

When Faith Meets Doubt

When Doubt Creeps In

John 20:24-29/ Mark 9:21-26/ Luke 1:26-38/ Exodus 3:1-4:16/ Psalm 73:13-23

Abram's Story

Great Faith/ Lingering Doubts/ God's Surprising Response

Genesis 15:1-21

The Truth About Faith, Doubt, and Righteousness

FOUR KINDS OF FAITH

James 2:19/ Proverbs 19:2-3 & Luke 14:28-32/ John 20:24-29 & Acts 12:1-16/ Hebrews 11:1-40

- (1) Intellectually believing **something is true**
- (2) Taking a **wild risk** and assuming **God will rescue me**
- (3) Being so **optimistic** that I have no **doubts**
- (4) Trusting God **enough to do what he says**

THREE KINDS OF DOUBT

Hebrews 11:6 & Psalm 14:1/ Genesis 3:1-13 & 1 Samuel 15:1-24/ Acts 12:1-16

- (1) Doubt that **writes God off**
- (2) Doubt that **disobeys**
- (3) Doubt that **worries but still obeys**

THE TRUTH ABOUT RIGHTEOUSNESS

Isaiah 64:6 & Galatians 2:21/ Ephesians 2:8-10/ John 3:16/ Hebrews 11:6 & Proverbs 24:16

- (1) We can't become righteous by **good living** & **religious rituals**
- (2) We can be declared righteous by **taking a simple step of faith**

Food for Thought

For the week of December 16, 2012

(Questions and Scriptures for further personal study)

1. Our trust and understanding of who God is as the object of our faith can either diminish or heighten the sometimes paralyzing effect of doubt. How might the following verses help build your confidence in God in the midst of doubt?

Psalm 25:8

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

Psalm 89:11

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

Psalm 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]

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]

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. It's often during times of hardship and challenge that we are most often tempted to doubt God's plan and his care for us. But the Bible teaches that hardships can play an important role in developing our faith. How do the following passages help us understand hardship's role and the attitude God wants us to have toward it?

Romans 5:3-5

Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; [4] perseverance, character; and character, hope. [5] And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us. [NIV]

James 1:2-4

Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, [3] because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. [4] Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. [NIV]

Romans 8:28-30

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. [29] For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. [30] And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified. [NIV]

What is most challenging for you in accepting what these passages say about hardship?

In what ways can the truths in these passages be helpful to you in handling difficult times in your life?