

Faith & Doubt

FAITH: Our Cultural Definitions?

- ✓ Faith and doubt are **incompatible**
- ✓ Faith and fear are **incompatible**
- ✓ Faith **pleases** God; doubt **angers** God
- ✓ We all need **more faith**
- ✓ All of the above are **baloney**

FAITH: Three Biblical Examples

The Father's Doubt:
Mark 9:14-29

The Mustard Seed:
Matthew 17:19-21

The Disciples' Fear:
Matthew 8:23-27

FAITH: How Faith Really Works

- ✓ The opposite of faith is **inactivity**, not **fear or doubt**
- ✓ When you doubt:
 - ❶ Don't **deny it**
 - ❷ Step **out anyway**
 - ❸ Get **over it**
- ✓ It's not the **amount** of our faith; it's the **object** of our faith that matters most

Growth Group Homework

For the week of February 7, 2010

QUICK REVIEW - Looking back over your sermon notes, was there a particular point or passage of Scripture that challenged, confused or caught your attention?

MY STORY

1. When you look at the “cultural definitions” of faith from this week’s teaching, which would be most likely to trip you up?

2. When, if ever, does doubt seem to occur in your life and faith? Is there anything specific you’ve typically done to deal with doubt?

DIGGING DEEPER

1. This week we heard how doubt and fear can co-exist with genuine faith. Gideon was a judge in the Old Testament sent to deliver the Israelites from their enemies, yet he was also known for his doubts. As you read his story in Judges 6, identify at least four examples of Gideon’s doubt.

Based on what you just wrote, how would you describe Gideon’s faith?

How does what you wrote compare to how Gideon’s faith is described in Hebrews 11:32, 33, 39?

Hebrews 11

[32] And what more shall I say? I do not have time to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel and the prophets,

[33] who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised; who shut the mouths of lions,

[39] These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised. [NIV]

What does Gideon’s story tell us about how God responds to our doubts?

2. One of the reasons we may doubt the strength or power of our faith is the ongoing battle we all have at times in dealing with our own sin. What insight does Paul give us in Romans 7:18-21 of how our struggle, doubt, and faith can co-exist?

Romans 7:18-21

I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. [19] For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do--this I keep on doing. [20] Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.

[21] So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. [NIV]

Would you say most people can relate to the struggle Paul describes? How about yourself?

How does Romans 8:1 help us deal with this struggle?

Romans 8:1

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, [NIV]

3. Blind faith is not biblical. Our trust and understanding of who God is as the object of our faith can either diminish or heighten the sometimes paralyzing affect of doubt. How might the following verses help build your confidence in God in the midst of doubt?

Psalms 25:8

Good and upright is the Lord;
therefore he instructs sinners in his ways. [NIV]

Psalms 89:11

The heavens are yours, and yours also the earth;
you founded the world and all that is in it. [NIV]

Psalms 145:9-10

The Lord is good to all;
he has compassion on all he has made.
[10] All you have made will praise you, O Lord;
your saints will extol you. [NIV]

James 1:17

Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. [NIV]

TAKING IT HOME

Looking back at this week's teaching and study on Faith & Doubt, what is most important for you to remember and why?

This week's teaching closed with three things to consider when doubt occurs. Is there one you need prayer for to keep you moving forward?

PRAYER REQUESTS

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