Faith Like a Mustard Seed

"Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out? And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, **If ye have faith 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. **Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting**."
Matthew 17:14-21

Introduction:

1. We must never forget, "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:16).
2. A lengthier version of this event with more details is found in Mark 9:14-29. Read the account there.
3. The most powerful things you can do for your family are found in the Bible passage above. Note it.

14 And when they were come to the multitude, there came to him a certain man, kneeling down to him, and saying,

A. The first thing we need to do for our families is to go to the Lord Jesus Christ for them.
B. This man had heard of our Lord's ability to heal and save, so he came begging for His help.

15 Lord, have mercy on my son: for he is lunatick, and sore vexed: for ofttimes he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water.

A. We can only claim help on the grounds of mercy, for our first parents and we corrupted life.
B. Irrational behavior of a child in this case was devil possession, which should not surprise us.
C. Folly is bound in all children's hearts, but this child was exceptionally irrational and crazed.

16 And I brought him to thy disciples, and they could not cure him.

A. Even though the men of God should have been able to help, this case was for the Lord alone.
B. Learn the lesson before wasting time, effort, and expense for human help that cannot help.
C. Those who have not learned the scriptures will continually look to man for advice and help.

17 Then Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him hither to me.

A. How did the father respond to this rebuke? Mark tells us, "Lord, help thou my unbelief."
B. God will reward weak faith, when weak faith humbly admits its weakness and cries for more.

18 And Jesus rebuked the devil; and he departed out of him: and the child was cured from that very hour.

A. What a difference? From the disciples unable to help to Jesus curing him that very hour!
B. There is absolutely no limit to the power of God to heal and save, and He wants to do so!
C. The devils tremble before the power of God and our Friend and Saviour Jesus Christ.

19 Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out?

A. The disciples themselves did not have sufficient faith for this miracle, so He rebuked them.
B. No situation is so difficult or hopeless that we need despair of the power of our great Lord.

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

A. The mountain here is not a literal mountain for consuming a miracle on our lusts, but rather a great obstacle in our lives that we need removed for peace, pleasure, prosperity, etc.
B. Do you know the size of a grain of mustard seed? It is very small, but it forms a great bush.
C. What can we accomplish with great faith? There is no limit in the Bible. Consider Joshua calling for the sun and moon to stand still!

22 Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.

A. There are exceptional trials that God may allow in your life that require fasting with prayer.
B. Fasting is an important part of true Christianity that is nearly or fully lost in this generation.
C. Paul in his general epistle to the Corinthians assumed it for Gentile Christians (I Cor 7:5).

Conclusion:

1. We must never forget, "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:16).
2. A lengthier version of this event with more details is found in Mark 9:14-29. Read the account there.
3. The most powerful things you can do for your family are found in the Bible passage above. Note it.
4. There are three steps for your family: go to Jesus, believe in prayer, and add fasting to prayer.

For Further Study:

1. The sermon outline, "The Bible Doctrine of Fasting," … http://www.letgodbetrue.com/sermons/pdf/fasting.pdf.
2. The sermon outline, "Family Planning," … http://www.letgodbetrue.com/sermons/pdf/family-planning.pdf.
3. The sermon, "Family Sin Cycles," … http://www.letgodbetrue.com/sermons/pdf/breaking-family-sin-cycles.pdf.