



## WHAT TO DO WITH DOUBT

Course 5, Real Christian Living, Lesson 12

**The Problem:** Doubt is something every believer encounters. Whether it's questions about God's existence, His promises, or His guidance in our lives, uncertainty can feel unsettling. Yet, Scripture teaches that doubt does not have to be a roadblock—it can be an opportunity for deeper faith, greater understanding, and a closer walk with God.

In this study, we'll explore how doubt fits into the journey of faith, examining biblical examples of those who wrestled with uncertainty yet emerged stronger. We'll look at God's response to honest doubt, practical ways to overcome spiritual uncertainty, and how faith grows even in the midst of questions.

Jesus Himself reassured His disciples when they doubted, showing that faith isn't the absence of questions—it's trusting God in spite of them. As we dive into His Word, let's discover how doubt can lead us closer to truth rather than farther from it.

### Objectives:

- I. We recognize that the Scriptures contain profound mysteries that are beyond human understanding.
- II. We understand that faith is built on evidence rather than absolute scientific proof, allowing us to trust in God's revealed truth.
- III. We explore how The Word leads us into a progressive understanding of truth, deepening our knowledge as we seek Him.
- IV. We identify the root causes of doubt and skepticism, gaining insight into how these challenges arise and how to overcome them.
- V. We affirm that personal experience provides undeniable assurance—just as one who drinks the water of life knows its power through direct encounter.

### I. THE BIBLE CONTAINS PROFOUND MYSTERIES

A Bible without mystery would lack the depth expected from an ultimate source of truth. The very nature of God defies human explanation—if we could fully comprehend Him, He would cease to be the infinite, transcendent Being whom Scripture reveals.

Likewise, if Jesus' resurrection could be explained by scientific means, it would not be the miraculous triumph that makes Him Savior and Lord. Divine power surpasses human knowledge, existing beyond the realm of science and reason. Many truths of God's kingdom remain hidden, reserved for the day when we stand in His presence. Until then, we walk by faith, trusting that His wisdom and majesty extend far beyond what we can yet perceive.

### The Word:

1. Does God intend us to understand everything about Himself? Why? Deuteronomy 29:29
2. How capable is the human mind of understanding the infinite God? Job 11:7–8; Romans 11:33

3. What did Peter say about difficult matters in the Scriptures? 2 Peter 3:15–16
4. What should be our attitude to suffering and sorrow that we cannot explain? Romans 8:28; 2 Corinthians 4:17; Compare Job 23:10; Psalm 119:67

Explanation: The Bible is God's message of salvation, revealing what is essential for us to know—but not everything about His infinite wisdom. Many truths remain hidden, not because God withholds knowledge arbitrarily, but because certain mysteries would not aid our redemption or strengthen our faith. The infinite nature of God cannot be fully grasped by finite minds, just as no human can comprehend all scientific knowledge. If the physical realm presents mysteries that challenge the greatest minds, it should not surprise us that the divine realm confronts us with truths beyond human explanation.

Even the inspired writings of Scripture are sometimes difficult to understand. Peter recognized this, referring to certain passages in Paul's letters as "*hard to understand*" (2 Peter 3:16). Scholars have debated the meaning of these words for centuries, yet the truth of the gospel is not reserved for scholars alone—it is for all who seek God. Jesus assured us that understanding comes through the Holy Spirit, saying: "*When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth*" John 16:13.

Beyond theological mysteries, we also wrestle with life's deepest questions—such as the suffering of innocent people. Why does God allow pain and hardship? While we may not fully comprehend His reasoning, we can trust that all things work together for good to those who love Him (Romans 8:28). He does not cause evil, yet He overrules it, bringing forth blessing even from adversity—either in this life or in the life to come.

Key Truths to Hold Onto:

- God's mysteries are purposeful—what He reveals is for our salvation, and what He keeps hidden is for His greater plan.
- The Holy Spirit gives understanding—we are not left alone in confusion; we are invited to seek divine wisdom.
- Suffering is not without meaning—though we may not always see the full picture, God is at work in every situation, shaping it for our ultimate good.

Relevance: A humble disciple of Jesus recognizes that divine mysteries surpass human understanding. While some truths remain hidden, the Word of God illuminates the believer's path, offering clarity, wisdom, and assurance in daily life. Though we may not comprehend all of God's ways, we can fully experience His salvation by faith. As John 3:36 declares: "*Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life.*" This promise reminds us that belief leads to assurance, and faith grants us peace in Christ, even in the face of uncertainty.

## II. FAITH RESTS ON EVIDENCE, NOT ULTIMATE PROOF

The Bible offers compelling prophetic and historical evidence for the truth of Christianity, yet it does not claim to provide scientific proof. If absolute proof existed for the existence of God, the deity of Christ, and the resurrection, faith would no longer be faith—it would simply be knowledge. True faith is not blind, but rather built upon strong, convincing evidence—evidence that does not conform to the strict standards of the scientific method, yet remains undeniable in its fulfillment.

The Word:

5. What is faith? Hebrews 11:1–3
6. Are there special blessings for the one who has faith in God? Matthew 17:20; Mark 9:23
7. What did Jesus say about people who believe without having proof? John 20:29

8. What kind of evidence for the Deity of Jesus Christ did Peter affirm as even more trustworthy than his own eyewitness experience? 2 Peter 1:16–19

Explanation: The original Greek of Hebrews 11:1 can be understood as: *"Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the certainty of things not seen."* The New International Version expresses this meaning as: *"Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see."*

Faith is not merely wishful thinking—it is deep conviction based on God's promises and historical fulfillment. Jesus emphasized the power of faith, declaring that mountains can be moved and victory over sin is possible when we truly trust Him. Unlike Thomas, who needed to see before believing, those who believe without requiring proof are blessed with greater spiritual depth and divine favor.

The Bible provides prophetic confirmation of its truths. Peter, who witnessed Jesus' transfiguration and heard the voice of God, still pointed to fulfilled prophecy as an even greater proof of Christ's divinity (2 Peter 1:19).

Examples of fulfilled prophecies include:

- Christ's birth in Bethlehem, foretold centuries earlier (Micah 5:2)
- His sacrificial ministry and death, vividly described by Isaiah (Isaiah 53)
- His resurrection, prophesied by David (Psalm 16:10; Acts 2:25-34)
- Daniel's visions, predicting human history and Christ's exact anointing and crucifixion (Daniel 2, 7, 8, 9:24-27)

Relevance: Faith is founded on solid prophetic and historical evidence, but it remains faith precisely because it is not based on ultimate scientific proof. God invites us to study His Word and witness its fulfilled prophecies, building confidence in His truth.

### III. HOW THE WORD LEADS US INTO A PROGRESSIVE UNDERSTANDING OF TRUTH

God's truth is eternal and unchanging—it never becomes error. Yet our understanding of it is progressive, unfolding gradually through the Spirit's guidance. Scripture reveals that our knowledge and insight into divine truth will deepen throughout our earthly lives, and this growth will continue beyond Christ's Second Coming. In eternity, freed from the limitations of sin and mortality, we will keep learning, exploring, and rejoicing in the infinite wisdom of God. The Word not only prepares us for that future—it invites us into a lifelong and everlasting journey of discovery.

The Word:

9. What should be our attitude when we come to the study of the Scriptures? Mark 10:15; 1 Peter 2:2
10. Who only can reveal the truth to our hearts and minds? 1 Corinthians 2:10-13
11. For how long is the believer to go on learning the truths of God's Word? Proverbs 4:18; 2 Corinthians 3:18; compare 2 Timothy 3:16-17

Explanation We are called to approach God's Word with the trusting openness of a child. Peter encourages believers to see themselves as newborn babes, eagerly drinking in the life-giving milk of divine truth (1 Peter 2:2). This humble posture invites spiritual enlightenment, which can only be granted by the Holy Spirit to those who sincerely seek it.

Those who reject Christ—no matter how learned—separate themselves from the Source of all wisdom and miss the magnificent truths meant to transform their lives (1 Corinthians 2:7-8). What remains a mystery to the world is readily unveiled to those who approach God with humility, for *"God has revealed [those things] to us through the Spirit, for the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God"* 1 Corinthians 2:10.

This enlightenment is not a single event, but an ongoing journey—progressing as long as a believer remains surrendered to Christ, faithfully exploring the depths of His Word. The light of truth is ever growing, as Proverbs declares: *"But the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, which shines brighter and brighter until full day"* Proverbs 4:18.

Relevance: Doubt fades as faith deepens. When you accept Christ as Lord and allow Him to guide you through His Spirit, He will progressively dispel your uncertainties, replacing them with divine understanding and peace. We will never exhaust the depths of His character, love, or truth.

#### IV. ROOT CAUSES OF DOUBT AND SKEPTICISM

Many who wrestle with serious doubts about the Bible struggle not only with belief but with surrender. At its core, the issue is not just intellectual—it's personal. God's truth calls for transformation, and that often means letting go of deeply cherished habits and practices that conflict with His will.

What many fail to realize is that in clinging to the fleeting pleasures of this world, they are trading eternal life for something far less fulfilling—a temporary existence that cannot compare to the abundant life God offers. True freedom is not found in resisting His truth, but in embracing it, allowing His wisdom to lead to genuine joy, peace, and purpose.

The Word:

12. Who did Jesus say would understand His teaching? Who would not? John 7:17

13. What does the “natural” man think of God's truth? 1 Corinthians 2:14; compare 1:18-23.

14. How much spiritual knowledge does the Lord give to the proud person? John 9:39–41; compare Romans 12:16; 1 Corinthians 8:2

Explanation: Jesus taught that spiritual understanding is given to those who are willing to follow His will. The “natural” man—one who has not accepted Christ—cannot fully grasp the significance of spiritual truths because his mind remains under the influence of the world's thinking, apart from God. Doubt and skepticism are not merely intellectual struggles; they are the result of a heart unwilling to receive Christ.

Reason alone does not lead us to God—rather, faith opens the door, allowing our understanding to deepen as we humbly surrender to Him. Those who believe their philosophy of life is sufficient without Christ resemble the Pharisees, who were confident in their spiritual insight yet blind to the truth. Pride of opinion, reliance on one's own intellect, and an unwillingness to learn at the feet of Jesus are major barriers to genuine faith, leading to persistent doubt. Even brilliant minds like Leo Tolstoy and C.S. Lewis discovered that intellectual pursuit alone could not satisfy the soul; both came to faith through a journey of surrender, recognizing that truth is revealed to the humble, not merely the learned.

Relevance: Faith grounded in the solid evidence of Scripture has the power to dispel uncertainty. When you invite Christ to teach you through His Word, He will establish you as a steadfast, immovable believer, rooted in the assurance of His truth.

#### V. THE EVIDENCE OF EXPERIENCE

The most profound evidence for the truth of Christianity goes beyond intellectual argument—it is deeply personal. When a heart is fully surrendered to Christ, a transformation occurs that defies human explanation. This change is unmistakable: a work of grace that no other force can produce. Believers love and serve the Lord not merely because of doctrine, prophecy, or history, but because of the living reality of His presence in their lives. What Christ has done within the individual soul becomes the greatest testimony of all—a truth that speaks louder than words and transcends every other form of evidence.

The Word:

15. What evidence did John present as so significant? 1 John 5:10–12; 1 John 4:13; 1 John 3:24

16. Of what does the Holy Spirit convince us? Romans 8:16; John 3:33

17. What are we invited to do? Psalm 34:8

Explanation: The Gospel of John recounts Nicodemus's encounter with Jesus, where he learns about the new-birth experience (John 3). Throughout his writings, John repeatedly emphasizes the essential role of the Holy Spirit in the heart of the believer. This presence is the greatest evidence of Christ's truth, far beyond any human reasoning or external proof.

When a believer surrenders to Christ, they experience a profound transformation—a power within that was not there before and could not come from any other source. As Galatians 2:20 declares: "*Christ lives in me.*" This personal connection assures the believer that Jesus is not just a figure of the past but a living presence today. The Holy Spirit confirms this truth, testifying within us: "*We are the children of God*" Romans 8:16.

Relevance: The Psalmist invites us to personally encounter God: "*Taste and see that the Lord is good*" Psalm 34:8. Faith is not merely intellectual—it is experiential. True assurance comes when we accept Christ, allowing Him to work in our lives through the Holy Spirit. This experience becomes our greatest certainty, proving that He lives and saves.

Our faith will continue to grow—not only in this life, but for eternity. One day, whether through death or at Christ's return, faith will become sight, and we will behold the Lord in all His glory. Then, our partial knowledge will be completed, expanding forever throughout the ceaseless ages.

Do you believe that Jesus is the living Christ? Will you allow Him to teach you by His Spirit, removing all doubt and bringing you into the fullness of His truth?

#### Review Questions

1. True or False
  - a. There is no scientific proof for the existence of God.
  - b. Faith is not based on evidence.
  - c. Human intellect is not adequate to grasp all the mysteries in the Bible.
  - d. Every person is given a different truth.
2. Discuss: If truth is ultimately revealed by the Holy Spirit, how does this shape our understanding of science's limitations? Can the scientific method fully uncover the most significant truths in the universe? What are the consequences of applying a modified scientific approach to studying the Bible while overlooking the Holy Spirit's role as a teacher?

Further Study: Ellen G. White, [Steps to Christ](#), Chapter 12.