

# Faith Versus Doubt

James 1:6-8

## I. Pray For Wisdom In Faith (6a)

<sup>6a</sup> But let him ask in faith,

### A. Pray For Wisdom As You Mature In Your Trials

### B. Pray In Faith As You Singly Trust God

- Faith is single-minded confidence and trust

|                        |               |                          |
|------------------------|---------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Faith Involves:</b> | Understanding | Knowledge of Facts       |
|                        | Emotional     | Confidence in the Truth  |
|                        | Will          | Commitment through Trust |

1. Mind: Knowledge of Facts (Heb 11:6)
2. Heart: Acceptance (Assent) As Truth (Heb 11:1)
3. Will: Commitment Through Trust

## II. Prevent Doubt By Remaining Single Minded In Our Faith In God (6b-8)

### A. Doubt Is To Believe And Disbelieve At The Same Time

<sup>6b</sup> with no doubting,

### B. Doubt Is Driven By Forces We Consider More Powerful Than God (Eph 4:13-14)

<sup>6c</sup> for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind.



### C. Doubt Presupposes Bad Theology (God Is Not Gracious, Caring Nor Providing)

<sup>7</sup> For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord;

### D. Doubt Destabilizes Every Area Of Our Life

<sup>8</sup> he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

### Conclusion:

1. Faith begins by having a good theological understanding in who God is.
2. Doubt allows forces that we presuppose are better or more powerful than God to make us double-minded.
3. Maturity eradicates God's competition as our prayer of faith brings mature wisdom through trials.

### Discussion:

1. How has your experience with doubt identify with Mark 9:24 "Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!"?
2. What forces compete with God in our mind when we doubt? How can we eliminate them?
3. In what areas of our life has doubt destabilized us? What promise of God can we trust?

# Faith Versus Doubt

## James 1:6-8

**James 1:6-8** <sup>6</sup>But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. <sup>7</sup>For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; <sup>8</sup>he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

### SCRIPTURE READING:

**James 1:2-5** <sup>2</sup>Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, <sup>3</sup>for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. <sup>4</sup>And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. <sup>5</sup>If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.

**James 1:6-8** <sup>6</sup>But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. <sup>7</sup>For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; <sup>8</sup>he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

### Introduction:

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## I. Pray For Wisdom In Faith (6a)

<sup>6a</sup> *But let him ask in faith,*

### A. Pray For Wisdom As You Mature In Your Trials

- "Ask" = αἰτέω = *aiteito*

**James 1:5** <sup>5</sup>If any of you lacks wisdom, let him **ask** God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.

- "ask" connects v. 5 and v. 6

### B. Pray In Faith As You Singly Trust God

- "Faith" = *Pisteuo*
  - B.A.G. – "to believe in something, be convinced of something... entrust something to another" (pp. 661-662)
    - formed from *peitho* = persuade, convince (see Colin Brown, Vol. 1, p. 588)
    - *pisteuo* is used around 240x in the NT
    - one who is persuaded places faith in what he has been persuaded in
  - Leon Morris: "Faith means abandoning all trust in one's own resources. Faith means casting oneself unreservedly on the mercy of God. Faith means laying hold on the promises of God in Christ, relying entirely on the finished work of Christ for salvation, and on the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit of God for daily strength. Faith implies complete reliance on God and full obedience to God." ("Faith," *The New Bible Dictionary*, p. 413)

- "Faith means confidence, trust, to hold something as true....To have faith in Christ unto salvation means to have confidence that He can remove the guilt of sin and grant eternal life." (Ryrie, *Basic Theology*, p. 326)
- **Faith is single-minded confidence and trust**

|                        |               |                          |
|------------------------|---------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Faith Involves:</b> | Understanding | Knowledge of Facts       |
|                        | Emotional     | Confidence in the Truth  |
|                        | Will          | Commitment through Trust |

- Louis Berkhof describes the 3 elements of faith as:
  - 1) Intellectual (*notitia*)
  - 2) Emotional (*assensus*)
  - 3) Volitional (*fiducia*)

## 1. Mind: Knowledge of Facts

- *Notitia*: "knowledge"

**Hebrews 11:6** <sup>6</sup>But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

- Some religious folks claim "It doesn't matter what you believe in as long as you're sincere."
  - but the road to hell is paved with sincerity
  - it does matter what you believe in
  - **not** JUSTIFICATION BY SINCERITY
  - know the person of Christ – deity & humanity
  - know the work of Christ – died for our sins, resurrected for our victory
  - 1 Cor 15:3-4
- Augustine "If you believe what you like in the gospel and reject what you don't like; it is not the gospel you believe, but yourself"

## 2. Heart: Acceptance (Assent) As Truth

- *Assensus*: "assent"
- There is a difference between knowing facts and believing facts

**Hebrews 11:1** <sup>1</sup>Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

- The Resurrection appearances

**Exodus 4:1-9** <sup>1</sup>Then Moses answered and said, "But suppose they will not believe me or listen to my voice; suppose they say, 'The Lord has not appeared to you.' " <sup>2</sup>So the

Lord said to him, "What is that in your hand?" He said, "A rod." <sup>3</sup>And He said, "Cast it on the ground." So he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from it. <sup>4</sup>Then the Lord said to Moses, "Reach out your hand and take it by the tail" (and he reached out his hand and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand), <sup>5</sup>"that they may believe that the Lord God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has appeared to you." <sup>6</sup>Furthermore the Lord said to him, "Now put your hand in your bosom." And he put his hand in his bosom, and when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous, like snow. <sup>7</sup>And He said, "Put your hand in your bosom again." So he put his hand in his bosom again, and drew it out of his bosom, and behold, it was restored like his other flesh. <sup>8</sup>"Then it will be, if they do not believe you, nor heed the message of the first sign, that they may believe the message of the latter sign. <sup>9</sup>And it shall be, if they do not believe even these two signs, or listen to your voice, that you shall take water from the river and pour it on the dry land. The water which you take from the river will become blood on the dry land."

### 3. Will: Commitment Through Trust

- *Fiducia*: "trust"
  - "involving trust, especially with regard to the relationship between a trustee and a beneficiary" (*Oxford Dictionary*)
    - E.g. "the company has a fiduciary duty to shareholders"
    - The Church Board has a fiduciary duty to the Church and Christ

ie/ When you sit in a chair: know there is a chair there; determine its strength; sit in it

ie/ When you purchase a car: find out knowledge of the car (flier, commercial, visit dealership); determine reliability (Consumers Reports, talk to other owners); then obtaining it (acting on your knowledge and trust)

## II. Prevent Doubt By Remaining Single Minded In Our Faith In God (6b-8)

### A. Doubt Is To Believe And Disbelieve At The Same Time

<sup>6b</sup> *with no doubting,*

- *Diakrino* – lit. to judge between two, to distinguish
- Chris Vlachos: "The basic mng. of διακρίνω is to differentiate ( δίδ in the sense of "to and fro") and is used in the sense of "creating distinctions" in 2:4. Here, however, the vb. is in the mid. voice, conveying the notion of **disputing with oneself**, i.e., "doubt" (most EVV; see BDAG 231c)." *Vlachos, Chris A.. James (Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament) (Kindle Locations 1304-1306). B&H Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.*  
**James 1:6** But let him ask in faith, with no doubting (*diakrino*), for he who doubts (*diakrino*) is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind.

**Romans 14:23** But he who doubts (*diakrino*) is condemned if he eats, because he does not eat from faith; for whatever is not from faith is sin.

- *Dipsychos* – dual minded

**James 1:8** He is a double-minded (*dipsychos*) man, unstable in all his ways.

- *Dialogismos* – carefully think through, reason, to think so deeply that you remain in doubt

**Luke 24:38** And He said to them, “Why are you troubled? And why do doubts (*dialogismos*) arise in your hearts?”

- *Distazo* – to doubt, waver (used 2x)

**Matthew 14:31** And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him, and said to him, “O you of little faith, why did you doubt?”

**Matthew 28:17** When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted.

- All words for doubt have to do with “double” or “split”.
- The Chinese call this having “a foot in two boats”
- The Navajo define doubt as “that which is two with a person”
- Os Guinness: “To believe is to be ‘in one mind’ about accepting something as true; to disbelieve is to be ‘in one mind’ about rejecting it. To doubt is to waver between the two, to believe and disbelieve at once and so be ‘in two minds.’” (*Two Minds*)
- J.I. Packer “What is doubt? It is a state of divided mind...and it is found both *within* faith and *without* it. In the former case, it is faith infected, sick, and out of sorts; in the latter, it belongs to a struggle either toward faith or away from a God felt to be invading and making claims one does not want to meet...In our doubts, we think we are honest, and certainly try to be; but perfect honesty is beyond us in this world, and an unacknowledged unwillingness to take God’s word about things, whether from deference to supposed scholarship or fear of ridicule or of deep involvement or from some other motive, often underlies a person’s doubt about this or that item of faith.” (*Growing In Christ*)
- Doubt gets a rough knock. If we were Thomas, having been told that our Mentor for 3 years was resurrected from the dead, we would have experienced incredulity and skepticism.
- C.S. Lewis points out that those who are theologically liberal are too soft on doubt – hailing ambiguity and uncertainty as spiritual virtues. Yet the theologically conservative can tend to be too hard on doubt that propagates a sense of spiritual perfection that causes guilt and results in many being shipwrecked in their faith.
- God has designed “doubt” for us to grow our faith on. It is not intended to bring us guilt about being perfect in our faith. It demonstrates that our mortal thoughts will never compare to the perfect thoughts of God. It magnifies the point that God’s ways are not our ways. Doubt is to bring us to subjection to God in faith, not to bring us to despair and guilt for not being perfect in faith.

**Mark 9:24** Immediately the father of the child cried out and said with tears, “Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!”

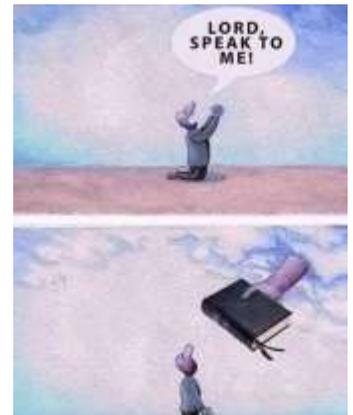
## B. Doubt Is Driven By Forces We Consider More Powerful Than God

*“for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind.”*

- Illustration: doubter = sea, outside force = wind
- Circumstances become bigger than God: illness,
- Fear is ascribed more power than God: fear of faith, fear of the future, fear of failure, fear of commitment
- Competing winds
  - Ie/ Tornadoes in Oklahoma and Kansas happen frequently because the warm, moist air from the Gulf and the cool, dry air from Canada meets there

**Ephesians 4:14** so that we may no longer be children, **tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind** of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.

- “children” = *nēpios* (νηπιος) – an infant or pre-pubescent child
  - “In the present context it has reference to a child’s gullibility, lack of understanding, or lack of perception.” (Hoehner, *Ephesians*, p. 561)
  - this describes being like a gullible child, just follows without reason
  - an immature believer doesn’t know how to discern truth with God’s Word
  - To an immature child or immature believer, **Doctrine** isn’t important as the True North in the direction of our life
  - We want to do what we feel instead of obeying God’s Word
  - We want to listen to feelings, not God’s Word



**Ephesians 4:13** till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a **perfect (mature)** man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;

- “children” contrasted with maturity (v. 13)

**James 1:2-5** <sup>2</sup>Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, <sup>3</sup>for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. <sup>4</sup>And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be **perfect (mature) and complete**, lacking in nothing. <sup>5</sup>If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.

## C. Doubt Presupposes Bad Theology (God Is Not Gracious, Caring Nor Providing)

*“For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord;”*

- “not suppose”
  - John the Baptist – announcer of Christ “Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” , preached repentance,
- “he will receive anything from the Lord”
- Contrasts **James 1:5** *who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.*

**Romans 8:32** He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?

#### **D. Doubt Destabilizes Every Area Of Our Life**

*he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.*

- “double-minded” = *dipsychos* – dual minded
- **Faith is single-minded**
- **Doubt is double-minded**
- “unstable in all his ways”
  - **Marriage** is rocky because we’re not fulfilling God’s design for marriage or loving like our spouse like Christ loves the Church
  - **Relationships** – use friends instead of serve friends
  - **Work** is unstable when we don’t see our work as a way to worship God
  - **Money** is treasured more than godliness which is always profitable
    - Two masters – Mt 6
  - **Life’s Purpose** – self vs God, idols vs God, achievement vs godliness
  - **Death** – what to I trust in
  - **Sickness** brings self pity rather than a means to worship God
    - J.C. Ryle – “Sickness”: “Duty 1: Live prepared to meet God. One paramount duty which the prevalence of sickness entails on man is that of living habitually prepared to meet God. Sickness is a remembrancer of death. ... the inhabitant of a sick and dying world should learn ... to prepare to meet his God.” (p. 16)
    - “I know how ready the heart of a believer is to faith, and how busy Satan is in suggesting doubts and questionings, when the body of a Christian is weak. ... I have marked how prone some good people are to torment themselves with morbid thoughts at such seasons, and to say in their hearts, ‘God has forsaken me: I am cast out of His sight.’ I earnestly entreat all sick believers to remember that they may honour God as much by patient sufferings as they can by active work. ... **Glorify God when you are ill.**” (ibid, p. 23)

**Conclusion:**

1. Faith begins by having a good theological understanding in who God is.
2. Doubt allows forces that we presuppose are better or more powerful than God to make us double-minded.
3. Maturity eradicates God's competition as our prayer of faith brings mature wisdom through trials.

**Discussion:**

1. How has your experience with doubt identify with Mark 9:24 "Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!"?
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