



"Good Christians don't have Doubts"

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In recent years there have been a number of best-selling books "evangelizing" heavily for atheism & Unbelief:

→ **Daniel C. Dennett** wrote a book called, ***Breaking the Spell***.

He contends that for too long, religious faith has been protected by the idea that it is holy or sacred, and it hasn't been subjected to the kind of critical thinking that would expose it as the nonsense that it is. So he sets out to do just that in his book.

→ **Christopher Hawkins** - has written book titled, *God is Not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything*.

→ **Sam Harris** - Wrote a book titled, *The End of Faith*.

He writes:

"We have names for people who have many beliefs for which there are no rational justification. When their beliefs are extremely common, we call them "religious." Otherwise, they are likely to be called "mad, psychotic, or delusional." While religious people are not generally mad, their core beliefs absolutely are."

Oxford University evolutionary biologist and outspoken atheist and secular humanist Richard Dawkins, argues Harris' *The End of Faith* book should *"replace the Gideon Bible in every hotel room in the land."*

→ **Richard Dawkins** wrote his own book called *The God Delusion*.

Publishers Weekly – commenting on his book writes,

"The anti-religion wars started by Daniel Dennett and Sam Harris will heat up even more with this salvo from celebrated Oxford biologist Dawkins. For a scientist who criticizes religion for its intolerance, Dawkins has written a surprisingly intolerant book, full of scorn for religion and those who believe."

At the beginning of Dawkins' book, he says:

"If this book works as I intend, religious readers who open it will be atheists when they put it down."

Just to give you a feel for Dawkin's tone, he writes,

"The God of the Old Testament is arguably the most unpleasant character in all fiction: jealous and proud of it; a petty, unjust, unforgiving control-freak; a vindictive, bloodthirsty ethnic cleanser; a misogynistic, homophobic, racist, infanticidal, genocidal, filicidal, pestilential, megalomaniacal, sadomasochistic, capriciously malevolent bully."

**What does it mean to question and struggle?
Am I a bad Christian if I have doubts?
Is it wrong to ask the difficult – the big questions?**

Matt 22:37 Jesus replied: "*Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your - mind.*"

A deep faith is a thoughtful faith. Because - We all live at the mercy of our ideas about the way things really are.

There is no way to have a strong attachment to God if there are deep questions in our mind that we have been afraid to look at honestly.

Four observations about the nature of faith and doubt: (from John Ortberg)

1) Doubt is an inescapable part of the human condition.

There is no doubt-free living. Part of what it means to be a finite creature with a limited IQ, with a capacity for reason & imagination... is there is no escape from doubt.

Be merciful to those who doubt. (Jude 1:22)

Why? Because that's all of us. We all have questions and doubts.

If you wait until all doubt is removed before you step out and commit to something you will never: get married / take a job / have a child. / make a friend / ask someone to forgive you / open up and let someone know you / you will never follow God.

"If you don't have any doubts you are either kidding yourself or asleep. Doubts are the ants in the pants of faith. They keep it awake and moving."

Frederick Buechner (Wishful Thinking, 20)

2) Every human being lives by faith.

"In the visible world, the Milky Way is a tiny fragment. Within this fragment the solar system is an infinitesimal speck, and in the speck our planet is a microscopic dot. On this dot, tiny lumps of impure carbon and water (this is where you come in) complicated structure crawl about for a few years until they are dissolved again into the elements of which they are compounded."

Bertrand Russell

Without faith, it is impossible to please God. (Hebrews 11:6)

Without faith, it is impossible to please anybody!

- Try to make a friend without having faith, trust that cannot be proved.
- Try getting married without faith. "I pledge my faith"
- Try pleasing a parent without faith, trust in them.
- Try to raise a child without learning about trust.

The righteous will live by faith. (Galatians 3:11)

And so do the unrighteous! They put their faith in something else – it is faith alright - just a different faith.

There is no such thing as a "no faith person." So we all struggle. We all struggle with faith. We all struggle with doubts.

Now we see but a poor reflection. [Now we have confusion, misunderstanding, doubts, and questions.] Then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part. [with questions and doubts] Then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known. (I Corinthians 13:12)

3) Doubt can lead to stronger faith.

"Doubts are the ants in the pants of faith. They keep it awake and moving."

4) When certainty is impossible, faithfulness is still on the table.

Can you think of any doubters in the Bible?

"Doubting Thomas," but it's not just Thomas who doubted. Abraham, Sarah, Elijah, John the Baptist ... all were doubters. Jesus' family thought he was crazy. All the disciples ran away. There were lots of doubters, and God doesn't give up on any of them. God didn't ask people to manufacture certainty. He asked them to be faithful to what they know.

Maybe what matters most to God is not that I have the comfort of certainty. That's what I want. I want to know for sure. But maybe what matters most to God is that I am faithful to what I already know. And maybe if I'm willing to do that, He can still use me, even with my doubts.