

DEALING WITH DOUBT

Allen G. Parr is a licensed and ordained minister who has taught the Bible for twenty-five years. In 2004 Parr graduated from Dallas Theological Seminary with a Master of Theology degree with an emphasis on Pastoral Leadership. Parr is the founder of The BEAT, an online Bible teaching ministry that publishes videos that reach thousands of weekly viewers worldwide. He is also the author of two eBooks and has a blog hosted on his website allenparr.com.

Confidence is necessary for success as an athlete and in all life. But confidence can often be short-lived and replaced with doubt.

There is a difference between doubt and disbelief. Doubt says "I can't believe this but help me to believe. Disbelief says, "I won't believe, and I don't want help."

Eliminating doubt from life is impossible. We must be prepared to process our doubts and be prepared to help others process their doubts.

Several well-known Christians in recent years began to doubt which led to deconstructing their faith and ultimately to disbelief.

"Now when John heard in prison about the deeds of the Christ, he sent word by his disciples and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another." Matt 11:2-3
ESV

"If John the Baptist, a spiritual heavyweight, could express his doubts openly, then so should you and I."

Three practical tangible steps to manage and process your doubts.

First, identify your doubts. What is the root of your doubts? There are three types of doubt.

Experiential Doubt: God failed to meet your expectations (e.g., the death of a loved one, debilitating illness, physical disability, struggling with same-sex attraction, etc.). You feel God did not come through for you; He let you down. Never base your belief on your experiences. God never promised us an easy life.

Internal Intellectual Doubt: You have internal questions that you cannot reconcile (e.g., how can a loving God let people go to hell who were good people? How could He allow so much evil in the world? Was Jonah really in the belly of a whale? Were Daniel's

friends really in a fiery furnace and survive? How did a woman get pregnant at 90 years old?) These are genuine questions, but they can be answered.

External Intellectual Doubt: Many groups are going to try to cause you to doubt your faith and are well prepared to answer why they believe what they believe. They can provide what may seem like solid reasons for why they reject your Christian faith. You must be prepared for them. One conversation with one of them can shake your belief in our Christian faith to its core.

Involve others in your doubt

“Satan does his best work in isolation secrecy”

Find a community of people you can discuss doubts with openly and find a trusted mentor to walk with you through the faith. John the Baptist involves both his disciples (community) and Jesus (mentor) when he has doubts (Matt 11:2-3)

Investigate your doubt

Go to Jesus to find the answers to doubts. Doubting is usually driven by emotions. Stick with the concrete evidence: “don't concentrate on your psychology, concentrate on the evidence. The evidence is what you ought to follow on whether or not Christianity is true, not your changing moods, not your changing emotions which tend to go up and down.”

Allen Parr's Top Apologetic Resources

1. Cross Examined – <https://crossexamined.org>
2. CARM – <https://carm.org>
3. Reasonable Faith – <https://www.reasonablefaith.org>
4. Sand to Reason – <https://str.org>
5. Cold Case Christianity – <https://coldcasechristianity.com>
6. Neil Shevni – <https://shrviapologetics.com>
7. Reasons to Believe – <http://reason.org>
8. Got Questions – <https://gotquestions.org>
9. Josh McDowell – <https://josh.org>
10. Natasha Crain – <https://natashacrain.com>
11. Discovery Institute – <https://discovery.org>
12. Probe for Answers – <https://probe.org>

Many doubt the faith and are brought to Christ by looking at the genuine evidence of Christianity. “If God can reveal truth to all these people who doubted their faith and none of them were Christians, how much more will God show you the truth if you truly follow after him.”

“All questions that you have won't be answered here. You need to accept that. The Bible says this. The Lord our God has secrets known to no one.”

Questions to Consider

1. Statistics show that many young adults who grew up in church leave the faith. What do you believe are the main reasons why?
2. Based on our session, what are some practical ways Christians can handle their doubts to draw them closer to God and not farther away?
3. What strategies would you use to counsel a friend who used to claim to be a Christian but is now having doubts about Christianity and considering leaving the faith?