

UNCERTAIN FAITH: THE ROLE OF DOUBT IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE - WHAT IF I'M WRONG? (VIDEO 6:11)**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. Recount a time you struggled with doubt or uncertainty.
2. If anyone is willing, please share how you've responded to doubts in the past.
3. What are the doubts that seem to linger in your personal life?
4. Why do you think many Christians have difficulty expressing their doubts or feel ashamed to admit them?
5. Why does silence about doubts and questions hurt our faith more than help it?
6. How can the church answer doubts without opening the door to more uncertainties?
7. How can individual believers—especially parents—answer doubts without opening the door to more uncertainties?
8. “You just need to have more faith.” Is this a healthy response to doubt? Why or why not? Share your experiences.
9. How does our media consumption affect the way we think and what we think?
10. Given your answer to question six, how ought Christians conform their minds to Christ rather than the world? What does that look like in practice when we face our doubts?

FOOD FOR THOUGHT:

Tim Keller had this to say about doubt in *The Reason for God*:

A faith without some doubts is like a human body without any antibodies in it. People who blithely go through life too busy or indifferent to ask hard questions about why they believe as they do will find themselves defenseless against either the experience of tragedy or the probing questions of a smart skeptic. A person's faith can collapse almost overnight if she has failed over the years to listen patiently to her own doubts, which should only be discarded after long reflection.

Believers should acknowledge and wrestle with doubts—not only their own but their friends' and neighbors'. It is no longer sufficient to hold beliefs just because you inherited them. Only if you struggle long and hard with objections to your faith will you be able to provide grounds for your beliefs to skeptics, including yourself, that are plausible rather than ridiculous or offensive. And, just as important for our current situation, such a process will lead you, even after you come to a position of strong faith, to respect and understand those who doubt.

The point is not that doubt is good in and of itself—we ought never be pleased about our doubts (the goal, after all, is to eventually discard them). But rather, the point is that whether a person yet realizes it or not, there are questions that must be thought through and answered, and if we ignore those questions at first, a time will come when they will be forced upon us. Don't let those questions build up. Take them slowly, one at a time.

DIGGING DEEPER:

As a group, read Amy Hall's article [“When a Mentor Walks Away from Christianity.”](#)

DISCUSS THE FOLLOWING:

1. Why do people leave Christianity?
2. How should Christians respond when those they know, love, or respect leave Christianity? Why aren't these evangelical stories good reasons to doubt?

ACTION POINTS:

- Start a journal to document your doubts and the answers you discover.
- Get honest about your own doubts. Schedule time with your pastor or a mature Christian to discuss your questions.
- Read a chapter or two from Psalms and identify how the author expresses and responds to his doubts.
- If you are a parent, have a conversation with your child about his or her doubts. Here are some resources to help you in teaching your child how to think critically about his or her faith:
 - [“If You Want Your Kids to Own Their Faith, Teach Them to Think Critically about Their Faith”](#)
 - [“Using PragerU to Engage the Minds of Your Kids”](#)
 - [“Inoculate, Don't Isolate”](#)
- Read and reflect on James 1:5–8 in preparation for the next class.

UNCERTAIN FAITH: THE ROLE OF DOUBT IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE - WHAT IS DOUBT? (VIDEO 6:48)**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. As a group, review the previous discussion. Consider having group members give summations or give highlights that they've been reflecting on since then.
2. Did anyone follow up with the Action Points from the previous week? If so, please share some key takeaways.
3. How do you think doubt differs from unbelief or agnosticism?
4. Tim says that not all doubts are equal. Do you agree with this?
5. Why is it significant that even thinkers like Charles Darwin and C.S. Lewis experienced doubt?
6. How does the idea of being "double-minded" describe the tension in doubting faith?
7. If every person doubts, regardless of his or her worldview, how can we still know and recognize truth?
8. Given that every worldview, including Christianity, is "messy," what makes Christianity the "best explanation for the way things are"?
9. In what way does Christianity (as opposed to materialism) provide the best logical and rational foundation for knowledge?
10. The modern world is largely led by feelings (i.e. Live your truth). Why is this an inadequate approach to truth? Why are our feelings unreliable when responding to doubt?
11. Why might someone who never doubts have a shallow faith?

FOOD FOR THOUGHT:

What about doubting Thomas? Didn't Jesus rebuke him for doubting and asking for evidence?

"Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed" (John 20:29).

Maybe Jesus wasn't using "seeing" as a metaphor at all. Maybe he was speaking literally. Maybe he chastised Thomas for demanding a face-to-face encounter—literally "seeing" Christ—before he'd believe his friends who did have a face-to-face encounter.

Mark reports that when Jesus appeared to all eleven disciples together—including Thomas—he "reproached them for their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they had not believed those who had seen Him after He had risen" (Mark 16:14).

In short, Thomas's demand that he first poke his fingers in Jesus' wounds before believing was a bit much. His friends' report should have been adequate evidence, ergo the scold.

Our insight clears up another confusion regarding "seeing" and faith. Paul tells the Corinthians, "For we walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Cor. 5:7). Once again, Paul is not using "seeing" as a metaphor to downplay evidence. He's speaking literally. While we're here on earth, Paul says, we don't see Jesus—obviously. One day we will, but not yet. Now we don't see him, yet we still trust him ("walk by faith") even though he's not physically present.

ACTION POINTS:

- Reflect on today's video and discussion. Write a short elevator-pitch answer for the person who asks you to "give the reason for the hope that you have" (1 Pet. 3:15) in spite of your doubts.
- Return to your lists of doubts and questions from the previous class. Are they justified or unjustified?
- Listen to Greg Koukl's [discussion with Bobby Conway](#) about Bobby's book *Doubting Toward Faith*.

UNCERTAIN FAITH: THE ROLE OF DOUBT IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE - DIFFERENT DOUBTS? (VIDEO 11:15)**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. Why is it important to identify the source of doubt before addressing it?
2. How can we discern the underlying reasons for our doubts, whether emotional, moral, or intellectual?
3. Which of the three kinds of doubts do you struggle with most?
4. Which of the three kinds of doubts have you encountered most in others?
5. In light of these various sources, how would you modify your approach to helping someone wrestle with their doubts?
6. Why might some people claim to seek truth but resist its implications?
7. Why does emotional doubt so easily overwhelm rational thinking?
8. Why is man so stubborn when it comes to accepting (or rejecting) God's moral will?
9. What is wrong with the view that Christianity is only about restricting rules and that leaving Christianity will bring freedom?
10. How can we approach someone whose doubts stem from deeper emotional or relational pain?

FOOD FOR THOUGHT:

In 2012, *Christianity Today* summarized Barna Research president David Kinnaman's findings into six reasons why young people leave the church.

Isolationism. One-fourth of 18- to 29-year-olds say church demonizes everything outside church, including the music, movies, culture, and technology that define their generation.

Shallowness. One-third call church boring, about one-fourth say faith is irrelevant and Bible teaching is unclear. One-fifth say God is absent from their church experience.

Anti-science. Up to one-third say the church is out of step on scientific developments and debate.

Sex. The church is perceived as simplistic and judgmental. For a fifth or more, a "just say no" philosophy is insufficient in a techno-porno world. Young Christian singles are as sexually active as their non-churched friends, and many say they feel judged.

Exclusivity. Three in ten young people feel the church is too exclusive in this pluralistic and multi-cultural age. And the same number feel forced to choose between their faith and their friends.

Doubters. Over one-third of young people say the church is not a safe place to express doubts, and one-fourth have serious doubts they'd like to discuss.

As a group, discuss the following:

1. How do these reasons fit into the categories discussed in today's class?
2. How have you seen these categories represented in the narratives told by media and secular society?
3. Are there any nuggets of truth in these reasons that Christians should take note of? For example, we already discussed why the church needs to welcome doubters.

ACTION POINTS:

- Ask yourself whether any of your own doubts are just screens for deeper emotional or volitional misgivings. Are you open to hearing the rational answers to your questions?
- Take five minutes to pray for your own heart. Ask God to realign your will with his and to change the way that you view his good and perfect law. Then spend another five minutes praying for specific friends and family who struggle with one of the three doubts discussed in this video.
- In preparation for the next class, read and reflect on Matthew 11:2–6.

UNCERTAIN FAITH: THE ROLE OF DOUBT IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE - HOW TO DOUBT WELL (VIDEO 11:15)**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. Review: As a group, sum up the course to this point and share big takeaways.
2. One of the action points from the previous gathering was to read and reflect on Matthew 11:2–6. Consider reading this as a group and sharing any quick reflections or insights.
3. What does it mean to “doubt well”?
4. Do you welcome or look down on those with doubts?
5. Your Outpost is the perfect place to develop a trustworthy community with which you can share your doubts! What questions are you struggling to answer?
6. Tim encourages us to provide a safe space for doubts. What would this look like with our fellow believers? What would a safe space look like with non-believers? What behaviors do we need to avoid in order to be more welcoming?
7. Why do you think Jesus pointed John to evidence of his works rather than offering a simple reassurance?
8. What role does objective evidence play in countering doubts, as shown in Jesus’ response to John? How would you respond to someone who claims Christians believe based on faith, not evidence?
9. Why does a strong foundation in truth provide resilience against doubt?
10. Why is it dangerous to rely on another’s faith, such as a parent’s or a friend’s, as the foundation for our beliefs?
11. What anchors your faith?

FOOD FOR THOUGHT:

In Mark 9:14–29, the father of a demon-possessed son pleads with Jesus, “I do believe; help my unbelief.” What an honest expression of doubt. And how does Jesus respond? He casts the demon out of the boy. Jesus provides evidence in the form of a miracle, confirming his claims about himself.

DISCUSS THE FOLLOWING:

1. How does Jesus’ response to John the Baptist’s doubt and to the father in Mark 9 encourage us to bring our own doubts to him?
2. Do you believe Jesus can handle your doubts? Have you asked Jesus to help you with your unbelief?
3. How can evidence move us from unbelief to confident faith?

ACTION POINTS:

- If you put off talking to a pastor or friend about your doubts after our first class, now is your chance! Find someone you can trust and “doubt out loud with others.”
- Following Tim’s example, make a list of the things you know to be true. Review your list every day this week. Memorize each point and refer to your list when you struggle with doubts.
- Make a list of your doubts. Reframe each doubt as a question. Search for good answers. Are there any reasons you might doubt your doubts?
- Read and reflect on 2 Timothy 3:14–17 in preparation for our next class.

UNCERTAIN FAITH: THE ROLE OF DOUBT IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE - DECONSTRUCTION ISN'T DOUBT (VIDEO 10:15)**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. What are some of the definitions of “deconstruction” that you have heard?
2. Is there such a thing as healthy deconstruction?
3. Tim calls deconstruction “fundamentally flawed.” What are the most significant flaws of deconstruction?
4. Those who deconstruct claim there is no one, right destination. What is wrong with this view? How does it compare to what the Bible teaches?
5. How does the authority of Scripture contrast with the self-authority promoted in deconstruction?
6. Why do you think modern movements like deconstruction often reject the idea of objective truth?
7. Why is man an unreliable authority for truth and morality?
8. What are the faults and negative effects of a constant skepticism?
9. How can holding onto objective truth guide someone when faith is being challenged by cultural narratives?
10. How can you “continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of” (2 Tim. 3:14) at the same time as you tackle your doubts?

FOOD FOR THOUGHT:

Didn't Jesus deconstruct?

No. Jesus saw man-made religious rituals and doctrines that had bloated the essence of the faith. He challenged those who had deviated from biblical faith to return to the standard of Scripture.

Therefore, if you begin to wonder about your faith, it's fine to ask questions. It's okay if you experience doubt. The next step, though, is not to pursue a path devoid of a biblical standard—that's deconstruction. You should examine your faith to make sure it's biblical. Your path should always be guided by the Word of God (Ps. 119:105). Be like the Bereans who tested what they learned against “the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so” (Acts 17:11).

ACTION POINTS:

- Start each day this week by reading Matthew 7:13–14, with the goal of memorizing the passage by the end of the week.
- Do some research: Where else in the Bible do we find support for the existence of objective truth and one “right way”?
- Consider areas in your life where you struggle with submitting to God's authority. Pray for strength to align with his will.
- Read [this excerpt](#) from Tim's book *The Deconstruction of Christianity*.