

Uprooting Our Doubts

Introduction and Review

In the previous chapter we looked at five of the ways doubts enter our lives. We called them *The Roots of Doubt*. In summary, those were:

- The problem of *forgetfulness*
- The problem of *focus*
- The problem of *foundations*
- The problem of *feelings*
- The problem of *follow-through*

Which of these five do you think are most troublesome to you? Why?

Let's grab hold of these doubts and begin to uproot them. A great place to begin is to start by looking at:

I. The Results of Our Doubts

How do doubts affect us? What do they do in the life of the Christian who is attempting to walk by faith? Read James 1:6-8.

But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does. (NIV)

What analogies does James use to describe the doubter?

What is the result of doubting? (see verse 7)

II. The Removal of Our Doubts

In chapter one, we looked at five roots for doubts. Let's summarize the action steps we mentioned.

- a. **For the problem of *forgetfulness*, we suggested REMEMBERING the blessings of God.** Sit down and write out some of the blessings of God in your life.

In the Old Testament, when they forgot God, they lost perspective. One of the key words in the book of Deuteronomy is REMEMBER. Remember your need for God. Continually remind yourself of your absolute sense of spiritual dependency upon Him.

Read Deuteronomy 6:4-9

⁴ Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. ⁵ Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. ⁶ These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. ⁷ Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. ⁸ Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. ⁹ Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates. (NIV)

How does Moses tell us to remember the commandments of God? (see verses 8, 9)

Can you think of a specific and practical way for you to do that today?

- b. **For the problem of *focus*, we suggested to REFOCUS on God.** Meditate on who God is, and that He is the meaningful answer to your problems. Read in the Psalms and focus on His greatness.

Let's look at one of those psalms. Read Psalm 90:1-2. What do these verse tell you about God?

A prayer of Moses the man of God. Lord, you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations. ² Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.

Now read verses 3-11. What do these verses tell you about the brevity of our lives?

You turn men back to dust, saying, "Return to dust, O sons of men." For a thousand years in your sight are like a day that has just gone by, or like a watch in the night. You sweep men away in the sleep of death; they are like the new grass of the morning though in the morning it springs up new, by evening it is dry and withered. We are consumed by your anger and terrified by your indignation. You have set our iniquities before you, our secret sins in the light of your presence. All our days pass away under your wrath; we finish our years with a moan. The length of our days is seventy years or eighty, if we have the strength; yet their span is but trouble and sorrow, for they quickly pass, and we fly away. Who knows the power of your anger? For your wrath is as great as the fear that is due you. (NIV)

Verse 12 is a prayer for perspective. The Psalmist's desire is for proper focus. Take the words of verse 12 and pray them back to the Lord.

Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom. (NIV)

- c. **For the problem of *foundations*, we suggested to **REBUILD** them.** Read books in the areas where you have questions. Several good ones include:

Evidence That Demands A Verdict, Josh McDowell

Know Why You Believe, Paul Little

Reason To Believe, R. C. Sproul

The Jewish patriarch Abraham had dark times in his life that he had to walk through. But he was not in the dark about God. Therefore he was able to walk with God in the dark times. Romans 4 talks about the faith of Abraham. Read verses 16-25.

¹⁶ Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham's offspring -- not only to those who are of the law but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all.

¹⁷ As it is written: "I have made you a father of many nations." He is our father in the sight of God, in whom he believed -- the God who gives life to the dead and calls things that are not as though they were. ¹⁸ Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, "So shall your offspring be." ¹⁹ Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead -- since he was about a hundred years old -- and that Sarah's womb was also dead. ²⁰ Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, ²¹ being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised. ²² This is why "it was credited to him as righteousness." ²³ The words "it was credited to him" were written not for him alone, ²⁴ but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness -- for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. ²⁵ He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification. (NIV)

List the contrasts between the reality of Abraham's problems (verse 19) and the reality of Abraham's faith in God (verse 20,21).

Verse 25 ends by mentioning the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Resurrection gives proof to the fact that we are forgiven and in a right relationship with God.

Learning more about who God is and the intellectual basis for our faith can make our faith as strong as steel.

- d. For the problem of *feelings*, we suggested that you REPROGRAM your feelings.** In other words, learn to live by faith.

It has been said that *faith is like a muscle: it grows with exercise*. We exercise faith every day by trusting God with every detail of our lives. It took Abraham years of trusting God (and sometimes failing God) before he was known as a man of strong faith. He went through years of heartache and waiting on God. Yet Romans 4 gives us the assurance that he did persist in faith. He now stands at the shining example of living by faith from the Old Testament.

What situations have you gone through that have served to strengthen your faith?

In the last chapter, we also said to develop good self-talk. In the middle of trials, we are often tempted to become negative and critical. Go back and read Romans 4:20. What did Abraham remind himself of?

The truest thing about Abraham was God's promise to him. And remember, "*The truest thing about me is what God says about me.*"

- e. **For the problem of a failure in *follow-through*, we suggested to RENEW your commitment to the Lord.** Make sure that you have mastered the basics of the Christian life and are continually practicing them.

In 2 Peter 1, Peter writes about some "basic" issues of the Christian life. What does he say about them in verse 12?

¹² So I will always remind you of these things, even though you know them and are firmly established in the truth you now have. (NIV)

Read verses 13-15. What was Peter's reasoning for reminding his readers again and again of the basics?

I think it is right to refresh your memory as long as I live in the tent of this body, because I know that I will soon put it aside, as our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me. And I will make every effort to see that after my departure you will always be able to remember these things. (NIV)

How are you doing with regard to the basics of the Christian life? Are you maintaining your spiritual disciplines? Why or why not?

Conclusion

How can we effectively deal with our doubts? In these first two chapters, we've looked at five practical steps to take. We need to continue to *Remember the blessings of God*, *Refocus on the person of God*, *Rebuild the foundations of your faith*, *Reprogram your feelings according to the Word of God*, and *Renew your commitment to practicing the basics of the Christian faith*.

As you do these five things, doubts will begin to depart.
As a final action point in this chapter, memorize this statement:

When in doubt, feed your faith and your doubts will starve to death!

Suggested Reading

Simple Faith, Charles R. Swindoll (Word Publishers)
Living by the Book, Howard Hendricks (Moody Press)