts are from public-domain World English Bible editions, identified below.

Day 1: A prayer with mixed feelings

Read Mark 9:14–29 — WEB British Edition.

> [14] Coming to the disciples, he saw a great multitude around them, and scribes questioning them. [15] Immediately all the multitude, when they saw him, were greatly amazed, and running to him, greeted him. [16] He asked the scribes, “What are you asking them?”
>
> [17] One of the multitude answered, “Teacher, I brought to you my son, who has a mute spirit; [18] and wherever it seizes him, it throws him down; and he foams at the mouth,

> grinds his teeth, and becomes rigid. I asked your disciples to cast it out, and they weren't able."
>
> [19] He answered him, "Unbelieving generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him to me."
>
> [20] They brought him to him, and when he saw him, immediately the spirit convulsed him and he fell on the ground, wallowing and foaming at the mouth.
>
> [21] He asked his father, "How long has it been since this has been happening to him?"
>
> He said, "From childhood. [22] Often it has cast him both into the fire and into the water to destroy him. But if you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us."
>
> [23] Jesus said to him, "If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes."
>
> [24] Immediately the father of the child cried out with tears, "I believe. Help my unbelief!"
>
> [25] When Jesus saw that a multitude came running together, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to him, "You mute and deaf spirit, I command you, come out of him, and never enter him again!"
>
> [26] After crying out and convulsing him greatly, it came out of him. The boy became like one dead, so much that most of them said, "He is dead." [27] But Jesus took him by the hand and raised him up; and he arose.
>
> [28] When he had come into the house, his disciples asked him privately, "Why couldn't we cast it out?"
>
> [29] He said to them, "This kind can come out by nothing but by prayer and fasting."

Reflect: The father's request is not polished confidence. He brings his limited faith to Jesus rather than hiding it. Your prayer can hold longing and uncertainty together. This account is not a formula for diagnosing illness or forcing an outcome; its focus is dependence on Jesus rather than self-sufficient religious performance.

Consider: What are you afraid to admit in prayer?

Pray: Lord Jesus, I believe and I need help. Meet me in my questions, and teach me to rely on you without pretending to be strong. Amen.

Declare: I may bring imperfect faith to Jesus and ask for help.

Practise: Turn one hidden uncertainty into a plain sentence of prayer.

Day 2: How long, Lord?

Read Psalm 13 — WEB British Edition.

> For the Chief Musician. A Psalm by David.
>
> [1] How long, LORD? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me?
>
> [2] How long shall I take counsel in my soul, having sorrow in my heart every day? How long shall my enemy triumph over me?
>
> [3] Behold, and answer me, LORD, my God. Give light to my eyes, lest I sleep in death;
>
> [4] lest my enemy say, “I have prevailed against him;” lest my adversaries rejoice when I fall.
>
> [5] But I trust in your loving kindness. My heart rejoices in your salvation.
>
> [6] I will sing to the LORD, because he has been good to me.

Reflect: The psalm moves through complaint, request and trust, but it does not tell us how quickly feelings changed. Lament gives words to a relationship under strain. You need not remove the difficult opening lines to reach the hopeful ending. Tell God what the waiting is actually like and let the whole prayer speak.

Consider: Which line resembles your experience most closely?

Pray: Father, hear the questions I have repeated for a long time. Keep me from isolation and help me pray truthfully while I wait. Amen.

Declare: Honest lament belongs in my relationship with God.

Practise: Write a short lament with a request for help.

Day 3: Promises and their context

Read Hebrews 11:32–40 — WEB Updated.

> [32] What more shall I say? For the time would fail me if I told of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, and the prophets— [33] who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked out righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, [34] quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness were made strong, grew mighty in war, and caused foreign armies to flee. [35] Women received their dead by resurrection. Others were tortured, not accepting their deliverance, that they might

> obtain a better resurrection. [36] Others were tried by mocking and scourging, yes, moreover by bonds and imprisonment. [37] They were stoned. They were sawn apart. They were tempted. They were slain with the sword. They went around in sheep skins and in goat skins; being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated— [38] of whom the world was not worthy—wandering in deserts, mountains, caves, and the holes of the earth.
>
> [39] These all, having been commended for their faith, didn't receive the promise, [40] God having provided some better thing concerning us, so that apart from us they should not be made perfect.

Reflect: The chapter honours both people delivered from danger and people who endured terrible suffering. Faith cannot be measured by visible success alone. Refuse the burden of believing that every painful result proves spiritual failure. God's final faithfulness is larger than the outcome of a single circumstance.

Consider: Have you judged your faith only by results?

Pray: Faithful God, steady me when outcomes confuse me. Help me read your word responsibly and stop making suffering a verdict on another person's faith. Amen.

Declare: Visible success is not the only measure of faithfulness.

Practise: Read one favourite promise with the verses before and after it.

Day 4: Hearing before striving

Read Romans 10:8–17 — WEB British Edition.

> [8] But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart;" that is, the word of faith which we preach: [9] that if you will confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.
>
> [10] For with the heart one believes resulting in righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made resulting in salvation. [11] For the Scripture says, "Whoever believes in him will not be disappointed."
>
> [12] For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, and is rich to all who call on him. [13] For, "Whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved." [14] How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in him whom they have not heard? How will they hear without a preacher? [15] And how will they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the Good News of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things!"

> [16] But they didn’t all listen to the glad news. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed
> our report?” [17] So faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Reflect: Paul places faith in relation to the message about Christ. Growth is not only trying harder to feel spiritual. Return to the content of the good news: who Jesus is and what he has done. Let regular, thoughtful reading replace a frantic search for the next dramatic reassurance.

Consider: What message have you been feeding your trust?

Pray: God, open my understanding as I read about Jesus. Let your good news shape me more deeply than fear, noise or comparison. Amen.

Declare: I will nourish faith with the truth about Christ, not constant spiritual pressure.

Practise: Read a Gospel paragraph slowly and note what it reveals about Jesus.

Day 5: Trust takes a practical form

Read James 2:14–18 — World English Bible.

> [14] What good is it, my brothers, if a man says he has faith, but has no works? Can faith
> save him? [15] And if a brother or sister is naked and in lack of daily food, [16] and one of
> you tells them, “Go in peace. Be warmed and filled;” yet you didn’t give them the
> things the body needs, what good is it? [17] Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead in
> itself. [18] Yes, a man will say, “You have faith, and I have works.” Show me your faith
> without works, and I will show you my faith by my works.

Reflect: James challenges a claim to faith that ignores a neighbour’s need. This is not earning salvation; it is allowing trust to become love. A modest act of service may express faith more honestly than impressive religious language. Choose something within your capacity rather than promising more than you can sustain.

Consider: What practical kindness fits your present capacity?

Pray: Lord, let my trust become useful love. Show me one need I can meet without pretending to be everyone’s rescuer. Amen.

Declare: With God’s help my faith will express itself in practical love.

Practise: Complete one quiet act of care today.

Day 6: Contentment while circumstances remain

Read Philippians 4:10–13 — WEB British Edition.

> [10] But I rejoice in the Lord greatly that now at length you have revived your thought for me; in which you did indeed take thought, but you lacked opportunity. [11] Not that I speak because of lack, for I have learnt in whatever state I am, to be content in it. [12] I know how to be humbled, and I also know how to abound. In any and all circumstances I have learnt the secret both to be filled and to be hungry, both to abound and to be in need. [13] I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

Reflect: Paul's confidence in Christ appears within his account of both plenty and need. The passage is not a promise that you can achieve every ambition. It is strength to remain faithful through changing circumstances. Ask what steadiness and wise help would look like in the situation you actually face.

Consider: What do you need strength to face rather than escape?

Pray: Christ, strengthen me for today's responsibilities and limits. Help me receive support and remain faithful when circumstances are not what I hoped. Amen.

Declare: Christ can sustain my faithfulness in both abundance and need.

Practise: Name one responsibility and one limit before planning your day.

Day 7: Remember without exaggerating

Read Psalm 77:1–15 — WEB Classic.

> For the Chief Musician. To Jeduthun. A Psalm by Asaph.
>
> [1] My cry goes to God! Indeed, I cry to God for help, and for him to listen to me.
>
> [2] In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord. My hand was stretched out in the night, and didn't get tired. My soul refused to be comforted.
>
> [3] I remember God, and I groan. I complain, and my spirit is overwhelmed. Selah.
>
> [4] You hold my eyelids open. I am so troubled that I can't speak.
>
> [5] I have considered the days of old, the years of ancient times.
>
> [6] I remember my song in the night. I consider in my own heart; my spirit diligently inquires:
>
> [7] "Will the Lord reject us forever? Will he be favorable no more?

> [8] Has his loving kindness vanished forever? Does his promise fail for generations?
>
> [9] Has God forgotten to be gracious? Has he, in anger, withheld his compassion?” Selah.
>
> [10] Then I thought, “I will appeal to this: the years of the right hand of the Most High.”
>
> [11] I will remember Yah’s deeds; for I will remember your wonders of old.
>
> [12] I will also meditate on all your work, and consider your doings.
>
> [13] Your way, God, is in the sanctuary. What god is great like God?
>
> [14] You are the God who does wonders. You have made your strength known among the peoples.
>
> [15] You have redeemed your people with your arm, the sons of Jacob and Joseph. Selah.

Reflect: The psalmist recalls God’s works while still carrying distress. Remembering is not rewriting your story so that every season looks easy. Notice genuine help, people who stayed and truths that endured. Gratitude can stand beside unanswered questions. Bring both into the next season rather than pretending the journey is complete.

Consider: What can you honestly remember with gratitude?

Pray: God, help me remember your faithfulness without denying my pain. Give me companions and courage for the next step of trust. Amen.

Declare: I will remember God’s goodness honestly and continue bringing him my questions.

Practise: Record one real encouragement and one question for further conversation.

Your next step

Continue with Learning to Pray When Words Are Hard, explore the Doubt and Questions route, or request a pastoral conversation. You can take the next step at your own pace.

Continue with a prayer guide

Bring your questions and hopes to God through these guided prayers.

- The Doubter’s Prayer
- The Possibilities Prayer

Explore the complete twelve-day prayer journey

Looking for a practical starting point? Read What to Do When You're Struggling to Believe God for five practical responses to difficult questions and a shorter seven-day reading plan.

Original ANCC Rooted in Christ study. Scripture sources: WEB British Edition; Hebrews 11, WEB Updated; James 2, WEB; Psalm 77, WEB Classic. These editions are public domain. All daily passages are reproduced above. Use your browser's Print menu to print or save this page as a PDF.