

“Dealing with Doubts About What Is True”

Pine Haven Christian Assembly - 2021

Dr. Rich Knopp

Email: rknopp@lincolnchristian.edu

Professor of Philosophy & Christian Apologetics

Lincoln Christian University

Program Director, Room For Doubt (www.roomfordoubt.com)

Program Director, WorldViewEyes (www.worldvieweyes.org)

Intro

- A. What do you doubt? When is it not-so-good and when is it good?
- B. Faith and doubt

I. Doubt seems to be a BAD thing.

- A. **Thomas** (John 20:27).
- B. **Jesus** (Matt 21:20-21).
- C. **Peter** (Matt 14:31).
- D. **James** (James 1:6).

II. Doubt can be a GOOD thing.

A. **Thomas** (John 20).

1. Thomas demanded _____.
2. Jesus does not _____ Thomas.
3. Thomas's doubt led to greater _____.

B. **John the Baptist** (compare John 1:29 and Matthew 11:2-3).

1. Compare John 1:29 and Matthew 11:2-3.
John 1:29 “Behold the Lamb of God ...”
Matt. 11:3 “Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?”
2. What changed?
3. Jesus does not _____ John.
4. Jesus actually _____ John: “Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist...” (Matt. 11:11).

C. **Father with possessed boy** (Mark 9:14-29).

1. The story
2. “I do believe; help my unbelief” (Mark 9:24).

D. I am thankful that ALL of the early followers of Jesus had _____.

III. Types of Doubts

A. **Psychological** (self-doubts; emotional)

B. **Spiritual**

C. **Volitional**: Doubt as _____.

Thomas Nagel (atheist philosopher): “It isn’t just that I don’t believe in God and, naturally, hope that I’m right in my belief. It’s that I hope there is no God! I don’t want there to be a God; I don’t want the universe to be like that.” (*The Last Word*, 130)

D. Intellectual:

1. Intellectual DIS-belief: "I'm not at all convinced. I reject Christianity on intellectual grounds."
2. Lacking intellectual certainty:
 - a. Some doubts may be inevitable because we do not have absolute certainty.
 - b. E.g., "I sometimes have doubts about God's creation because it's just way over my head to comprehend."
 - c. E.g., "I periodically have doubts about Jesus' resurrection, because no one can know with absolute intellectual certainty that it happened."
 - d. However, we can still have justified _____.
3. Some level of faith is _____.
 - a. **2 Cor. 5:7** Paul says, "We walk by faith, not by sight."
 - b. **Heb. 11:1** "Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen."
 - c. **Rom. 8:24** "... Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees?"
 - d. **1 Cor. 13:12** "We see in the mirror, darkly."

IV. Some Reminders

- A. Having some doubts is not the same as _____.
- B. Having some doubts is normal, because absolute _____ is unachievable.
- C. Christians can have _____ reasons for their belief that are not just _____ (John 20:30-31; 1 John 1:1-4).
- D. Christians can have a _____ assurance of their relationship to God that goes beyond intellect and evidence (Romans 8:16-17).

Discussion and Reflection Questions Pinehaven 2021

“Dealing With Doubts” by Rich Knopp

1. In this lesson, we talked about different types of doubts: psychological, spiritual, volitional, intellectual (dis-belief), intellectual (uncertainty). (Can you think of any *other* kinds of doubts?)
 - a. Individually, take a few moments to think about any doubts you sometimes have about Christianity. (If you can't think of any doubts that *you* have, then list some doubts that others have, especially your friends or acquaintances.)
 - b. Write down some of these doubts.
 - c. Share some of the listed doubts and have the group classify each one.
2. Among the various Bible characters discussed in this lesson, with whom do you identify most? Why?
3. What was most encouraging to you in this lesson?
4. What questions do you still have about your Christian faith or about having doubts?