

# I Can't Doubt And Be A Christian

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## PART 3

### Dealing with doubt

There is no simple formula for overcoming doubt; at the same time, there are some steps people can take to help ease their doubts. And everything begins with the will.

1. People need to decide whether or not they really want to believe.
  - o Some people want to believe when they really don't. Some may have a Psychological need to believe, as does those that have a Psychological need not to believe.
  - o The reason some have the desire not to believe is that they don't want the responsibility faith brings with it. It may be because of despair over their own fixed mentality. Or maybe they don't want to give up parties.
  - o It could also have an emotional basis.
2. You need to go where faith is.
  - o If you want to grow roses, you don't buy an acre at the North Pole. You go where roses grow well.
  - o If you're going to do faith, you probably don't want to join American Atheists, Inc.
  - o Get around people who you respect for life, their faith, their mind, their character, and their faith and learn from them.
3. Put faith-building materials into your mind
  - o Such as books, tapes and music that build strong motivation for faith, and give you tools to develop your spirituality.
4. Establish exactly where you're putting your faith.
  - o Clarify the object of your faith
  - o You can have very little faith in thick ice and it will hold you up just fine. You can have enormous faith in thin ice and you can drown.
  - o It may be tiny, like a mustard seed, but it must be invested in something solid.
  - o When it comes right down to it, the only object of faith that is solidly supported by the evidence of history, archaeology, literature and experience is Jesus.

### The faith experiment

Ultimately you must embark on your experiment of faith by doing what faith would do.

1. Jesus said that if we continue in His Word – that is continue doing what Jesus says – then we are truly his disciples.

*To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." (John 8:31-32)*

2. Being a disciple means you're a 'following learner'. And when you are a following learner, you will know the truth and the truth will set you free.
3. Knowing the truth doesn't mean filling your head with knowledge; this is the Hebrew 'know', which isn't gathering information. It's experiential knowledge. Like Adam and Eve – he didn't just know her name and address; he experienced her.
4. Do what Jesus says and you'll experience the validity of it. Like riding a bicycle. You can't watch a video or read a book you got to get on one and get the feel of it
5. How do you know if what Jesus taught is real, such as it is better to give than to receive? A thousand debates won't prove it. When you become generous, you'll realize this is truth.
6. Psalm 34:8 The more you do faith, the more you will be experientially be woven into a web of faith.

### Faith as a verb

- o There are many aspects to this faith that can't be answered but experiencing it will tell you it is true.
- o Every time you discover a new insight, every time Jesus speaks to you personally in ways you cannot articulate, every time you practice his teachings and experience the results – after awhile you will not care how many intellectual questions there questioning this truth, you will **know** it's true.
- o Eventually you have to move out and do it. In the Gospel of John, faith is never a noun it is a verb.
- o Faith in action. Never just a mental acceptance. It's a direction of life. So when we begin to do faith, God begins to validate it.

- If faith is experiential, then you could get into Buddhism and find that meditation lowers your blood pressure and makes you feel good. But that doesn't necessarily mean Buddhism is true.
- Remember that experience is just one avenue of evidence. You must also clarify the object of faith to determine if there are valid reasons for believing it's true.
- Christianity isn't true because it works; it works because it's true.
- Read Lee Strobel's interview with Lynn Andersons (congenital doubter) p 338

## Having faith in doubt

- Though doubt can be disconcerting, and although it can eventually become destructive if left untended, doubt clearly can have benefits.

*"If faith never encounters doubt, if truth never struggles with error, if good never battles with evil, how can faith know it's own power? In my own pilgrimage, if I have to choose between a faith that has stared doubt in the eye and made it blink, or a naïve faith that has never known the firing line of doubt, I will choose the former ever time."*

- Gary Parker (*The Gift of Doubt*)

- The fundamental trust in Jesus would be stronger, surer, more confident, more steadfast because it had been refined through the purifying fire of doubt.
- You do not need to resolve each and every obstacle between you and God in order to have an authentic faith.
- At the end it is a choice to believe, and ask God to help with your unbelief.

