



*The #1 catalyst for spiritual growth is reading and reflecting on the Bible.
Use these questions for personal study or as part of a community group experience.*

INTRODUCTION

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Doubt can plague the most devout follower. This was the case with John the Baptist who met Jesus face-to-face and experienced his ministry first hand. Jesus' response however addresses doubt in a unique way.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. When you think of doubt in the church or Christianity what comes to mind? What response to doubt do you expect from those within the church?
2. Read Matthew 11:2-15. This passage begins by describing the circumstances of John the Baptist. Who was he? What role did he serve in church history (Matthew 11:9-10; 3:1-3, 13-17)?
3. John hears of what Jesus had done in the towns of Israel, but he also knows Jesus personally. Where are the interactions between Jesus and John recorded and what impact did they have on John?
4. Verse 2 mentions two important things: 1) John was in prison; and, 2) John had heard what the Messiah was doing. What effect might each of these things have on John's faith? What things does John hear Jesus, the Messiah, doing (hint: look at the context before and after this verse)?

5. John originally confesses that Jesus is the Messiah, or the Christ, and is now seeking further confirmation. Based on Isaiah 61:1-3; 35:1-7; Psalm 72:1-4; and, Jeremiah 23:5-8 what were some of the expectations of Messiah?

6. Looking at Matthew 11:7-10. How does Jesus portray John despite John's sense of doubt? In what ways does Jesus' description of John, despite his doubt, impact your understanding of God and doubt?

7. Would you agree that doubt can be either constructive or destructive? Describe each form of doubt in 1-2 sentences. Have either, or both of these impacted your spiritual journey?

8. From Derek's sermon, how can doubt benefit your faith? What things can be done to increase the likelihood that doubt is constructive rather than destruction?

9. Jesus instructs John to remember the things he has already seen and heard concerning Jesus. What are some teachings, events or stories that you can recall to renew your faith and bring encouragement?

10. How can you help foster a safe group, community or church environment to discuss doubt? How can you help others identify and remember the God-moments in their life?

MOVING FORWARD

Faith entails movement. Doubt seizes hold and becomes destructive when we no longer take actions (movement) to address those doubts. There is a great prayer in the Gospel of Mark by a man facing impossible odds: "I believe; Lord, help my unbelief" (9:24). As you discuss doubt in your group, be sure to discuss your doubts with God. Prayer is an incredible tool for increasing faith.