

# I Can't Doubt And Be A Christian

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## PART 1

*“In their most inner thoughts, even the most devout Christians know that there is something illegitimate about belief. Underneath their profession of faith is a sleeping giant of doubt.... In my experience, the best way to conquer doubt is to yield to it.”*

*Dan Barker, pastor-turned-atheist*

*“Those who believe they believe in God but without passion in the heart, without anguish of mind, without uncertainty, without doubt, and even at times without despair, believe only in the idea of God, and not in God himself.”*

*Madeleine L'Engle, Christian*

## Questions?

- Is it ok to doubt my faith?
- In what circumstances or for what reasons do you doubt?
- What kind of doubts do you wrestle with? Is it possible that they're fuelled by a motivation not to believe? If so, can you pinpoint why you're reluctant to pursue faith in Christ?
- What may be the results of doubting?

For many Christians, merely having doubts of any kind can be scary. They wonder whether their questions disqualify them from being a follower of Christ. They feel insecure because they're not sure whether it's permissible to express uncertainty about God, Jesus, or the Bible.

In contrast, some Christians have a completely different perspective. They believe that having doubts isn't evidence of the absence of faith...they consider them to be the very essence of faith itself. The struggle of God is not lack of faith, it is faith.

Do spiritual seekers have to resolve each and every one of their questions before they can follow Jesus?  
Can a person be a Christian and nevertheless have reservations or doubts?

## The Roots of Doubt

- Those always questioning, always probing deeper are more susceptible.
- Unanswered prayer
- Fear (eg. Not meeting expectations. Lost if cannot meet God's standard, why believe. What if this is all false?)
- Upbringing (influence of parents, self-esteem/self-image)
- Intellectual. Questioning the credibility of the Bible (eg. Why so much suffering in the World...)

## Species of Doubt

- Congenital doubters - Always asking, what if? Drawn like magnets to uncertainties and questions. Faith doesn't come naturally.
- The rebellious - "I'm not going to let somebody run my life or do my thinking". Arrogant pride.
- Disappointment with God - God says, 'Seek and ask', when we ask and it is not given, we doubt if God was serious or even if God is there?
- Personal or family wounds - Trauma, abuse, personal hurt, rejection, loss, failure...all can lead us to ask 'If there is a God, why does this stuff happen?'.
- Intellectual doubters - Is faith only for the brilliant? Is a high IQ important to God? Many try to understand God by applying logic and when it doesn't rationalise, they doubt.

What are some factors that can accentuate doubt in people, what things contribute to doubt?

- Seasons of life - May be great believer as a student, later as young parents with children and working long hours, so on, they don't have time to reflect.

- Faith cannot develop without some contemplative time. If faith doesn't grow, doubts creep in.
- Comparing your faith with others - When we sometimes look at other believers who may have constant spiritual experiences, you may feel left behind and question God, 'why won't God give me those things'. It may help to read Psalms, because it shows what real faith is like..60% of them are laments (people screaming out – 'God where are you?'). Normal faith is allowed to beat on God's chest and complain.
  - Fear of commitment - In a narcissistic (excessive self-love; vanity) country our definition of freedom is freedom to get my own way and keep my options open. Eg. Marriage is a lifetime commitment; many young avoid this and rather just live together. The ultimate commitment is to God. We live in a Gelatissimo culture, a life where we want many options and fear committing to one thing, especially Christ.
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Next Week...

**Part 2**

What Faith Isn't

Delving beneath the surface

The decision to believe

Following Week...

**Part 3**

Dealing with doubt

The faith experiment

Faith as a verb

Having faith in doubt