

Understanding & Dealing with Doubt – May 14, 2025

Doubt: Feeling of uncertainty; lack of conviction. Seen as **weakness**
We've all had it. **Don't like to admit/discuss it b/c Thomas got a bad rap.**

But if you've had doubt at some point, you aren't alone. 5 ex:

1 – John 6 – Jesus was teaching that He was the bread of life.

- a. **vs. 64** – “Yet there are some of you who do not believe.” For Jesus had known from the beginning which of them did not believe and who would betray him.”

2 - John 7 – Jesus' brothers doubted

³ Jesus' brothers said to him, “Leave Galilee and go to Judea, so that your disciples there may see the works you do. ⁴ No one who wants to become a public figure acts in secret. Since you are doing these things, show yourself to the world.” ⁵ For even his own brothers did not believe in him.”

3 - Jesus healed a man's son of a demon – Mark 9:21-24:

Father said, ^{vs 22} “It often throws him into the fire or into the water, trying to kill him. But if You can do anything, have compassion on us and help us.” ²³ “If You can?” echoed Jesus. “All things are possible to him who believes!” ²⁴ Immediately the boy's father cried out, “I do believe; help my unbelief!”

4 - John the Baptist even had doubt - Luke 7:18-35/Matt. 11:1-5:

John sent 2 followers to ask Jesus, “Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?”

Jesus replied to the messengers, “Go back and report to John what you have seen and heard: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor.

5 - Matthew ends w/ the Great Commission – go make disciples.

- Even then, after all they'd seen, **some disciples** still had doubt
Matt. 28:16-17 – ¹⁶ “Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. ¹⁷ When they saw him, they worshiped him; *but some doubted.*”

- - Most messages focus on the commission, the good challenge...

Let's not ignore the hard stuff . . . some doubted.

*** **If you've ever had doubts, struggled – you aren't alone.**

There are many like the father, "I believe... **help my unbelief.**"

Let's deal w/Doubt honestly. Some doubt miracles. Whale? Virgin?

- What about civil rights and faith? Injustice?
- How does faith relate to reason & science?
- Early church wondered – can a Christian be a good citizen?
- Much bad in the world.... Suffering. My prayer wasn't answered.
 - **Abraham** doubted God's promise. Too old!
 - **Mary** had doubts . . . "how can this be?"
 - **Andrew** wondered what Jesus could do / 5 loaves, 2 small fish.
 - **Peter** wondered if he could walk on the water w/ Jesus.

Truth 1 – Doubt is **natural** part of a **journey of faith**. **Essential**. No guilt.

- **Faith is not the absence of doubt**. And **doubt** is not same as **Denial**/
- Faith is more than feelings... It's **trusting** in unseen: God. **Unbelief**

Truth 2 - Doubt can be **good** or it can be **bad**.

- Some have doubt so they can live how they want. No honest basis.
- For others, doubt can work for good; strengthens relationship/faith.
 - **Lee Strobel**, a journalist & lawyer— all out investigation. 600 days - "**The Case for Christ**"
- **Doubt can destroy relationship w/God or propel us to a strong one.**

Truth 3 – Doubt: **battle/mind**. **Battle** happening between **faith & reason**.

- **Reason**. Proof. Evidence. **Faith**: Just accept. Walk, not by sight.
 - **Faith is substance/hope; evid: unseen**. Assurance. Confidence.
 - It's belief. Certainty. Conviction. H.S. at work.
- **The war is a spiritual battle**. Enemy fights battles here. Why Qs.
 - **The "god of this age blinds the minds of unbelievers."** 2 Cor. 4:4
 - How do you not let doubt destroy faith? Become blind?
 - How do you not just give up ... walk away?

5 Steps:

- 1 – **Seek truth.** Don't ignore doubt. Don't let lies lead you away truth.
 - Enemy is father of lies. Lies confuse. Blind us. Twist.
 - Go to Scripture . . . get the story straight. Correct theology.
 - Reinforce your faith thru Reading God's word... sources!
- 2 – **Acknowledge Reality** – not all of our Qs will be answered here.
 - “Now I know in part, but then I will know fully” – **1 Cor. 13:12**
 - **Some answers** won't happen until heaven.
- 3 – **Don't add shame to your doubt.**
 - Remember: Jesus showed up in a room in Jerusalem. He met the Disciples where they were. Showed His hands/side to Thomas.
 - **Jesus did not chastise**... condemn... get angry. Gentle. Tolerant.
- 4 – **Question your doubts** as much as you question your faith.
 - Is this honest doubt, or an **excuse** to be angry? Revenge. Selfish.
 - In a place of pain/weakness? Dark prison: **John**. Fear, tired: **Elijah**.
 - “*test the spirits to see whether they are from God*” – **1 Jn. 4:1**
- 5 – **Appreciate Doubt** as a catalyst for deeper faith.
 - Doubt can lead us to a more profound faith. Trusting God more.
 - Appreciate that doubt is a sign of intellectual honesty.
 - **Mark 12:30** – “*Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul & **with all your mind** & with all your strength.*”
 - The Disciples included Thomas... still one of them.
 - All our faith journeys include dealing w/ doubt.
 - Gather together. Continue. Talk w/others who worship.

Jesus offered a safe place for conversation. We each have to come to our own place of truth... assurance... confidence in what is unseen.

- Don't give up. Ask God to help your unbelief.
- Doubts can strengthen your faith. Draw us closer to God.