

## HOW TO DRIVE AWAY DOUBT

*Do you have times when you doubt everything your life is built upon? Do you question God and your salvation? Here are some suggestions for restoring your confidence and hope.*

A lady recently wrote me and said, "I am in desperate need of help because I'm on the verge of losing my faith. Until recently, I found it easy to believe. Then my husband left me for another woman. A little later I lost my job. I have prayed for my husband to come back to me, but I don't think he's going to. I can hardly make ends meet. I'm having trouble with my teenagers. I'm beginning to wonder about everything I once believed."

Nagging doubts are ruining the happiness of many Christians. Sometimes they arise in the minds of believers who encounter strong arguments against Christianity. But more often they are produced by adverse circumstances and emotions. People can become negative about themselves, get discouraged with others, be disappointed in prayer, and then just sink into a state of depression - plagued by doubts.

This article suggests five antidotes to doubt. If you're suffering from this spiritual malady, I suggest that you take a good dose of each of them.

### INFORMATION

The first antidote to doubt is information. Many times doubts arise because people are uninformed about some of the basic truths of the faith. They are unclear about how the Bible came to us. They don't fully grasp the doctrine of salvation by grace through faith. They know almost nothing about Bible terms like justification, sanctification, and regeneration. Solid information in these areas will avert many doubts.

You don't need to be a Ph.D. to gain this knowledge. Clear, easily read booklets are available from Radio Bible Class and other Christian organizations that explain how we got our Bible and that define basic salvation truths. When you know these things, you'll be better equipped to deal with disappointments, failures, and feelings of unworthiness.

### ATTITUDE

A second antidote to doubt is a right attitude. Spiritual uncertainty flourishes in an atmosphere of hatred, pride, resentment, envy, or ingratitude. Take time each day to reflect upon all the good things God has done for you. Give Him thanks. When you really appreciate His love, you will be delivered from hatred, resentment, and envy.

A negative attitude will keep you from sensing God's presence in your life. Discipline your thinking. Consciously reflect upon the wonderful things God has done and promised to do. Paul said that God fills us with joy and peace "in believing" (Romans 15:13). The best preventive against debilitating uncertainty is a positive, believing, grateful, loving attitude.

### PRAYER

The third antidote to doubt is a daily time of private prayer. Paul told us that if we would pray in every situation we would experience God's wonderful peace. "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:6,7). The apostle John told us how to keep the line of communication open between us and the Lord. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1 :9).

When we confess our sins daily, give God thanks, and tell Him everything that is on our hearts, we will experience a peace which is "better felt than telt." Praying overcomes doubt.

## **FELLOWSHIP**

The fourth antidote to doubt is fellowship. From the very beginning of Christianity, believers have associated with one another. The first converts "continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2:42). In the apostolic age, the people who accepted Christ would immediately join the community of saints. Paul repeatedly reminded his readers to exhort one another, comfort one another, encourage one another, and pray for one another. He knew the value of friendship.

God never intended for us to be spiritual loners.

He has designed us to gain strength through fellowship with others. We rob ourselves of a provision God has made for us, and we make ourselves susceptible to doubt when we try to live our Christian lives in isolation.

## **SERVICE**

The fifth antidote to doubt is Christian service. A believer who doesn't work for God is bound to feel guilty. If he doesn't take corrective measures, these justified guilt feelings will fill his mind with negative thoughts. Jesus continually emphasized discipleship as the path to spiritual joy, and discipleship involves working for Him. Paul often spoke of his own labors. He thanked God for the believers in Thessalonica as he remembered their "work of faith, and labor of love" (1 Thessalonians 1:3).

To remain spiritually fresh, you must take in spiritual nourishment - and give it out. Active and self-sacrificial service is an effective counteragent to doubt.

If you are plagued with nagging doubts, don't make the mistake of thinking you will have to live with them until you die. Don't destroy yourself by letting your guilt feelings drive you into depression. Don't resort to the practice of seeking supernatural signs or of repeatedly going forward in church. You are not sinning if you have honest intellectual questions you are trying to resolve. You need not be overwhelmed with guilt by the doubts that arise from your emotions. Take in a good-sized dose of solid information, adopt a Christlike attitude, spend time in prayer, participate in Christian fellowship, and get busy in active service. It is sure to drive the doubts away.

*by Herbert Vander Lugt*