

Biblical faith is to trust, not just believe in, the existence of God

- Why is faith necessary – we are dealing with an infinite God - Romans 4:1-3 (NIV)

Hebrews 11:6 (NIV) – 6 And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

But We all deal with doubt – the enemy plays in the questions –What if...?

- But we will live in a world that will challenge our faith and even cause doubt
- Doubting is a normal part of our lives
- Sometimes we doubt ourselves
- Some doubt God because of what Gods people do or don't do
- Sometimes we doubt God when we don't understand what is happening
- We doubt because we are strangers in the world –everyone believes something different than us – we feel different and are tempted to just get along and go along

The enemy of God (and us) has always sought to create doubt and then unbelief Genesis 3:1-7 (NIV) John 8:44 (NIV)

The difference between doubt and unbelief

- Doubt is questioning what you believe. Unbelief is a determined refusal to believe Hebrews 3:12-19 (NIV)

The scriptures are filled with those who doubt

Peter

Matthew 14:31 (NIV) – 31 Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. “You of little faith,” he said, “why did you doubt?”

The Father of the demon possessed boy

Mark 9:21-23 (NASB95)

Thomas

John 20:27 (NIV) – 27 Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.”

The Disciples after the resurrection

Matthew 28:16-18 (NIV)

John the Baptist

- Circumstances – He believed
- He doubted because of his circumstances
- He sought out Jesus
- He sought out his friends to help him
- He finished in faith

Matthew 11:2-6 (NIV)

How do we deal with doubt? –

1. Have the right expectations concerning your faith

- We all will struggle with faith

Galatians 5:16-17 (NIV)

You will have to fight for your faith –and choose

- I contend for the faith (body of truth and to trust)–wrestle for it
- (Gk epagōnizomai)

- It is a word from which we get our English agonize and was used in New Testament times of the struggle between wrestlers. The emphasis is upon great effort being expended¹
- To defend refute falsehood –in the faith and in our heart
- To build yourselves up in your faith

Jude 3 (NIV) Jude 17–23 (NIV) 2 Thessalonians 2:15 (NIV) Philippians 2:12–13 (NIV)

David

- See Psalm 73 – why do the wicked seem to prosper – then I went into the temple

Psalm 42:5–11 (NIV)

Remember what you have learned, received, and been promised

- Remember who Jesus is – and what He has said – through His Apostles
- Remember what He has done in our lives – where He found us –How He has directed us so far – the decisions we made because of Him
- Remember what He has promised – in this life and the next

Romans 8:28–29 (NIV)

2. Be in encouraging relationships 1 Thessalonians 5:11 (NIV) Hebrews 3:12–13 (NIV)

What does being an encourager look like?

- Empathy – remembering a time when you saw only a tiny part of reality
- Placing your hands on theirs (after earning the right to do so by how you responded)
- Helping them widen their view

For Small Group Discussion: What stood out to you most from the sermon?

Opening Question: What is your funniest boat or river/lake/ocean story?

Main Point: Doubts are a normal part of the Christian walk. However, God cares what we do with those doubts when we have them. Facing our doubts head-on and looking to Jesus for help is crucial in honoring God through our doubts.

Read/Tell the Story: Matthew 1:22-33

Questions:

Head -

- What enabled Peter to walk on the water?
- Why did Peter begin to sink?
- What doubts about God have unbelievers in your life expressed?

Heart -

- What is a doubt you have wrestled through in the past?
- What is your initial reaction when experiencing doubt? What do you naturally do?
- In your experience, how does God act toward those who are doubting?
- When have you had to step out in faith when you weren't sure it would work out?

Hands -

- Who helps you process questions and doubts in your faith journey?
- What is an area where you are currently working through doubts, or want more clarity in scripture or your faith journey? (Remember, no fixing!)
- What resources, habits, or environments help strengthen your faith the most?

Supporting Scripture: Jude 22, Deuteronomy 29:29, James 1:5, Isaiah 55:8-9, John 20:29

Tips and Resources: Before You Lose Your Faith: Deconstructing Doubt in the Church by Ivan Mesa, For

For resources, podcasts and more, go to <https://realliferesources.org/current-series/>

¹Scripture quotations marked NIV are taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version. Copyright 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.