

FAITH & DOUBT—Part 2

FAITH includes DOUBT, which has both dangers and benefits

- Faith is the *means of salvation* (Eph 2:8-9), a *spiritual gift* (1Cor 12, Rom 12), but also the exercise of *assensus* and *fiducia* in the *notitia* of Jesus and His word
- As such, it's something you can have more or less of → Cf. Matthew 8:10, 26; 14:30-31; 17:19-20; 21:21; 16:5-12)
- The DANGERS of Doubt
 - Can hinder growth that occurs through the exercise of faith
 - Can close the heart and mind to life-giving belief
 - Can produce crippling cynicism and negativity
 - Can prevent us from experiencing the benefits of knowing God
- The BENEFITS of Doubt
 - Fosters humility by reminding us of our creaturely status
 - Offers companions along our journey of faith
 - Helps us relate better to Jesus
 - Functions as the cradle of belief
 - Supplies a framework for belief
 - Strengthens faith

DEVELOPING FAITH involves *increasing your understanding of who God is and learning to trust in the context of a growing relationship*

Jesus answered, "My teaching is not my own. It comes from the one who sent me. Anyone who chooses to do the will of God will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own. (John 7:16-17)

QUOTES OF NOTE

Jesus offers a peace that involves new turmoil, a rest that involves new tasks. The “peace of God which transcends all understanding” promised in the New Testament is a peace in the midst of warfare, a calmness in the midst of fear, a confidence in the midst of doubt. (Philip Yancey, *Reaching for the Invisible God*)

The only thing more difficult than having a relationship with an invisible God is having no such relationship. (Philip Yancey, *Reaching for the Invisible God*)

It is not as a child that I believe and confess Jesus Christ. My Hosanna is born in the furnace of doubt. (Fyodor Dostoyevsky, Russian moral philosopher)

Doubt always coexists with faith, for in the presence of certainty, who would need faith at all? (Philip Yancey, *Reaching for the Invisible God*)

An agnostic is somebody who doesn't know for sure whether there really is a God. That is some people all of the time and all people some of the time. (Frederick Buechner, *Wishful Thinking*)

Whether your faith is that there is a God or that there is not a God, if you don't have any doubts, you are either kidding yourself or asleep. Doubts are the ants in the pants of faith. They keep it awake and moving. (Frederick Buechner, *Wishful Thinking*)

We both believe, and disbelieve a hundred times an Hour, which keeps Believing nimble. (Emily Dickerson, poet)

Doubt isn't the opposite of faith; it is an element of faith. (Paul Tillich, theologian)

Faith can survive periods of darkness but only if we cling to it in the midst of the darkness. (Philip Yancey, *Reaching for the Invisible God*)

In His relationships with people God places a premium on faith, which can only be exercised in circumstances that allow for doubt. (Philip Yancey, *Reaching for the Invisible God*)

But why should it be possible to mistrust—
 Nor possible only, but its opposite hard?
 Why should not man believe because he must—
 By sight's compulsion? Why should he be scarred
 With conflict? Worn with doubting fine and long?
 No man is fit for heaven's musician throng
 Who has not tuned an instrument all shook and jarred.

Therefore, O Lord, when all things common seem,
 When all is dust, and self the centre clod,
 When grandeur is a hopeless, foolish dream,
 And anxious care more reasonable than God,
 Out of the ashes I will call to thee—
 In spite of dead distrust call earnestly;
 Oh thou who livest, call, then answer dying me.
 (George MacDonald, *The Diary of an Old Soul*)