

ECHO CHURCH
No Games. No Gimmicks. Just God.

Authorized but Unable

A 6-Day Devotional on Coming Down From the Mountain and Staying Dependent

Week of Monday, September 28, 2026

On Sunday we came down the mountain with the disciples and watched them meet something their authority could not move. Jesus did not take their calling back. He exposed their dependence. This week we let that same light fall on our own lives. Each morning give it a few honest minutes. Read the passage, sit with the reflection, then answer plainly. The goal is not to feel more capable. The goal is to become more dependent on the God who authorized you in the first place.

One line will follow us all week: The authority came from Him, and so must the power.

The Test Is at the Bottom of the Mountain

Encounters reveal who God is. Ordinary days reveal whether you learned to trust Him.

Matthew 17:14 NKJV

"And when they had come to the multitude, a man came to Him, kneeling down to Him and saying,"

Jesus, Peter, James, and John had just come down from the Mount of Transfiguration. There was glory up there. Revelation. The voice of the Father from the cloud. And the very next scene is a desperate father, a suffering boy, nine frustrated disciples, arguing scribes, and a crowd. Scripture keeps doing this. Revelation is followed by responsibility. Moses came down from Sinai into a golden calf. The mountain is not the test. The valley is.

This is what happens after Sunday. You can worship with everything in you, hear God clearly, and leave strengthened. Then Monday introduces you to something that is not impressed by what happened to you yesterday. The mountain says God is powerful. The valley asks whether you know how to walk in what you experienced.

So do not measure this week by how you felt in the service. Measure it by what happens when you get to the bottom of the hill and life is waiting there, unmoved. That is not God abandoning you. That is God teaching you to carry the mountain into the valley.

The real test of an encounter with God is what happens when you come down from the mountain.

REFLECT

Where has this week already tested something you felt sure of on Sunday?

What would it look like to bring the mountain into the valley instead of leaving it behind?

PRAY

Father, thank You for the mountain. Now teach me how to walk it out in the valley. When Monday meets me with something that will not move, keep me steady in what You showed me. Amen.

Authorized Is Not the Same as Matured

You can be called and still need development.

Matthew 17:16 NKJV

"So I brought him to Your disciples, but they could not cure him."

The father did the reasonable thing. He brought his son to the men who represented Jesus, the men Jesus had already authorized. In Matthew 10:1, Jesus gave them power over unclean spirits and to heal all kinds of sickness. So this is not a story about people who lacked permission. They had authority. And still, they could not. They did not refuse. They tried what they had been empowered to do and met resistance.

That gives us a sobering distinction. Authority is not the same thing as maturity in the use of authority. You can be called and still need development. You can be gifted and still need formation. You can be authorized and still discover places where your dependence on God has grown thin. A moment of inability does not prove an absence of calling. Sometimes it reveals where your calling requires deeper dependence.

If something God clearly gave you is not working right now, resist the rush to hand back the assignment. The gap is usually not permission. It is formation. God is not asking whether you are authorized. He is developing how you carry it.

A moment of inability does not prove an absence of calling.

REFLECT

Where have you been treating a struggle as proof that God never called you?

What might God be developing in you through the very thing that is not working yet?

PRAY

Lord, I confess I sometimes read my struggle as disqualification. Grow me where I am still immature. Do not let me hand back what You assigned just because I have not yet learned to carry it. Amen.

DAY THREE | WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 30

When the Crowd Is Watching

Do not let people who are watching you struggle interpret your calling.

Matthew 17:14 and 16 NKJV

"And when they had come to the multitude... So I brought him to Your disciples, but they could not cure him."

Mark tells us the disciples were surrounded by a crowd and arguing with scribes when Jesus arrived. So this was not just a hard moment. It was public, contested, and embarrassing. They tried and nothing happened. They tried again and nothing happened. The father was watching. The boy was suffering. The scribes were forming arguments. The crowd was forming opinions.

There is a particular pressure that comes when something you believe God called you to do is not working in front of people. That is where many believers begin to doubt the assignment. Maybe God did not call me. Maybe I misunderstood. Maybe I do not have what I thought I had. But notice the crowd was never given the authority to define the disciples. Only Jesus could do that, and He never revoked their assignment. He corrected their dependence.

Do not let a crowd interpret your calling. The people watching you struggle may assume the struggle proves you lack authority. It does not. When it does not work in public, do not abandon in public what God told you in private. Take it back to Jesus and ask what it is exposing in you.

Do not let a crowd interpret your calling.

REFLECT

Whose watching eyes have been shaping how you feel about your calling lately?

What has God said in private that you need to hold, even when it is not working in public?

PRAY

God, quiet the crowd in my head. You authorized me, and only You get to define me. Give me the courage to keep believing what You told me in private, even when it has not yet shown up in public. Amen.

DAY FOUR | THURSDAY, OCTOBER 1

Stop Disguising Unbelief as Humility

Humility questions your independence. Unbelief questions God's ability.

Matthew 17:17 NKJV

"Then Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him here to Me."

Jesus uses severe covenant language here, the same kind spoken over Israel at Kadesh when they looked at the obstacle instead of the God who had already proven Himself. That tells us something. Unbelief is not only atheism. You can believe in God and still function as though everything depends on you. You can believe God is powerful and still lean on your own experience.

The father in this story models the opposite. He came saying, Lord, have mercy. Not entitlement. Dependence. And here is the trap we fall into: we confuse humility with unbelief. Humility says, I cannot do this without God. Unbelief says, because I cannot see how God will do this, maybe God cannot do it. Humility admits your limitation and still trusts God's capacity. Unbelief takes your limitation and quietly projects it onto God.

Sometimes we call something humility when it is really unbelief. I do not want to get my hopes up. I am probably not qualified. Maybe I should not expect too much. It all sounds humble. But humility never makes God smaller so we can feel safer. Biblical humility says, I am not enough, but God is.

Humility never questions God's ability. It questions our independence.

REFLECT

Where have you dressed up unbelief in humble language this season? Name the sentence you tell yourself.

What would change if your humility lowered your self-reliance instead of your expectation of God?

PRAY

Father, expose the unbelief I have been calling humility. I am not enough, but You are. Let me lower my dependence on myself without ever lowering my expectation of You. Amen.

Measure the Mountain by Your God

The question is not how big your faith is. It is what your faith is connected to.

Matthew 17:20 NKJV

"So Jesus said to them, Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, Move from here to there, and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you."

We usually misread the mustard seed. Jesus is not praising tiny faith, as if the point were that you barely need to believe. The mustard seed is an image of faith that is genuine and alive. Something can start small and still carry life. Then He sets that seed beside a mountain, the smallest thing in their imagination against the largest thing in their landscape. And do not miss where they are standing. When He says this mountain, they are at the foot of the one they just came down from.

So the real question is not how big is your faith. It is what is your faith connected to. Faith does not draw its power from emotional intensity. It draws its power from the God it trusts. You can have enormous confidence in the wrong thing and accomplish nothing. Or you can have trembling, mustard seed confidence placed in an enormous God.

Here is where we get it backward. We stare at the mountain until the mountain sets the size of our faith. Jesus teaches us to let God set the size of the mountain. The mountain says, look how big I am. Faith says, look at Who sent me. You do not need faith as large as your mountain. You need genuine faith in the God who stands above it.

You do not need faith as large as your mountain. You need faith in the God above it.

REFLECT

What mountain has been setting the size of your faith instead of the other way around?

What is your faith actually resting in right now, your own ability or the God above the mountain?

PRAY

God, I have been staring at the mountain until it looked bigger than You. Reset my eyes. Let my small, living faith rest fully in You, the One who stands above everything in front of me. Amen.

DAY SIX | SATURDAY, OCTOBER 3

The Enemy of Your Next Level Is Your Last Success

Delegated authority must stay connected to dependent communion.

Matthew 17:21 NKJV

"However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting."

Prayer is not a formula. Fasting is not currency we spend to buy more power. Both confront self reliance. Prayer says, God, I need You. Fasting says, my appetites do not control me. And notice Jesus did not stop to pray or fast before He healed the boy. This was never about a ritual performed in the moment. It is about a life lived in communion. The disciples' deeper problem was that they had started operating on delegated authority without maintaining dependent communion.

That is dangerous, because sometimes the greatest enemy of your next level of dependence is your last level of success. You prayed because you did not know what to do. Then God taught you what to do. Eventually you got so comfortable doing it that you stopped praying. And then God permitted a mountain. Not to embarrass you, but to remind you the authority came from Him in the first place.

So as the week closes, look at what you have gotten good at, and ask whether you are still praying about it. The place you feel most competent may be the place your communion has quietly gone thin. Return there first. Keep the gift connected to the Giver.

Sometimes the greatest enemy of your next level of dependence is your last level of success.

REFLECT

Where have you grown so competent that you stopped praying about it?

What is one area of proven success you will bring back into honest, dependent communion this week?

PRAY

Lord, I do not want yesterday's success to become today's self-reliance. Where I stopped praying because I got comfortable, draw me back. Keep the gift tied to You, the Giver. I cannot do this without You. Amen.

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A CLOSING WORD

Six days ago you came down the mountain and found something that would not move. You have walked the whole scene: the public struggle, the mislabeled humility, the mountain that tried to set the size of your faith, and the communion that had quietly gone thin. The lesson was never that you lost your authority. It is that authority was always meant to stay dependent. So keep the grip on the Giver, and carry the mountain into the valley.

Authority tells you what God said you could do. Dependence keeps you able to do it.

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