

A few weeks ago, I think it was the last time I had an opportunity to teach, we learned about overcoming unbelief, part one.

And so, just to get back in the groove of what we're doing, we're going to start off along the same lines of that previous teaching. We're going to take a look at what is unbelief.

Remember, there are two words in the Greek New Testament for unbelief.

There's one that relates to the word pistia, which is the word translated most commonly as "faith", and it's prefixed by the letter "a", a negation: apistia. It means: not being convinced enough to be able to do the Word, it's not being convinced enough to be able to act on it, to obey. You might possibly be willing to do the Word. You might say, "I really want to, but I just don't know enough. I just ... I haven't ... I'm not able. I want to, but I can't. Because I don't know enough."

Or perhaps you know how to drive, but nobody taught you how to turn the car on. Wrong teaching, or they taught you that you needed to cross the wires to turn it on. That's wrong teaching.

So, it has to do with the knowledge level, not the willingness. That's apistia.

Then there's another one, which perhaps you've come across in the English language, as apathy. But it doesn't really communicate the way the Greek does. because it comes from the word peitho, which is to be convinced, to be absolutely convinced, to be positive and have a logical buildup of what is there. But when you put "a" in front of that, it becomes apeitheia. And apeitheia is to be convinced that you're not going to. It's against, to be convinced against, or perhaps it is just plain stubbornness. It's a willful decision to not do, a willful decision to not act right, to not obey, to rebel. That's apeitheia.

So, we have the two words meaning unbelief. Why would we care about overcoming it? Sometimes ignorance is bliss, right? Well, that's what we think.

But, we're gonna take a look at a couple of scriptures here, and we'll reconstruct why we want to overcome unbelief.

Matthew 13:58

58 And he [*Jesus Christ*] did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief [apistia].

They didn't know enough. See, they knew Jesus Christ as being the illegitimate son of Joseph, the carpenter. They did not know Jesus Christ as the Son of God. So, they didn't believe that he had the authority to do the mighty works. It was unbelief because of a lack of knowledge.

And what was the result? The mighty works of God were not performed.

Oh, that's a good reason to get rid of unbelief, because we want to see God's mighty works evident.

And you have to remember, that when God created man, he gave him free will. If a man's will is not there to receive God's works, God's not going to force them on him. God will never violate our free will.

Here's another reason why we want to overcome unbelief.

Titus 1:15

15 Unto the pure all things [are] pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving [is] nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled.

Remember, this is where we find that unbelief taints, it taints to your perception of things. It skews the way you see things, maybe to the point where you can't even see what's true and right. So it's very beneficial to get rid of unbelief, because it helps us to get a true and undistorted view of what's in the world. Instead of having the privacy glass that distorts the view, we can't see what's behind it, we'll have the clear, precision optics.

Get rid of the unbelief.

Hebrews 4:6 gives us one more reason to get rid of unbelief.

Hebrews 4:6

6 Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief:

This is talking about the children of Israel entering the promised land. But they didn't believe, the ones that first came out of Egypt, they didn't believe appropriately, so they couldn't receive what was theirs.

If you don't believe it, you can't receive it.

Remember, believing equals receiving, unbelieving equals not receiving. Makes sense.

We want to be able to receive what God has for us, to receive His promises. So we want to get rid of our unbelief so that we can receive.

Well, many times we come across unbelief, and we have trouble figuring it out. Unbelief at its root is due to one, or more, of three major reasons. We've touched on most of them, but you can find these if you look in your Power for Abundant Living book on page 59. Chapters three and four talk about believing and unbelief.

One of the biggest reasons we talked about is ignorance, not knowing enough. Simply not knowing what is available is a big blockage to believing.

The second one is wrong teaching or wrong information. That leads to believing wrongly, or inconsistently with what is truly available.

The third one is fear. Fear comes into play when there's a perception that there's going to be some consequence that's undesirable; punishment, disappointment, a crushing rejection. There's fear that comes in there, and fear is sand in the machinery of life. It will result in an inability to receive what you know is yours.

If you have a beautiful car sitting on the street. And it is fast. It is so smooth. It is the very best. It's a joy to drive and to ride in. But you are paralyzed with fear that you are going to have an accident if you ever get behind the wheel. Are you ever going to be able to enjoy that car? No.

It's the same way with God and His Word. If you have fear, it will keep you from receiving what God's Word has for you, what God has designed for you.

So, how do we overcome it?

Wrong teaching may be overcome by right teaching. Wrong teaching is overcome by right teaching. And we get the right teaching from God's Word, from people that know what is right. That could be you speaking to somebody else.

Ignorance may be corrected or overcome by instruction in righteousness. Well, instruction.

Fear. That leaves us with fear. How do you overcome fear? Fear is overcome by the application of love. You can reverse many of the reasons why fear is there with proper teaching, but ultimately fear is eliminated by the love of God in the renewed mind in manifestation. That is what we'll do. So, we're getting right into how to eliminate fear in others, and in us too.

1 John 4:17,18

17 Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world.

18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.

That word "perfect" that occurs a couple times in there, means "complete", "mature", nothing lacking. We've had several teachings in the past about what that perfect love looks like. I'm not going to go into that, we don't have time to do that *and* the rest of this. But that perfect love in manifestation casts out fear.

When we have somebody else that is not receiving, they're not believing, they have unbelief, many times it's because there is fear stopping it. And our patient application of God's love can help to open up the gates that allow His Word, to heal them, because it dispels the fear.

Another way that we help to dispel unbelief in others, is that we provide the example. This fits so very well with our theme for this year, where we shine as lights in the world.

2 Corinthians 4:1-7

1 Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not;
2 But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.
3 But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost [*other people*]:
4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.
5 For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.
6 For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to [give] the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.
7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.

Do you see how it is us living the Word? Us, not just saying what the Word says, but acting like it, that shines so brilliantly? We. Just. Shine.

We are faithful to speak, and to do truth. That helps others too.

Do you remember that parable in Matthew, I think it's Matthew 13, where there were the seeds that were scattered. And some of them went on the path, on the wayside, and they were snatched up by the birds. Some of them, they went on stony ground and that Word took root, sort of, but then died out because of stones. Or in the thorns that were choked by the cares of the world. Others fell on good ground.

Well, the way you get good ground out of stony ground, as any New England farmer will tell you, is you have to de-stone it. Yeah, you go in there and you root out the hard knots of stone. Stones or just dirt that is so tightly packed that it has no room for water, seeds, or anything else, in a sense.

Well by, yes, soaking them in the love of God, and surrounding them by the light of God's Word, we help others to "de-stone", to root out the wrong concepts, the unbelief, so that the true Word can take root and grow. That takes time. It takes effort. It takes patience. It takes diligence. And it takes faithfulness.

But what else are we gonna do with our lives? Right?

So, we help others to de-stone the fields of their minds, so that the Word can take root. And we don't give up. We're patient, yet we're gentle. We don't want to uproot everything, their entire life, just trying to get that one big stone out. We're gentle. Some disruption is gonna happen, but we make it as gentle as we can.

And we don't back down, or change the declaration of truth. Don't compromise on the truth, just because they don't believe it. But also, we're not combative.

This reminds me about witnessing yesterday. I was at the Farmers Market and encountered a gentleman and his family selling popped lily pad seeds. Yep, strange little things, kind of like popcorn without the kernel. And I asked him where he was from.

He says, "Oh, I'm from India."

And as we went through the conversation I said, "Are you a Christian?"

He says, "No, I'm Hindu."

So, okay, I've known some other Indians and everything. I didn't push him on his religion. This is my first contact. I don't want to alienate him by saying, "Oh, you're not a Christian. Then you're doomed."

No. Instead, we build the relationship. And we work to build right believing in place of wrong teaching. We allow God's Word to do the work.

And many times when you have a big stone in a field that you want to get out, you soak it with water. Allow the ground to soften. And then the stone almost floats out. It takes some effort yet, because it's heavy, but it's much easier to get out than trying to chisel it out with a pickaxe and shovel.

Another way we overcome unbelief in others, is by speaking and teaching the truth.

Romans 10:8-15

8 But what saith it? The word is nigh [*near*] thee, [even] in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith [*believing*], which we preach;

9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

11 For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed [*disappointed in their expectations*].

12 For there is no difference between the Jew [*Judean*] and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.

13 For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

14 How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher [*somebody that is speaking, and saying, and declaring who Jesus Christ is and what he's done*]?

15 And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!

You would think they'd say, "how beautiful is the tongue and lips", wouldn't you? But it's the feet that are beautiful, because the feet carry you from where you're at, to where they are. It's not that you're speaking and preaching, it's who you're speaking and preaching to.

Romans 10:16,17

16 But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias [*Isaiah*] saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?

17 So then faith [*believing*] [cometh] by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

It's not just "any" hearing. Any hearing is where we got into the unbelief problem to begin with, because they heard things that were not true, mixed with a little bit of truth, maybe. It's hearing the Word of God. We speak and we teach that truth.

Psalms 40. I love this psalm of David. David was known as a man after God's own heart. And this psalm has some expressions of truth that are just so good.

Psalms 40:3

3 And he [*God*] hath put a new song in my mouth, [even] praise unto our God: many shall see [it], and fear [*respect*], and shall trust in the LORD.

It is because of the witness that you are of God's goodness and grace to you, that others will respect and come to trust God.

Psalms 40:9,10

9 I have preached righteousness in the great congregation: lo, I have not refrained my lips, O LORD, thou knowest.

10 I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart; I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation: I have not concealed thy lovingkindness and thy truth from the great congregation.

That's someone that is open and willing to testify of what God has done for them, of the promises being fulfilled, of the truth of the Word prevailing. And it builds believing and destroys unbelief.

So, when we eliminate, overcome unbelief, in ourselves and in others, what is it that it does for us?

Philippians 4:13

13 I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

Yes! When we eradicate unbelief in ourselves and others, we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us.

When we remove, eradicate that unbelief, we've removed fear from our lives, we've rightly learned, and we know what pleases our Heavenly Father, and we act on it. Then we also remove limits on our ability to see God's Word come to pass.

Look at Matthew 17:20. Here Jesus is speaking about why his disciples couldn't do the things that they thought were right, getting rid of a devil spirit.

Matthew 17:20

20 And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye

have faith [*believing*] as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and **nothing** shall be impossible unto you.

What kind of thing? **Nothing**. You know I love that word. It's no thing. No thing, shall be impossible unto you if you have that believing. That's right. That's true. That's pure.

We remove the limits on our ability to see God's Word come to pass, to see signs, miracles and wonders. This is what it is that we do when we soak people in God's love. It tenderizes them to where they can see the truth of God's Word.

A number of years ago when we were in Iowa. We had a landlord that wasn't so great. But the location was perfect. Because next door to us we had a truck driver, and his companion that were unbelievers.

They did not believe. They would not have anything to do with church, God, or anything else, and they let us know. But yet, my loving wife would go over and visit with the young woman. "Young" woman, she's older than us. She'd go over and she'd visit with her, and she would just be steadfast and sure. Uncompromising on the Word, but loving in all that she did.

And eventually, the woman said, "You know, if I ever do decide to go to church, or to consider this, I think I probably would be going to where you're at."

This is loosening the rocks of unbelief. And eventually she took the foundational class, and the intermediate class, and now is preparing for the advanced class, along with her husband, who followed several years later. However, it was because of not being so harsh that we cannot love them where they're at, that they were able to be softened to God's Word. We were able to overcome their unbelief.

And we can do that more and more. The more people we have softening those around us, the more people will be able to believe, the more we'll see God's Word prevail.