

Why Is Faith So Hard?

In episode 20 of my new series, *Questions With God*, I ask the question, “Why is faith so hard?” In this final entry of these *Questions With God* articles, I think it’s appropriate that the last thing I look at is probably the very thing that drives all of these questions we have about God in the first place. We so badly want to be certain of the things we believe. Many of us just want God to make things clear to us so we no longer have to doubt anything. But God continuously pushes us out of the nest and asks us to have faith in something we cannot see. There is a hiddenness to God that is both genius and infuriating. His hiddenness can either leave us in crippling doubt or cause us to seek harder after Him.

One of my pet peeves with God has always been that He is invisible. Yes we can “experience” Him at times, feel Him around or inside us, our spirit mingling with His, but let’s be honest—most of us would just love for Jesus to suddenly appear before us the way He did at His resurrection with the disciples. We’re sitting there eating some fish, minding our own business, and suddenly Jesus walks into our kitchen and asks for a bite. That’s pretty much all we need, we tell ourselves, and we’re in 100 percent. Because then we’ll know that we know.

The problem with this thinking, I’ve realized, is that we are way better at doubting than we are believing. Want the perfect example? Matthew 28:16-17. Jesus has just resurrected from the dead, and He appears to the 11 remaining disciples. Amid all the worshipping and glory, God throws this little nugget in there, I’m convinced, to remind us where our constant battle will be: “Now the 11 disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted.” Seriously? We’re not talking about some random people on the streets here; we’re talking the 11 guys who did life with Jesus for three

years, knew Him better than anyone ever would and were like His best friends. Jesus has literally just risen from the dead and is standing with you in the flesh, and some of these guys still doubted. I guess that makes me feel a little better.

The point here is obvious. The battle will always be in our minds. The disciples had way less reason to doubt than we do. Our society has trained us to mistrust things. Whether it's fake YouTube videos, photoshopped memes or ministers being outed as frauds, it's become our overriding ethos to question things that seem too good to be true. But the disciples didn't have social media to contend with, and they were staring at Jesus in the flesh. They watched Him eat food. They touched Him, for goodness' sake. Yet still some doubted.

Why is faith so hard? There are obviously a million reasons, but I think a major reason we so often struggle with trusting God (which is what faith really is) is because trusting Him requires us to stop trusting ourselves. Trusting God means we are required to relinquish control of others. And in a world that sometimes feels like it's spinning out of control, we want nothing more than to take hold of something and bend it to our will so that at least we can be lord over something in our life. But God continues to ask us to let go completely. We are to have no gods before Him, and that includes ourselves. There is only one thing He has ever wanted us to grab hold of, and that is His son, Jesus. He is the the rock on which we stand, the firm foundation in the storm.

"But," you say, "if only I could just know for sure that He is real, or that He will do what I want Him to do..." I'm here to tell you, and Scripture backs it up, that even if Jesus Himself came to you in the flesh and sat down to eat those salmon fillets with you, as soon as He was gone, the doubts would begin again. Jesus told his disciples that blessed are those who haven't seen Him yet still believe. Why are we blessed when we put our full faith in Him? Because it is the ultimate act of trust, and as such, it is the ultimate way we

can show Him love. It's why God puts such a high premium on faith in the first place. As hard as it may be, if you don't trust Him, then you don't truly love Him.