

HOW TO HANDLE YOUR DOUBTS

A 21-year-old girl recently wrote me that she is plagued with doubts about her personal salvation. She said that at times she actually panics momentarily when she walks into an empty room because she's afraid the rapture may have occurred. Yet her letter reveals a good grasp of what the Bible teaches about sin and salvation, and it appears that she was sincere when she placed her trust in Christ. Furthermore, I am confident she isn't harboring a secret unconfessed or unforsaken sin.

This girl represents thousands of dedicated believers who are beset by feelings of insecurity, even though they are convinced that the Bible is true and that God will faithfully fulfill all His promises. I'm going to present a synopsis of the letter I wrote to her. I pray that it will help many who are burdened like she is.

MAINTAIN SPIRITUAL ACTIVITY

I first encouraged this young woman to continue reading the Bible, praying, attending church, and living an obedient, love-filled life. The devil would like to have a doubting believer become so discouraged that he abandons these practices. Any Christian who neglects these means of grace God has provided will remain uncertain, unhappy, and unfruitful.

CONTROL YOUR EMOTIONS

My second admonition to this girl was that she get her emotions under the control of her mind by concentrating upon the great redemptive facts of the Bible. Paul summarized a few of them in 1 Corinthians 15:3, 4, "Christ died for our sins ... He

was *buried*, and He *rose* again the third day." Remind yourself that God *loves* you (John 3:16); that Christ is your *living* Savior (1 John 2:1, 2); and that you have the *Holy Spirit* dwelling within you (1 Corinthians 6:19). F. B. Meyer used to portray three soldiers named Fact, Faith, and Feeling walking single-file. He said that Fact was in front, and that Feeling followed along nicely, while Faith kept his eye on Fact. But confusion and disorder began whenever Faith started looking back at Feeling. By dwelling on the *facts* of the Bible, you keep your mind in control, and not your emotions.

AVOID A VAGUE IDEALISM

Third, I cautioned my young friend against an abstract, altruistic, and vague idealism. She said in her letter that she had told the Lord she didn't want to be just an ordinary Christian. Therefore, she expected God to send her hardship and suffering to make something special out of her. Now, we should earnestly desire to be like Christ, and we're not to be surprised when God sends adversity. But we shouldn't develop a hero-martyr complex that causes us to feel guilty about being happy or enjoying God's physical and material blessings. Instead, we ought to accept gratefully the good things the Lord sends us, realizing that it isn't always His will that faithful Christians be afflicted.

My friend, accept life as it comes. Don't invite morbid thoughts by suspecting that every silver cloud must have a black lining. And be thankful for every blessing.

by Herbert Vander Lugt