



Doubt. We all have it, but we don't always know what to do with it. The Bible seems very open to (and even welcoming of) expressing doubt, frustration, and questions when it comes to God. Church is intended to be a place for people who practice a thinking faith, faith seeking understanding; and church ought to be a place where disagreement and doubt does not destroy but leads to discernment. Christianity welcomes doubters. Thank God!

These questions are intended to deepen your experience of the message. Use them for your personal or family study time, or with an open Bible as you share the good news with your neighbor.

Group Introduction: "Raise your hand if you have a child, a sibling, or a close personal friend who has left church, or left faith. Discuss why they left."

Helpful Resources:

Philip Yancey, "Faith & Doubt." Blog

Julia Baird, "Doubt as a Sign of Faith," *New York Times* (2014)

Josh Graves, "Faith and Doubt." Sermon. Otter Creek Church.

DOUBTERS WELCOME (IN SCRIPTURE).

Read Job 3:11-26; Psalm 22:1-2; Lamentations 2:20-3:18; Ecclesiastes 3:19-22; Habakkuk 1:1-4 & 2:1. Why do you think the Bible includes language of doubt, frustration, anger, and questioning toward God? **Follow up:** **Read Matt 14:31; Heb 3:12; James 1:6.** How do you reconcile these verses with what we just discussed?

DOUBTERS UNWELCOME (IN CHURCH)?

Read Ecc 1:5; Joshua 10:13; Psalm 96:10. The religious leaders in 1633 condemned heliocentrism as a heresy. Now we believe in it and see these passages as poetic license. How does this serve as a lesson for us Bible believers? **Follow Up:** Has church typically felt like a place where you can express doubts or questions? Discuss.

THE MYTH OF CERTAINTY. Think of an issue or topic you know people in your class or family or church would likely disagree about. Think of an issue or topic about which you are uncertain or divided on. Does **Mark 9:24** express it well?

THINKING FAITH. **Read Hebrews 11:1-6.**

How is Biblical faith a "thinking" faith? Thinking almost always leads to more questions and maybe even doubts. This is why doubt can actually be a sign of faith. Think of doubters in the Bible, and how doubt is a sign that one is engaging. Nathan said the opposite of faith is apathy. Discuss.

A CHURCH FULL OF DIFFERENCES.

Read Romans 14:1-15:7. The "strong" and the "weak" differ over issues that one side thinks is opinion, but the other side thinks is doctrine. What is Paul's teaching in this situation? How is this a lesson for a church? **Follow up:** **Read 1 Cor 1:10.** How do you reconcile this verse with Romans 14?

FAITH SEEKING UNDERSTANDING.

Anselm used this phrase in the 11th century. How is this motto helpful for faith strugglers, or seekers, or skeptics who wonder if church might be a welcome place for them? How is this helpful for church members as they think, read, study, and question?