

Doubt

Look Up

The following biblical heroes had doubts about Jesus. How is your experience with Jesus similar to or different from theirs? Read the Scriptures and write your responses after each grouping.

John the Baptist

Matthew 11:2-6

²Now when John heard in prison about the things the Christ was doing, he sent word by his disciples to Jesus, asking, ³“Are you the one who is to come, or should we look for another?”

⁴Jesus responded, “Go, report to John what you hear and see. ⁵Those who were blind are able to see. Those who were crippled are walking. People with skin diseases are cleansed. Those who were deaf now hear. Those who were dead are raised up. The poor have good news proclaimed to them.

⁶Happy are those who don’t stumble and fall because of me.”

John 1:29-34

²⁹The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! ³⁰This is the one about whom I said, ‘He who comes after me is really greater than me because he existed before me.’ ³¹Even I didn’t recognize him, but I came baptizing with water so that he might be made known to Israel.”

³²John testified, “I saw the Spirit coming down from heaven like a dove, and it rested on him. ³³Even I didn’t recognize

him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'The one on whom you see the Spirit coming down and resting is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' ³⁴I have seen and testified that this one is God's Son."

- *How is your experience with Jesus similar to or different from John the Baptist's?*

Peter

Matthew 14:28-31

²⁸Peter replied, “Lord, if it’s you, order me to come to you on the water.”

²⁹And Jesus said, “Come.”

Then Peter got out of the boat and was walking on the water toward Jesus. ³⁰But when Peter saw the strong wind, he became frightened. As he began to sink, he shouted, “Lord, rescue me!”

³¹Jesus immediately reached out and grabbed him, saying, “You man of weak faith! Why did you begin to have doubts?”

Matthew 26:69-75

⁶⁹Meanwhile, Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. A servant woman came and said to him, “You were also with Jesus the Galilean.”

⁷⁰But he denied it in front of all of them, saying, “I don’t know what you are talking about.”

⁷¹When he went over to the gate, another woman saw him and said to those who were there, “This man was with Jesus, the man from Nazareth.”

⁷²With a solemn pledge, he denied it again, saying, “I don’t know the man.”

⁷³A short time later those standing there came and said to Peter, “You must be one of them. The way you talk gives you away.”

⁷⁴Then he cursed and swore, “I don’t know the man!” At that very moment the rooster crowed. ⁷⁵Peter remembered Jesus’ words, “Before the rooster crows you will deny me three times.” And Peter went out and cried uncontrollably.

- *How is your experience with Jesus similar to or different from Peter's?*

Thomas

John 20:24-29

²⁴Thomas, the one called Didymus, one of the Twelve, wasn't with the disciples when Jesus came. ²⁵The other disciples told him, "We've seen the Lord!"

But he replied, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands, put my finger in the wounds left by the nails, and put my hand into his side, I won't believe."

²⁶After eight days his disciples were again in a house and Thomas was with them. Even though the doors were locked, Jesus entered and stood among them. He said, "Peace be with you." ²⁷Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here. Look at my hands. Put your hand into my side. No more disbelief. Believe!"

²⁸Thomas responded to Jesus, "My Lord and my God!"

²⁹Jesus replied, "Do you believe because you see me? Happy are those who don't see and yet believe."

- How is your experience with Jesus similar to or different from Thomas's?

Sum Up

- *What message regarding faith and doubt do the Scriptures highlight for you?*

Wrap Up

- *In light of the quotation below, how have your doubts led to greater faith?*

“Doubts are the ants in the pants of faith. They keep it awake and moving.”—Frederick Buechner

Lace Them Up

- *What is your game plan for encountering doubts with faith and faithfulness?*

Day 1

Growth

Read John 20:26-29.

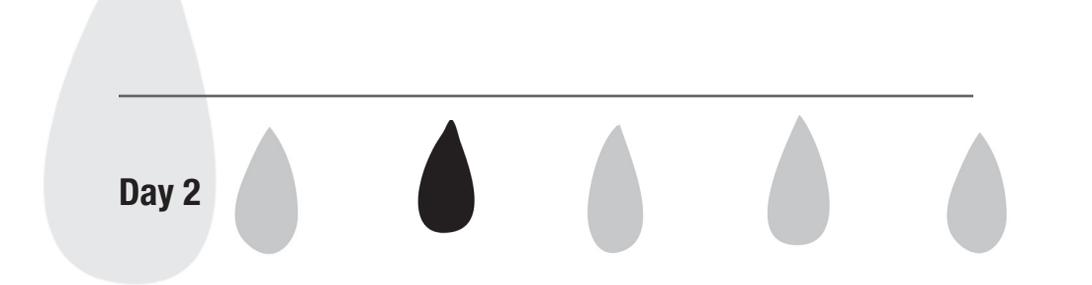
Reflect on the following:

- *What was Thomas's doubt? What did he need in order to believe it was really Jesus standing there?*
- *What does it mean to believe in God?*
- *What do I believe about God?*
- *What doubts about God do you think about the most?*

Doubt is natural. Seasons of doubt affect us all at different times in our walks with God. Doubting does not mean that we are bad Christians. In fact, doubting can help us grow in our faith just like it did Thomas's.

- *What would help you find answers to your doubts?*

Prayer: God, please help me to lean more on you for understanding. When I doubt, I ask you to help me see more of you. Thank you for always loving me, even in the midst of my doubt and uncertainty. In Jesus' name. Amen.



Day 2

Mission

Read Jonah 1:1-6.

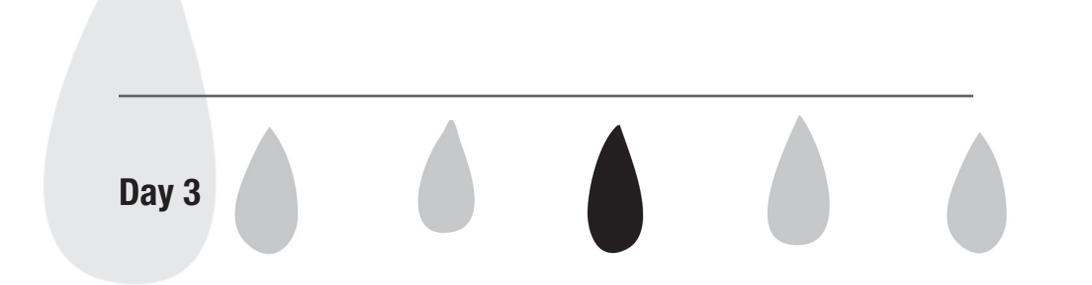
Reflect on the following:

- *What have you felt God ask of you that didn't seem to fit with what you had in mind? What happened?*
- *Who were the people or what were the circumstances that steered you in the direction God had for you?*

Jonah doubted God's mission for him. He didn't understand why God wanted the Ninevites to be saved and didn't want to be the person to give them the good news.

With a little help from a big fish, he eventually did go to Nineveh, and he did what God asked him to do. This can be true for us as well: even though we doubt God, we can still be faithful followers of the Lord.

Prayer: God, please help me in my doubting to love you more. Help me understand that you are with me always, even when it doesn't feel like you are near. Thank you, God, for being you. In Jesus' name. Amen.



Day 3

Waiting

Read Psalm 27:1-14 several times.

Note words and phrases that seem of significance to you.

Reflect on the following:

- *What is David trusting God to be and do for him?*
- *What does the psalmist want more than anything? Why do you think this is the most important thing to him?*
- *What are you trusting God to be and do for you?*
- *What do you want more than anything in your relationship with God? Why is it important to you?*

An English phrase encouraging patience goes like this: “Good things come to those who wait.” David knew that he would have to wait patiently for what he wanted. How are you with waiting?

Prayer: God, waiting is hard. But thank you for seasons of doubt, because these times help me grow in my faith. Help me to depend on you, even when it’s hard. Help me to remember your love for me. In Jesus’ name. Amen.





Day 4

Ask, Seek, Knock

Read Luke 11:9-13.

Reflect on the following:

- *In what ways do you doubt that God wants to give you good things?*
- *When have you gotten frustrated or weary with not finding answers you need and stopped seeking and stopped asking your questions (knocking)?*
- *What do you need to encourage and motivate you to keep asking, seeking, and knocking?*

Seasons of doubt plague all of us. When we doubt, we are faced with two options: We can either seek God in the midst of our questions, or we can forget about it and walk away. The Gospel of Luke tells us that if we seek, we will find; if we ask, we will receive. Use your season of doubt to ask God and to seek God, instead of walking away.

Prayer: God, thank you for who you are. Thank you for your love and your grace. Remind me that you love me, even when I am questioning. In Jesus' name. Amen.

