

**Welcome to the
Common Ground Café!**



Sunday, November 4, 2018

**Learning to Doubt Your Doubts
Week 6 in the series "Don't Stop Believing"
Matthew 11:2-9**

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Doubt is a powerful emotion, capable of crippling a person's life. Is some doubt understandable? When does doubt become a problem?

Describe the effects of doubt when:

- ❖ A person is considering whom to marry.
- ❖ A person is trying to choose a career.
- ❖ A person is considering a relationship with Christ.

List common doubts *believers* can experience as they follow Christ.

Even God's Best People Struggle with Doubt

Read John 1:23-35 and answer these questions:

- ❖ Who was John the Baptist?
- ❖ Did John believe Jesus to be the Messiah at this point in his ministry?

Read Matthew 11:2-3 and answer the following questions:

- ❖ What did John doubt?
- ❖ When his doubts arose, where was John?
- ❖ Why was he there? (This isn't found in Matthew 11, but if you don't know the answer, take a look at Matthew 14:1-12.)

Do you think his circumstances contributed to the doubts John had? Why?

We will look at Christ's words **to** him in a moment, but first let's look at Christ's words **about** him. Read Matthew 11:7-9.

Considering that John had just expressed serious doubt about Jesus, does Jesus's strong endorsement of John surprise you?

Does Jesus's strong endorsement of John at this point tell you anything about how Jesus reacts to our own times of doubt?

Read James 1:6 and Jude 1:22. **Both** of these approaches to doubt must be true, but how?

What kinds of "prisons" tend to bring out doubts for you regarding Jesus?

In those periods of discouragement and doubt, what most renews your courage and faith?

Those Who Belong to God Have to Learn to Doubt Their Doubts

Read Matthew 11:4-6.

Discuss the validity of the following "doubt busters":

#1—Decide whether or not you really *want* to believe. Disbelief isn't just a rational exercise of weighing the evidence, but it includes emotional elements, too. Why would someone not **want** to believe in the claims of Jesus?

#2—Go where faith is. In other words, surround yourself with other believers. Randy Alcorn put it this way: "If you want to grow roses, you don't buy an acre of the North Pole. You go where roses grow well." How have the programs, music, lessons, and relationships at Hillcrest helped you grow the "roses" of faith?

#3—Put faith-building materials into your mind. What materials have strengthened your faith along the way? Name some books, podcasts, songs, conferences, etc.

#4—Examine the reliability of the object of your faith. Read this quote from Tim Keller:

Imagine you are on a high cliff and you lose your footing and begin to fall. Just beside you as you fall is a branch sticking out of the very edge of the cliff. It is your only hope and it is more than strong enough to support your weight. How can it save you? If your mind is filled with intellectual certainty that the branch can support you, but you don't actually reach out and grab it, you are lost. If your mind is instead filled with doubts and uncertainty that the branch can hold you, but you reach out and grab it anyway, you will be saved. Why? ***It is not the strength of your faith but the object of your faith that actually saves you.*** Strong faith in a weak branch is fatally inferior to weak faith in a strong branch. This means you don't have to wait for all doubts and fears to go away to take hold of Christ. Don't make the mistake of thinking that you have to banish all misgivings in order to meet God. (*The Reason for God*, page 234)

Do you agree or disagree? Explain.

Who in your life could most use this reminder today?



Close with praise reports and prayer requests