

5. What's a scenario where someone might have doubts similar to John's about Jesus's identity in today's context?

6. How would you describe what it means to question your doubts, not just your faith to someone who is struggling with doubt?

7. How might Jesus's answer to John cause John to have to rethink his assumptions and understanding of scripture?

8. In light of these verses, how can you apply Jesus's response (including his demeanor) to a Christian friend or family member who is struggling with doubts about their faith?

SERMON APPLICATION GUIDE

Responding to Jesus (A Series on Matthew 11-12)

"How to Keep Doubt from Distancing
You from God" (Part 1)
Matthew 11:1-15

Doubt will _____ you from or draw you nearer to God.

We doubt God when he doesn't do what we _____ him, as God, to do.

How to Keep Doubt from Distancing You from God

Don't _____ your doubts.

Your faith can be deeper and more meaningful if you struggle with doubt.

Doubt can _____ your faith, help you go deeper with God, deepen your understanding of Christianity, and help you be more compassionate.

1. Question your _____, not just your faith.

Is the _____ that's shaking my faith truly faith-shaking?

You're not the _____ to ask difficult questions. All your questions, or variations of them, have been thought about, struggled with, and written about for centuries.

What's _____, intellectually dishonest, and sometimes just plain lazy is when your doubts are derailing your faith, but you don't apply the same quality and quantity of scrutiny to your doubts that you applied to your faith.

Proverbs 14: ¹⁵ The simple believe anything, but the prudent give thought to their steps.

Proverbs 18: ² Fools find no pleasure in understanding but delight in airing their own opinions.

Where is God leading you with your BLESS list this week?



“When a man stops believing in God he doesn’t then believe in nothing, he believes anything.” (Attributed to G.K. Chesterton)

“When I talk to a lot of people who have deconstructed to de-conversion, I’ll ask them not, ‘Why did you leave?’ But, ‘Tell me the story of when you became a Christian. Tell the story of when you knew you were a sinner and you cried out to God for his grace.’ ...I’m telling you, it’s the exception when someone has the experience of God’s grace.” (Sean McDowell)

2. Diagnose the _____(s) of your doubt.

- I _____
- E _____
- P _____
- V _____
- S _____

3. Bring your doubts to _____.

If you come to Jesus and you bring your doubts, he might _____ you by raising new issues, correcting your view of him or yourself, or giving you answers you don’t like.

Resources:

- McDowell, Sean, and John Marriott. 2023. Set Adrift: Deconstructing What You Believe Without Sinking Your Faith. Zondervan.
- Swoboda, A J. 2021. After Doubt: How to Question Your Faith Without Losing It. Brazos Press.

Personal Reflection & Small Group Questions

Please complete this study on your own, then bring it to your small group for discussion.

1. Looking over your notes from this week’s sermon, what particularly caught your attention, challenged, or confused you?
2. Read Matthew 11:1-6. From the passage, what emotions and questions do you think John the Baptist might be experiencing?
3. Why do struggles with serious doubts never leave us the same but drive us toward God or away from him?
4. Of the five categories of doubt listed in the sermon, where does John’s doubt fit?