

The Conflict between Belief and Skepticism

Christmas in Conflict

Luke 2

In the time of Herod king of Judea there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly division of Abijah; his wife Elizabeth was also a descendant of Aaron. Both of them were upright in the sight of God, observing all the Lord's commandments and regulations blamelessly. **Luke 1:5-6**

But they had no children, because Elizabeth was barren; and they were both well along in years. **Luke 1:7**

Once when Zechariah's division was on duty and he was serving as priest before God, he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to go into the temple of the Lord and burn incense. **Luke 1:8-9**

And when the time for the burning of incense came, all the assembled worshipers were praying outside. **Luke 1:10**

it came his one turn in life to enter the sanctuary of God and burn incense. **Luke 1:8**

But the angel said to him: "Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to give him the name John. He will be a joy and delight to you, and many will rejoice because of his birth, **Luke 1:11-14**

Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. **Luke 1:11**

for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He is never to take wine or other fermented drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even from birth. **Luke 1:15**

Zechariah asked the angel, "How can I be sure of this? I am an old man and my wife is well along in years." **Luke 1:18**

**How to deal with doubt
and the conflict between Belief and Skepticism.**

1. Doubt is _____ —even for Godly people.

The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" John 1:29

The times we are be tempted to doubt

1. When we are hurting and our lives seem to be falling apart
2. When we don't share the _____ experiences
3. When our experiences don't _____ with other believers around us

2. Doubt is beneficial—if it motivates us to_____.

How to deal with doubt and the conflict between Belief and Skepticism.

***A simple man believes anything, but a prudent man gives thought to his steps.*

Proverbs 14:15

Doubt of C_____

"I can't honestly say I believe it when I don't, but I'm willing to examine the evidence to see if it is true."

Doubt of C_____

"I don't know if it's true or not, and it doesn't matter to me because I don't want to be confused with the evidence. It's easier not to believe."

Two Types of Doubt

- Convenient doubt uses skepticism to justify immoral behavior
- Conscientious doubt questions and investigates to draw a reasonable conclusion

***Doubt is beneficial if it motivates us to investigate
and leads to a stronger faith.***

3. Doubt can be_____—

if it disregards the evidence and is indecisive.

How to deal with doubt and the conflict between Belief and Skepticism.

The angel answered, "I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to tell you this good news. And now you will be silent and not able to speak until the day this happens, because you did not believe my words, which will come true at their proper time." Luke 1:19-20

Prolonged indecisive doubt is always a spiritual disability.

Doubt opens the door to temptation.

Since, then, we know what it is to fear the Lord, we try to persuade men.

2 Corinthians 5:11

Doubt negates our _____

Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, if you have faith and do not doubt, not only can you do what was done to the fig tree, but also you can say to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and it will be done. Matthew 21:21

Doubt nullifies our _____

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. James 1:6-8

Doubt excuses immorality.

Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. John 3:18

This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. John 3:19-20

Most doubt is not rooted in an intellectual problem.

Most doubt is moral doubt. It's rooted in_____.

4. Doubt is conquerable and should be overcome.

How to deal with doubt and the conflict between Belief and Skepticism.

When it was time for Elizabeth to have her baby, she gave birth to a son. Her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown her great mercy, and they shared her joy.

Luke 1:57-58

On the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to name him after his father Zechariah, but his mother spoke up and said, "No! He is to be called John."

They said to her, "There is no one among your relatives who has that name."

John 1:59-61

Then they made signs to his father, to find out what he would like to name the child.

Luke 1:62

He asked for a writing tablet, and to everyone's astonishment he wrote, "His name is John." Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue was loosed, and he began to speak, praising God. Luke 1:63-64

The neighbors were all filled with awe, and throughout the hill country of Judea people were talking about all these things. Everyone who heard this wondered about it, asking, "What then is this child going to be?" For the Lord's hand was with him. Luke 1:65-66

Essential Steps to Conquering Doubt

1. Examine the _____

Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ. Romans 10:17

I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. Romans 1:16

2. _____ to obey God's Word that you understand

The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned. Isaiah 9:2

Doubt and belief are sometimes co-mingled in the same heart.

Do you really want to believe? Then act on the faith you have.

Key: normal, same, resonate, investigate, Conscience, Convenience, detrimental, witness, prayers, disobedience, evidence, Decide