



GOOD NEWS

for the unsaved WORLD!

(#113)
Defective faith: Wavering with doubt.

1

DEFECTIVE FAITH

⇒ Is this my FAITH?

- Genuine fact-based living FAITH is a saving faith.
- But what if my faith is...

Defective in its FACT foundation?	Defective in its LIVING expression?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> False (= deception) Rejected (= unbelief) Missing (= ignorance) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small (= "little faith") Wavering (= doubt) Absent (= not there)

TODAY

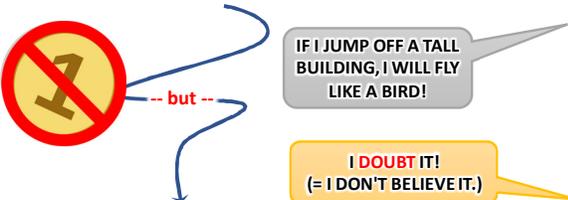
2

A WAVERING ATTEMPT AT A LIVING FAITH.

A "doubting" faith is an uncertain faith.

✦ DOUBT IS NOT A ONE-DIRECTION FOCUS. ✦

- WE may use the word "doubt" as a synonym for "not believing" (which is a one-direction focus)... *but the Bible doesn't.*



IF I JUMP OFF A TALL BUILDING, I WILL FLY LIKE A BIRD!

I DOUBT IT! (= I DON'T BELIEVE IT.)

3

✦ DOUBT IS A TWO-DIRECTION FOCUS. ✦



- The New Testament concept emphasizes *hesitation* and *wavering* between two viewpoints – such as, "believing" and "not believing" (or "trusting" and "not trusting").

Most of the New Testament words translated as "doubt" are connected to the idea of "two" or "double" – such as:

- Double-minded.
- Two "judgments" (or conclusions) on an issue.
- Two viewpoints fighting each other.

* (2-directions is OK for creatures with eyes on stalks... but not for us!)

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DOUBT ⇒ TAKES YOU IN TWO DIRECTIONS... BACK AND FORTH.

FAITH ⇒ TAKES YOU IN ONE DIRECTION... FORWARD.

{ Even UNBELIEF takes you just one direction... ← BACKWARDS. → }

5

VIEWING THINGS TWO WAYS AT THE SAME TIME.

There might be value in questioning some things... but not when it comes to trusting God.

WAVERING UNCERTAINTY HESITATION

DOUBT

GOD CAN... GOD CAN'T. HE WILL... HE WON'T.

Temporary doubt may have value IF it involves evaluating issues – and then reaching a conclusion.

But there is nothing good with *ongoing* questions about God, his promises and his power.



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DOUBT is like trying to look TWO ways at once.

❖ These passages express a similar concept (though the word "doubt" is not present).

"How long will you waver between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him."
1 Kings 18:21b (NIV)

"No one can serve two masters..."
Matthew 6:24a (CSB)



GOD CAN TAKE CARE OF MY NEEDS... OR PERHAPS HE CAN'T!

Genuine FAITH has a ONE-direction focus.

❖ Doubt is an enemy of faith, and must be conquered.

How?

... keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith.
Hebrews 12:2a (NET)

... we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.
2 Corinthians 10:5b (NIV)



WITH GOD'S POWER, THIS SINGLE FOCUS IS MY GOAL!

★ How evil is DOUBT? ★

✓ **IT'S INCOMPATIBLE WITH A LIVING, POWERFUL FAITH.**

[Jesus to Peter...]"You of little faith, why did you doubt?"
Matthew 14:31b (NET)

But he must ask in faith without doubting...
James 1:6 (NET)

[Abraham] didn't doubt God's promise out of a lack of faith.
Romans 4:20a (GW)

✓ **IT CAN LEAVE A PERSON SELF-CONDEMNED.**

(This example involves a person eating something that, under the circumstances, he might think is morally wrong.)

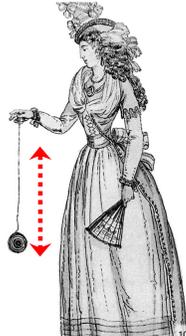
But if a person has doubts and still eats, he is condemned because he didn't act in faith. Anything that is not done in faith is sin.
Romans 14:23 (GW)

✓ **IT DESTROYS ONE'S OPPORTUNITY TO RECEIVE WHAT HE PRAYED FOR.** (This is the opposite of what happens with the person who has faith – Matthew 21:21-22.)

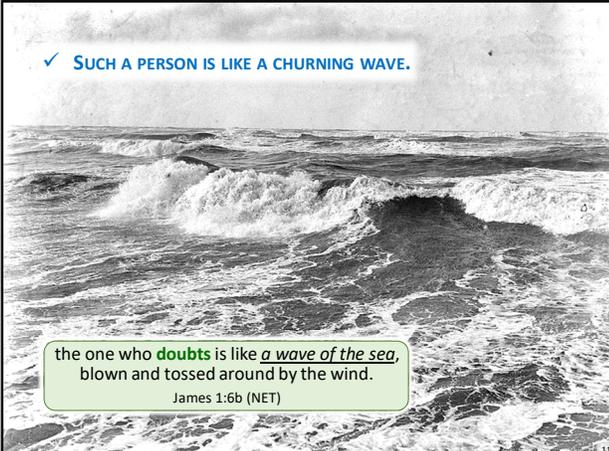
That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord, being double-minded ...
James 1:7-8a (CSB)

✓ **IT LEAVES A PERSON UNSTABLE IN ALL HIS WAYS.**

[The person who doubts] is a double-minded individual, unstable in all his ways.
James 1:8b (NET)



✓ **SUCH A PERSON IS LIKE A CHURNING WAVE.**



the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed around by the wind.
James 1:6b (NET)

★ WHAT SHOULD WE DO ABOUT DOUBT? ★

✓ **ACTIONS TO TAKE.** (Depending on who the doubter is.)

- **If it's US,** we should submit to God in repentance and humility.

Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.
James 4:7-10 (NIV)
- **If it's OTHERS WHO ARE DOUBTING...** show mercy to them.

Show mercy to those who have doubts.
Jude 1:22 (GW)

False teachers try to get people to question the truth. We shouldn't give-up on those who are misled, but should desire to bring them back to the truth.

✓ **EXAMPLES TO LEARN FROM.**

- **LEARN: "NO" ⇒ LOOKING AWAY FROM JESUS.**
(Peter, walking on water, took his eyes off Jesus and began to sink.)
[Jesus to Peter...] "You of *little faith*, why did you **doubt**?"
Matthew 14:31b (NET); see vs. 25-33.
- **LEARN: "YES" ⇒ SINGLE-FOCUSED OBEDIENCE.**
(If we know God's will, we should do it without doubt-induced hesitation, or "second thoughts" about doing it.)
The Spirit told me [= Peter] to accompany them without **hesitation**. ... and we entered the [Gentile] man's house.
Acts 11:12 (NET); see also Acts 10:20.

NOT THIS!
I KNOW GOD WANTS ME TO... BUT PEOPLE MIGHT DISAPPROVE!

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- **LEARN: "YES" ⇒ LETTING THE FACTS BRING YOUR DOUBT TO AN END.**
After Jesus' resurrection, some of his followers had doubts about his *physical* presence. It was "too good to be true!"
Doubts when they first saw Jesus – when he suddenly appeared in front of them.
[Jesus] asked them, "Why are you afraid? Why do you have **doubts**? ... Ghosts don't have flesh and bones, but you can see that I do."
Luke 24:38, 39b (GW)

Some, seeing Jesus at a distance, were hesitant to believe that it was Jesus – v. 17. (This was before he came up to them and gave them the "Great Commission" – v. 18.)

When they saw [Jesus], they worshiped him, but some **doubted**. Then Jesus came up and said to them, ... [The Great Commission – vs. 18b-20.]
Matthew 28:17-18a (NET)

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- **LEARN: "YES" ⇒ TRUSTING GOD'S "IMPOSSIBLE" PROMISES.**
He didn't **doubt** God's promise out of a lack of faith.
Romans 4:20a (GW)
(Many translations use the word "waver" = doubt-induced hesitancy.)

If we learn from these examples, then we will be able to move mountains.*

Jesus replied, "Truly I tell you, if you have **faith** and do not **doubt**, ... you can say to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and it will be done. If you **believe**, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer."
Matthew 21:21–22 (NIV); see also Mark 11:23.

* (This represents *any* "impossible" accomplishment that is in agreement with God's will. If our faith is genuine, the only "limiting factor" to this promise is God's will.)

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THROUGHOUT THE BIBLE, WE SEE THIS THEME:
⇒ **GOD IS TRUSTWORTHY, FAITHFUL AND TRUE.** ⇐

⇒ There is no reason to question it.
⇒ There is no reason to doubt it.

Your mission:
LIVE according to the facts and **TRUST** God, instead of doubting him.

When God makes a promise, there is no need to hesitate or waver!

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Credits (1)

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