

DEALING WITH DOUBT

Introduction

Sooner or later, every Christian will have spiritual struggles and doubts. Someone you love dies unexpectedly and you wonder if God is asleep on the job. You are disappointed in a relationship- and you wonder if God cares.

JESUS APPEARS TO THOMAS

Now Thomas, one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it."

A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" "Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe." Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!" Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." John 20

3. "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it." What was Thomas saying? ☐ "You guys are crazy." ☐ "I need proof."
☐ "I want to believe, but no." ☐ "Don't break my heart again."

4. Who does Thomas remind you of in this story? ☐ a science teacher
☐ an agnostic ☐ an honest person who wanted to believe ☐ a friend of mine
☐ myself ☐ other:

5. What is the closest that you have come to going through what Thomas went through?
☐ when my parents or I went through a divorce ☐ when someone close to me died
☐ when I dropped out of Christian fellowship ☐ when I tried really hard but failed
☐ when I was disappointed and took it out on God ☐ other:

6. How do you think Jesus feels when we have doubts about our faith? ☐ angry-"I can't believe you have doubts!"
☐ disappointed-"How could you question me?" ☐ ready-"Bring it on, I can handle your questions!"
☐ glad-"I'm happy you are curious about me." ☐ other:

7. What do you rely upon for spiritual "proof"? ☐ gut feelings
☐ what the Bible says ☐ what my church teaches ☐ logic and common sense
☐ emotional peace ☐ Christian family and friends ☐ simple faith ☐ other:

8. When you have struggles and doubts in your faith, what have you found most helpful?
☐ going to the Bible ☐ talking it over with my pastor
☐ sharing my struggles with my family and friends
☐ letting my family and friends share their struggles ☐ going to church /Relig
☐ going ahead "on faith" ☐ spending time alone with God
☐ being encouraged by the faith of others ☐ other:

9. If you could ask Jesus one "hard question" about your spiritual life, what would it be?
☐ How do I deal with doubt? ☐ How do I deal with guilt?
☐ What's wrong when I don't always feel/like a Christian? ☐ Where is God when I'm hurting?
☐ Why can't I seem to get closer to you? ☐ other:

10. How would you describe your spiritual life right now? ☐ full of doubt ☐ full of faith
☐ half and half ☐ increasing in doubt ☐ increasing in faith

11. How can the group support you in prayer this week?