

Doubting when Life Gets Hard

This is **lesson 3 of 3** in the series Dealing with Doubt. Check out the Kids and Youth version.

If God is in control, why is the world so messed up? Why do bad things happen to good people? These are common questions that even Christians ask. If Christianity is true, then shouldn't the world look different? During his time on earth, Jesus dealt with these issues when he talked with one of the most infamous doubters in the Bible.

Disappointment with God may lead to doubt

If you know anything about John the Baptist, then you probably know that he was a wild man who was passionate for God. But towards the end of his life John was also a doubter. Although he had baptized Jesus, he felt disillusioned with life. In [Luke 7](#), he is sitting in prison and ultimately will be executed. John has some questions for Jesus. If Jesus is God's chosen one, why isn't he fixing everything?

Luke 7:20 *“John’s two disciples found Jesus and said to him, ‘John the Baptist sent us to ask, ‘Are you the Messiah we’ve been expecting, or should we keep looking for someone else?’”*

John is disappointed with God. He's disappointed that he's in prison, and he's disappointed that Jesus hasn't removed the Romans from the Jewish promised land. In other words, John feels the same thing as many of us. When we feel disappointment with life's circumstances, then we begin to doubt God's plan. Thankfully, God can handle our disappointment.

[\[Related resource: Is Everything Really Going to Work Out?\]](#)

Doubters are welcome in God's family

How does Jesus respond to John? First, he answers John's questions:

Luke 7:22 *“Then he told John’s disciples, ‘Go back to John and tell him what you have seen and heard—the blind see, the lame walk, those with leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised to life, and the Good News is being preached to the poor.’”*

Jesus tells John that God is at work. People are being transformed. God's work just looks differently than he might expect. But Jesus goes further and addresses John's character. Even though John has these doubts, Jesus still affirms him.

Luke 7:28 *I tell you, of all who have ever lived, none is greater than John. Yet even the least person in the Kingdom of God is greater than he is!*

Jesus doesn't turn doubters away. He brings them into his family as he did with John. So, let's get some practical takeaways from John:

[\[Related Resource: Who Was John the Baptist?\]](#)

Admit your doubts to God

John didn't hide his doubts. In fact, he went to great lengths to share them with Jesus. Tell God your doubts. He wants you to bring them to him, and ask for his help. And don't battle your doubts alone. Let others in on your doubts so that they can help you.

Don't let doubts be your default

Doubts tend to control our thinking. Our doubts become facts in our minds and our faith is what has to be proven. This isn't healthy. Test your doubts just like you test your faith. It may be that your doubts come from faulty reasoning.

| **1 Thessalonians 5:21** *"Test everything, hold on to what is good."*

Go back to what you know is true

When you are dealing with particularly troubling doubt, a helpful step to take is going back to what you know to be true. Go back to the foundation of your life: God is real. God loves you. Jesus came to rescue you. Remember how God has moved in your life over the years. In moments of crippling doubts, remembering God's work in your past can revive your faith.

[\[Related Resource: How to Start a Pursuit of God\]](#)

Watch and Discuss:

1. Watch the video together or invite someone to summarize the topic.
2. Read [Luke 7:20](#). When was the most recent time you doubted God's plan?
3. When has God's plan surprised you by how different it was from your own plan?
4. Read [Luke 7:22](#). How did Jesus answer John's doubt? What specific things do you think Jesus wants you to know in the midst of your doubts?
5. Read [Luke 7:28](#). Why do you think Jesus praised John in that moment? How does that affect the way you approach Jesus with your doubts?
6. Read [1 Thessalonians 5:21](#). List some ways that you can "test everything" in order to strengthen your belief. What are some assumptions you make that need testing?
7. Write a personal action step based on this conversation.