

## THE TOP TEN GRACE KILLERS<sup>1</sup>

### GRACE KILLER #9 Doubt and Unbelief

#### 1. Doubt and unbelief are huge grace killers.

➤ **The greatest example of doubt and unbelief killing grace is that of salvation.**

- Even though by grace God has forgiven the sins of the whole world (1 Jn. 2:2) and is not holding them against them (2 Cor. 5:19), if people refuse to believe, they will not be saved. God WANTS them to be saved, but unless they believe, they won't be.

*John 8:24*

*Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins."*

➤ **Doubt and Unbelief can keep us from enjoying the provisions of His cross.**

- Jesus DIED to make us righteous, for example, but if we doubt that we are righteous, we will not be able to enjoy the gift of righteousness. Doubt and unbelief not only hinder us from enjoying what Jesus has done for us, but they nullify His cross.

*Galatians 2:21*

*I do not nullify the GRACE of God, for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain.*

➤ **In fact, unbelief and doubt can hinder our prayers and any promise of God.**

#### 2. DEFINITIONS

➤ **Why is faith so important?**

Faith is important, because we are saved by grace through faith, and without faith it is impossible to please God. Faith is our way of responding to His grace in every area of His kingdom.

➤ **Belief/Faith**

People sometimes wonder what is the difference between "faith" and "belief". The surprising answer is there is no difference in the Greek. Both words are "pistis". "Believe" is the verb form of "faith".

Faith = Belief

To have faith = To believe

➤ **Unbelief is "apistis"**

Strong's: apistia (ap-is-tee'-ah) faithlessness, that is, (negatively) disbelief (want of Christian faith), or (positively) unfaithfulness (disobedience): - unbelief.

**"Unbelief" refers to not believing in God or His ability/power.<sup>2</sup> Unbelief hinders God from doing miracles.**

*Mark 6:1-6*

*Then He went out from there and came to His own country, and His disciples followed Him. <sup>2</sup> And when the Sabbath had come, He began to teach in the synagogue. And many hearing Him were astonished, saying,*

<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise stated, all scripture is taken from the NKJV.

<sup>2</sup> Mat 13:58; Mar 6:6; Mar 9:24; Mar 16:14; Rom 3:3; Rom 4:20; Rom 11:20; Rom 11:23; 1Ti 1:13; Heb 3:12; Heb 3:19

## *Studies in Grace and Faith* THE TOP TEN GRACE KILLERS

“Where did this Man get these things? And what wisdom is this which is given to Him, that such mighty works are performed by His hands! <sup>3</sup> Is this not the carpenter, the Son of Mary, and brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon? And are not His sisters here with us?” So they were offended at Him.

<sup>4</sup> But Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor except in his own country, among his own relatives, and in his own house.” <sup>5</sup> **Now He could (dunamia) do no mighty work (dunamis) there, except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed them.** <sup>6</sup> **And He marveled because of their unbelief.**

**Vs. 5 Amplified 5 And He was not able to do even one work of power there, except that He laid His hands on a few sickly people [and] cured them.**

“Could” do no mighty work, Thayer Definition:

- 1) to be able, have power whether by virtue of one’s own ability and resources, or of a state of mind, or through favourable circumstances, or by permission of law or custom
- 2) to be able to do something
- 3) to be capable, strong and powerful

**THIS FREAKS PEOPLE OUT!** Some still believe that God can do whatever God wants to do because He is sovereign, but their view of sovereignty is warped. Yet, here we see Jesus. He **WANTED** to heal the people there, but He couldn’t. Why? What was stopping Him? Their unbelief. They did not believe He was anything more than the carpenter’s son. His ability to do mighty miracles for them was hindered.

➤ **Doubt, diakrino** (*dee-ak-ree'-no*) is to *withdraw* from, or *oppose*; to *discriminate* (by implication *decide*), or *hesitate*, *doubt*, *waver*

**Doubt has to do with having a divided judgment or opinion. It is to waver (go back and forth), to hesitate.**

*The word "doubt" is diakrinō. The word means "to judge between two," thus, a divided judgment, or a wavering doubt. -Wuest*

**While “unbelief” questions God’s ability to do a miracle, “doubt” goes back and forth as to whether or not He will (either by lack of knowledge or doubting God’s character/promise).**

### **James 1:5-8**

*If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. <sup>6</sup> But let him ask in faith (pistis), with no doubting (diakrino), for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind.<sup>7</sup> For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; <sup>8</sup> he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.*

**TRUTH:** *Without faith it is impossible to please God (Heb. 11:6). Faith comes to us by hearing the good news of what Jesus did on the cross (Rom. 10:17). When we confess what we believe, and do not doubt, we receive what God has promised (Mk. 11:22-24). Unbelief questions God’s power (Mk. 9:22) and doubt questions His character. Doubt and unbelief can hinder us from receiving God’s grace (James 1:6-8).*

**ERROR:** *It doesn't matter what we believe or if we doubt. God's gonna do what God's gonna do whether we believe Him or not.*<sup>3</sup>

God in His sovereignty has determined that "faith" is the way people get saved, and faith is the way people please God. Hebrews 11:6 reads, "And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him."

This same sovereign God in His infinite sovereignty tells us to ask, to seek, to knock (Lk. 11:9). He tells us we will receive from Him whatever we ask in prayer believing (Mt. 21:22). He says that whatever we ask the Father in Jesus name, He will do it (Jn. 16:23). He tells us we can have whatever we say (Mk. 11:23). He has made it so that if we believe, all things are possible to us (Mk. 9:23). In His sovereignty He has decided that if we abide in Him and His words in us, we can ask what we will or desire and it will be done (Jn. 15:7).<sup>4</sup>

### 3. Unbelief Gets in the Way of Receiving His Provisions and Promises

- a. **Unbelief will prevent a sinner from becoming a saint. God has never ZAPPED someone with salvation. It must be received by grace through FAITH/BELIEF.**

**John 3:18**

"He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."

- b. **Unbelief kept the Children of Israel from entering the Promised Land.**

**Hebrews 3:10**

So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

**Psalms 78:40-42**

<sup>40</sup> How often they provoked Him in the wilderness,  
And grieved Him in the desert!

<sup>41</sup> Yes, again and again they tempted God,  
And limited the Holy One of Israel.

<sup>42</sup> They did not remember His power:

The day when He redeemed them from the enemy,

- c. **Unbelief is the only force that kept Jesus from doing miracles.**

**Mark 6:4-6**

But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his own country, among his own relatives, and in his own house." **5** Now He could do no mighty work there, except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed them. **6** And He marveled because of their unbelief.

- d. **God sees unbelief as "evil", and doubt as being unstable and childlike.**

**Hebrews 3:12**

Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God.

**James 1:6-8**

But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. <sup>7</sup> For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; <sup>8</sup> he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

- e. **Doubt and unbelief hinder God's promises from happening.**

**Matthew 17:19-21**

<sup>3</sup> See also Grace Killer #8 Misunderstanding the Sovereignty of God, <http://graceandfaithministries.org/the-top-ten-grace-killers/>

<sup>4</sup> From the manuscript Healing Grace, C. D. Hildebrand

Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "Why could we not cast it out?" <sup>20</sup> So Jesus said to them, "Because of your unbelief."

**Mark 9:23**

All things *are* possible to him who believes.

**Mark 11:23**

For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says.

#### 4. It's interesting to note the types of faith spoken of in the Gospels.

- a. **Great Faith:** Faith that believes God is both willing and able. They KNOW without a doubt that He will do what they are asking/saying.

➤ **The Centurion**

**Matthew 8:5-10**

Now when Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to Him, pleading with Him,<sup>6</sup> saying, "Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, dreadfully tormented."

<sup>7</sup> And Jesus said to him, "I will come and heal him."

<sup>8</sup> The centurion answered and said, "Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof. But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed." <sup>9</sup> For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it."

<sup>10</sup> When Jesus heard it, He marveled, and said to those who followed, "Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel!"

➤ **The Woman Who Had Not Been Helped by Physicians**

**Mark 5:26-29, 34**

Now a certain woman had a flow of blood for twelve years, <sup>26</sup> and had suffered many things from many physicians. She had spent all that she had and was no better, but rather grew worse. <sup>27</sup> When she heard about Jesus, she came behind Him in the crowd and touched His garment. <sup>28</sup> For she said, "If only I may touch His clothes, I shall be made well."

<sup>29</sup> Immediately the fountain of her blood was dried up, and she felt in her body that she was healed of the affliction... <sup>34</sup> And He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be healed of your affliction."

- b. **Those who received a miracle of God's initiative**

➤ **The Widow of Nain**

**Luke 7:11-15**

Now it happened, the day after, that He went into a city called Nain; and many of His disciples went with Him, and a large crowd. <sup>12</sup> And when He came near the gate of the city, behold, a dead man was being carried out, the only son of his mother; and she was a widow. And a large crowd from the city was with her. <sup>13</sup> When the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her and said to her, "Do not weep." <sup>14</sup> Then He came and touched the open coffin, and those who carried him stood still. And He said, "Young man, I say to you, arise." <sup>15</sup> So he who was dead sat up and began to speak. And He presented him to his mother.

➤ **The Lame Man at the Temple Gate**

**Acts 3:1-9**

Now Peter and John went up together to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour. <sup>2</sup> And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms from those who entered the temple; <sup>3</sup> who, seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, asked for alms. <sup>4</sup> And fixing his eyes on him, with John, Peter said, "Look at us." <sup>5</sup> So he gave them his attention, expecting to receive something from them. <sup>6</sup> Then Peter said, "Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk." <sup>7</sup> And he took him by the right hand and lifted him up, and immediately his feet and ankle bones

received strength. <sup>8</sup> So he, leaping up, stood and walked and entered the temple with them—walking, leaping, and praising God. <sup>9</sup> And all the people saw him walking and praising God.

- c. **Insecure/Weak Faith:** Faith that believes God can, but is unsure if He is willing. Once this person understands that God IS willing (once they hear this good news), they receive.

**Matthew 8:1-3**

When He had come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed Him. <sup>2</sup> And behold, a leper came and worshiped Him, saying, “Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean.”

<sup>3</sup> Then Jesus put out His hand and touched him, saying, “I am willing; be cleansed.” Immediately his leprosy was cleansed.

- d. **Those Who Believe and then Waiver/Doubt When Circumstances Contradict their Faith**

**Matthew 14:22-33**

Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, while He sent the multitudes away. <sup>23</sup> And when He had sent the multitudes away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray. Now when evening came, He was alone there. <sup>24</sup> But the boat was now in the middle of the sea, tossed by the waves, for the wind was contrary.

<sup>25</sup> Now in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went to them, walking on the sea. <sup>26</sup> And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, “It is a ghost!” And they cried out for fear.

<sup>27</sup> But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, “Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid.”

<sup>28</sup> And Peter answered Him and said, “Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water.”

<sup>29</sup> So He said, “Come.” And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus. <sup>30</sup> But when he saw that the wind was boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, “Lord, save me!”

<sup>31</sup> And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him, and said to him, “O you of little faith, why did you doubt?” <sup>32</sup> And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased.

<sup>33</sup> Then those who were in the boat came and worshiped Him, saying, “Truly You are the Son of God.”

- e. **Unbelief:** This person wants a miracle from God, but doesn’t believe that Jesus CAN do anything for him/her (they question His ability) or he/she is unwilling to receive from God.

**Mark 9:22-24 NASB**

It has often thrown him both into the fire and into the water to destroy him. But if You can do anything, take pity on us and help us!” <sup>23</sup> And Jesus said to him, “‘If You can?’ All things are possible to him who believes.” <sup>24</sup> Immediately the boy’s father cried out and said, “I do believe; help my unbelief.”

**Hebrews 3:10**

So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

## 5. Understanding God’s Kingdom of Grace and Faith<sup>5</sup>

- a. God extends grace (unmerited favor).
- b. We hear of the good news of His grace.
- c. Faith comes (we believe).
- d. We receive by speaking/confessing our faith in His grace.
- e. We hope (joyfully anticipate) and do not doubt/waiver.
- f. What we hoped for comes to pass.

<sup>5</sup> By the way, this is the reason we named our ministry “Studies in Grace and Faith”.

**Notice: This “process” can happen simultaneously. Sometimes it might take some time.** For example, someone might be coming to the Lord. They’ve heard the good news, and they believe it is real, but aren’t sure they want to receive it. They might struggle awhile with how it could change their lives or with how they might be persecuted by family and friends. His grace keeps reaching out, and at some point, they receive/confess Jesus and are saved. Again, first they hear the good news, then they believe, then confession is made unto salvation.

**Romans 10:5-17**

For Moses writes about the righteousness which is of the law, “The man who does those things shall live by them.”<sup>6</sup> But the righteousness of faith speaks in this way, “Do not say in your heart, ‘Who will ascend into heaven?’” (that is, to bring Christ down from above)<sup>7</sup> or, “‘Who will descend into the abyss?’” (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead).<sup>8</sup> 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**):<sup>9</sup> that if you **confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus** and **believe in your heart** that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.<sup>10</sup> For **with the heart one believes** unto righteousness, and **with the mouth confession is made** unto salvation.<sup>11</sup> For the Scripture says, “Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.”<sup>12</sup> For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him.<sup>13</sup> For “whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.”

<sup>14</sup> 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?**<sup>15</sup> And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written:

**“How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace,  
Who bring glad tidings of good things!”**

<sup>16</sup> But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, “LORD, who has believed our report?”<sup>17</sup> **So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God** (the word of Christ...the glad tidings of good things v.15).

**John 1:12-13**

But **as many as received Him**, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who **believe** in His name:<sup>13</sup> who were **born**, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but **of God**.

We don’t get to dictate to God how He will go about saving someone or how He will fulfill His promises. In His sovereignty, He has provided a way. One might say, “Well, I don’t want to confess anything.” That person will not be saved nor will they receive from God what they want. Imagine the arrogance of dictating to God how things will be. “God, I don’t really like that I have to confess that you are the Lord to get saved. I want you to simply save me. Amen.” No, it doesn’t work like that. God is God. He gets to decide how we get saved (Rom. 10:9-10)

## What Do WE Do if Our Faith is Weak?

1. Don’t be afraid or ashamed or too stubborn to admit it. Don’t try to dictate to God how He will operate His kingdom. **God wants you to receive from Him**. Just as the man prayed, “Lord, help my unbelief,” and he was helped, so we can ASK God to help us.

**John 16:24**

Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.

2. **Discover the source of faith.** “Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (in context the glad tidings of good things, Rom. 10). We heard the Good News and received faith to get saved, so if we lack faith in some other area, we simply put ourselves in a position to “hear” the good news about what God has done or has promised to do in whatever area where we lack faith, and the more we hear the good news, then the “dunamis” of the word will produce faith in our hearts, and then we will have boldness to confess/receive whatever we ask from Him.
3. **Don’t doubt/waiver.** Resist the enemy when he questions what God said or His character to do what He said He would do. Speak out loud the grace you have discovered in whatever area it is.
4. **Patiently hope against hope (joyfully anticipate).** When circumstances or our senses call God’s character and promise into question, believe God anyway. Don’t give up hope.

**Romans 4:16-21**

*Therefore it is of faith that it might be according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all <sup>17</sup> (as it is written, “I have made you a father of many nations”) in the presence of Him whom he believed—God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did; <sup>18</sup> who, contrary to hope, in hope believed, so that he became the father of many nations, according to what was spoken, “So shall your descendants be.” <sup>19</sup> And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah’s womb. <sup>20</sup> He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, <sup>21</sup> and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform.*

**Hebrews 6:11-12**

*And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end, <sup>12</sup> that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through **faith and patience inherit the promises.***

**Romans 15:4**

*For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.*

There are only two times recorded that Jesus “marveled/wondered” at something.

1. **At the unbelief of people**

**Mark 6:4-6**

*But Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor except in his own country, among his own relatives, and in his own house.” <sup>5</sup> Now He could do no mighty work there, except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed them. <sup>6</sup> And He marveled because of their unbelief.*

2. **At the centurion’s faith**

**Matthew 8:8-10**

*The centurion answered and said, “Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof. But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed. <sup>9</sup> For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to this one, ‘Go,’ and he goes; and to another, ‘Come,’ and he comes; and to my servant, ‘Do this,’ and he does it.”*

*<sup>10</sup> When Jesus heard it, He marveled, and said to those who followed, “Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel!”*