

STUDY GUIDE: Dealing with Doubt

BIG IDEA:

Doubt isn't the enemy of faith-it can be a fuel for deeper faith. The key isn't whether we doubt, but what we do with our doubt.

SECTION 1: Two Types of Doubt Responses

Doubt that Led to Separation

Biblical Example | Doubt | Outcome

King Saul (1 Sam. 13:8-14) | Doubted God's timing | Acted out of fear, lost his kingdom

Israelites in the Wilderness (Num. 13-14) | Doubted God's power | Refused to enter the Promised Land, wandered 40 years

King Ahaz (Isaiah 7:10-13) | Doubted God's protection | Sought help from Assyria, led to idolatry

Doubt that Led to Closeness

Biblical Example | Doubt | Outcome

Thomas (John 20:24-29) | Needed physical proof | Saw Jesus, proclaimed faith personally

David (Psalm 13, 22) | Wrestled in despair | Turned to God in trust and worship

John the Baptist (Matt. 11:2-6) | Questioned Jesus' identity | Jesus affirmed his role and mission

Reflection Questions:

- Which of these examples do you relate to the most?
- Do you tend to withdraw from God or run toward Him in seasons of doubt?

SECTION 2: The "Why" Behind the "What" of Doubt

Common Roots of Doubt:

1. Circumstances
2. Intellectual Challenge
3. Emotion-Based Faith
4. Father Wounds
5. Personality
6. Sinful Choices

Reflection Questions:

- Which of these reasons most resonates with you?
- Have you identified why you're doubting-not just what you're doubting?

SECTION 3: How Doubt and Anxiety Work Together

James 1:6 - "The one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind."

The Cycle:

1. Doubt leads to uncertainty.
2. Uncertainty leads to fear.
3. Fear feeds anxiety.
4. Anxiety creates mental instability.
5. Instability leads to more doubt.

Break the Cycle:

- Clarity (truth, Scripture, wise voices)
- Faith over fear
- Action over paralysis

Reflection Questions:

- Have you felt paralyzed by your doubts?
- What small, intentional action can you take this week?

SECTION 4: Doubt Can Lead to Deeper Revelation

Key Truths:

- Doubt can lead to personal encounters with God.
- Doubt often reveals a distorted view of God.
- Wrestling in doubt can refine our understanding of God's character.

Example: Thomas

John 11:16, 20:25, 20:28

Example: Job 42:5

"My ears had heard of you, but now my eyes have seen you."

Reflection Questions:

- Has a season of doubt ever led you to a stronger understanding of God?
- What distorted view of God might your current doubt be exposing?

SECTION 5: Action Steps to Transform Doubt

1. Let Doubt Lead to Action

Application: Identify one area where you're feeling stuck and take a step.

2. Let Doubt Lead to Revelation

Application: Read Psalms of lament and write your own honest prayer to God.

3. Let Doubt Lead to Community

Application: Share your questions with a pastor, leader, or trusted friend.

KEY QUOTES TO REMEMBER:

- "Our doubts can't be defused until they are defined."
- "The strongest faith isn't a faith that never doubts, but one that grows through doubt."
- "Doubt isn't the end of faith-it's often the refining fire of it."

CORE SCRIPTURES:

- James 1:6
- John 20:24-29
- Job 42:5
- Psalm 13, 22
- Jeremiah 29:13
- Matthew 11:2-6